

G.K.'s

**A MISCELLANY OF THE FIRST
500 ISSUES OF G.K.'s WEEKLY**



BACK TO THE LAND

Thomas Derrick

GK's

A MISCELLANY OF THE FIRST
500 ISSUES OF G.K.'s WEEKLY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
G. K. CHESTERTON

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TO
THE MEMORY
OF
CECIL CHESTERTON

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COMPILER'S NOTE

THE task of selection has been made difficult not only by the large amount of material available, but also by the fact that journalism deals with perishable things.

For instance, public men considered so important a few years ago that columns were devoted to their characters and statements in *G.K.'s Weekly* have passed rapidly into obscurity. To reproduce some of the best work written for the paper would mean the addition of several appendices, voluminous footnotes, and perhaps a glossary.

As a result a number of essays, cartoons and poems which otherwise would have figured prominently in this book have had to be excluded.

Thanks are due and warmly offered to all contributors and helpers; in particular to the Rev. Ronald A. Knox and Messrs. Sheed and Ward, publishers of *Essays in Satire* for permission to reprint "The Authorship of 'In Memoriam,'" which was contributed to the preliminary issue of *G.K.'s Weekly*; to Mr. Walter de la Mare and Messrs. Constable & Co. for "The Journey" and "Maria-Fly," which has been published in *Broomsticks and other Tales*; to Mr. E. F. P. Bartlett for "A Proper New Ballad entitled Church and King"; to Mr. Wilfred Gibson and Messrs. Macmillan and Co. for "The Weazel" from *I heard a Sailor* and "Laughter" from *The Golden Room*; to Mr. Hilaire Belloc for "Mrs. Markham's History of England" and "Dot and Dashes"; and to Mr. Peter Belloc for "Captain Manuel Muñoz."

E. J. M

INTRODUCTION

THIS book is published to celebrate the 500th issue of the weekly paper which bears a similar title. This is really a triumph of survival under singular circumstances; it is also a triumph of a singular kind. The paper has lived through what is called the slump, and actually improved its position in the very middle of the slump. Unlike many papers filled with sincere criticism of Capitalism and Big Business, it has never been financed by any big capitalist, or by anyone worth calling a capitalist at all. Unlike many brilliant weekly papers, starting with independent intellectual ideas, it has succeeded in remaining independent if only in the sense of isolated; and has not been driven to the modern expedient of amalgamation. I am not so silly as to say these things with any intention of superiority over journalistic organisations in many ways necessarily superior; I say it because the two facts happen to be specially important to our own spiritual and social faith. Perhaps the shortest way of defining what we are always denouncing, as abnormal in this country and century, is to say that only the capitalists have any capital. And it was our whole point from the first that the rise of Trusts was in itself the collapse of Trade; that what was called Rationalisation was really only the first announcement of ruin; that enterprises of every kind collapsed in each other's arms; and that it was not so much the power as the weakness of combines that was a warning to the world. We have therefore a reason of our own for rejoicing, without reflecting upon others, over the fact that our own paper has remained a small property; being a small thing, but our own.

It is my privilege to say a preliminary word about this very real triumph; I need not say that it is in no sense my triumph; as I shall explain later, it was almost accidental and perhaps unlucky that it had to be so very closely connected with my name. It is the triumph of a group of men who have worked much harder, under difficulties much heavier, and whose loyalty and self-sacrifice I seriously believe to be unique in the history of journalism. This collection contains work by men of the first literary rank, like Mr. Walter de la Mare and Mr. Maurice Baring, whom I should like to assure of my most earnest gratitude; but it also contains work by men who have devoted almost entirely to this cause the talents and the knowledge that they might have used to achieve as worthy a worldly distinction for themselves. I have almost a feeling of remorse in having wasted, in the worldly sense, the time of men so capable of practical achievement; but, much as I value our friendship, I know very well that they have not been working for me, but for an ideal which, unlike a good many current ideals, is also an idea. That idea bears the somewhat clumsy name of Distributism; and of the idea itself I shall say more in a moment. What I wish to record first is the testimony to that idea, in the almost heroic sacrifices made for it, by men who could have worked so much more successfully elsewhere. We have had the services of a young writer on scientific subjects, whose criticisms of great leading scientists like Professor Haldane are everywhere quoted in the controversy; and who had indeed the privilege of reminding that great but absent-minded naturalist of the existence of the cuckoo. We have been helped by a writer who might have figured in any of the great newspapers as a specialist on Poland;

if the great newspapers had ever heard of Poland; and enjoyed the genius of a satirist who might certainly have put a punch into *Punch*. Differing in a hundred ways, they have been held together by their loyalty to this ideal of personal liberty as expressed in private property; and while many good and intelligent people may condemn our creed, they have not to condemn any modification of our creed. I am proud to have been associated with such men, and no less proud of having done my best to help them to defend such an ideal; I do not apologise to the public for having chosen to expend my energies, or even theirs, upon so necessary and urgent a social need; I only apologise to them for the mere chapter of accidents, which has scrawled across their much more valuable script my own somewhat absurd monogram.

For in truth I writhe (a difficult feat for me) as I take up my pen to write this prefatory note on a selection from *G.K.'s Weekly*; for the very title recalls to me the blackest hour of humiliation. I remember through what agonies of reluctance and disgust I passed before I was persuaded, by my best friends and business advisers, to surmount this unfortunate sheet with my own initials. Some may not understand this; some may not believe it. It is not the only truth, or the most important truth, that an enlightened age cannot believe. Anyhow, that enlightened age faithfully followed the sort of light that is known as the spotlight; and I have the misfortune to feel that this particular process of advertisers putting a man in the spotlight is rather like the process of gangsters putting him on the spot. To write my initials round my hat, or in a ring of electric lights like a halo round my head, or to blazon them on an enormous flag flying from my highest

chimney-pot, or to arrange them in red letters, composed of red lamps, over my front-door—all this would surely be in perfect harmony with the business principles of publicity and salesmanship preached so energetically in recent times, and recommended to us earnestly by the richest and therefore most successful men in the world. To reprint all my favourable press-notices as large as placards, and plaster them all over the front of my own house; to print on my visiting-card that I am a Master of Paradox (whatever that may be); to walk about preceded by energetic youths distributing leaflets with my portrait—all this were only to follow humbly and respectfully the advice of all those great commercial experts whose counsels have brought the world to its present state of universal prosperity and repose. But somehow I could never at any time bring myself to like this particular sort of vainglory, though I am probably capable of enjoying glory that is quite as vain. I do not mix up my tastes in the matter with any pretensions to virtue; I daresay there is more vanity than modesty in my dislike of this special manner of making an ass of myself. The only point here is that I did vividly feel a faint touch of such vulgarity in using my own initials for the paper; and it was a long time before I could overcome my horror of the idea. What decided me was one most extraordinary fact; for which alone I have troubled the reader with this egotistical opening.

I had assumed that the paper would be called *The Distributist*, or *Distributism*, or something of the sort. But those with whom I was in negotiation about the whole notion of such a paper, surprised me by saying what was, as I thought about it, a more and more astonishing thing. So far as I know, I have never

really written a paradox in my life; but the hard-headed and practical men of affairs, who were willing to consider the possibility of such an enterprise, certainly proceeded to utter a most horrid paradox. They actually did tell me, in cold blood, in broad daylight, that there were a great many people who had heard of me, who had not *heard* of Distributism.

This ghastly, this blasting view of the intellectual condition of modern England did at least prove one thing; that it must be made to hear of Distributism, as soon as possible, somehow. If it could only be done by using the name of some buffoon who was known in the newspapers, as other buffoons are known to the police, it was clear that the buffoon must not complain. And I believe, as I must say in all fairness, that my business advisers were probably right; that there is a very large number of normal citizens who have heard in some vague way that I am funny for some reason, very much larger than the number of people who have even heard of the truth that would make them free. Therefore, though in profound grief and shame, I consented to the title as the only way of disseminating the truth. And now let us forget all these trifles, and everything except the truth.

The truth is this; and it is extremely, even excruciatingly simple. Either Private Property is good for Man or it is bad for Man. If it is bad, let us all immediately become honest and courageous Communists; and be glad to have joined the movement while the support of it still calls for some little courage and honesty. But if it is good for Man it is good for Everyman. Of its own nature, private property is a private good for the private citizen; or else it is less than nothing, for it is not even itself. There is a case for Capitalism; a

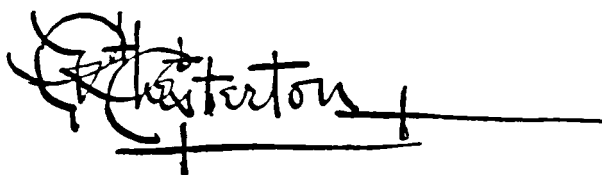
case for Landlordism; a case for complete Despotism; there are arguments for all the various processes by which property is placed in specially trustworthy hands, or administered from recognised centres, or made part of a smoother and stricter machinery of social life; there are arguments for Trusts, for Squires, for big employers. But they are all arguments *against* Private Property. They are all more or less philosophical reasons why a man, as such, should not be an owner, as such; why the tenant should *not* own his house; why the workman should *not* own his workshop; why the farmer should *not* own his farm. All Capitalist arguments are Communist arguments. The moment Private Property becomes a privilege, it ceases to be private property. It becomes a public institution, granting special privileges to special persons; at the best aristocracy, at the worst plutocracy; but always oligarchy. It was obvious that all these things were illogical compromises between Communism which denies private property and Distributism which asserts it. They are compromises made by men who are at least subconsciously ashamed of private property; and would like to limit it to a few people, including themselves. But we are not ashamed of private property; for we would give it to everybody else.

Now the startling and outstanding fact was this: that there was *no* journalistic organ in all England dedicated to defending this plain principle; which had in consequence disappeared entirely from the public mind. There is still no other organ dedicated to it; though many more journalists allude to it, or even approve it, in particular passages; largely as a consequence of the long dedication of this paper to this idea. But I am only concerned here with the causes

of the foundation of the enterprise; and its (probably unfortunate) connection with my own name. I looked round the whole world of literature and politics that I knew; and I could see nobody else who could at the moment do it; though I could see a hundred who would have done it better. My brother Cecil would have done it a thousand times better; but he was dead (if the Pacifists will excuse me) on the field of honour. My friend Belloc would have done it a thousand times better; but he was occupied with the sort of studies that really consume a man's time; the ransacking of libraries of fact to refute the learned and their falsehoods. There was nothing left but to use such trivial advantages as I had; the buffoonery or the newspaper notoriety to get some hearing for the truth. It is an ironical situation, that must often have happened in the complexity of human life. I was not the best person to do it; it is very arguable that I was the worst person; anyhow, I was never for an instant under any illusion that I was the best person. I was only the only person.

The enterprise emerges to-day, in days when even survival is success. It survives in spite of all these handicaps; the handicap of its name, or indeed of any possible name (for there is only a choice between some such personal title and some polysyllabic incubus like "Distributism"); the handicap of a lack of capital, nowadays inevitably arising from a lack of capitalists; the handicap of the slump, in which far more famous papers have been annihilated or amalgamated or both; the handicap of talking to the English people in a language that has become strange to them; and the handicap of its highly uneditorial editor. Against all these things, and perhaps especially the last but one,

the men whom I have the honour to call my friends have contended successfully; and this book commemorates their success. Two facts are stamped very vividly over all the journalism and the conversation of this country. One is that it consists very largely of clichés or catchwords, used because they mean nothing. The other is the fact that they do in reality mean something; they are almost always memories, though now meaningless memories, of a more human and historical England. I shall illustrate both in one instance, if I say most seriously that the men about me have very truly done yeoman service, to assist the resurrection of the forgotten race of the yeomen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "G.K. Chesterton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G". A horizontal line is drawn across the bottom of the signature, starting from the end of the word and extending to the right.

MISS MEEKHEART'S LIVING

By VINCENT McNABB, O.P.

ONE Monday I heard the following:—

“Last week I was staying with one of my friends in the village of X——, about thirty miles from London. My friend and hostess, seeing that my knitting had come to an end for want of wool, went to buy some in the village's only draper's shop. When she asked the shopkeeper for the wool I needed, he said very apologetically:—

“‘We don't stock wool. *That is Miss Meekheart's living.*’”

There ended the story. And there began my thinking.

1. First of all I thought it a very beautiful story and very simple. The Gael within me was on the point of writing—“very English.” But, like all that is best in England, it is human.

I am writing this miles away from a copy of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. But if my memory is trustworthy I behaved towards this story exactly as the Vicar of Wakefield's little son behaved when he heard a like story. Moreover I am still impenitent of my tears.

2. Of course the story was so unexpected in these days of Multiple Stores, that the shopkeeper's words sent my thoughts whirling and sparking like a Catherine-wheel. It took time to change into a steady rocketing of thought.

My first definite thought was: This thing is a Survival, as the White Horse of Wilts or Salisbury Minster or Cockney wit is a survival. This village shopkeeper is a survival, and not just a successor, of the folk who set such store by good manners that, what philosophy now calls the Absolute, they called "the Courteous God."

3. From this I was unpleasantly forced to think of our modern Multiple Stores not as a rare and precious survival, but as a vulgar, cheap, nouveau-riche successor of the courteous centuries.

This was not pleasant thinking, because most of my acquaintances buy all kinds of cheap nicknacks, and even cheap food-snacks at these cheap Stores.

4. My next thought went with middle-wicket directness straight to the heart of my religious beliefs; in other words, to the centre of my heart and brain.

How was I to reconcile two facts that seemed as irreconcilable as fire and water? One fact was that most of my acquaintances believed in a good God, in a personal devil and in the Commandment, Thou Shalt Not Steal. The second fact was that these good folk were thinking God was somehow very thoughtful of them by setting them down in a progressive century, when Big Business, with its drapery-line and millinery-line and furniture-line and stationery-line and religious-object-line, and funeral-line and cremation-line, etc., enabled country cousins to spend a whole day of excitement under one roof. But for my wretched conscience the snag in this was that these many-lined Stores were the death of such courteous English folk as the draper of X—, and, I need not say, of Miss Meekheart, whose "living" was wool.

5. Another line of thought became such a Sierra

Nevada of thinking that flight from it was my only defence. The draper of X—— was such a purveyor of goods and good-manners that he advertised the wool that was Miss Meekheart's living! Now, take this "line" of thought out into the Big Business of to-day and see if you are not, sooner or later, quite dizzy. Imagine yourself going to Messrs. Welfridge for a bolt of tape and hearing the answer: "We do not stock tape. That is Messrs. Soolworth's living!"

Or go in spirit to the X-Y-Z caterers for afternoon tea. Would you not be put off any kind of food if Messrs. X-Y-Z, the caterers, said apologetically: "Tea is not in our line. That is Messrs. Syons' living"?

After such adventures in burlesque, it is not food you would want, but stimulants.

6. What the draper of X—— did was, as we said, a survival. But even what he said was a survival. It was an unexpected survival in days of telephone manners and B.B.C. English of the days when the King's subjects spoke King's English.

Coleridge once said that "good prose was words in their best order, and good poetry was the best words in their best order." By this canon of an authentic master of poetry and prose, the word of the draper of X—— is poetry of the highest. It is some ten years since I heard so noble and musical a word, spoken in such fit surroundings of time and place. "Living" rang in my ear as a thrush's unexpected trill of song after a thunderstorm. It was the one word that could be used; and it was in such fitting place and time that it instantly came into its own.

7. Whilst such folk as the draper of X—— still live in England, it is clear that England cannot die. And

whilst such folk are still to be found, our hopes for England must be allowed to live. This thing that we call a survival may perhaps blossom into a revival; when the swagger and show of to-day have proved themselves to be but a paroxysm in the steady culture and courteousness of our people.

THE FARMER'S BOY

(Revised Version)

THE sun had set behind the hill
When, full of erudition,
To a farmer's door a young man came,
For it was his ambition
To use his D.Sc. (Agric.)
And all his brains employ,
To cultivate and rusticate
And be a farmer's boy-oy-oy,
And be a farmer's boy.

He used the latest dynamos
For milking cows and shearing
And fitted all the heifer's tails
With epicyclic gearing,
Enabling them with greater ease
To make the flies deploy,
And teem with cream in gratitude
To such a farmer's boy-oy-oy,
To such a farmer's boy.

He sowed the superphosphates wide,
And sulphates in rotation,
To show the stupid farmer what
Was what in cultivation;

And when the ear of wheat grew up
A trifle shy and coy,
He gave it ultra-violet rays,
This clever farmer's boy-oy-oy!
This clever farmer's boy!

In every sleeping heifer's ear
Suggestions he would mutter,
And they thereby subconsciously
Increased the yield of butter;
Thus, too, he taught the grunting pigs
Life's humour to enjoy,
And laughing, they made fatter pork
To feed the farmer's boy-oy-oy,
To feed the farmer's boy.

The too-prolific aphis-fly
He soon exterminated,
By Stopesian suggestions which
He subtly inculcated;
By this same means all insect pests
He managed to destroy,
So they could neither spoil the fruit
Nor bite the farmer's boy-oy-oy,
Nor bite the farmer's boy.

By means of Mendelism and
Skill in manipulation,
He crossed his hens with bees and through
Gametic segregation
The hens each laid a million eggs,
And bees ceased to annoy
By stinging or by buzzing round
The busy farmer's boy-oy-oy,
The busy farmer's boy.

By dint of double entry and
 Much filing of petitions,
 He sat with expert dignity
 On many Royal Commissions:
 Though farms and farmers are extinct
 He tells with pride and joy
 How he went and showed them how to be
 A modern farmer's boy-oy-oy,
 A modern farmer's boy.

G. C. HESELTINE.

THE LAST OF HARRY QUELFE

By F. KESTON CLARKE

No, don't let's make it the William the Fourth. I never go in the William the Fourth nowadays; I don't care to somehow, after that business of Harry Quelife.

Didn't I ever tell you about poor old Harry Quelife? Perhaps that isn't quite the way to put it. As if I could tell you about him! I might as well push forward to introduce you to a man I've seen only in the weird perspective of the barbers' mirrors. But I will, and I'd better begin at the beginning, if there is one.

The William the Fourth is rather off my usual beat, you see; but I used to go that way perhaps once in a month, and then I'd drop in for a quick one. It was about this time last year, and I'd been in the place three or four times, and the landlord—Horsbill—knew me by sight. A devil for making conversation, he is; a foolish habit, and I never encourage it. That morning he'd tried everything from Lords Reform to local hockey, but he got no change out of me. Then, as I was going out, he said:

“D'you ever hear from old Harry Quelife now?”

"No!"

"Ah!" said Horsbill. "He never was much of a one for writing to anybody."

"That's so," I muttered, and got away.

Heard from Harry Quelfe? I'd never heard of him in my life. But to have said so would have meant another half-hour of Horsbill's reminiscences. One says anything to dam that flow.

It was weeks before I entered the William the Fourth again. Certainly I'd been too busy ever to think about Horsbill and his phantasms.

"A brown, please."

"Cert'nly. . . 'Ere! Whaddyer think? I went over to Princes Risborough last Saturday!"

"Oh, yes?" Nijni-Novgorod would have meant as much to me.

"Yes. *You* know. That's where old Harry Quelfe settled, after the fire."

I stared at Horsbill. But he's such an innocent soul, for a publican. It seemed a pity to trample his gentle illusions with hobnailed truth.

"Oh, of course," I said. "Er—how is he?"

"Doing nicely. Very nicely. Well, he deserves to, don't he?"

I agreed. I wish no harm to the burgesses of Princes Risborough. Why should I?

"And when I told Harry you'd been in here now and then, why you could have knocked him down with a feather. 'Yes,' I says, 'Whatshisname as used to be at Chatham.' He stares at me. 'What,' he says, 'Whatsisname from Chatham? Why, it must be seventeen year or more,' he says."

I finished my brown. "Ah, it's a long time, isn't it?" I said, and escaped again.

And within the hour, of course, forgot Horsbill and Harry Quelfe and all their works. But I was on a slippery slope. A few days later, it happened that I *did* go to Chatham; the first time in my life. And when next I entered the William the Fourth, with unbelievable stupidity I mentioned Chatham to Horsbill.

"Well, I'm blown!" he said. "Tell me all about it. I bet it's changed. I'm going over to Princes Risborough again in a few days, and old Harry Quelfe's sure to ask me."

I told Horsbill all about how Chatham was looking. What else could I do? And I asked him—at his unspoken suggestion—to remember me to Harry Quelfe. How could I do otherwise?

And then in some uncanny fashion I found myself being drawn quite out of my way, within the fortnight, to call at the William. I would find myself wondering what was the news from Princes Risborough. I would tell myself that Princes Risborough meant nothing to me; and yet be only half convinced. As I pushed open the door I had even forgotten the name—

"Harry Quelfe!" shouted Horsbill—ah, that was it!—"Harry Quelfe was in here yesterday. Why ever didn't you come yesterday?"

I went a bit cold. This absurdity was getting too near the bone. But I knew it was too late—

"Fair put out, he was, missin' you, 'Course, I told 'im you only look in now and agin like, but we kept hoping. . . . Watched the clock, he did. But he had to go back by the afternoon train."

"Brown, please," I said. "Well, well. What a pity. How is he?"

Horsbill wiped a glass, with concentration. "Ah, that's it. How is he? Well, you've asked, and I'll

tell you. Poor old Harry! I tell you what, guv'nor. I don't half like the look of him."

"You don't?"

"I don't. I'll tell you for why. 'Course, there's always been the old trouble."

The old trouble——?

"Yes," I said. "Oh, quite."

"He's had these bad turns, on and off, these twelve years or more. You know that as well as I do. There's no need to tell *you*."

"No, no."

"And what I say is, There isn't one on us as *really* knows what poor old Harry Quelfe's 'ad to go through!"

I assented, with conviction. After all, do any of us know that, of any of us?

"And then, you know," said Horsbill, "there's that son of his. 'Ere! What do *you* make of that son of his?"

I grunted.

"You're right," said Horsbill. "You got him weighed up, I can see. But old Harry won't hear a single word against him!"

"He won't?"

"Not he. Well, I s'pose it's right enough, in a way. You don't want to poison a man's mind against his own son, do you?"

Of course I didn't. I drank up, and went.

But, you know, I felt quite upset, in my mind, about this Harry Quelfe. It's hard to explain; but, you see, of course I'd heard lots more about him than just what I'm able to tell you here. Sometimes I even wondered whether I'd suffered some mental lesion, and Quelfe and I had really been boozing pals, in some torn-out page of the past. And often, I wished it might have

been so. He had evidently been a great fellow, in those Chatham days. Always the same, convivial or quarrelling; as hearty at the fast as at the feast; generous, and prejudiced; as broad in sympathy as he was narrow in conviction. And work! You have to, these days, to get a living in the green-grocery. And bit by bit Horsbill had given me the details of that sorry business with the son, that finished poor old Harry Quelfe at Chatham and sent him—at his age!—to start again in Princes Risborough, where nobody ever goes. And such a comic! Always ready with something. “ ‘Course,” Horsbill would explain, “ I can’t say it like he said it, but you can just imagine it——?”

I usually could.

But Horsbill, that last time, had seemed uncommonly grave. He hadn’t half liked the look of poor old Harry Quelfe. He had shaken his head as he talked, and wiped the counter without his accustomed zest. When next I went that road, I reminded myself sharply that what was a comedy of error to me, was real bleak trouble to Horsbill. I passed by, that time.

It must have been quite six weeks before I did go to the William again. No good reason why I shouldn’t, I thought. Besides, this Quelfe bloke might send me a brace of rabbits, or a dozen eggs, for old times’ sake.

Horsbill poured my beer in silence, and placed it before me. Then he said, “ I s’pose you’ve heard?”

“ Heard?”

“ That Harry Quelfe’s gone. Died on Saturday night, only ’arf an hour after he’d put the shutters up.”

I put the beer down.

“ Yes,” said Horsbill. “ The same old trouble. He had one o’ those turns of his. Only this time they didn’t get him round again.”

I'd never noticed before, that Horsbill looks so old when he doesn't smile.

"Funny thing," he continued. "I was with him only the night before. And he asked particular after you. Seemed quite anxious. Kept on reminding me, in fact."

I drank my beer, saying nothing. When I looked up, Horsbill was eyeing me.

"I was wondering whether you'll be very busy the day after to-morrow. 'Cause that's the day of the funeral, and——"

* * * * *

I must say they did me very well at Princes Risborough. Very nice people, all of them; except the son, I suppose, and he wasn't there. They hadn't met me before, but they needn't tell me how welcome was any old friend of the old man's. And they did so hope I'd come again sometime; in the summer perhaps, when things had settled down again. . . .

As I trudged along to the station afterwards, that rainy evening, I wondered what poor old Harry Quelfe, up there beyond the clouds, would have thought. Somehow I think he'd have been rather pleased. Such a one for a joke, Horsbill always said.

But I never go in the William the Fourth nowadays. It doesn't seem the same, now that there's no Harry Quelfe.

VOICES

SAINT JOAN looked up, and saw the Great Light shine,
And heard her Voices, by the cottage door.
I need not go to Domrémy for mine;
We've got a medium at number four.

J. B. MORTON.

DOTS AND DASHES

By HILAIRE BELLOC

A MAN reading the strange prose and verse resulting from the recent disturbances of Europe will do well to consult the past; and especially the past from between the beginning of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth.

If he will do this, he cannot but discover that men need hate, just as they need love; but change the objects of their hate much more easily, rapidly, and irresponsibly than they change the objects of their love: though, God knows, they change these lightly enough.

A little while ago the animosities were artificially ordered to be on national lines. They are already to-day on the much sounder lines of religious difference. England is again in line with Prussia; France with Poland. But the lesson to be learnt is that men must hate and love; and that their choice of what to hate and what to love is subordinated to the great necessity of hating and loving.

Here, in the matter of international affairs, I warn my beloved contemporaries against two errors: in the first place, they must not imagine that they love as much as they hate, where foreign nations are concerned. In the second place, they must not conceive it possible for one moment that their loves or their hates are free to act.

No, my dear contemporaries, you are canalised. You are led by the nose. You are driven like sheep. You have many masters, but your drovers are the banks. You do what you are told, but subject always to your instincts, which are religious, and which the banks must allow for.

No doubt you dislike the Poles (whom you have never met) and the French much more violently (for you have met them). You would not dislike the Germans so much, for Prussia which governs them (or used to) is of the same religious kind as yourselves. As for the Italians, you do not yet understand how powerful they are going to be in the affairs of Europe. The Spaniards you know nothing of—some day they will again astonish you.

Anyhow, Europe spreads itself out before you as a mere map; and its realities do not affect you—save as the realities of the human body affect one, with sudden pains. Decline you may accept as some mysterious new trouble in your own bodies. But of the poisons affecting you you know nothing at all: still less of the rise of your enemies. I congratulate you.

Now let me give you some advice.

Make a clean sheet of your hatreds and your loves in modern Europe. Presuppose the worst. Presuppose the collapse of those highly intellectual cosmopolitans, the Russian Communists, and Russia counting no more in our civilisation. Presuppose the Italians really powerful and the Spaniards less and less negligible: rising from the dead. Presuppose the destruction of professional politics in France and the inception of vigorous national government—even a true monarchy. Presuppose the atrophy of Prussia and the re-assertion in some new form of the old civilised Germany upon the Danube and the Rhine. Presuppose Poland not falling to pieces nor bowing humbly to a neighbouring Russian anarchy, nor enslaved to Berlin, but making her enemies more and more anxious all around. Presuppose an Ireland become united, her population growing, and her wealth. Presuppose all the things

which you hope from the bottom of your hearts can never happen, and which therefore you, after the true modern habit of thought, firmly believe can never happen.

What then?

What then? Why, then you will be exactly where your fathers were—to wit, facing novelties. They said that there stood against danger to our civilisation the English yeoman and French monarchy and the German princes. Gibbon said exactly that. The French Revolution came. Where were those three forces in the nineteenth century?

Or again; all Europe turned (two long life-times ago, or little more) upon the rivalry between the French and the Austrian royal houses. Where is that rivalry to-day?

Or again; within living memory, London, and especially the rich drawing-rooms of London, went mad with delight over a certain movement for a united Italy which was to destroy Catholicism. Garibaldi was a hero—Mazzini was a god. Well, you had your wish. United Italy indeed appeared. But has it turned against the Catholic culture? Oh, you, who put your money (but not your blood) on Garibaldi, how bitterly have you been deceived!

Napoleon said that Europe would be Republican or Cossack. He was wrong. Had he said that it would be Republican or despotic he would have been right. Cobden said (but far be it from me to compare a foreigner like Napoleon with a native like Cobden) that if Europe did not accept Free Trade it would burst. Europe has not accepted Free Trade. It has not burst. And the moral is, act as though you knew the Future—but be inwardly certain you do not.

What other people said about the matter I do not know and I do not care, for I am sure they were all wrong. But what I say about the future is this: It will be very different from what I expect.

* * * *

A very wise man said to me once—a little before the late deplorable difference with Prussia—as we walked together along the river side near Boadicea (he being twenty years older than me), “Mark my words”—it was thus he would emphasise his more important follies—“mark my words, the time will come when the House of Commons will once more . . .” But at that very moment a motor-bus mounted the pavement; we fled for our lives, and when peace returned we were talking of other things—motor-buses for one.

In those days I should have doubted the truth of whatever it was he had meant to say. I thought him pompous, and I did not then know how important pomposity was in this life. He was indeed pompous, and I now know how important pomposity is in this life.

Here excuse me for a digression. I will lay seventeen besants to one liard that pomposity is of no service whatsoever in the world to come.

But wait a moment. Is there such a world? I do not know whether you have recently been reading your daily papers, but I have, and their owners, the great English nobles and peers of our time, are much divided upon this important point. Some say there is a world to come, some (and they are the wiser) say they hope there is none, for them at any rate. And who shall decide?

I will now make an end of all this silly talk about

the great English nobles who own great English newspapers, and their world to come, and all the rest of it. . . . Stay—only this very morning I read a violent denunciation of the Trinity in a certain newspaper, which in any other country but England I should be allowed to name by its name.

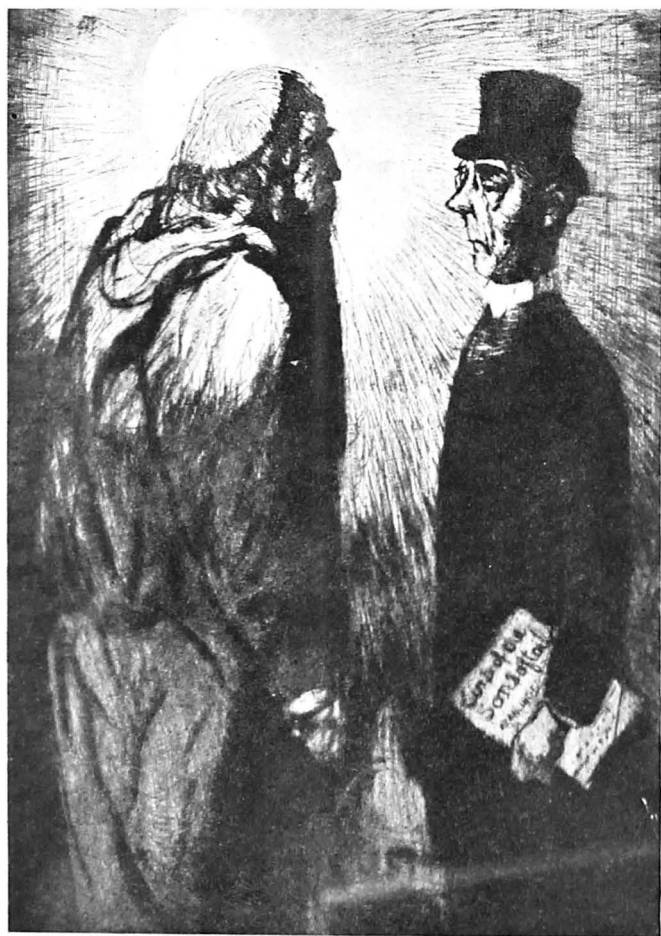
* * * *

I have wandered so far from my original subject (whatever it was) that I have no more to say to you nor you to me. . . . But, oh God, what times we live in!

THE LEGEND OF THE SWORD

A STRANGE story is told of the Spanish-American War, of a sort that sounds like the echo of some elder epic: of how an active Yankee, pursuing the enemy, came at last to a forgotten Spanish station on an island and felt as if he had intruded on the presence of a ghost. For he found in a house hung with ragged Cordova leather and old gold tapestries, a Spaniard as out of time as Don Quixote, who had no weapon but an ancient sword. This he declared his family had kept bright and sharp since the days of Cortes: and it may be imagined with what a smile the American regarded it, standing spick and span with his Sam Browne belt and his new service revolver.

His amusement was naturally increased when he found, moored close by, the gilded skeleton of an old galley. When the Spanish spectre sprang on board, brandishing his useless weapon, and his captor followed, the whole parted amidships and the two were left clinging to a spar. And here (says the legend) the story took a



“BUT OF COURSE, MY DEAR DEAN, I AM BIASED,
AND MY SON WAS A CARPENTER.”

Will Dyson

strange turn: for they floated far on this rude raft together: and were ultimately cast up on a desert island.

The shelving shores of the island were covered with a jungle of rush and tall grasses; which it was necessary to clear away, both to make space for a hut and to plait mats or curtains for it. With an activity rather surprising in one so slow and old-fashioned, the Spaniard drew his sword and began to use it in the manner of a scythe. The other asked if he could assist.

“This, as you say, is a rude and antiquated tool,” replied the swordsman, “and your own is a weapon of precision and promptitude. If, therefore, you (with your unerring aim) will condescend to shoot off each blade of grass, one at a time, who can doubt that the task will be more rapidly accomplished?”

The face of the Iberian, under the closest scrutiny, seemed full of gravity and even gloom: and the work continued in silence. In spite of his earthly toils, however, the Hidalgo contrived to remain reasonably neat and spruce: and the puzzle was partially solved one morning when the American, rising early, found his comrade shaving himself with the sword, which that foolish family legend had kept particularly keen.

“A man with no earthly possessions but an old iron blade,” said the Spaniard apologetically, “must shave himself as best he can. But you, equipped as you are with every luxury of science, will have no difficulty in shooting off your whiskers with a pistol.”

So far from profiting by this graceful felicitation, the modern traveller seemed for a moment a little ruffled or put out: then he said abruptly, unslinging his revolver, “Well, I guess I can’t eat my whiskers, anyhow; and this little toy may be more use in getting breakfast.”

And blazing away rapidly and with admirable aim, he brought down five birds and emptied his revolver.

"Let me assure you," said the other courteously, "that you have provided the materials for more than one elegant repast. Only after that, your ammunition being now exhausted, shall we have to fall back on a clumsy trick of mine, of spiking fish on the sword."

"You can spike me now, I suppose, as well as the fish," said the other bitterly. "We seem to have sunk back into a state of barbarism."

"We have sunk into a state," said the Spaniard, nodding gravely, "in which we can get anything we want with what we have got already."

"But," cried the American, "that is the end of all Progress!"

"I wonder whether it matters much which end?" said the other.

HERCULES IN TROUBLE

By JAN STRUTHER

THE other day a man was fined seven-and-sixpence for trying to push a bus over, and the magistrate referred to the attempt as "one of the labours of Hercules."

Now, this incident provides a clear illustration of the present-day attitude towards individual endeavour. A man has not an earthly chance of pushing a bus over: he cannot even do the bus much harm; yet not only does he have to suffer the humiliation of defeat, but he is punished for making the attempt.

All the same, it must have been well worth seven-and-sixpence. There are so many things I should like to push over—or even to try to push over. If only I

knew how the fining system worked, I would save up a few pounds and enjoy myself. Is the fine proportional, I wonder, to the size of the object attacked, to the muscular strength of the attacker, or to the desirability of the attack being made? Would one have to pay as much for trying to knock down the Albert Memorial as one would for "leaning up against" Queen Anne's Mansions? And would it be unreasonably expensive to have a push—just a very little one—at the lamp-post which stands so inconveniently outside my door?

All through the ages there has raged this ceaseless contest between the small and the great, between the idealist minority and the materialist majority, between David and Goliath, between Don Quixote and the windmills. And nowadays, at any rate, the odds are always on Goliath and the windmills; and David and Don Quixote spend the night in Bow Street.

Even Hercules himself, if he were alive to-day, would be considered no hero at all, but a public nuisance. His treatment of the Nemean lion and the Lernean hydra would be condemned (and rightly) by the R.S.P.C.A. In pursuing the Arcadian stag and the Erymanthian boar, he would find himself up against the Game Laws, while even the Stymphalian birds would probably be strictly preserved. Imagine, too, the newspaper headlines on the morning following his excursion into Amazonia: "Sensational Jewel Haul, Queen's Girdle Stolen by Daring Crook." The episode of the golden apples of the Hesperides would come under the heading of petty larceny, his method of cleansing the Royal stables would get him into trouble with the Metropolitan Water Board for tampering with the course of the Thames, while even his

capture of Cerberus (though performed with the full consent of Pluto, the dog's owner) would not escape the interference of the law. For no sooner would he be seen walking down the street with the creature trotting beside him on a lead than an officious policeman would come up.

"I suppose you know," he would say, "that them two-headed dogs require a *double* licence . . . ?"

No, this is not an age for Heroes.

DEAD MARCH

By ALAN BLAND

Pom-pom-pom tara-rara pom!

It's a good tune that. I always liked it. I remember when old Faversham went. We walked along behind him all the way from Marble Arch to the Abbey. Bitterly cold and damp; just like to-day. Button your overcoats; this weather's very treacherous.

Pom-pom-pom tara-rara pom!

We shuffled along behind him with our silk hats and tightly-rolled umbrellas, trying not to walk faster than the band. "Most impressive," the newspapers said. "Amazing scenes, full story, first pictures."

A year ago! I was then "the tall, distinguished, silver-haired figure of the great statesman." Now I'm stiff as Bob Faversham. How short his coffin looked under the Union Jack! I suppose they always do. I expect people are looking at me and saying "But I thought he was a tall man." Six-foot-two looks very small and pitiful in a crowd, people.

Oh man, man, man! Man whose feet bestride the globe and whose head strikes the stars. All neatly

packed up like the jointed puppet in the showman's box. I thought that about Faversham, I remember, all the way from Park Lane to Westminster. The great banks of black, silent people, and the little coffin.

But Faversham was a soldier: he had saved the lives of most of those black, silent people, though they had almost forgotten it, and hardly knew why they were there.

Faversham was a soldier. He got a gun-carriage. Why couldn't I have earned that creaking, jingling gun-carriage, and been dragged to my grave with an air, behind those satin, glossy, effortless horses? Father wanted me to be a soldier. Dear old Dad! I shall see him soon, I suppose.

The drivers cursed because "Reveill  " was an hour earlier; "Stables" lasted so long that day they had no proper breakfast, and the old sweats groused. But they loved old Faversham. So they burnished their horses and their harness with empty stomachs and sorrowing hearts. The soldiers guided their tired, lagging comrade to his last billet. In the coffin he straightened his shoulders beneath his pack as the band played him in the last long mile: *Pom-pom-pom tara-rara pom!*

It was very decent of the Army chiefs to insist on being represented at a mere civilian's funeral to-day. Thanks. A soldier grouses, but bears no malice—I would you had no cause.

How old Fav. would have grinned, though, behind his bitten moustache, and carried his mind back to the day when I threatened to break him. The Press had been grumbling that we weren't winning fast enough. So I had Faversham up on the carpet and shook my fist in his face. Poor old Fav.! he was working twenty

hours a day, and the three years had added ten to his sixty. We were great friends really. I think he liked me in a queer sort of way, because we both knew we were talking not to each other but to a third person who wasn't there. Had it been God and not Lord Standish, it would have been better, cleaner talk.

Very inconsiderate of me to have died just now. So suddenly too. Half the papers in Fleet Street were two years behind with my obituary. I seemed so healthy. Some poor devil had to sit up all night bringing it up to date. They thought I was going to die the year before last; I nearly did. The *Evening Dispatch* had a front page set up with three photos, and had to scrap it in the end when I turned the corner.

What a day that was! All the morning papers swearing because I hadn't died by three in the morning, and all the evening papers cursing because I lingered on till three in the afternoon. And then I got well in the end, and five exclusives and two scoops died in child-birth.

But I'm dead now, and the obituaries are all in order. There'll be some stirring leaders too. "An Empire in mourning," I shouldn't wonder!

Pom-pom-pom tara-rara pom!

Get in step there!—My Lord!—There's Galston! He's crying! Galston!—Tears running down his face as he walks behind me.

Pom-pom-pom tara-rara pom!

Who else is there? Bannerton, Markham, Sibley, Henslowe. All with silk hats and tightly-rolled umbrellas. Button your overcoats up tight, boys; it's cold, and pneumonia's 'e devil. You may be the next, you know. Sibley's a mere lad, not more than sixty, but the others ought to be careful.

What are you all here for? But of course! "Paying a tribute to a great figure who has passed on before."

"Take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again."

And aren't you glad? I gave you something to think about while I was alive; but now—*Pom-pom-pom tara-rara pom!*

Didn't you loathe me, Henslowe? You were of my Party: we worked together, lunched together, put our heads together in corners. And you loathed me. But for me, you would have been England's youngest Prime Minister since Pitt. Now here you are walking from Euston to Westminster with a *thud-thud-thud tara-rara pom!*

It will soon be over. You have your chance now. Tuck the smile away. Only another half-hour and you can keep that lunch appointment at the Party offices.

By jove! There's Lindsworth! What on earth—
But of course:

"All differences of Party were sunk when the nation gathered to do honour to——"

Ha! ha! Caught! caught! caught! How could you escape? I have died, and I whom you fought for a lifetime have triumphed from the coffin. You are smitten hip and thigh, my Lindsworth. What have you called me? Thief, juggler, trickster, buffoon. And now you are here, head decorously bowed, silk-hatted, umbrella tightly-rolled, mourning my loss.

And what? You have been singled out to carry a wreath? And the honour is yours, not mine! I thank you. The lovely coronal of primroses, bright and clear and pure! Hell! They should shrivel in your grasp and sear the hand that holds them so smugly. But they will not. Not to-day.

Pom-pom-pom tara-rara pom!

"All animosities were buried when Lord Lindsworth, a tall, silver-haired, distinguished figure, stepped forward and laid a beautiful tribute of primroses on his dead rival's bier." Pah!

But you could not help it. You are in the toils. England expects, and you have to do your duty, though it be an insult to me and to all you ever held dear beside yourself.

Had you stood back, had you dashed down that mighty fist with which you split the Treasury box when I introduced the Home Rule for Rutland Bill, and said, "No! I hated him and fought him alive: I will not play the mummer at his grave!" I had loved you then: revered you for a man and an enemy. But you dared not, and here you creep behind me to the "*Pom-pom-pom tara-rara pom.*"

Do you remember? "This Bill revolts against the conscience of the whole civilised world. It is a wicked attempt to——" My poor Bill was never so revolting as your downcast face to-day, Jack Lindsworth!

The Abbey at last. The reporters are looking at their watches. Now is the moment when at any properly conducted public funeral "a shaft of sunlight broke from the clouds and streamed through the stained-glass windows of the mighty fane directly on to the grave." It will not come. The incessant drizzle descends. Use your other cliché, boys. I was always glad to help the Press. "The very heavens seemed to weep for the passing of a great man. The pall of gloomy weather overhung all sorrowing England."

England! Don't! Who dared to mention England?

My God! How I have loved her! Of course I've had to feather my nest a bit. I didn't want much, but

I had a home to keep up and a wife.—And then my boys. I couldn't let them start where I did, on the bottom rung of a crazy ladder. One's a Whip with friends in the City, and Denis has that Chancery practice. . . .

There wasn't very much. That Navy supplies business was a bit over the edge, perhaps. And the Bulgarian gas-masks. But it was the inspectors' business to have found out that they were faulty. It all passed off. I shouldn't have done it, but when everyone else was scrambling, I should have been a fool to hold back. The history-books have forgiven Walpole. They will forgive me too. He loved England, and so have I in my fashion. It's a great country. I hope I have not done it any harm.

Pile the flowers above me; they are rotting already. Unroll your umbrella, Henslowe, and step out into the rain. It's over now.

The Abbey is dark and empty. Here come the cleaners with bucket and broom. Sweep and garnish, you ugly old women, sweep and garnish and make clean. They have wiped me from their minds; wipe their footprints from my resting-place.

They pressed about me and they are gone. Begone, in peace, little hucksters! I am your debtor. Take your petty bills from the dead man's doorstep and leave me alone with God. I have a great account to settle with Him. Close the doors, little hucksters, and leave us alone together.

A. B.

“. . . As another case of proportion, take the case of peasants. The moment we have so much as uttered the word peasant, our critics fly at us with one accord, demanding to know how we can expect England to

G. K.'S MISCELLANY

Have nothing but peasants. It would in our opinion grossly violate our own ideal of proportion to have nothing but peasants. But it never occurs to the capitalist critics that there is any disproportion about England having been for three or four hundred years a country with *no* peasants. We were often told with Victorian complacency that this or that foreign country suffered the tragedy of having no middle class: which meant the excruciating agony of having no middle man. But those who spoke thus never thought of noticing the huge gap in our own history; in that we alone had no peasant proprietor class. We do not desire that all men should be peasants; but nearly all the saints and sages and wise men of the world would have been far more amazed and shocked at the notion that nearly all men should be town workmen. Yet we have endured that insane disproportion for a century and we are called insane for attempting to return to sanity."

G. K. C.

THIS WEEK'S FABLE

WHEN the two children, who had been labouring all day in his service, came to the Philanthropist for their reward, he thanked them warmly, patted them upon the head, smiled at them, and advised them never to attend race-meetings. When he found that they still remained before him with their hands outstretched and were not going to let him get away with it, he drew two coins from his pocket—one large and of bronze, the other small and of silver—and offered the choice to each in turn. The younger boy, who had read many informative and improving books and who knew the catch, indicated his preference for the small piece of

silver; to the evident gratification of the Philanthropist, who patted him again upon the head, addressed him as "intelligent lad," and warned him against Drink. When the choice was offered to the elder child, however; he pointed silently to the larger coin of bronze; and despite the epithets fool, dunderhead, idiot, clod, and so forth, which were shouted at him by the irate philanthropist, stubbornly adhered to his choice.

* * * * *

As the children walked away from the house, each clutching the coin that he had chosen, the elder, pausing to light a cigarette, addressed his companion: "Experience tells; and I, who have been young myself, shall be the last to blame you. But when you have been in the City as long as I have, you will know that what with the cost of material and plant, overhead charges and what-not, no Philanthropist—no, not even a Cocoa King—*can ever make it worth his while to fake a copper coin.* No doubt that small disc of what I take to be antimony will serve as an ornamental souvenir of the day's work. For myself I am going to have a blow-out." And so saying, he walked on, leaving the other biting small unpalatable pieces from his wages.

A. M. CURRIE.

STOP PRESS NEWS

THE Salmon and the Gluckstein were walking hand in hand. They wept like anything to see The tea shops in the Strand. "If A.B.C.'s were cleared away," They said, "it would be grand." "If small men opened little shops (Though that is quite absurd), Do you suppose," the Salmon said, "That we should get the bird?" "Oy, oy!" exclaimed the Gluckstein, And fainted at the word.

W. R. T.

Qu an American Best Seller.

††† The President's bridges broke down in despair:
It is something that someone could fling
Some sort of a bridge over that dizzy abyss
In the name of Saint Louis the King:

††† That Art may yet cross to the people, and purge
Of the poison & slime that defiled her,
For when I was a child half the world had gone Wilde
But now half the world has gone Wilder.



ON AN AMERICAN BEST-SELLER

G. K. Chesterton

THE EYE-WITNESS

By DESMOND MCCARTHY

RECOLLECTIONS increase in rarity and, therefore, in value by being kept long bottled, but, like wine, they do not necessarily improve in strength and flavour after a certain age. Mine, it is true, may not be mellow for decanting, nevertheless, I am going to pour some out now in order to drink health and long life to *G.K.'s Weekly*.

I need not look back very far, only to the Coronation of George V, the year which saw also the birth of *The Eye-Witness*. The first number was a most remarkable first number, indeed a rare exception in the annals of journalistic venture; it did not announce what the paper intended to do, but started off at once doing it. Not, I think, till Belloc resigned the editorship in June, 1912, was there any explicit statement in its pages of what the paper stood for and of the public need it met. Then, when Cecil Chesterton, who had helped Belloc from the start and, indeed, had sometimes done the greater part of the editorial work, succeeded him, Belloc explained that the value of *The Eye-Witness* lay in providing a place where certain truths of advantage or of necessity to the public could be told, and that it aimed particularly at narrowing the difference between the comments on public affairs which were spoken and those which were printed. To take one instance; the instructed public already talked quite freely about the sale of peerages, yet the press at that date would still be discussing "with awful solemnity whether a fine old Feudal Institution called the House of Lords should remain an active instrument of Government, or whether the

detestable pride of the haughty barons should not be humbled by the just vengeance of that powerful democracy, which so strenuously controls its servant, the House of Commons." After Cecil Chesterton lost the Marconi case, *The Eye-Witness* went bankrupt. *The New Witness*, which took its place, started to perform the same functions, and when *The New Witness* several years later expired, its spirit descended upon *G.K.'s Weekly*. The tradition is, therefore, so strong and direct that present supporters of *G.K.'s Weekly* may be interested in a few brief recollections of what was practically the earliest phase of it.

It was good news for me when I heard that Belloc was going to start a paper. *The Speaker* had recently turned into *The Nation*, and the new editor, Massingham, who wanted to do his own dramatic criticism, turned me off. Like Mr. Pooter, "I was too angry to say anything," but I'd be hanged if I'd ask him for other work. One did not get anxious so quickly in those days, a guinea went far; but it was a relief to hear that I was to be the dramatic critic of the new paper, and to write general articles and reviews besides. I blessed, and not for the last time in my career, its editor.

We began in two little rooms in John Street. We did not stop long, and we never seemed rid of carpenters and painters. It was quieter in the bar of the Adelphi Hotel. So we moved to printers overlooking Covent Garden on the south side, and then I made the important journalistic discovery that the only essential things when starting a paper are talent and a good-sized table. Writers always have fountain pens; the important thing is to get the stuff written and printed, and the nearer the table is to the machines the better. Our large round table (four could write at it com-

fortably) was in a sort of box, partitioned off from a long, dusty room. The box also contained a greasy black sofa to seat agreeable interrupters and those lovers of work who, as Dan Leno used to say, can watch a man working all day long. Why should *The Eye-Witness* have wanted offices? The greater part of the paper was written on that table. There were, of course, the big-type middles by outside writers, the poems, though some of these were composed in the box, and Belloc did a good deal of dictating at various typing offices. The meagreness, however, of the stock of matter in hand would have scared any editor I have known before or since.

If, late on the day of going to press, the paper was two or three articles short, Belloc or Cecil Chesterton supplied them. The men of the round table were great improvisors. If, when the sheets came in, there were blank spaces of different sizes, there was never a thought of altering the make up; something was written to length. Often it turned out as spirited and pointful as anything else in the paper, though it was necessary sometimes not to disguise that it was only a last-moment fill up. A nasty space of about two inches occurred particularly frequently. If you have the luck to come across a bound volume of *The Eye-Witness* (they are rare) you will be struck by the number of triplets to be found in them; that is the explanation. One of them still rings in my head.

We have to print a triplet
 When space is clamouring for matter;
 We try to put it off and yet
 We have to print a triplet.
 It is with infinite regret
 That we admit the silly patter—But
 We have to print a triplet
 When space is clamouring for matter.

The recurring "Ballade Urbane" was a great feature of the paper. These Ballades ought to be collected and reprinted; Belloc, Bentley, G.K., and Maurice Baring wrote most of them.

The refrain, of course, always struck the clef: "It is the covers of cigars that tell," or "I simply wag my great long furry ears." I remember a verse from one of them; it was a reporter's "news" Ballade with the pessimistic refrain:

"The ice is breaking up on every side":

A child at Brighton has been left to drown:
 A railway train has jumped the lines at Crewe:
 I haven't got the change for half-a-crown,
 I can't imagine what on earth to do. . . .
 Three bisons have stampeded from the Zoo:
 A German fleet has anchored in the Clyde,
 By God, the wretched country's up the flue
 —The ice is breaking up on every side.

There was an occasional feature which I used to enjoy helping to compile. It was called "Fun with the Calf." You seized a paper and ran your eye down it for some apparently harmless item from which, however, a comment as laconic as possible could draw the latent absurdity. For instance: *The new title of Sir Edward Stracey will be Lord Strachée.* ("Daily News," November 3, 1911.) "Why?" Or: *It could hardly fail to be noticed that the Duke of Connaught wore a guards tie.* ("Manchester Guardian.") "Yes, it could; by the vulgar and common people who don't know what a guards tie is." (I think that must have been Belloc's comment.) Then there were Open Letters of Junius by Cecil Chesterton, sometimes written to persons, sometimes to abstractions or types. In some of these letters he showed himself the best pugnacious journalist since Cobbett.

I am sure *The Eye-Witness* gained by being written in a day or two. Its unique character was due to its blending gaiety and honest anger; qualities which find their true expression in spontaneous writing. Brilliant it often was, but never for the sake of showing off. I think its readers must have felt that, and also been aware of an exhilarating generosity (absent sometimes in its attack on persons) in its attitude towards the public. It was written by men who gave their best from moment to moment, never hoarded their ideas for a better market, never refrained from speaking out. Certainly from my association with that round table I learnt that it is the glory of the journalist to scatter his gifts like largess. True, these journalists had deep pockets, but they emptied them continually: and if in a handful of copper and silver there happened to be precious coins too, they cared not if none noticed the glint of gold as it fell.

LINES FOR A MONUMENT

By A. M. CURRIE

IF I am rich enough and reasonably active in the evening of my days, I will buy a quarry of good hard stone and set to work with a chisel to jot down a few pointers for the historians of future centuries. They will have little enough to work upon, poor devils, when all our chemical ink and print and paper has faded and rotted away, when our gimcrack institutions have collapsed, when our machinery has turned to rust, when our tin and concrete buildings have cracked and collapsed, when the colours of our art have sunk back into mud-brown, when the ten thousand little mass-produced adjuncts to our little mass-produced lives

have all melted or decayed or corroded or fallen to bits. There will be a gap in their records from the beginning of this century until the time when the world fights its way to sanity again. They will have no evidence of us beyond the proof of our cemeteries that we died.

The first few hundred words—say, as much as to cover an ordinary middle-class tombstone fairly neatly chiselled on one side only—I will devote to a brief account of myself, for as Wordsworth (I think it was Wordsworth) has noted, and one or two before him, there is in man a yearning for immortality, and it is not altogether satisfied even by the prospect of being able to send ga-ga messages about flowers through all eternity to fish-faced seekers after psychical knowledge. After that I shall be more economical with my words, as I should be to-day if I were obliged to chip every letter out on the base of the Nelson Column. Probably it will run in the end somewhat in this fashion:

“However much or little of our history has come down to you, these things should be remembered when you judge us. The people of my time had lost every vice and every virtue of their fathers. They were sober and servile, peaceful and timid, gentle and unprincipled. They asked these things only of life, and in this order: security, comfort, amusement. Freedom they despised; responsibility they feared; honour they did not understand, for it was not taught in their schools. They were singularly free from hypocrisy and were entirely without standards, moral or political. They feared boredom, starvation, pain, discomfort and death, but showed courage of a spiritual sort in the endurance of slavery, indignity and contempt.

“ They lived in great cities, but cramped in small quarters, the poor willy-nilly, the richer of choice, for hatred of the care and responsibility which a large house involves. They earned their bread, for the greater part, by counting the riches of the few who possessed them, by attending to machines owned and controlled by the rich, by gambling with their own money or that of others, by manufacturing or operating the various mechanical devices for amusement, by distributing the food sent in tins from the distant countries where it could be produced. Those for whom no occupation of this sort could be found were made pensioners of the State. Their pension was small, but, because it was sufficient to sustain life, because it was certain, and because it left them free to enjoy the cheaper brands of amusement, they wisely submitted to their lot.

“ Their masters were neither loved nor feared by the people. Often they were scarcely known. A large number, perhaps a third, or even a half, were of native birth; the rest hailed from Syria, Armenia, Germany, Bessarabia, Northern America, Palestine, and Greece. These latter, when they had been taught the language, were uniformly described as Scotch, thereby greatly enhancing the prestige of that race.

“ The mastery of the people, so admirably were their vices and their virtues attuned to the system, was a simple matter. The scheme of public government gave to the people themselves the privilege of electing their own rulers. With this privilege the masters never interfered, finding it easier and more economical to wait until after the election and then bribe the chosen of the people. Frequently, indeed, it would happen that the choice of people would fall upon a number of

the masters themselves, and thus the ruling class would be saved the trouble and expense of bribery. Should any of the more reckless or vicious among the people (and these were usually to be found among the worst-paid classes) show any sign of restlessness or discontent, the masters would immediately throw the responsibility upon the people's representatives, would even encourage the people to disown them and to elect others. This device invariably succeeded in pacifying the vast bulk of the population, who were then told that any further agitation would threaten their security, and were enjoined to support the Constitution, as the arrangement was called, on pain of the dreadful discomforts and privations which would ensue were the delicate system in any way upset.

“Among the masters there were many men of considerable ability and intelligence (I speak of the masters, not the representatives). A great number of them were dirty, disreputable, mean and unscrupulous; but against that they had certain advantages: they had cunning, foresight, an instinct for money, and above all a profound contempt for the people. They knew that from a population which had left them unchanged for years they had nothing to fear, so long as the supply of amusements and food should be maintained.

“And with this matter of amusements, we return to the people. Although, so fortunately for the peace of the kingdom, they were as deficient in virility as in intelligence, a certain physical restlessness among the younger members of our society made popular with them a number of sports of an active sort. It goes without saying that these sports were not of a kind to involve any risk of physical injury (the most popular

involved the hitting of rubber balls) or to impose upon the player the slightest intellectual burden, but they frequently demanded of him a degree of agility nearly approaching the simian. It also goes without saying that they were entirely useless for any public purpose of war and peace.

“The elder people, and those who were disinclined to physical exertion, were inclined generally to pass a great part of their leisure either in watching the more active members of society disport themselves, or in absorbing the mechanical entertainments which the masters of the amusement industry provided for them. The theatre at this period devoted itself almost exclusively to the representations of adulteries and fornications (some of them, of the most laughable kind) woven into stories of three or four different types by the ingenious addition of preceding and subsequent scenes. These stories were also represented on the cinema screen, at cheaper rate, and were even more popularly patronised, although a few of the *cognoscenti* would insist that the cinema was never quite the same. A fourth form of entertainment, perhaps the most popular of all, was provided by our wireless system. Any householder who so wished (until 1940, when it became compulsory) might instal a trumpet through which, for about ten hours a day, voices and noises of an assorted kind would be pumped into his house. The vocal part of the entertainment would consist largely of lectures upon bee-life, upon the literature of Siam and upon Chaldean remains. The noises were generally provided either by the musical instruments popular at the time or by the animals at Zoological Gardens. . . .”

But the page is ended and my chisel is blunt.

FROM "STRAWS IN THE WIND"

By G. K. CHESTERTON

" . . . THERE is one queer thing about newspapers, which appears especially in the newspapers just after the Easter holidays. It is the practice of telling everybody what everybody knows. A man will gaze gloomily out of his window at an overwhelming and interminable downpour of rain, and not know quite what to think about it; until the news is hastily sent him from Fleet Street by a newspaper. In the same way the papers sold in the streets to passers-by tell them what the streets look like, and how many passers-by there are. They talk about crowds of trippers in trams and tubes, just as if there were not crowds of newspaper-readers in trams and tubes. There seems to be a sort of assumption that the kind of people they are talking to are totally different from the kind of people they are talking about. But in truth the same long-suffering and patient race has to suffer being written down to and being written round. This weird duplication, as some mystical mirror, would not perhaps matter very much, but it has two incidental disadvantages. The first is more subtle; it is that when they parade so many details that are familiar they can insinuate one detail that is false. They can put in something, or more often leave out something, that makes all the difference, even when people do not see the difference. The second is simple: that, by telling us what we know they excuse themselves from telling us what we want to know."

" . . . THE great outstanding fact and feature of our time is Monopoly. It is in a quite special and strict sense the age of Monopoly. It is perhaps difficult to



G. K. Chesterton

the Merger.

St Nicholas distributes, as he list,
the gifts, and is a good Distributor:
the Heathen, on the other hand, was not:
He mixed two children: and
they went to pot

convey how clearly it could be seen, from the distance of the future and the past, as something standing up above our age like the Eiffel Tower above Paris. The peculiarity of this period is that everybody seems to be tolerating the erection of financial privileges without any particular protest. For instance, we hear a great deal about Charles the First and the struggle of the Crown and Parliament. But few seem to remember that Parliament demanded, not from Charles in the hour of his defeat, but from Elizabeth in the height of her despotism, the redress of the gross evil of Monopolies. The old kings granted those privileges to courtiers; and it was felt as infamous that such power should be given capriciously to individuals; merely because they could behave like gentlemen. To-day it is given capriciously to men who cannot even do that. Moreover even the faults and follies of those great Favourites, who went clad in diamonds and gold, at least fixed their responsibility in the public eye. They were men sometimes, like Essex, popular; sometimes, like Raleigh, glorious. To-day the Favourites are at the best nameless; and some of them probably have to be nameless or they would be notorious. The old Parliament men, who found the old monopolies intolerable, would have found the new monopolies incredible."

". . . By the nature of the idea, by the nature of the very name, the ideal of property is the ideal of providing a man with something with which he can be content. In that sense what we call private property is the very opposite of what they call private enterprise. But the Socialists are quite as blind as the individualists to the nature of that normal idea. Perhaps they are not to be blamed for failing to understand it, when its defenders completely fail to defend it. But anyhow they do fail to

understand it, in the sense in which we understand it. For they do not really propose to provide a man with what will content him so much as with what will have to content him. They do not solve the problem of property; but rather mortify the appetite of property. They are the ascetics of the passion of property; and like all typically modern ascetics, they are also persecutors; they wish to impose their own renunciation on other people by force. . . .

“Now if it be asked why we reiterate these things, we answer that we work for a time when a debate in the Oxford Union about Socialism shall not consist of two perfectly innocent and unconscious apologies for two kinds of stealing. We hope for a time when the ordinary intelligent young man shall start out with the primary question of whether private property is a necessary human institution or no; instead of merely comparing the sturdy good sense of the man who gets other people’s money by cheating with the pure spirituality of the man who gets other people’s money by force. Is property a thing to be destroyed like slavery or saved like society? We think we know how to save it; and everybody else seems to know how to destroy it.”

G. K. C.

COBBLER, COBBLER, MEND MY SHOE

By JAN STRUTHER

THERE are a great many strange characters wandering about the streets of that strange little town they call Chelsea. There are street singers by the score, and street musicians who play on barrel-organs and hurdy-gurdys and cornets and flutes and fiddles and harps. There are men who shout “Fine Log—O!” and men

who want to grind your scissors, and men who want to cane your chairs, and women who cry "Wonchu buy my sweet bloomin' lavender, sixteen fine bunshes fore one penny" (which sounds very poetic, but is actually a lie, because prices have risen since the day when the cry was first invented). There are also several religious maniacs, old men with grey beards and young men with golden ones, who walk about bare-headed and talk of God. Finally, there are a few artists in broad floppy felt hats and black cloaks, and a great many female cranks who think that they can bring about the renaissance of Art by wearing laboriously hand-woven clothes of pastel colouring and quite intolerable cut. In fact, there are so many queer-looking people of one kind and another that after a while you don't bother to turn round and stare at them as you did when you first came to live there.

Nobody stared, therefore, at the old man who walked up the High Street one afternoon in late October, when the chilly autumn sunset was just beginning to send people home to hot buttered toast and the passionate rapture of first fires. He was a very old man indeed, and a very odd old man. From the long loose cloak that he wore he might have been one of the artists, but from the raggedness of it you would have classed him with the hurdy-gurdists. The white beard and a touch of far-away ecstasy in the eyes seemed to label him "religious"; while his sandalled feet were faintly suggestive of the cranky and hand-woven women.

Not sandalled feet—sandalled foot. For his left foot was bare and very dirty, and his left sandal he was carrying in his gnarled old hand, because one of the straps of it was broken. And as he walked along limping a little from a cut on his foot, he muttered:

“Who is going to mend my sandal?”

Presently he came to a shop whose windows were decked with innumerable shoes, as the firmament is decked with stars. There were men's shoes marked “Highly Serviceable,” and women's shoes marked “Very Chic,” and felt bedroom slippers marked “Unrivalled Bargain.” The old man stopped and gazed into the window.

“Hideous—most hideous,” he murmured, and mused upon the decadence of the times. Then he caught sight of some children's sandals in a corner, and the sternness of his face relaxed.

“But the children still wear sandals,” he said, softly; and reassured by this he went into the shop. Inside there was a bright and ugly green carpet, and his bare foot left a trail of mud and blood upon it as he walked. A young salesman appeared from the depths of the shop rubbing his hands and saying mechanically:

“Good afternoon, sir. What can I do for you?” But when he had looked more closely at the old man in the failing light, his tone changed.

“Excuse me, sir—the carpet. Something's wrong with your foot.”

“I know,” said the old man patiently; “I have damaged it on some broken vessel. That is why I came in here. I want you to mend my sandal so that I may wear it again.” He held out the tattered footgear to the young man, who peered at it distastefully with his hands behind his back.

“I'm afraid you'll have to go somewhere else,” he said, dropping the “sir.” “We don't do repairs.”

“Will you sell me another pair, then?”

“We don't stock anything like that, I'm afraid.”

“But those ones in the window——?”

"Oh, for children, yes. No demand for large sizes."

"As ever," murmured the old man, "the children are the wise ones. Can you not make me some, then?"

"Sorry," said the salesman, shortly, "but we're not manufacturers, we're only agents. Good afternoon." Very firmly, he held the door open, and very sadly the old man passed out muttering to himself:

"You cannot make, neither can you mend: are there no craftsmen left?"

There were three more shops of the same kind in the High Street, and at each of the three he met with the same treatment. In one of them the salesman called the manager, and the manager requested him to leave. In another a pert young woman told him with a giggle that they hadn't got any hare-skins or rabbit-skins to-day, thank you. In the third he was so tired that he sat down, uninvited, on one of the red plush chairs, but the manager fixed him with a glassy eye and began to talk about the police, so he rose wearily to his feet again and shuffled away down the street.

"In all this great city," he asked himself, "will nobody mend my shoe?"

But suddenly there were quick running footsteps behind him, and a girl in a black frock touched his arm. She was a little button-nosed creature, a very unimportant assistant in the last shop he had entered, and she had felt sorry for the old man.

"Look here," she panted, "my uncle's a cobbler in Emily Street. You try *'im*." And she scuttled back to the shop, blushing at her own impulsiveness.

The old man turned and threw a blessing after her as she ran. (And it is a certain fact that the very next day the manager told her she was getting on much better now, and her friend Mabel gave her an almost new

blue hat because she herself had gone into mourning, and she picked up a shilling in the gutter going home, and the boy she was walking out with asked her to marry him. So you may say what you like about blessings.)

The old man limped along to Emily Street, which is a little alley leading off the High Street. And there, sure enough, was a real old-fashioned cobbler's shop, with a battered wooden counter that was also a work-bench, and bundles of boot-laces hanging like sea-weed on the walls, and little irregular three-cornered scraps of hide littering the floor, and a glorious, all-pervading smell of leather. And there at the bench, bent double over his work under a flaming, fan-shaped gas-jet, was Mr. Mullins, the cobbler. He looked up with a cheerful grin as the old man entered. He liked queer-looking customers.

"I wonder," said the old man diffidently, "whether you can mend my shoe?"

"Mend your shoe, sir? If it's anything made of leather, I can mend it. That's my trade, that is."

"At last," cried the old man, handing him the sandal, "I have found a craftsman!"

"That's a curious shoe," said Mullins, looking at it with interest. "If you'll excuse my saying so, I bet that's carried you a good long way in its time?"

"Sixteen hundred years," the old man murmured.

"Potty," thought Mullins to himself, "but a decent old cove." Aloud he said, "I'll do this 'ere job for you now if you like, seeing you won't want to walk 'ome as you are. If you'd care to take a seat—" He pushed forward a wooden stool. "Live far from 'ere?"

"A good long way," answered the old man, and he leaned forward, watching with keen interest in his face while the other worked.

"If you don't mind my saying so, sir, this is the finest bit of leather ever I see. Even if it *is* old."

"Yes. Leather was leather in those days."

"I don't know *when* I've seen such a beautiful bit of leather," Mullins repeated. "If you'll excuse me, sir, may I ask where you got this pair of sandals?"

"I made them myself. You see, I was in your trade once."

"*Was* you, now? Well, I never. Well, well. All I can say is, you knew your job. Give it up now, 'ave you?"

"Yes. A long time ago."

"Ah. Sold the goodwill, I suppose?"

"Goodwill—ah, that's neither bought nor sold," said the old man.

"'Tis in London," Mullins assured him. "But per'aps other places they've got other ways of doing business. Now where was it you was working exactly?"

"In Soissons," said the old man.

"Soisson? Not Soisson on the Aisne?"

"You know the place?" asked the old man, eagerly.

"I should think I ought to. I was there two years—there and thereabouts—before I was knocked out."

"A beautiful place," the old man mused, "but a hot-bed of evil-doing and evil-thinking. A veritable hot-bed."

"A bloody 'ot-bed," agreed Mullins, tersely. "'Ottest corner *I* ever was in, anyway."

"I did my best, you know, I did my best. . . . Living among them, and working among them, and trying to reach their immortal souls through the soles of their shoes. They were hard to convert, but perhaps . . ."

His voice trailed away, and for a few minutes the two men lost themselves among the memories of old

fighters; only for one of them it was the fighting of armies, and for the other it was the fighting of God against the gods. And one of them had travelled back scarcely a decade, while the other was dwelling on things that had happened sixteen hundred years ago.

"There, now," said Mr. Mullins, putting the finishing touches to the sandal. "I think you'll find that all right. Don't you move, sir. I'll just slip it on for you."

He knelt down among the scraps of leather and fastened the sandal on to the bare and travel-stained foot. And then the extraordinary old man laid his wrinkled hand on Mullins's head and began to bless him.

Mullins thought, "'Lumme, this is a go. The old cove must be one of the religious ones, after all, who come and ask you whether you're saved." He was glad that there was nobody there to see him being made a fool of. And then suddenly he came all over queer, and felt happier than he ever had before, and rather light-headed. He couldn't see properly. His head swam. . . .

It was only for a moment, but when he came to himself again the old man had gone away, and on the counter lay a gold coin. It wasn't a sovereign—it was a foreign coin, and it looked very old and worn. He slipped it into his pocket hastily, because his small son Tommy had suddenly burst into the shop, swinging his school satchel.

"Oh, Dad! Do you know what we done 'safternoon? A play! At least, a bit of a play. Shakespeare. And we read it out in turns. And Dad—I was the King, I was!"

"Whatever are you talking about?" asked Mullins, patiently. "What King? What play?"

"Henry the Fiff. Look here—you read it yourself." He pushed a paper-covered Shakespeare under his father's nose.

"Oh—poetry!" Mullins sniffed.

"Go on, Dad. It's lovely. Just read the end bit of what the King says—"

. . . And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

"You see to-day is S'n' Crispin's day—twenty-fiff of October. That's why Teacher made us do it to-day."

"Oh," said Mullins, unimpressed. "All this play-acting stuff. Why can't they teach you something useful? And 'oo is Saint Crispin, any'ow, when 'e's at 'ome?"

"'E was a shoemaker—just like you are," cried Tommy triumphantly. "An' Teacher said 'e was the pattern—patron—patron saint of shoemakers—so there!"

"*Wos 'e now?*" said Mullins, slowly, scratching his head. Then, after a long pause—

"Oh, 'e *wos*, *wos 'e?*" said Mullins, thoughtfully, fingering the gold coin in his pocket.

√ LAUGHTER

THE baby laughed; the father laughed; and then the
mother

Laughed likewise; and they all lay laughing at each
other,

Lay laughing underneath a laughing sky of blue:

But why, or what they laughed at, only the baby knew.

WILFRID GIBSON.

THE LANDING AT NIGHT

(To H. BELLOC)

As twilight fell the wind blew strong,
The seas around the Head
Rose high: we could not round that night:
"Best go about," we said.

And ran her for the northward curve
Till in smooth swell she lay,
And made all fast, and left her there
Anchored in Dead Man's Bay.

We pulled away: on crinkling seas
Gleamed small her riding light:
All else was dark, but high on shore
Two windows in the night.

Plash went our oars in silent air,
The rowlocks knocked and whined,
We halloed to the dark, and then
Felt her on pebbles grind.

Just seen, vast paleness in the dark
Above us rank on rank
In steep straight even ridges rose
The myriad-pebbled bank.

The lonely curves of endless stones
That turned for miles, we knew;
"Ahoy!" we cried; beyond the sky
Came back a far halloo.

And crunch of pebbles in the dark;
And then on that high rim
A lanthorn burned, held up beside
A face fantastic grim,

Hollowed and reddened in the glare
Which all around showed forms
Stirring, round which there seemed to cling
Shadows of many storms.

And ten men took the dinghy's rope
With "Hup!" and "Hup!" and "Hup!"
Swish through the avalanching pile
Till she was safe atop.

With muffled murmurs once again
They gathered round the light,
And silent stood and stared at us
The strangers of a night;

Men curious, natural and mild,
As dark as buccaneers,
Shaggy and dark, with shining eyes
And earrings in their ears.

And then they gave good-night and turned
Still lanthorn-led inshore:
Their footsteps and their muttering died
Behind the inn's dark door.

J. C. SQUIRE.

CHARLES AND SAMUEL

By J. P. COLLINS

WE are somewhere in the Elysian Fields. There is a quaint odour of the eighteenth century, not unmixed with fumes or reminiscences of hot lemonade, tobacco, and gin toddy.

In the dimness we descry two interesting but ill-assorted figures. One is ponderous in his gait, bulky in form, and burly in his manner. He handles an

ash cudgel, which is stout like himself, and thumps it into the ground as if he were planting the flag of King George afresh in one of those rascally American colonies.

Restlessness is his foible, rather than energy. His eyes blink as if he were refusing to see some awkward argument; his fingers keep twitching as though trying to wring the neck of some detested Whig. Even his breath is laboured, for he whistles it in and grunts it out. But he prides himself on never wasting it, for he rarely speaks unless to the purpose, either in smashing a fallacy or demolishing an opponent.

His companion is slighter, smaller, and not unprepossessing in his own peculiar way. His figure seems to dwindle away as you look at it, and to leave the impression of a noble head supported by an immaterial torso. He is flat-footed and springless in his walk, and skims his feet along the ground. He has a dark and penetrating eye and a smile that is half-whimsical, half-quizzical. The contrast between the pair is so complete that if you only added a look of wistful dismay to the one and a Yankee accent to the other, you might be reminded of those two modern celebrities—Laurel and Hardy.

They meet and bow rather stiffly; it is evidently a first encounter. Let us call them Charles and Samuel.

* * * *

C.—Dr. Johnson, I presume.

S.—Sir, you may, but on what grounds?

C.—There is,—or was,—a d-d-dictionary that would serve as c-c-credential^s for any man to stand on. I r-r-remember st-t-tanding on it as a ch-ch-child at my f-f-father's table.

S.—Sir, let us leave the subject. There are no

dictionaries here, and all publishers are mercifully consigned elsewhere.

C.—P-p-poor devils.

S.—Why this officious pity?

C.—Please, do not mistake me. I was th-th-think-
ing of the unhappy beings who have to attend on them.
Fortunately they, poor devils, are no longer ob-b-bliged
to accept their t-t-terms.

S.—Sir, I perceive you are an author. What have
you written?

C. (*amused*).—Oh, a few trifles merely,—fugitive
essays, certain poems, and a play or two. They
beguiled my leisure and pleased my friends.

S.—Sir, there is a modesty in what you say that
at our age is rare. I used to hear my friend Dr.
Goldsmith dismiss inquiries in this airy manner, but
his humility was insincere. The rogue was prouder
of his performances than I was of mine.

C. (*silly*).—Incredible!

S. (*noting the sarcasm*).—I am not instituting com-
parisons, and here we can be frank. There is an
atmosphere about this place which alters our standards
of judgment, and those masterpieces of ours have
shrunk considerably in the course of our journey.

C.—Yet there was a b-b-barbarian called Boswell,
I believe. Is he here, or is there a sp-p-pecial p-p-place
reserved for Sc-c-cotsmen?

S.—Sir, Master Boswell visits me once a week for
an hour at a time.

C. (*to himself*).—Part of his expiation, I suppose.

S.—He is very deaf, and I am silent, for fear any
of our deliberations might shock politer neighbours,
or escape to the printers down below. He had a weak-
ness for taking notes, which is a nuisance, but has

its serviceable uses, and when I wrote my "Lives of the Poets" I regretted I had not done the same.

C.—I have always m-m-marvelled, Sir, that you went so far north for your chronicler.

S.—Sir, the rogue came and pestered me until I allowed him access, and (*this complacently*) a tolerably good use he made of it, by what the critics say. Have you read his book about me, Sir?

C.—My friend Coleridge has quoted it to me ad infinitum, and he complains that it lacks philosophic synthesis or metaphysic unity—whatever that may mean.

S.—Sir, I apprehend his meaning. Your friend has insight—possibly a scholar, though I never heard of him. As for my friend Boswell and his book (*flourishing his stick*) I am persuaded that I could have made a better thing of it myself.

C.—Bigger, perhaps.

S.—Sir! (*This with a disconcerting frown.*)

C.—L-I-let us say a greater. But seriously, Sir, have you no regrets or qualms that the capital of letters is so invaded nowadays by North Britons, Switzers, Dutchmen, Hebrews, and the rest of the cosmogony?

S.—Sir, this is a difficulty of long standing. The Scriptures have something to say upon the habits of vultures and their search for prey. We have drawn upon France and Germany and Portugal for our monarchs and their consorts; and these have brought odd creatures in their train. But we must also remember the Georges came from Hanover, the Stuarts from Scotland, and the Tudors from Wales. Indeed, Sir, the further we go back, the worse we fare.

C. (*mischievously*).—You have forgotten, Sir, that Jack Cade came from Kent, and Titus Oates from—

S.—Sir, let us leave these categories to clerks—

C.—And amateur auctioneers?

S.—Sir, you are pleased to be facetious without being diverting. When I acted that part at poor Thrale's brewery, it was at the instance of friendship and not for a fee. I believe I acquitted myself with fair success,—for a novice; and I am never likely to take up the hammer again.

C.—'Twas a great episode, and you made it greater by your eloquence. (*Johnson unbends.*) Indeed, the surroundings alone would have excused enthusiasm. It is not every orator who finds a rostrum in a brewery, or gets away with his m-m-emory unclouded.

S. (*loftily*).—Sir, you are trifling with my recollections of what was a perfectly sober undertaking. I gave up your kind of potation years ago.

C.—Indeed, it was a g-g-grievous loss to a worthy industry. T-t-tea is a sociable kind of plant—for women in the afternoon; but it palls on men with a legitimate thirst. By the way, did Mrs. Thrale ever suffer from a tired wrist in handling that three-quart teapot for your benefit?

S. (*haughtily*).—Sir, oblige me by respecting my friends and their regard for the laws of hospitality. Mistress Thrale would have scorned to complain of any inconveniences thus incurred. (*severely*) Your levity is odious and ill-timed, Sir,—ill-timed.

C.—Doctor, pray do not mistake me,—though for my part I could never see why gravity should be a virtue and levity a failing. I was tilting, not at the lady's forbearance, but your own capacity. It was a matter of twenty-four cups, I think, at a sitting. Barring the choice of the beverage, it was a massive achievement. Pray, Sir, what had Mr. Burke to say?

S. (*pettishly*).—Sir, let us call a truce to this tea-table

prattle. (*He turns the fire on his interlocutor.*) You were something of a practised navigator, I should fancy, in these seas of refreshment, if I mistake not by your aroma. Was it malt or punch or brandy?

C.—If you are in earnest, you may c-c-call for a double dose of gin, and just a shade of sugar and hot water.

S. (*trenchantly*).—Sir, do not seek to make me a confederate in your orgies. Bacchus and Momus and I have long been strangers. I should think it beneath my self-respect to call at any tavern for what Master Shakespeare calls so leperous a distilment.

C. (*laughing*).—Indeed, the boot is on the other foot, and you have turned my weapon against myself. Oblige me, Sir, by allowing me to call for whatever it is you most prefer, and we shall see what is meant by “standing Sam.”

S. (*wrathful at last*).—Sir, pray observe the decencies of ordinary civility. I have already informed you that this kind of pot-house potation appeals to me no longer. Finding I could not be sure of moderation, I renounced the habit years ago.

C.—Sir, your pardon. As for myself and my habits, I respect your strictures, though I commiserate the critic. Even now, Sir, you must remember from experience how much the magic spell of conviviality banishes the gloom of memory and most of our fears for the morrow.

S. (*relenting*).—Sir, at last you are eminently in the right. Years ago, when bereavement deprived me of the best of wives, I found recourse and relief in this way, and it did no one any harm. Perhaps you also have suffered.

C. (*dreamily*).—Who—I? Ah, the best of death is that it happens once only. There are times, even now, when I lose my guardian angel, my p-p-patron

saint, and when she is away, for m-m-months at a time, no man could be more lonely. Then I am apt to steep my senses in forgetfulness, as the poet says, and on those occasions the cup of cordial cheers a man like warming oneself at a neighbour's fire. If I console myself a whit too freely in her absence, she is disposed to overlook it, as a rule; but on her return home, if she is pleased to chide me, I listen attentively, and vote her voice the sweetest music in the world. Then I fly perhaps to old Burton——

S.—Sir, you said a few moments ago that malt was quite outside your potentialities.

C.—No, I meant old Burton of the “Anatomy.”

S.—Sir, you have me there. The man who loves that kind of Burton is a kindred soul. Come, Sir, let us walk together along the Strand, and dilate upon his merits. (*Exeunt, arm-in-arm.*)

SED EX DEO NATI SUNT

GOD, in an idle mood one day
 Fashioned His image out of clay,
 And as He turned the lovely head,
 “I will put Reason there,” He said,
 And whispered as He set the eyes,
 “Be very wise, be very wise.”

And as He formed the tender lips
 With beauty-feeling finger tips,
 “Be open, Ephphatha,” He cried,
 “Tell of My glory, far and wide.”
 And softly as the ears He laid,
 “Be unafraid, be unafraid.”

And swiftly as the body grew,
 The hands within His own He drew,

“ I will place power here,” and pressed
The upturned palms to East and West ;
“ I give him freedom of the will,
For good or ill, for good or ill.”

The slender feet He firmly made
One over other gently laid ;
“ The feet of him who brings good news
Bathed in the cool of mountain dews,
Earth shall they walk and shall not stray
The narrow way, the narrow way.”

The Father said, “ This is my Son,”
And breathed the breath of life thereon.
“ Him first and last of all things made,
Angels shall worship ;” and He bade
Michael, Gabriel, Uriel stand
On either hand, on either hand.

When God had made the perfect Man,
The Word with Him ere worlds began,
There rushed the flaming fires of heaven
Athwart the mighty planets seven
And fell in showers of starry mirth
His Peace on earth, His Peace on earth.

FRANCES CHESTERTON.

THE LITTLE GREY DONKEY

By K. C. MACDONALD

THE little grey donkey came over the frost-hardened road at a smart trot. He looked like a toy donkey, because the cart behind him and the load on it and the man sitting on top of the load were all so much bigger than himself. He looked the most patient of beasts of burden, but only his master knew the uncertainty

of his mind; and even now, so near his home, he held his breath for fear the donkey's mood would change.

His fears were justified. The cross-roads were before them; up from the west came a pony, and it was plain to the eye that he had no proper pride, despised his work, and resented the chance that had brought him out on a winter's evening with a clattering cart at his heels. The roads rayed out in every direction before his eyes, and he knew that on a matter of direction he and his master could never hope to agree. A sense of utter futility descended on him, and he stopped dead.

The grey donkey, coming up from the south, saw what had happened, and recognised an animal of independent and courageous mind. He, too, experienced a desire for quiet and contemplation. The sound of his iron-shod hoofs on the road, the clatter of the cart behind him jarred on his mood. He swerved, missed the ditch by a fraction, and came to a stop with his nose a few inches from the hedge.

There he stood in the cold twilight, and threats and pleadings were of no avail to move him. Lost in thought, a small, grey, obstinate figure, he stood on the edge of the frost-rimed grass, his gaze on the scarlet berries of the hedge. Home, hay, warmth, carrots were as nothing to him, for his soul contemplated infinite space.

The pony allowed himself to be cajoled, and the sound of his feet died away on the northern road. But the donkey had conceived an idea, and he would not budge from it. His master lost patience with him, took up the sacks that formed his load and departed, trusting to the animal's instinct to bring him home in the end.

The evening was closing in, and a single star, poised

in a sky that barely hinted at a green too delicate for understanding, caught and held the rapt attention of the donkey. But presently he became aware of a shuffling and heavy breathing on the other side of the hedge.

"Cattle," he said to himself, with a shade of contempt; for he was of an intolerant nature, and the sound had disturbed him. But it was growing darker, and the calm of his mood had departed. He brayed slightly, and a large, horned, but wholly benevolent head was lifted over the hedge.

"Good evening," said the ox in his kind and gentle manner. "Can I do anything for you?"

"No, thank you," said the donkey. "I had only stopped to think for a while."

"I see," said the ox, and he began to munch and ruminate with himself, and his brief interest in his neighbour seemed to fade away.

The donkey was irritated. He was also a little hungry. And if he could not maintain a mood of thought, he did not see why it should be allowed to the ox. He said snappily: "Don't you ever do anything but munch, munch, munch?"

"There isn't much for the grazing these days," replied the ox apologetically. "But I am thankful to say I am well looked after. Won't you try a little of the hedge?"

The donkey tried, but he was not satisfied. A dislike of the hedge rose in him suddenly.

"If the hedge were not there," he said resentfully, "we could talk, and enjoy friendship and community of interests. But, as it is, it is in the way, and it embarrasses and distracts me."

It grew darker, and very still. The ox left off munching, and turned his head from side to side as though

he heard strange music; and then he glanced at the sky. "How bright the stars are," he said.

But the donkey had no room in his mind for more than one idea at a time. "There is only one star in the sky," he said.

They stood silent again for a while, and behind in the fields, where the low line of a farmhouse stood above the slope, they heard a child's cry. The whole world seemed hushed to listen to it, and the roads were grey and shining and mysterious under the stars.

"I believe we are missing something," said the donkey.

"No," said the ox. "It is easy enough to hear."

They waited again in silence, and it seemed to the donkey as though the whole world were peacefully enfolded in the gentle breathing of the ox. The hedge that had been an obstruction seemed to melt away into insignificance, and the ox and the donkey stood in an intensity of friendship and understanding, listening in the cold solemnity of the night. Again came the little wailing sound, and it was not a cry, but somehow a thread of delicious music. The ox stirred and sighed. The spell broke, and the donkey backed his cart into the road. For a vision of warmth and light and tenderness had risen before his mind.

"I must go home," he said. "They will be coming out to look for me."

The ox went on again munching and ruminating in the shelter of the hedge. The roads glimmered faintly, beckoning east and west and north and south over the silent fields. The tall white signpost stood up in the midst of them, like a cross by the wayside, mysterious and awful in the faint light, but a help and protection in the darkness. Under its stretched and pointing arms the donkey turned and trotted home.

“There will be lights in the windows,” he thought. “There will be a smell of apples, and sweet straw, and good things for me to eat. Coming into my stall after the cold night it will be like a fragrant garden-place, and I shall be glad to be there. I don’t know why it is, but now more than any other night the stable seems to be the place of peace.”

THE PERFECT TOURIST

By J. DESMOND GLEESON

WHILE I was living in a Belgian village I began to understand what is meant by a Catholic country. I had heard the term very frequently employed, either in praise or blame, long before I landed in Belgium. I fully appreciated that when one was compelled to apologise for the Belgians, or even to sneer at them, one had only to say, “Yes, my dear, but then, you see, they are Catholics.” The explanation covered a multitude of crimes. Yet when I was living in the country, and moving about (the object of joy and noisy admiration of the surrounding multitudes), I discovered that my ideas of what is implied by the phrase “a Catholic country” were somewhat out-of-date. For instance, it was pointed out to me that the Belgians of that village generally went to Mass at six o’clock on Sunday morning. Moreover, this particular service was known as the “Pigeon Mass.” You might think that the name has something to do with early birds, and you would be right in a sense, but only a little right. If you believed, as I pretended to believe, that the Belgians were such religious fellows that on the one day upon which they might rest, their devotional fervour yanked them out of bed and hustled them off to church, you

would be wrong, for you would have forgotten all about the Pigeons. The truth is that flying Pigeons is one of the pastimes in which they really delight. But to fly the feathered chaps to best advantage it is necessary to start while the morning is still young, bright and clear. Therefore the Belgians get up early on this day of rest. But just as they are going off to dot the sky with their little blue birds, a black priest steps out and says "Hi" or "Oy," as the case may be. There follows a very long and heated dispute, in which the peasant asks truculently if he is to be deprived of his spot of pleasure on the one day in the week he is free to follow it, and the priest asks firmly whether religious duties are to be sacrificed to the birds of the air. After much argument and not a little gesticulation, a compromise is reached. There shall be pigeons, but there shall also be the Mass. By stepping into church at six in the morning, the peasant shall find himself free some minutes later to send his birds up into the blue. The duties have not been neglected and neither have the pigeons, and if any are left to complain, they are the unfortunate birds who are called upon to perform when they would much prefer to take their rest.

For my part I had no pigeons, so was not called upon to dispute with the local curé, nor even to visit his church at a time when all good men should be lost in fairy sleep. "Oh, sleep it is a gentle thing, beloved from pole to pole," sang the dope fiend when he had had rather more opium than usual, and for once he was telling the truth. Not only did I seek health and good nerves in long, peaceful slumber, but I was careful to remove all the stains of revelry from my costume before I ventured out into the village. Then did I

see how wise I had been in my method, albeit unconsciously wise, for while I slept great preparations had been made in the village to celebrate one of the principal Belgian feasts. The preparations, let me state it frankly, had nothing to do with me. Had I been absent, all would have continued much the same. Still, it was my fortune to be in this village on the Sunday that marked one of the two great Feast Days in the year, and if I added a touch of charm and grace to the scene, it is not for me to be boastful or conceited about it.

From each house there hung down great flags. The flags were of two sorts, the three-coloured national flag from most of the houses, but the red Flemish lion from others. This distinction of flags was significant. It was no accident, but of deliberate choice. It was the sign of the national division that is appearing in Belgium. But though the signs were frankly hostile, the occasion was one of concord, and while people hung out their rival banners, they had met together for one very peaceful purpose. It was to march in procession from the church round the village and over the fields and so back again to the church. In this traditional manner were they to celebrate the Feast Day, and no pigeons should stay them from their purpose. Indeed, the birds were very early put away that day. More important than flying them was the duty of erecting little altars, on which stood statues surrounded by lighted candles, in the doorways or windows of the houses and under the large flags.

From all sides the bird-fanciers began to arrive to take their place in the procession. Most of them bore huge banners or sacred signs, others carried candles in a sort of lantern case which crowned a long wooden

handle. From all quarters, too, came the women-folk to play their part on the great day. I saw the procession start off, led by the village band, which blared its way to the church door. Banners and candles followed without a pause. I watched the banners with some concern. One in particular seemed to be behaving in a curious manner. It bobbed suddenly and as quickly straightened itself, and then bobbed again in a new direction. And as it came abreast of me I saw the reason for this alarming performance. The fellow who carried it was a stout, red-faced individual with a serious face, but far from serious eyes. As he marched along it was his delight to poke such of his fellow-walkers as were within striking distance with the pole of his banner. For the most part they were stout chaps with tempting waistcoats, and as they marched in solemn procession they received, without warning, sundry prods from the jovial banner-bearer. Most of the banners, it must hastily be added, were carried in a more decorous manner.

But after the male portion of the procession had passed, singing, into the distance, came the children, and all of them in fancy dress. Tiny Chinamen and Turks, Arabs and Hindus, or representatives of nations yet to be, they marched along in solemn state. All their garments were gaily coloured and worn with an astonishing dignity. Then ladies, as brightly dressed, swept along, accompanied by angels or fairies, and bearing in their hands strange symbols. Most of them, at any rate, were strange to me. But a last group of ladies carrying palms I recognised without effort. Unhappily they did not recognise me. They sang a great many "Hosannas" as they approached, and even if it had not been pointed out, I knew they represented

the "Daughters of Jerusalem." Perhaps "carrying palms" does not quite describe their gesture. They waved their palms aloft and beat the air joyously and, such was their enthusiasm, frequently beat each other with them.

But here I began to notice a remarkable thing—that I was the only spectator of this cheerful procession. Everyone else in the village, except the aged, who sat at their doors or windows, had joined in. Should I be only a watcher when all the world was up and doing? I put the question to myself sharply, and my reply was direct action. Disdaining hesitation, I fell into line—but at a prudent distance from the Daughters of Jerusalem. Though I boasted no gay colours, my costume was fancy enough, and so on we all went over the fields, chanting lustily or, in my case, making shameless pretence to chant.

THE SWORD

[The sword of Richard Cœur de Lion, on his statue outside the Houses of Parliament, was broken in a gale.]

THE Sword of the King is broken!
 Who shall defend us now?
 The God of the Gale has spoken
 And shattered the steel with a vow.

His Voice has roared through the thunder
 In the place where the lies are told,
 And the Sword of the King lies asunder
 Where honour is bought and sold.

"You have lied," He cried in His fury,
 "That the Sword is an evil thing;
 You have scorned, in your pride and vainglory,
 The Sword that I came to bring.

“ You have lied that My Peace can be bartered
 For gold and treaties and trade;
 You dishonour your King Lion-hearted,
 And the Sword in his hand that I made.

“ *Who takes it shall perish by it*
 I have sworn, and for justice' sake
You shall perish who now deny it,
By the Sword you refuse to take ! ”

The God of the Gale has spoken,
 And shattered the steel with a vow.
 The Sword of the King is broken!
 Who shall defend us now?

G. C. HESELTINE.

THE WEAZEL

A STREAK of red, the weazel shot
 Into the Gallows Wood:
 I heard a dying rabbit squeal,
 And for a moment stood

Uncertain, then as by some spell
 Drawn in through briar and thorn
 I followed in the weazel's track
 By clutching brambles torn.

Blindly I followed till I came
 To a clearing in the fir:
 Then startled, suddenly I stopped
 As my glance lit on her—

The strapping red-haired tinker-wench
 Who stood with hands on hips,
 And watched me with defiant eyes
 And parted, panting lips.

At first I only saw her eyes,
 Her lips, her hair's fierce red :
 And then I saw the huddled man
 Who at her feet lay dead.

She saw I saw, yet never blenched,
 But still looked straight at me
 With parted lips and steady eyes ;
 Then muttered quietly—

*I'll go : no need to make a fuss,
 Though you've come gey and quick :
 You must have smelt the blood—and so
 The hangman takes the trick !*

*But what care I, since I am free
 Of him and all his lies,
 Since I have stopp'd his dirty tongue
 And shut his sneaking eyes ?*

*What matter though I kick my heels
 In air for settling Jim ?
 The vermin's dead : at least I'll make
 A cleaner end than him.*

WILFRID GIBSON.

THE TWO SELVES

Two selves am I : the slave of sense,
 My body's greedy underling ;
 Time's cursèd fool whose going hence
 Will be a damned awakening.

And yet another self am I
 Who chafe against the bonds of sense,
 And curse the self that would deny
 The triumph of my going hence.

CONRAD BONACINA.



Gilbert,
We Hilaire, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted;
But yet an union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.

BOGUS INTERVIEWS SHAW ON CHESTERTON

IN his earlier youth Chesterton wrote several books to show that he could not understand anything that happened before the battle of Bosworth, and could not approve of anything that had happened since. These critical deficiencies so effectively damned him as an historian that his admirers began to call him a philosopher; and the explanation has followed him down the years, acquiring by the way the status of a tribal superstition. Needless to say, to anyone who knows truth and knows Chesterton, the suggestion that he is a lover of truth, or has any respectable intentions at all regarding the lady, is fantastical.

The fact is, of course, that Chesterton has been skillfully evading Truth ever since he was old enough to recognise her. He is far too keen a sportsman to hide from her, and his great delight is to approach her as nearly as possible, so that he may taste the full joy of scuttling away before they can meet.

In matters of intellect, Chesterton is a sensualist, and no one can hope to understand him who does not recognise this salient fact. He has an inordinate appetite for clear and logical thought; and he indulges it, exactly as the drunkard indulges his appetite for alcohol, with the intention to feed but not to satisfy it. He is the patentee of an ingenious process of intellectual contraception, which enables him to enjoy all the delights of mental exercise without incurring the pain and responsibility of having to give birth to an idea.

This view of Chesterton explains everything about

him that can be explained. It explains why, having followed an argument lucidly and logically into its later stages, he always flies for safety to the wrong conclusion. It explains why, when by accident he stumbles upon a fundamental truth, he invariably stands on his head and waves his legs to exorcise the demon. It explains those moods of passionate repentance in which he forswears all thought and devotes himself to the production of schemes for the betterment of society.

And even in these schemes the licentious character of the man is reflected. His remedy is the rake's remedy. He finds the twentieth century sick from a thousand years' debauch, and he points back with pious admiration to the days when the wine still ran. He deplores the headache, and he offers us a hair of the dog that bit us.

What do I think of him? I reject the vulgar notion of Chesterton as the pursuer of Truth, in favour of a livelier vision: Truth, in a moment of human indignation, with her lamp in one hand and a club in the other, pursuing Chesterton across Europe, and sinking at last, baffled and exhausted, on the steps of St. Peter's.

A. M. CURRIE.

CHESTERTON ON SHAW

IN one of the wilder moments of my impetuous youth I happened to remark that I alone understood Mr. Shaw, and that I disagreed with him. For some reason or other this unassuming statement attracted the attention of a score of fantastic curates from all over the country; and for at least a month I was

deluged with their letters in praise, in vindication, and even, I regret to say, in condemnation of Mr. Shaw. One, who seemed to foreshadow even in that remote age the intellectual vigour of the post-war period, said simply that Mr. Shaw was thought-provoking; as though it were a subtle triumph for the eminent dramatist to have provoked a thought in a curate; and possibly it was. Another, obviously a man of more acute and more orthodox mind, roundly asserted that Mr. Shaw was a heretic—which was exactly what Mr. Shaw had been trying to point out for the past ten years. But one of my dearest treasures is the letter from a more elderly incumbent who would have me know that Mr. Shaw's great-aunt Tabitha (that noble woman) still knitted socks for his Church Lads' Brigade. I am the first to remove my hat and to bow before the *pietas* of Aunt Tabitha and the simple chivalry of the clergyman; and to acknowledge that Mr. Shaw, despite his many noble feelings, never has cold feet.

Anyhow, the point is that Mr. Shaw is no longer, in the changed conditions that have followed the European upheaval, either thought-provoking or a heretic. It may be, as I myself sometimes darkly suspect, that there are not so many thoughts to be provoked; or possibly the dramatist in his meridian provoked them all. But whatever the cause, the most daring of Shavian epigrams now seem to be platitudes; man quails before the superman who swims the Channel or who flies the Atlantic; Don Juan is no longer a romantic fiction but a psycho-analytic fact; and Mrs. Warren's profession is as much a routine matter as the knitting of Aunt Tabitha's socks. And an even more terrible nemesis has descended upon the bearded

demi-god who startled us years ago; for when he loudly proclaims: "I am a heretic," the mob of intellectuals looks up with simple faces and replies, "Oh, but, Mr. Shaw, we are all heretics now."

However (and here we must thank Providence for little mercies), we may still detect in G. B. S. the clear virtue and the modest ambition of his great-aunt Tabitha. In his brightly pointed dialogue we hear the scintillating click of Aunt Tabitha's knitting-needles. In his prolonged dramas we seem to detect, stitched and purled and dropped, the interminable progress of one of Aunt Tabitha's woollen mufflers. Even in his letters to the Press there is something of crochet work and the inculcation of a moral lesson which Aunt Tabitha would display in a sampler.

For myself, then, I must outgrow the proud ardour of my youth and confess in all humility that when everybody agrees with Mr. Shaw I alone do not understand him; for I cannot knit. But whoever despises Mr. Shaw, or whoever laughs at him, will miss the Apocalypse of our century; the Presbyterian Don Quixote, with knitting needle couched, and dressed from head to foot in woollies, riding down the darkness of the ages with the last cold laughter of the Celt.

GREGORY MACDONALD.

THE NEW VOCATION

I WAS spending an amusing hour reading the painfully written letters of elementary school children to their teacher. These letters are set as a kind of special treat, to take the child for an hour out of the iron routine of the text-book. They are the opportunity of finding the child's capacity for self-expression. They encour-

age the child to think for himself, an egoistic process that will be crushed when he becomes an adult.

You may talk heavily and learnedly of letter-writers, famous and infamous, but give me rather, twenty of these childish, pseudo-epistles, where you can find the germinal wit, loyalty, treachery, meanness, gush, deceit, sincerity and love that spell our nature.

As I read through these crooked, ludicrously spelt documents, a single sentence from some grubby nine-year-old East Ender struck me like a blow.

“And when I leave school, and am out of work, I will come and see you . . .”

As children, we of a happier, golden and industrial age knew our destiny. We were already, in our dreams, soldiers, engine-drivers, sailors. We saw ourselves on the footplate, behind the drum, or reeling through the seven seas. The vivid imagination of our childhood lit our post-school lives not so much with high thoughts, high desires, but with action. We saw ourselves among the men who did things.

And now I find myself staring at this sentence, “And when I leave school, and am out of work . . .” There was the vision splendid for that little East Ender. One left school. One went out of work. This strange and mysterious vocation had been the lot of his father and brothers for years, and he could conceive of no other. There was no lure of the footplate, no sound of drums to beckon him, but the simple quietistic state of “being out of work,” yawned as deep as hell outside the school gates. I suppose the youngster thought it was a state one entered only after due preparation in an elementary school: a state as proper to the poor as dock labour and navvying in days of yore; a state that was to be as much a part of

Caerleon is for ever riveted to the romance of King Arthur; which is something much more than romance. It is also a national epic, and none the less a national epic because nobody has ever written it properly, and nearly everybody has tried. It is one thing that has remained for the British what the great Greek mythology was for the Greeks: not quite a religion, though much more than a romance: but, above all, an existing and everlasting subject. The subject is that of a fallen king; and a long procession of kings have read the story in their pride and felt only a distant pity; and not one of them realised how he also would fall. The Plantagenets built their tower at Tintagel, and never dreamed of the day when it would be so ruinous that men would call it a castle of King Arthur. The French kings read of the great British king and how he had fallen, as the most fascinating of romances, and had no notion of how their own romance would end. This is an old story of the pride of the unfallen kings as they pity the fallen. But in the Plantagenets and the Bourbons there was always some shadow of Christian irony. And none have ever been so blind, so unconscious of perishing, so like the beasts that perish, as the kings of coal and iron and gold in our own time; who have not yet heard of their own fall.

Let those who like ruins rejoice; probably there will soon be plenty of ruins in every industrial city. Let the antiquarians line up in a queue and wait, notebook in hand, for the hour when the new branch of the Imperial Stores shall suddenly become an antiquity. Let landscape painters start at once with easels and campstools; and if they walk in a leisurely fashion they may arrive just in time to see the ivy crawling up the factory chimney. Many a melancholy poet will wander lonely

and listening to the hooting of the owls down the roofless halls of the local cinema or the once-populous tea-shop. For the story of Arthur had been read a thousand times, and its lesson never learnt; nor will men understand it now if it is only stated thus; that Caerleon was a great city and in it civilisation and prosperity slept securely behind the shields of Rome.

THE EMIGRANT

BID farewell to Upper Slaughter,
 Say good-bye to Lower Swell;
 Kiss the Bourton baker's daughter,
 Look your last on thatch and well;
 Drink the deep, cold, Cotswold water.
 Bid farewell.

Late nor soon shall Cotswold laughter,
 Cotswold game, and Cotswold tune,
 Drum the floor and shake the rafter;
 Nevermore the wide-eyed moon
 Watch your homeward footsteps after,
 Late nor soon.

Make an end, behind you falling
 Voice and footstep, house and friend.
 Breast the hill and climb the walling
 Past the coppice at the bend.
 Hear the last faint cuckoo calling.
 Make an end.

Bid farewell to Upper Slaughter,
 Say good-bye to Lower Swell;
 Kiss the Bourton baker's daughter,
 Look your last on thatch and well. . . .
 Seal your brow with Windrush water,
 Then—farewell.

ALAN BLAND.

WOOLHAMPTON

(The sign of the Angel Inn at Woolhampton, on the Bath Road, a little Bacchus astride a barrel.)

BELOW the hill, below the School, the road and river
run,

And all the little houses lie day-dreaming in the sun:
And those who built of thatch and beam, their home-
steads still remain

Proof against time and weather, for they builded not
for gain.

There, under little eaves of shops, are names I used to
know

When life was like a country dance, a score of years
ago;

And high above the village street, and smiling still
to-day,

Young Bacchus on his barrel looks Aldermaston way.

They've set a metal surface on the road the Romans
made,

That motorists who break the laws may hasten un-
afraid,

And silly motor-cyclists whom the demon Speed
enslaves

May have pre-mortem comfort ere they reach their
early graves:

And great Leviathans drone past and widely sweep the
curves,

To ruin railway companies and damage people's
nerves—

While sometimes bidding Hasten, and sometimes
bidding Stay,

Young Bacchus on his barrel looks Aldermaston way.

But the road is not the village, and the houses cluster
still

Like a crowd of village gossips at the bottom of the
hill,

For Change he passes down the road and lingers not
to rob,

And Life goes jogging sweetly like the trotting of a cob.

Oh, happy is the traveller who reaches journey's end

To win an unforgotten smile of greeting from a friend:

While sweetly sings the Kennet, and sweetly smells the
hay,

Young Bacchus on his barrel looks Aldermaston way.

Oh, I will take the road again when June is warm and
fair

And smell again the hayfields and taste the Berkshire
air,

And pass through kindly places where the old grey
cares unload,

And whistle back a memory at every stretch of road:

This will I do for loving, who have not loved in vain

The river and the footpath, the coppice and the lane:

And I shall greet in sunset light a roguish god and
gay—

Young Bacchus on his barrel looking Aldermaston
way.

A. M. BURRAGE.

THOMAS HARDY

Who can picture the scene at the starry portals?

—Truly, imagination fails—

When the pitiless "President of the Immortals"

Showed unto Thomas

The print of the Nails.

MOLLY O'FOGERTY.

THE FLYING VANDAL

THE curse of long distances, which is coming to be like the curse of large fortunes, threatens to have a very ruinous effect on one of the real glories of England. If there is one thing that the history of this country has preserved more than that of any other country it is the individuality of the small towns. The turn of each street is unexpected; the feature of each market place is unique. They are in their very shape as quaint and elvish as their quaint and elvish names—Nether Wallop, or Stoke Poges, or Stow-in-the-Wold. Those who love liberty, those who love beauty, those who love the essentials of English tradition, know that this variety turns England into Elfland.

But our immediate point is a particular fashion in which it is being swept away. The excuse is given that these angles and obstructions become death-traps when they are assailed with reckless and rapid motoring. Nobody seems to answer that reckless motoring is a danger to themselves. Old landmarks must be cleared away to give motorists a playground in which to play the fool, or a large and airy lethal chamber in which to commit suicide. It would puzzle the people of this mental calibre to tell them that in many great civilisations a man would have had to respect the gate and banner of an ancient municipality, or salute the gods of the city as he passed.

But, in any case, the following extraordinary principle is established. A monument in a market town does not belong to the market town; but only to a man who lives forty miles away to the north and who only wishes to arrive forty miles away to the south. To him the market town is a mere blur of dust and confused colours;

he cares nothing about it; perhaps he does not even know its name. But he is the king of that city, who can order all its monuments to fall. He can send pioneers on in front of him to cut down the oak under which Alfred sat or in which Charles was hidden, simply and solely because he cannot drive through the oak and will not bother to drive round it. He can knock off a large corner of a house in which Chaucer drank or Wolsey slept, simply because he prefers a curve to a corner when he is rushing blindly from Brighton to Charing Cross. The town he owns is not the town he inhabits, or even the town he wishes to reach. It is any town that he particularly wishes to get out of and leave behind. Never assuredly was territorial conquest made so easy. Never was there a safer or smoother form of imperial expansion. We have heard many tales of Big Bertha and the modern shelling of great cities from far away. The old English towns are to be shelled and shot to pieces from very far away. They are to be bombarded with cars, and not with cannon balls, and blown up with petrol instead of powder. But only long-range artillery is recognised as having any rights in the matter. The only principle recognised is that the village cross of Hugby-in-the-Hole must be immediately pulled down, to please a gentleman who lives in Manchester and is very anxious to get to Margate.

ON READING "GOD"

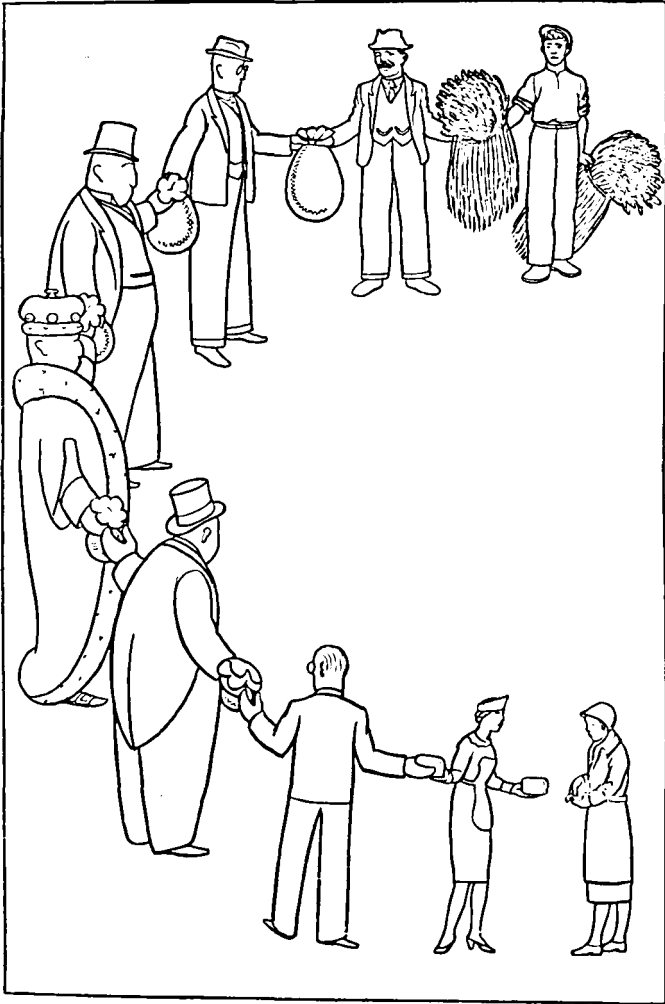
(Mr. Middleton Murry explains that his book with this title records his farewell to God.)

MURRY, on finding *le Bon Dieu*

Chose difficile à croire

Illogically said "Adieu"

But God said "Au revoir." G. K. C.



BREAD

Powys Evans

TURNING THE WHEELS

By J. DESMOND GLEESON

SOME while ago I found myself in the South Kensington district on an evening that was both wet and cold. I found myself in the streets because I had been thrust into them. I had arrived in that part of the world all beaming, but unexpected, to call on a gentleman who should have wined and dined me. He did nothing of the sort. He spoke to me very briefly, muttered something about an engagement, said he would see me later and pushed me out into the rain and the wind. Turning, therefore, from his unhospitable door, I tramped through the gloom down one street and up another without any particular purpose. Thus, without warning, did I arrive outside a well-lit door, which moreover was not fastened. Through the glass I could see many people within. I determined to join them. Pushing through the portal I found myself in a huge hall, guarded by a gigantic, but genial porter. He took from me my Polish stick, but allowed me to retain my wet coat and hat and urged me onwards. I moved to join the throng, but then halted a while to marvel at their singular occupation.

It was a tremendous hall in which I was walking and pretty well filled with great glass cases. Round these cases were gathered groups of old men, most of them very old men indeed. They gazed with reverence into the cases, but I noticed that each used a hand, either to press a button or to turn a handle, that was placed outside the cases. The cases were of glass, and therefore could hold no secret for the old men which was withheld from me. I moved forward, therefore and peered through the glass. Behind the transparent

partition was the model of a railway engine, and I discovered that the pressure on the button or the turning of the handle caused the wheels of it to rotate in a highly satisfactory manner. I joined the crowd at the first case, which crowd I soon perceived to be of the nature of a queue, and waited my turn. Each grey-beard passed before the button or handle as his turn came round, performed his task and moved on to the next case. But while one man was using the button or handle, everyone else was watching the wheels. In due course I found myself before the button, and pressed with the precision of a veteran. It was with quite a different feeling that I saw the wheels go round, now that I was making them go. I pressed with grim determination until the ancient behind me warned me that my time was up and it was his turn to assume control of the wheels. I thereupon passed on to the next case and went through the whole performance again.

Round that vast hall we trudged, the whole antique army of us, turning wheels, each for his allotted span, and the business continued all through the evening. On all manner of strange engines we operated—engines that looked like kettles on wheels, engines with great top-heavy chimneys, spiked all round so that small boys should not climb up and fall in, engines with all their spare parts hung outside them and the pieces barely hanging on by the skin of their teeth, engines looking like solemn, ponderous animals which must have made the country people roar with laughter when they first turned out to wonder at the unwieldy beasts, engines—but no, that is cheating and merely filling in space under false pretences. Suffice it that there were more types of locomotives than one, and that we carried our admiration to each in turn. But it was

not primarily to admire these models that we wandered along. Differing much in shape and size, they were all alike in this one respect—that outside the case was neatly fixed that button or handle, with the aid of which we were able to make the wheels go round. It was the wheels that mattered to this strange crowd, and I had not been of their company for more than three cases before the wheels mattered to me also. There was an appeal about these wheels which gripped me no less than the elders. The fatal fascination of being able to turn wheels and having the wheels there to turn, the unholy joy of watching them revolve—these things were not to be resisted and of themselves joined to form a terrible spell. Like the rest, I was caught up by this strange worship of wheels; caught in the wheels, as it were, and forced to follow from case to case.

It ended suddenly by the gigantic porter growing less genial and pushing us all out into the night. With resolution and firmness would the old gentlemen have clung to their wheels, but the porter wasn't having any of it. He marched the whole crowd out and slammed the door in our faces. We shuffled off miserably enough and were soon swallowed up in the gloom. But the very next evening, lo and behold! there we were once more, all gathered together in the same hall, moving slowly round and making the wheels to turn. It had not been my intention to go, I had other business, but the lure of the wheels proved too strong for me. Once more we solemnly paced the hall, halting obediently before each case, each man taking his turn to press the button. And so it goes on to this day. Years ago each of these ancients was a Bright Young Thing. Then some accident betrayed them into the Mansion of Model Engines, since when

they have become slaves of the wheels, and very cheerful slaves, for we are a jolly crowd, we model engine-drivers. Once you yield to the spell, there is no breaking it. As that hoary sinner, the Ancient Mariner, would put it, "since then at an uncertain hour that agony returns" and so do we and so we will continue to return until the Distributist Revolution smashes all our wheels. But this I can promise, that my stout army of greybeards will resist to the last button, and only over our felled bodies will our engines be broken. Meanwhile our club continues to hold its nightly sessions, and I can say nothing further about it now, for I have a pressing engagement at South Kensington.

SPACE, TIME AND MACSTICKLEBACK

PROFESSOR MACSTICKLEBACK sipped at his Port;
His feet on the anthracite stove for support.
His dinner was over; his mind was at ease;
His thoughts were unfettered and free as the breeze.

Some volumes of science reposed on the floor,
By Einstein, Lorentz, and some two or three more
By Minkowski and Eddington, Michelson, Mor-
Ley, De Sitter and Helmholtz, and nearly a score
Of mathematicians whose names I ignore
For fear of encouraging readers to snore:
In short, all the wizards who write of a Four
Dimensional Space-Time Continuum, or
Define in a manner beyond my poor, puny verse
The marks of a Quasi-Euclidean universe.

The Port was so mellow; the stove was so warm;
So faint, through the shutters, the howl of the storm;

So-porific the books he had just been perusing,
 No wonder he wavered 'twixt waking and snoozing.
 He sleepily pondered: "Suppose one could go
 As fast as the light through the ether—Ah no!
 There ain't any ether, but still I maintain:
 Suppose one could posit an aeroplane—
 Well, scarcely an *aero*, that couldn't be right—
 Say, a sort of a kind of a thingummy-tight
 That would hurtle through Space without stalling or
 stopping
 As fast as the daylight—now *that* would be topping!"

* * * * *

MacStickleback sat in his wondrous machine—
 'Twas a cross 'twixt a 'plane and a small submarine—
 He adjusted the throttle, retarded the spark,
 Engaged the self-starter and—rose like a lark,
 Up through the atmosphere,
 Up through the stratosphere
 Which airmen (whose motto * is "Semper Paratus")
 fear,
 And on—while terrestrial vistas loom greyer—
 Bumpitty-bump through the Heavyside Layer;
 And on—ever faster and faster the pace—
 Till, free of Earth's shackles, he shoots into SPACE.

Now Einstein lays claim—don't ask me if he's right—
 That, if you can travel as fast as the light,
 Though the World's clocks continue their tasks to
 fulfil,

For you, while you're travelling, Time will stand still.

MacStickleback travelled (so I read the signs)
 On one of those curved or slack-twisted straight lines

* Perhaps it is not, but I'm the one who pays for the stamp on
 my Poet's Licence.

(Which we commonly speak of as Mister Einstein's)
 Such as Euclid's geometry flatly declines
 To consider a moment, and Ralph Waldo Trine's
 "In Tune with the Infinite" never defines.
 In a flash he returned, feeling brisker and bolder,
 Yet the England he found was a hundred years older.

Surveying the landscape from Parliament Hill
 (The spot where he landed) he felt a queer thrill,
 For the London he knew was replaced by a new one
 So unlike the old that it seemed an untrue one.
 All gone were the towers and the spires and the steeples,
 Gone were the Palaces—Crystal and People's—
 Gone was Saint Paul's and—less unsatisfactory—
 Gone, with its cats, was the Craven "A" factory,
 Gone were the statues for Nelson and Charlie meant,
 Gone was Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament,
 Gone was the Oval and all its gasometers,
 Gone all the clock towers and all their chronometers.
 Gone were the cinemas, gone were the breweries,
 Gone the Law Courts where they swear in the ju-eries,
 Gone Albert's Memorial (some *do* wish it skimpier),
 Gone the Savoy, and Bush House and Olympia,
 Gone the noble old Tower with its fame everlasting,
 And that funny new place where they do the broad-
 casting.

"Old London is gone," said he, gazing, aloof, on it.
 "And here's a new city built up *with a roof on it.*"
 Roads ran o'er the roof— there was glass in between—
 And traffic sped rapidly over the scene.
 Lifts shot up and down 'twixt the roof and the ground;
 And aeroplanes landed, rose, hovered around.
 The roads crossed each other by bridges (and so
 There was no further need for the Stop-Caution-Go)

And then, at the edge of the roof's mighty girth,
On long, sloping viaducts, ran down to earth.
As MacStickleback stared—eyes and mouth gaping
wide—

A very young man came and stood by his side:
A queer little chap dressed in flexible glass
Which allowed the sun's rays through his clothing to
pass

And gave him, no doubt, lots of Vitamin Q
Plus Chlorophyll Oxide of pure Hugaboo.
This *very* young man, in a voice yet unbroken,
Addressed the Professor, who started when spoken
To suddenly, and in so boyish a tone,
By a man who appeared to be so undergrown.

“ Good day,” said the man, “ Superannuate Person,
Do you realise I am Professor MacPherson,
The greatest of scientists living to-day
And also the British Prime Minister, eh? ”

“ Dear me,” said MacStickleback, finding his tongue,
“ How odd! But, excuse me, you look very young.”
“ *Young!* ” shouted the man in an outburst of spleen,
“ What the Devil d'you mean? I am nearly thirteen.
Young! ” cried he again in a juvenile roar,
“ I'd a seat in the Cabinet when I was *four*.”

MacStickleback gasped: “ Well, to tell you the truth,
I've read about ‘ clarion calls to Our Youth,’
But really now, dash it, come, *do* tell me straight,
Am I dreaming or have I had one o'er the eight? ”
The Premier scowled; he was very annoyed.
“ Talk sense,” he exclaimed, “ or I'll have you de-
stroyed.

All folk over twenty, not wanted for breeding,
Are simply bumped off as a normal proceeding.”

“W-well,” stammered MacStickleback, looking inane,
 “It’s a b-beautiful day, b-but I think we’ll have rain.”

But the Premier, turning his back on the scene,
 Began to examine the flying machine.
 He asked many questions about the affair,
 Which MacStickleback answered with prudence and
 care.

“You see, sir,” he said, “in my primary aim
 I was following Einstein—you’ve heard of the name?”
 “Of course,” said the Premier, cold and unmoved.
 “It must be fifty years since his case was disproved.
 Relativity, now, is completely outmoded,
 Worn out, superseded, scrapped, kyboshed, exploded.
 So you realise, don’t you, you queer old buffoon,
 That your notion’s a fallacy? Good afternoon.”

MacStickleback swayed like a wind-shaken bough.
 In beads perspiration stood out on his brow.
 What was he to think and what was he to do
 With his whole basic theory blown to the blue?
 “If Einstein is wrong, then I cannot be here;
 And, if not, where am I? It’s not very clear.

“I may be in Saturn or Venus or Mars,
 Or Alpha Centauri among the fixed stars;
 Perhaps in the Pole Star, perhaps in Orion.
 Why didn’t I stay in that damned thing and fly on?
 Yet that fellow spoke *English*; it’s awfully queer.
 Still, if Einstein’s in error, how *can* I be here?”
 With head bowed in thought and a slow, not a spry,
 gait

MacStickleback strayed o’er the Heath towards High-
 gate.

His dire situation had terrible features.
 Too late he recalled the advice of his teachers:

“Don’t make *too* much of Time.” Could *this* be what the Vicar meant?

Did the dear man envisage this fearful predicament?
So, wandering thus in the Slough of Despond,
At last he arrived by the boat-sailing pond
Where a bevy of youngsters in flexible glass coats
Were betting on races between their high-class boats.
A bookie yelled odds from a box topped with matting,
While a p’leeceman kept watch to prevent him from
rattling.

’Twas the p’leeceman (aged twelve) who first noticed
a stranger.

MacStickleback halted; he scented some danger.

“Now show me your licence for Being Alive,”

Demanded the slop, “if you want to survive.

“I’ve orders to lock up unlicensed old men,

And the Lethal Board deals with ’em daily at ten.”

“Good Lord!” cried MacStickleback, gasping for air,
And, forsaking his dignity, ran like a hare.

“Hi, stop!” cried the copper and started the chase,
And all the young gamblers abandoned their race,
While more children came from all over the place,
Shouting and yelling and bawling and squalling,
Some were halloo-ing and some caterwauling,
Screeching and screaming and crying and howling,
Whistling and whining and mewling and miaowling.
Roaring like lions or storm-laden breezes,
Whooping and coughing with asthmatic wheezes
And making queer noises like prize Pekineses.
Never was heard such a racket before
From children athirst for an old fellow’s gore.

By pressing his pace in a way that distressed him
He reached his machine ere the kids could arrest him.

He started at once; 'twas no time to relax. He
 Saw hands grab the 'plane as she started to taxi.
 With feverish haste, then, he trod on the gas
 And tumbled the vanguard all over the grass.
 In vain they yelled after him juvenile curses.
 He only retorted: "Go back to your nurses!"
 And upwards he soared at prodigious velocity,
 Far out of range of their wild animosity.

But though he was safe from all mortal pursuit,
 Yet still on the throttle he pressed with his foot,
 Till the speed of his Etherplane couldn't be reckoned;
 It left even sunlight a very bad second.

Urged rather by panic than motives sublime
 The Professor was travelling *faster than Time*,
 Which means, I suppose (if I'm not up the pole),
 That some previous age was his ultimate goal.
 In short, with the calendar fairly outclassed,
 He was journeying rapidly into the Past.

In making these statements it's only polite
 To say they imply that Herr Einstein is right.
 Be that as it may. From his strange Etherplane
 The Professor soon sighted our planet again,
 And slackening speed with a generous hand
 The landscape below him he eagerly scanned.
 Yes, there was old London, the London he knew—
 Saint Paul's and the Houses of Parliament too,
 And everything else as he'd known it before,
 All just as he'd left it. His troubles were o'er.

* * * *

But were they?

MacStickleback woke with a start
 And the cold hand of terror gripped hold of his heart.
 Yes, there was the Port and the books and the stove,
 Just as he'd left 'em: that proved it, by Jove!

Yes, Einstein was right, to deny it was vain.
 First forward, then backward, he'd travelled, 'twas
 plain;
 And here he was, back in his fam'ly domain,
 A moment before he'd set out in his 'plane.
 Great Heaven! the thought of it drove him insane:
 IN A MINUTE 'TWOULD ALL BEGIN OVER
 AGAIN.

C. T. B. DONKIN.

SPELL ENGLAND

By VINCENT MCNABB, O.P.

A SEER in search of volunteers for the heroic task of saving his birthland, found a rich financier, one of those to whose knowledge of currency and token wealth the country was now handed over. As if demanding a password, the Seer said: "Spell England!" To this the financier answered haughtily, "LONDON." Whereupon the Seer was angry and roared, "Begone, Satan. And be accursed; for even before the days of Iscariot thou wert ever a curse."

* * * *

Then the Seer sought, and, after a long search found, a single-minded statesman living dramatically on the droppings of Fleet Street.

Again the Seer demanded the password, "Spell England." Wearily, as if writing a trenchant leading article against time, the statesman answered "ENGLAND." Whereupon the Seer's anger was leashed as he said, "Friend, thou art not far from the truth! Yet, like St. Peter in prison, art thou not still standing expectant before the Iron Gate that leadeth to the City?"

* * * *

At last the Seer found, in deep poverty, a Christian—that is a passionate lover of Christ, and therefore a lover of his birth land—to whom he said “Spell England!”

Whether the Christian was so intent upon divine locutions as to mistake the question, or, being a man of God, he saw the answer in what the mystics call the eternal ideas, we shall never know. But as if muttering an ejaculation he said slowly, “LAND!”

Whereupon the Seer's eyes leaped with joy, as he said: “Son, thy faith hath made thee safe. Thou art as near the truth as a man may be who walks by faith and not by sight. But come, let us walk out of Babylon, shaking her dust from our feet.”

Then both set out from Fleet Street, through suburbia to the fields beyond.

AT THE GOLDEN POT

By G. C. HESELTINE

LATE in the evening I came to the end of the footpath over the downs, stepped on to a hard road and found myself before the door of “The Golden Pot.” As I passed under its low lintel and peered through the mist of smoke, blue as a Tyrolean haze, I saw bending over the pianist a pair of great shoulders which might well have borne the old Anchises from the flames of Troy.

Over the broad humming gossip of the village youths and ancients round the room, came a kindly sonorous voice from the direction of the shoulders, half pleading and half threatening the lad at the piano. Presently I gathered that the lad insisted on playing jazz, to which he of the voice and shoulders

objected. He was gradually urging his objections more and more forcibly when he half turned and caught sight of me.

"Ssh—, no row now!" he cautioned the pianist in tones of awe. "There's a Scotland Yard man just come!"

Slowly and a little unsteadily he came over to me bearing aloft a half-emptied pint pot.

"Good evening," he murmured, and stood against me towering awfully, a fine great fellow.

"Do you think I am a Scotland Yard man?" I asked, for I was not a little perturbed at such a description.

His deep, humorous blue eyes showed just the faintest smile and he lowered his great head to whisper to me:

"Hath not a Jew eyes?"

"—hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions," I continued, for I too have something of a flair for that sort of thing. "Then what does the Jew see?"

"You are, like myself, an artist," he answered. I bowed acknowledgment of the flattery. "Now tell me," he continued, "what would you do, what should any artist do when he hears an unholy din like that?" He indicated the altar on which a starveling melody was being cruelly butchered. And then, supplying his own answer, he snapped, "Why, give 'em something better!"

An apple-checked wench came over for our mugs and, smiling, left the room to replenish them. As she disappeared through the door, the big fellow stood upright, showing now the strange incongruity between his clean-shaven mobile face and his rough labourer's

clothes. The "house" ceased chattering and looked expectant. Clearly, they knew their man. He paused for a moment, stretched an eloquent arm towards the absent girl and spoke:—

I fain would go, yet beauty calls me back :
 To leave her so, and not once say farewell,
 Were to transgress against all laws of love.
 But, if I use such ceremonious thanks
 As parting friend accustom on the shore,
 Her silver arms will coil me round about,
 And tears of pearl cry, "Stay, Æneas, stay!
 Each word she says will then contain a crown
 And every speech be ended with a kiss.

Never was a man so torn between love and duty. As he ended, the "house" thumped applause, in which Kit Marlowe's ghost lurking in a smoke-screen behind the settle joined heartily.

"Good old Macbeth" (for so they called him), "give us some Shakespeare!"

He turned to me: "You see," he said softly, "they like music."

The maid had now returned, and as "Macbeth" (or was it Æneas?) took a draught from his pot, I dimly remembered the great god Thor and his attempt to drain the mighty horn whose end was in the sea.

He paused for breath, and the house waited again. He could not disappoint them:—

Now mark me, how I will undo myself:
 I give this heavy weight from off my head—

(I thought he was holding a pint pot, but he laid a royal crown upon the table!)

And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,
 The pride of kingly sway from out my heart;
 With mine own tears I wash away my balm . . .

I did my best with Northumberland, and indeed surprised myself. It seemed easy then—and there.

By the time he ended, having smashed a photograph which I unconsciously handed him from the top of the piano when he commanded:—

A mirror hither straight,
That it may show me what a face I have,
Since it is bankrupt of his majesty,

and turned me from Northumberland to Bolingbroke when he addressed me:—

Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport—
How soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face,

—every man of the company felt the tragedy of kingship, and some of them, I fancied, of him who was even now ruling their emotions. But they would be wrong. For him, here was no tragedy, but triumph.

Then we fell to talking of London and the people there. He inquired, a little incoherently now, of many people—Forbes-Robertson, Du Maurier, James Douglas, John Hassall, and a host of others. He was much concerned to know whether Gilbert Chesterton had grown more or less like Dr. Johnson, and then he spoke of the Old Vic and “the divine Sybil.”

He catalogued, as well as he could in his blissful state, the famous theatres and capitals in which he had played. “But here,” he said at last with a sweep of that arm again, “here is *my* audience!”

The innkeeper called “Time, gen’men, please!” and we all trooped out under the stars.

Suddenly a yokel asked, “Wur’s Macbeth?” and another “Fetch ’im out, somebody!” “Who’s takin’ ’im ’ome?”

I went back to seek him in the inn and bid him good-night. I found my Macbeth, alias Æneas, alias King Richard, there alone with Dido, who had, despite the law, newly filled his goblet.

Whether she was saying beneath the shadow of
those shoulders

For in his looks I see eternity . . .
And he'll make me immortal . . .

or he was breathing an impassioned parting :

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part,

I cannot say. I only know there was no third alter-
native.

THE AMERICAN REPORTER

"I FEAR it will be rejected as a paradox, rather than accepted as a compliment, if I say that even wild American reporters out for a story have a strange link with Christian humility. But it is amusing to notice, even in their appearance in popular literature, such as the crime stories with which I cram my pockets, how free they are from the sophisticated self-consciousness of more respectable heathens. We can generally guess the secret ideal of a nation from the conventional hero of a novel. We all know the conventions required to make the English hero conventional. One of the first is that he should be comfortable even when he is uncomfortable. When perched upon the breaking bridge above the yawning chasm, he shows he is an English hero by smoking a cigarette, with a slightly bored expression, or even perhaps (with a polite gesture) yawning, like the chasm. But the Americans do not really admire boredom, even in a martyr at the point of death. They do really admire excitement, even in a man surrounded by all the comforts of life. The young hero, who is often a young reporter, in my favourite American romances, is excited all the time; he is excited by everything or by anything. A pin or a

postage-stamp will alike send him flying out of his seat; a taunt or a telegram will equally catapult him across the room; the mention of a job will hurl him out of the window; the chance of a scoop will send him out through the skylight. The editor likes him for it; the heroine likes him for it; and I will frankly confess that I like him for it. I am myself of the very opposite national temper and tradition; and no opportunities of writing for this paper will propel me through even the most conveniently placed skylights or windows. But the more meditative habit may sometimes be used to cultivate a sense of justice; and I recognise in that young lunatic a streak of sincerity and single-mindedness and thoughtlessness about appearances which I think may yet hurl him to some wild country not far from the kingdom of heaven."

G. K. C.

ENDYMION

THE silver from the slow rill slides,
 The moon-mists tremble and are gone,
 The burning kiss that never bides—
 Endymión! Endymión!

Ah, who is there has told the tale?
 And who of all the poets gone?
 Ah, Keats, didst float thy lily-sail?—
 Endymión! Endymión!

But lonely in a Latmian glade,
 A girl once named her unborn son—
 A shadow-name, the dream to fade,
 Endymión! Endymión!

PATRICK CAHILL.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF "IN MEMORIAM"

BY RONALD A. KNOX

THE problem "Who wrote *In Memoriam*?" is one of the most interesting and most complicated in literary history; and it is safe to say that it has not hitherto received the attention it deserved. Everybody is familiar with the outlines of it. Hallam died in 1833, and the poem which professes to be his epicedium did not see the light until 1850. What is the explanation of this monstrous interval? Further, when the poem originally appeared, it was accorded a doubtful reception, and was attributed by some critics (a very significant fact) to a feminine hand. Mr. Nicholson has familiarised us with the verdict of one reviewer in particular, who suggested that it was in all probability composed by the widow of some military man. It was only later that Tennyson stepped in, claimed the poem as his own, and gave it the reputation which it holds at present. The question naturally suggests itself, did Tennyson really write it, or was he screening somebody else? If we adopt the latter view, it will be necessary to urge some sufficient motive for a literary imposition so audacious and so persistent.

One looks, naturally, for a cryptogram. And here a most impressive fact meets us at the very outset of the inquiry. Give the letters their natural value as Greek numerals: that is, make A = 1, E = 5, I = 10, M = 40, N = 50, O = 70, R = 100. The letters of IN MEMORIAM thus work out at 10 + 50 + 40 + 5 + 40 + 70 + 100 + 10 + 1 + 40, cyphers which on a careful computation add up to 366, the number of days in the full year! Scarcely less significant is the result if we take the natural values of the English

alphabet, starting with A = 0, B = 1, C = 2, etc. The letters of IN MEMORIAM on this reckoning give you 8 + 13 + 12 + 4 + 12 + 14 + 17 + 8 + 0 + 12, and these ten cyphers add up to 100! Again, if you give the vowels their natural values as a separate series, this time making A = 1, E = 2, etc., you find that the vowels IEOIA represent 3 + 2 + 4 + 3 + 1, cyphers which add up to the mystical number 13. (The same number, it may be observed, which is thrice repeated in the sum given just before.) Adding 100 to 13 (for want of anything better to do), you arrive at the number 113, and immediately turn to the 113th canto of the poem to see if it holds any secret for posterity. Is it possible that the cryptographer will have betrayed, by some tiny awkwardness of phrase, some tiny evidence of strained writing, the line in this canto which contains the clue?

The search is not a difficult one. Few readers of the poem can have failed to note the artificial effect of the 11th line,

A potent voice of Parliament—

why OF Parliament, instead of IN Parliament? The latter, surely, is what any author would naturally have written. Is not the change from "in" to "of" just such a change as might have been forced on him, not by any demands of literary appropriateness, but by the desire to select two particular letters *which would complete a particular message in cypher*? It might be a fresh numerical cypher, it might be merely anagrammatical. . . . One has to play with various possibilities, and then an anagram leaps quite suddenly into view. What it is we shall see later. For the present, let us simply note that the 11th line of the 113th canto of *In*

Memoriam can be read anagrammatically, and when so read gives a thoroughly sensational message.

It also (as will be seen later) indicates unmistakably that it is the *last* of a series of cryptograms. As an hypothesis, then, it may be worth considering the possibility that it is the last of a series of *II*, which will involve verse 1 of canto *x*, verse 2 of canto *y*, and so on. It would be easy to construct an artificial series for the purpose (*e.g.*, 13, 23, etc.), but a natural series is not so easily arrived at. It is here that a certain amount of intricate mathematical thinking is involved, the details of which we spare the reader, giving only the conclusions. It will be seen that the series is a real and a natural one, though sufficiently abstruse to be worthy of an accomplished cryptographer such as the poet we are dealing with.

It runs as follows:—

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 & & \text{I} = \text{I} \\
 * & * & * \\
 \text{I} \times 2 + \text{I} & = & 3 \\
 * & * & * \\
 2 \times 2 + 2 & = & 6 \\
 6 \times 2 + \text{I} & = & 13 \\
 * & * & * \\
 3 \times 2 + 3 & = & 9 \\
 9 \times 2 + 2 & = & 20 \\
 20 \times 2 + \text{I} & = & 41 \\
 * & * & * \\
 4 \times 2 + 4 & = & 12 \\
 12 \times 2 + 3 & = & 27 \\
 27 \times 2 + 2 & = & 56 \\
 56 \times 2 + \text{I} & = & 113
 \end{array}$$

Taking the formula as $xy + z$, it will be seen that y is always 2, that z is in turn 1, 2, 1, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1;

that x is in turn 1, 2, 3, 4, at the beginning of the division, and in the rest of the division is simply a repetition of the last total reached.

On our present hypothesis, then (for it is so far a hypothesis), we shall expect to find a cryptogram (in the form of an anagram) in the following lines, line 1 of canto 1, line 2 of canto 3, line 3 of canto 6, line 4 of canto 13, and so on till we get to line 11 of canto 113. Let us give the results of this speculation :—

- | | | |
|------|----|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | 1 | I held it truth, with him who sings. |
| 3. | 2 | O priestess in the vaults of death. |
| 6. | 3 | And common is the commonplace. |
| 13. | 4 | Her place is empty, fall like these. |
| 9. | 5 | So draw him home to those that mourn. |
| 20. | 6 | And weep the fulness from the mind. |
| 41. | 7 | Thy changes; here upon the ground. |
| 12. | 8 | And leave the cliffs, and haste away. |
| 27. | 9 | Nor, what may count itself as blest. |
| 56. | 10 | Such splendid purpose in his eyes. |
| 113. | 11 | A potent voice of Parliament. |

Before we go any further we may at once comment upon a corroborative symptom. Omit the first two and the last two of these lines, and the intervening lines give us a perfect single acrostic. It runs, "Ah, Satan!" Somebody clearly felt that he or she was being tempted to violate conscience, and registered a protest in this way. We shall see that the seven lines of the acrostic have a common thread running through them.

Anagrams are slow work, and a "Word Making and Word Taking" outfit is recommended to the beginner. The letters of "I held it truth, with him who sings" yield, with a little arrangement, the following rather

intriguing result: "Who is writing this? H.M. luteth, hid." It was, no doubt, the occurrence of the word "harp" in the next line of the poem that suggested to the cryptographer the rather fanciful word "luteth." The implication is plain enough; the author of this poem is not its reputed author: somebody described as H.M. is really writing the poem, but prefers to remain hidden, that is, anonymous. So far we have not much to go upon in the way of positive information. After all, there must have been plenty of people writing in 1850 who would answer to the required initials. We turn on, then, impatiently to canto 3, line 2, and are met with a startling announcement. "O priestess in the vaults of death" reads quite unmistakably "V.R.I. the poetess. Alf T. has no duties." Astounding—impossible! Yet there it is in black and white; there is no getting over the documentary evidence. English sovereigns had not yet adopted the imperial title (the Mutiny was yet to come), but already it must have been designed *in petto*. There was only one person in England who could be designated indifferently "H.M." or "V.R.I."

And yet, is it so extraordinary? Has anybody read Queen Victoria's published diaries without being conscious of a note of domesticity, a note of resignation, a note of common human pathos, which finds its very counterpart in the stanzas of *In Memoriam*? There was, after all, something to be said for the critic who suspected feminine authorship. But at that period of our history, though a woman might write poetry, a queen might not publish it. It was necessary to conceal the secret as if it had been a guilty one, or the consequences might have been international. The arrangement, then, clearly, was that the work should be published

anonymously, but that Tennyson, then a rising poet, should be prepared if necessary to cast veracity to the winds, and shoulder the onus of authorship. It was a patriot's act; and perhaps something of the moral struggle which it involves is reflected in the next cryptogram, which is in Latin. "And common is the commonplace" (a line which many of us have felt before now to be something less than Elizabethan in its quality) is after all only an ingenious cloak for the Latin motto "*Pie hoc nomen clam commodans. T.*", that is to say, "Devotedly lending this name in secret. T." The man who wrote thus had faced a moral problem, and has risen superior to it.

It would be necessary for Tennyson to "lend his name" if either of two things happened—if discovery of the real authorship threatened, or if the anonymous appearance of the book should prove injurious to its sales. Which motive in fact became operative? The next cryptogram leaves us in no doubt, and indeed casts a rather sinister light on the whole proceeding. Tennyson had no doubt been studying Bacon as a master of cryptographic method; and he will have been struck, as all of us will have been struck, by the singular ease with which you may find cryptograms in the works of the Elizabethans, *because any sort of spelling will do*. Imitating, then, the crude orthography of Gloriana's period, he has delicately indicated the motive which was responsible, at least in part, both for the original publication of the poem and for the invocation of Tennysonian patronage. "Her place is empty, fall like these" can be nothing other than "Her Majesty lacks pelf. I'le help. TE."

It will already have occurred to the ingenious reader that the letter T left over in the third, and the letters

TE left over in the fourth cryptogram, are a sort of rudimentary signature, which (by a pretty piece of ingenuity) adds one letter to itself each time it occurs. This is true only of the seven lines which form the acrostic "Ah, Satan," and consequently they stop at "TENNYSO," just short of the complete signature. The fifth and sixth are mere repetitions of the message which the earlier cypher has given us. "So draw him home to those that mourn" is to be read (no doubt in playful allusion to the May Queen) as "O Mother, I'm H.M.'s shadow-author! TEN." "And weep the fulness from the mind" is meant for a mock warning to the reviewers of the poem, suitably couched in the words, "Who pummels Faith-Defender? TENN." One recognises, in the choice of the verb, Tennyson's own love for vigorous English.

Alas, that our minds should be built on such a mercenary pattern! We naturally ask, was this generous loan of his name to bring Tennyson no reward from the real authoress of the poem? History supplies us with a painfully distinct answer—Tennyson became Poet Laureate in 1850, the very year of *In Memoriam's* publication! It is no doubt to this recognition of his services that he alludes, with what some will think doubtful taste, in the next cryptogram. We have done our best to find some other anagrammatic equivalent for the words "Thy changes; here upon the ground," but the unfortunate fact defeats us. There can be no doubt that we are to understand it as meaning "Oh hurrah! Nest-egg pouched! TENNY." Let us pass hastily over this lapse from dignity, pausing only to admire the characteristically keen appreciation of Nature which the metaphor shows. And, indeed, the recognition was not undeserved, for it appears

that the whole conception of the artifice originated with Tennyson: so at least the eighth cryptogram gives us to understand. "And leave the cliffs, and haste away" can hardly stand for anything but "La! What a safe device Alf had! TENNYS." He had indeed burrowed deep, but he should not have trusted to the impenetrability of his armour so far as to give way to these regrettable outbursts of exultation.

What, then, was the original purpose of the poem? Queen Victoria did not know Arthur Hallam, and it is clear that the initials were merely chosen in order to lend plausibility to the story that it was Tennyson's work. Was it, then, some quite imaginary person whose death evoked this touching threnody? We might have remained in the dark, were it not for one final disclosure of the cypher-lines. The ninth cryptogram is more difficult to read than the others, because more allusively expressed, but there can be no doubt of the true version. "Nor, what may count itself as blest" must be "Let A.H. act for W. Lamb's suit. TENNYSO."—or possibly "Let W. Lamb suit, cast for A. H. TENNYSO." The metaphor will be sartorial on the former supposition, histrionic on the latter; in any case there can be no doubt as to the hero. William Lamb was the family name of that Lord Melbourne who was Queen Victoria's first and favourite Prime Minister. Mr. Lytton Strachey has given abundant evidence of the warm respect and admiration, something half filial and half romantic, which the young Queen felt for Lord Melbourne. When did he die? In the November of 1848, a date which exactly suits the circumstances of the poem. It enhances our respect for Queen Victoria's poetic gifts when we reflect that this long and intricate work was the fruit of little more than a year's labour.

The tenth cryptogram raises the question—If Victoria was the authoress of the poem, how was it that Tennyson came to supply the cypher? There must, it seems, have been collaboration here, and there could be few more generous tributes than that which is paid in the words “Such splendid purpose in his eyes.” For these, when read according to the cryptographer’s intention, give you: “She lisp’d in sinuous cyphers deep”—the praise is the praise of Victoria, but the voice is the voice of Tennyson. And yet the man who could write such a line as that could take pride in signing himself at the conclusion of his cryptographic message: “A potent voice of Parliament,” which, it need hardly be pointed out, stands for “Alf, poet-pen to Victoria. Amen.”

The chain of evidence, then, may be summed up as follows :—

- | | | | |
|------|----|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | 1 | Who is writing this? | H.M. luteth hid. |
| 3. | 2 | V.R.I. the poetess. | Alf T. has no duties. |
| 6. | 3 | Pie hoc nomen clam commodans. | T. |
| 13. | 4 | Her Majesty lacks pelf; I’le help. | T.E. |
| 9. | 5 | O Mother, I’m H.M.’s shadow-author! | TEN. |
| 20. | 6 | Who pummels Faith-Defender? | TENN. |
| 41. | 7 | Oh, hurráh! Nest - egg pouched! | TENNY. |
| 12. | 8 | La! What a safe device Alf had! | TENNYS. |
| 27. | 9 | Let A.H. act for W. Lamb’s suit. | TENNYSO. |
| 56. | 10 | She lisp’d in sinuous cyphers deep. | |
| 113. | 11 | Alf, poet-pen to Victoria. Amen. | |

There is much, no doubt, still to be explained as to the personal allusions of *In Memoriam*: some, no

doubt, deliberately put in as a blind, others referring in a veiled way to incidents in Lord Melbourne's career. But, in the face of evidence such as this, will anybody attempt to rack the long arm of coincidence so as to make it cover this extraordinary series of cryptograms? If so, he has the ostrich-mind that cannot, because it will not, acquiesce in the assured results of modern enquiry.

Why Shakespeare more than anybody else?

NURSERY RHYME

LITTLE Jack Horner
 Sat in a corner
 Eating a Christmas pie;
 He put in his thumb
 And pulled out a plum,

And said: " My lords—ha! and ah—gentlemen—hum!
 The conclusion to which the Committee has come
 On the sociological residuum
 Of the weak, the unfit, and the blind and the dumb—
 The (in short) economic excrescence which some
 In less technical terms have described as the Slum
 Discovers a Nervous Prostration made numb
 By the use of beer, brandy, gin, whisky, and rum,
 Affecting the sensitive sensorium
 With a blasting effect as of bullets (dum-dum);
 And making our workers so gloomy and glum
 That they can't take delight in the landscape of Brum,
 And will seldom leap up like a chivalrous chum
 To make somebody else's enterprise hum,
 And receive in return, by a sound rule of thumb,
 The more or less crumby proportion of crumb
 Which falls from the table of Baron de Tum

Of Consolidate Glue and Incorporate Gum,
 And the British Adventure in Bam-Buzalum.
 The table all laden with Clicquot and Mumm
 To which they might, too, have aspired, and become
 Successful as we are: survived in the scum
 Of the fittest who fight for Honorarium,
 And make in Imperio Imperium,
 To the manifest gain of Lord Cockalorum;
 And at last, to arrive at the Summum Bonum,
 The Evolving Eden and Elysium,
 The Pattern of Fate with its thread and its thrum,
 The End of Existence when—er—that is, um,
 I appear; and the world has discarded its scum
 Of ignorance, dirt, and of mere tedium,
 And the beer and the bloodshed in which it has swum,
 And the dissolute cask and the bellicose drum,
 And the world that revolves like a mad teetotum
 Round Me"—(or, to state his oration in sum)
 He said: "What a good boy am I."

G. K. C.

DRAGOONING THE DRAGON

WE all know the people who think it wicked to tell children fairy tales which they are not required to believe, though of course not wicked to teach them false doctrines or false news which they are required to believe. They hold that the child must be guarded from the danger of supposing that all frogs turn into princesses or that any pumpkin will at any minute turn into a coach and six, and that he must rather reserve his faith for the sober truth told in the newspapers, which will tell him that all Socialists are Satanists or that the next Act of Parliament will mean work and wealth for all. We ourselves have generally found that children were quite sufficiently intelligent to question

the first and that grown-up people were quite sufficiently stupid to swallow the second. It almost looks as if there were something wrong about education; or perhaps something wrong about growing up. But the latest news in the educational world is that a more moderate reform is under consideration; and the reformers admit that there is a distinction to be made. One or two fairy tales about pretty things like flowers or butterflies, it is loftily admitted, may do no harm. But fairy tales about dragons and giants, because they are ugly things, may have a dreadful effect upon the delicate instinct for beauty. Schoolmasters discussed the question recently in the light of the most recent psychology of æsthetics. For our part, we have seldom seen a schoolmaster who was half so decorative as a dragon. And though a giant may appear gross or grotesque, he is not necessarily less so when (as in the case of one or two professors) he is reduced to the dimensions of a dwarf. The human race must be a very horrible sight to the human child, if he is really so sensitive an æsthete as all that. But it must be admitted that the objection was not exclusively æsthetic, but also partly ethical. On moral grounds also it was urged that the child may read stories about beanstalks, but not stories about giants; the learned educationists having apparently forgotten that they both occur in the same story. Children, it appears, are not to read about giants and witches because it will encourage cruelty; as the child "will certainly sympathise with the torturers." This would seem to be an extreme dogma of Original Sin by the Calvinist rather than the Catholic definition of it. Why a little boy reading about another little boy pursued by a dragon should suppose himself to be a dragon, which he is not, instead of a boy, which he is, we have no idea; we suppose it is

the dragon complex. Anyhow, psychologists suffer from what may be called the contradiction complex; and we need not say that they contradict themselves flatly even on that one small point. For they also say that the tale of the dragon will produce morbid terror and panic; so that it would almost seem as if the little boy were a little boy after all. But he is a rather curious little boy, who exultantly enjoys eating himself at the same moment that he is mad and miserable with fear of being eaten by himself; his complex is evidently very complex indeed. Meanwhile, it might perhaps be pointed out that a child generally goes very eagerly to his father or his friend for the experience of fairy tales; whereas he can remain in complete isolation and ignorance, and still have the experience of fear. The child learns without being taught that life contains some element of enmity. His own dreams would provide him with dragons; what the legend provides is St. George.

A SONG FOR SECRETARIES OF COMMITTEES

(To the tune of "Before a Barndoor Crowing," from "The Beggar's Opera.")

BEFORE the Minutes reading
 I glance around the forum.
 Oh, damn! Despite my pleading
 We haven't got a quorum.
 There's only Batt and Shuttledore,
 Myself and Gasogen.
 The same old four! Oh dear, Oh lor!
 The same old four again!

C. T. B. D.



MONEY TALKS

Thomas Derrick

MARIA-FLY

By WALTER DE LA MARE

LITTLE Maria that morning—and it was a good many years ago—was dressed in a black-and-white frock with a flounce to it. Her hair was tied back over her small ears with a white ribbon, and she was sitting in the drawing-room on a low armchair with a blue-cushioned seat, her stockinged legs dangling down in front of her. She was all by herself. She had wandered in there—nobody by; and after walking about for a little while looking at the things in the room and sniffing at a bowl of red and white roses, she had sat down, looking so sleek and demure you might almost have supposed that company was present and that she was “behaving.”

But Maria was not behaving; she was only thinking. It was a quiet morning. The room, with its two square-paned bow windows, was rather long. There was sunshine in it, and it was still, and though, as it appeared, there was no other living thing between its walls except herself, it seemed to be happy, too. It was no wonder, then, that Maria had begun to think—or rather not exactly to think and not exactly to dream, but (if that is possible) to do both together—even though she could not have told anyone what she was thinking and dreaming about.

She had had a bowl of bread and milk for breakfast, half an apple, and two slices of bread and jam. She felt comfortable. Her piano practice in the old room by the nursery was over, and now she was alone. But she was alone more than usual. It was as if she were not only sitting there in her blue-cushioned arm-

chair with her legs dangling down, but that she could see herself sitting there. It startled her when that notion occurred to her. It was as if she must have really slipped into a dream. And she glanced up quickly with her rather round face and clear darting eyes to make sure. And on the white paint at the side of the door, not very far away, she saw a fly.

It was just a fly. But simply because at that moment everything was so quiet in the world, and because, maybe unlike the chairs and tables around her, it was alive, Maria fixed her eyes on the fly. It was nevertheless a perfectly ordinary fly—a house-fly. It stood there alone on its six brushy legs and clawed feet, their viscous pads adhering to the white gloss of the paint. But, though ordinary, the fly was conspicuous—just in the same way as a man in black clothes, boots and a high cap stalking with an alpenstock on the enormous dazzling snow-slopes of a mountain, is conspicuous—and Maria seemed to be seeing the fly much more clearly and minutely than you would have supposed possible, considering the distance between herself and it.

On the other hand, the fly was not standing there doing nothing, as Maria was sitting there doing nothing. It was not, for example, merely standing on the paint in *its* drawing-room, and looking across at another infinitely tinier fly on the white paint of the minute door to that drawing-room. It was busy as flies usually are in the warm sunny months.

Maria had been up and dressed herself hours and hours ago; but flies seem to be dressing, or at least to be toileting themselves, all the time when they are not prowling about on a table in search of food, or circling round, or sucking up water, or standing like

mock flies asleep, or angling to and fro in the air under a chandelier or a fly-charm, in one another's company.

Not that Maria was by any means fond of flies. She shooed them away with her spoon when they came buzzing about over her blanc-mange or red-currant-and-raspberry tart, or alighted on her bare arms, or walked rapidly about over her bed-clothes. Once she had pulled off the wings of a fly, and had never forgotten how suffocatingly fusty and hot she had felt after doing so.

And if there was one thing Maria couldn't abide, it was a fly floating in her bath. It was extraordinary that, though its carcass was such a minute thing, you could at such a moment see absolutely nothing else. It was extraordinary that the whole of the water at such a moment seemed like fly-water. She would ask her nurse to take the ill-trapped creature's corpse out of the bath and to put it on the window-sill, in case it was not quite dead and might come to again.

And if she remembered to look next morning, maybe it was not, or maybe it *was* there still—just its body. She had more than once, too, heard the dreadful languishing drone a fly utters when it has been decoyed into a web and sees the clawed spider come sallying out of its round silken lair in the corner. It had filled her with horror and hatred and a miserable pity. Yet it had not made her any fonder of flies just for their own sakes alone. But then, one doesn't always feel exactly the same about anything. It depends on where you are, and what kind of mood you are in; and where the other thing is, and what kind of mood *that* is in.

So it was this morning. For some reason, this particular fly was different; and Maria sat watching it with the closest attention. It seemed to be that just

as Maria herself was one particular little girl, so this was one particular fly. A fly by itself: able to live its own life, go its own way, and get about in the world—its own world, too.

To judge from its solitude, and the easy careless busy way in which it was spending its time, it might be supposed indeed that it had the whole universe to itself. It might be supposed it was Sirius, and not another star in the sky. And after a while, so intent did Maria become that she seemed to be doing a great deal more than merely watching the fly. She became engrossed.

She was now stooping together in her chair almost as if she were a pin-cushion and her eyes were black-headed pins in it. She seemed almost to have *become* the fly—Maria-Fly. If it is possible, that is, she had become two things at once, or one thing twice. It was an odd experience—and it lasted at least three minutes by the little gold clock, with the gilt goggling fish on either side its dial under the glass case on the chimney-piece. Three minutes, that is, of ordinary clock time.

For when Maria herself came to, it seemed she had been away for at least three centuries—as if, like the stranger in the rhyme, she had been with her candle all the way to Babylon; ay, and back again: as if she had gone away Maria, come back Maria-Fly; and now was just Maria again. But yet, when she came to, everything was a little different.

She could not possibly have explained why, but she felt surprisingly gay and joyful. It was as if a voice, sweet and shrill as the angel Israfael's, had been singing in her mind from a very long way off. She looked about her in sheer astonishment. If anything, the things in the room were stiller than ever, and yet she

would almost have supposed that up to a moment ago they had been alive and watching her, and were now merely pretending to be not-alive again.

She looked at the roses in the bowl; they were floating there filled with their fragrance and beauty as a dewdrop is with light. The fishes on either side the little clock seemed to be made of flames rather than gilded plaster. There was a patch of sunshine too—just an oblong patch resting on the carpet and part of a chair. It seemed to be lovelier than words could tell and to be resting there as if in adoration of its own beauty. Maria saw all this with her young eyes, and could not realise what had happened to her. She was glad she was alone. She had never felt like it before. It was as if she had ceased to be herself altogether in her black-and-white frock and had become just a tied-up parcel marked “Pure Happiness” with the date on it.

And as she gradually became aware how very still the room was, almost stealthy—and all quiet things, of course, seem in a way a little watchful—she felt she must go out of it. She felt she must go out of it at once. So she scrambled down off her chair. On purpose, she didn't even glance again at her friend the Fly. She most particularly (though she didn't know why) wished not to see it again. So she walked side-long a little, her head turned to one side, too, so that no part of her eye should see the fly again even by accident.

* * * *

She went out of the room, walked along down the hall, and went down the rather dark side-stairs into the kitchen. There was a fire burning in the great burnished range. A green tree showed at the window,

and a glass jar half-full of beer and wasps was twinkling on its sill. Mrs. Poulton, the cook, was rolling a piece of dough on her pastry or dough-board; an apron tied with all its tape round her waist. There was an immense flour-dredger like a pepper-pot beside the board, and a hare, its fur soft as wool, cinnamon and snow white, lay at the further end of the table. Its long white teeth gleamed like ivory between its parted lips.

"Mrs. Poulton," Maria said, "I have seen a fly."

"Now, *have* you?" said the cook. And the "have" was like a meadow that slopes up and down with wild flowers all over it. "And did the fly see you?"

That hadn't occurred to Maria. She frowned a little. "It's got lots of kind of eyes, you know," she said. "But what I mean is, I *saw* it."

"And that was a queer thing, too," said the cook, cautiously lifting up the dough and arranging its limp folds over the fat, dark, sugary plums in the shallow pie-dish, with an inverted egg-cup in the middle. She gave a look at it, and then took up her kitchen knife, and, deft as a barber, whipped the knife clean round the edge of the dish to cut away what dough hung over. "Would you like a dolly, my dear?" she said.

"No, thank you," said Maria, a little primly; not wishing to have the subject changed. "I have told you about the fly," she repeated, "and you don't seem to take a bit of notice of it."

The cook lifted her doughy knife, turned her round face and looked at the little girl. She had small lively light blue eyes, and the hair under her cap was as fair and light in colour as new straw. It was a plump face and yet sharp. "And what do you mean by that, may I ask?" she said, eyeing Maria.

"I mean," said Maria stubbornly, "I *sawn* a fly. It was on the paint of the door of the droring-room, and it was all by itself."

"Whereabouts?" asked Mrs. Poulton, trying to think of something to say.

"I said," said Maria, "on the door."

"Yes; but whereabouts on the door?" persisted the cook.

"On the side where it's cut in and the other part comes."

"Oh, on the jamb," said Mrs. Poulton.

"Jam!" said Maria. "How could there be jam on the door?"

"Well, I'm not so sure about that, Miss Sticky-fingers," said the cook. "But by jamb, I meant *door-jamb*, though it's spelt different—leastwise, I think so. And what was the fly doing?—nasty creatures."

Maria looked at her. "That's what everybody says," she said. "*My* fly—wasn't doing anything." This was not exactly the truth; and feeling a little uneasy about it, Maria remarked in a little voice, "But I am going now, thank you."

"That's right," said the cook. "And be sure and mind them steep stairs, my precious."

Maria glanced at the wasps, hovering over the bottle, she glanced at Mrs. Poulton, at the fire in the range, at the dish-covers on the wall—and then she went out of the door.

She minded the steep kitchen stairs just as much as usual, though she was a little indignant after her talk with the cook. When she reached the top of them, she went on along the slippery hall, past the grandfather's clock, with the white moon's face and the blue

over its hands, past the table with the pink-flowering azalea on it, and climbed on up the wide shallow staircase, taking hold of the balusters one by one, but treading as near as possible in the middle of the rose-patterned stair carpet.

And when she got to the top, she came to a room where she knew she would find a guest who was staying in the house. His name was Mr. Kittleson; he was a clergyman, and this Saturday morning he was writing his sermon for Sunday, and his text was "Consider the lilies of the field. . . . They toil not, neither do they spin."

After fumbling with the handle a little, Maria pushed the door open and looked in. And there sat the old gentleman in a round leather chair, with his silvery-grey beard spreading down over his chest, his sermon-paper on the blotting-book in front of him, and a brass inkstand beyond that. His lips were moving as he wrote. But on hearing the door open, he stayed his writing and with stooping head looked round over his gold spectacles at Maria.

"Well, well, my dear, this is a very pleasant sight. And what can I do for you?" he said, being one of those peculiar old gentlemen that don't mind being interrupted even when they are writing sermons.

"I," said Maria, edging a little into the room, "I have just seen a fly. It was standing all by itself on the—the jamb of the door in the droring-room."

"In the drawing-room? Indeed!" said the old gentleman, still peering over his gold spectacles. "And a very fortunate fly it was, to be in your company, my dear. And how very kind of you to come and tell me!"

Maria was almost as little pleased by the old gentle-

man's politeness as she had been with her talk with the cook. "Yes," she said, "but this was not a norinary fly. It was all by itself, and I looked at it."

The old gentleman peeped down a little absently at his clear sloping handwriting on the paper. "Is that so?" he said; "but then, my dear little Maria, no fly is really ordinary. They are remarkable creatures if you look at them attentively. And especially through a microscope. What does the Book say? 'Fearfully and wonderfully made.' They have what is called a proboscis—trunks, you know, just like elephants. And they can walk upside down. Eh? How about that?"

At that moment, out of its shadowy corner a silvery clothes-moth came flitting across the sunlight over his table. The old gentleman threw up his hands at it, but it wavered, soared, and escaped out of his clutches.

"Cook says flies are nasty creatures," says Maria.

"Ah," said the old clergyman, "and I've no doubt cook avoids them in our food. But they have their ways, which may not please us, just as we have *our* ways, my dear, which may not please Somebody Else. But even a fly enjoys its own small life and does what it is intended to do in it. 'Little Fly, thy summer's play——'" he began, but Maria, who was looking at him almost as attentively as she had looked at the insect itself (before, that is, it had actually become a Maria-Fly), at once interrupted him.

"It's a *beautiful* rhyme," she said, nodding her head. "I know it very well, thank you. But that was all I wanted to say. Just that I had sawn—seen it. I don't think I could tell you anything else—so I mean, that you could be explained it to."

The old gentleman, pen in hand, continued to smile

at his visitor over his beard in the same bland cautious way he always did, until she had slid round the door out of his sight, and had firmly closed it after her.

On her way back along the corridor, Maria passed the door of the work-room; it was ajar, and she peeped in. Miss Salmon, in her black stuff dress, sat there beside a table on which stood a sewing-machine. At this moment she was at work with her needle. She had an immensely long white face—white forehead to chin—with rather protruding eyes and elbows; and she and Maria were old friends.

“And what can I do for you, Madam, this morning?” she cried in a deep voice like a man’s.

“Well, I just looked in, Madam, to tell you I seen a Fly.”

“If you was to look through the eye of the smallest needle in that work-basket, you would see the gates of Paradise,” said Miss Salmon, stitching away again with a click that sounded almost as loud as if a carpenter were at work in the room.

“Give it me,” said Maria.

“Ah, ha!” cried Miss Salmon, “such things need looking for.”

“Ah, ha!” chirped Maria, “and that means tidying all the basket up.”

“Nothing seek nothing find,” cried Miss Salmon, “as the cat said to the stickleback. Which is far better than Latin, Madam. And what, may I ask, was the name of Mr. Jasper Fly, Esquire? If you would kindly ask the gentleman to step this way, I will make him a paper house with bars to it, and we’ll feed him on maple sugar.”

Maria’s spirits seemed to sink into her shoes. “It was not that kind of fly at all,” she said, “and—and I

don't wish to tell you the name, thank you very much."

"*Good morning,*" said Miss Salmon, lifting her needle and opening wide her eyes, "and don't forget closing time's at seven."

It was strange that Maria should feel so dismal at this turn of the conversation, considering that she and Miss Salmon were such very old friends and always had their little bit of fun together. Maria looked at her sitting bolt upright there in her high-collared black stuff dress, with her high head. "*Good morning,*" she said politely.

"*Good morning, Madam,*" said Miss Salmon.

And Maria withdrew.

Opposite the workroom, there was a portrait hanging on the landing in a large gilt frame. Maria looked at the lady painted in it, in her queer clothes, with a piece of muslin or something thrown over her head, and she said under her breath, though not out loud, "M'm, *you* don't know I've seen a fly." And then she ran off downstairs again and met her father at that moment issuing out of his den with the topmost joint of a fishing-rod in his hand. He had on his ugly brown suit and thick-soled brown shoes.

"Daddy," she called at him, "I've just been telling him I have seen a fly."

"Oh, have you," said he, "you black-eyed young ragamuffin? And what business had you to be mousing into his room this time of morning, I should like to know? And talking of flies, Miss Black-and-White, what would you recommend for this afternoon? So as to make quite sure of certain Mrs. Fat Trout I wot of?"

"You see, Daddy," said Maria, stiffly, "you always

turn things off like that. And it was something so very special I wanted to tell you."

"Now, see here," said her father, flicking the air with the tip of his tapering rod-piece, "what we'll do is this, we will. You shall tell me all about that fly of yours when I come in to say good-night to-night. And perhaps by then you will have seen lots of other things. And you shall have a penny for every one that begins with a Q. There's plenty of flies," he added.

"I don't think I shall *care* to see lots of other things," said Maria, "but I'll see." And, looking a little like old Queen Victoria, she walked off into the garden.

Up till then it had been a morning like a blue-framed looking-glass, but now a fleece of cloud was spread over the immense sky. Far away in the kitchen garden she came across the gardener, Mr. Pratt. With his striped cotton shirt-sleeves tucked up over his elbows, he was spraying a rose-tree on which that day's sun, even if it came out in full splendour again, would shine no more. Maria watched him.

"What are you doing that for?" she said. "Let me!"

"Steady, steady, my dear," said Mr. Pratt; "you can't manage the great thing all by yourself." But he put the syringe with a little drop of the liquid left in its brass cylinder into her hands. "Now, push!" he said, "with all your might."

Maria pushed hard, till her knuckles on her fat hands went white and she was plum-red in the face. But nothing came. So Mr. Pratt put his thick brown hands over hers, clutched the tube, and they pushed together. And an exquisite little puff of water jetted like a tiny cloud out of the nozzle.

"It came out *then*," said Maria triumphantly. "I could do it if I tried really hard. What, please, are you doing it *for*?"

"Ah," said Mr. Pratt, "them's secrets."

"Ah," said Maria, imitating him, "and I've a secret, too."

"What's that?" said the gardener.

She held up her finger at him. "I—have—just—seen—a fly. It had wings like as you see oil on water, and a red face with straight, silvery eyes, and it wasn't buzzing or nothing, but it was scraping with its front legs over its wings, then rubbing them together like sticks, all round and round one another, like corkscrews. Then it took its head off and on and then it began again—but I don't mean all that. I mean, I *sawn* the fly—saw it, I mean."

"Ah," said Mr. Pratt, the perspiration glistening on his brown face, and his eyes at least two shades a paler blue than Mrs. Poulton's, as though the sun and the jealous skies had bleached most of the colour out of them. "Ah," he said. "A fly, now? And that's something to see, too. But what about them pretty little Meadow Browns over there, and that Painted Lady—quiet, now, see—on that mallow-bloom! There's a beauty! And look at all them yellow ragamuffins over the winter cabbage yonder. We won't get much greens, Missie, if you can underconstumble, if *they* have their little way."

Maria could perfectly well underconstumble. But she hated greens. She hated greens as much as if she had eaten them on cold plates in another world. It was odd, too, that nobody had the smallest notion of what she wanted to say about the fly. No one. How stupid! But she looked at the Painted Lady none

the less. It was jingly perched on the pale paper-like flower of the mallow, its ball-tipped antennae sucking up that secret nectar for all the world like the Queen of Hearts in her parlour with her slice of bread and honey. And then the sunshine stole out again over the heavens above them, and drew itself like a pale golden veil over the shimmering garden. The Painted Lady's wings, all ribbed and dappled, orange and black and white, trembled a little in its gentle heat, as if with inexpressible happiness and desire.

But though Maria admired the creature in its flaunting beauty more than she could say, this was not her fly—this, at least, was no *Maria-Fly*. It was merely a butterfly—lovely as light, lovely as a coloured floating vapour, exquisitely stirring, its bended legs clutching the gauzy platform beneath it and supporting its lightly-poised, frail, plummy body on this swaying pedestal as if the world it knew were solid as marble and without any change; even though it now appeared as gentle as a dream.

Maria was not even thinking as she watched the butterfly, except that she was saying over to herself, though not using any words, that she did not want to go into the drawing-room any more just now; that she had no wish to see her fly again; that she didn't want ever to be grown-up; that grown-ups never could underconstumble in the very least what you were really saying; that if only they wouldn't try to be smiling and patient as though the least cold puff of breath might blow you away, you might prove you were grown-up, too, and much older than they—even though you did have to eat cold greens and do what you were told and not interrupt old gentlemen writing sermons, and must wait for bed-time—no

she was not really thinking of any of these things. But her small bosom rose and fell with a prolonged deep sigh as she once more glanced up at Mr. Pratt.

He was hard at work again with his syringe, and now, because the sun was shining between herself and its watery vapour, it had formed a marvellous little rainbow in the air, almost circular, with the green in it fully as vivid as the myriad aphides clustering like animated beads around the stems of the rosebuds.

"I told you," she quavered a little sorrowfully, though she was trying to speak as usual, "I told you about something and you didn't take any notice."

"Well, well, well," said the gardener. But he hadn't time to finish his sentence before Maria was already stalking down the path, and in a moment had disappeared round the corner of the green-house.

And there, a moment or two afterwards, she happened to come across patient Job, the gardener's boy. Job was an oaf to look at, with his scrub of hair and his snub nose and silly mouth. He was little short of what the village people called a half-wit. He laughed at whatever you said to him even when you frowned double-edged daggers at him. But he was a gardener's boy or natural nonpareil; the very roots of the flowers he handled seemed to want to net themselves about his clumsy fingers, and he was "a fair magician" with bees. Three little steel mole-traps lay on the gravel beside him where he knelt, and he was scouring flower-pots with a scrubbing-brush, and as Maria appeared he looked up with a face like a good-humoured pumpkin, and he grinned at her with all his teeth.

"Marnin', missie," he said.

"Good-morning, Job," said Maria. She stood look-

ing at him, looking at his tiny pig-like eyes in the great expanse of his good-humoured face, and hesitated. Then she stooped a little and all but whispered at him, "Have you ever seen a fly?"

"Oi, miss, seen a floi?" he replied, opening his mouth. "Oi, missie, oi've seed a floi."

"But have you"—and Maria all but let all her breath go over just those first three words—"but have you, Job, ever seen the only teeny tiny fly there ever was: *your* Fly?"

Job scratched his head and looked so serious for an instant that Maria feared he was going to burst out crying. "Oi, missie," he suddenly shouted at last, with a great guffaw of laughter, "that oi've, and avore I could catch un ee was gawn loike a knifejack clean down Red Lane. Oi, and ee *wor* a floi, ee wor."

Maria burst out laughing; they laughed in chorus; and then she found tears were standing in her eyes and she suddenly fell silent and mournful. "And now," she said, "you had better get on with your pots."

She turned away, her small head filled as if with a tune ages old, and as sorrowful as the sounds of the tide on the unvisited shores of the ocean. There was a little old earwiggy arbour not far away that always smelt damp, even after weeks of fine, hot weather—though it then smelt dry-damp.

Maria went into its shadow and stood there by herself a moment. Why she had gone in she didn't know. It was very still. But mustily, stuffily, gloomily still—quite different from the sunny coloured stillness of the drawing-room. There was a wide droning in the air outside. Millions of minute voices were sounding in concert like the twangling of the strings of an enormous viol. A bird hopped on to the roof of the arbour;

she could hear its claws on the wood. Its impact dislodged a tiny fleck of dust. It fell into the yet finer dust at her feet. The arbour's corners were festooned with cobwebs—old and grey as Melchizedek.

Maria gave yet another deep sigh, and then looked up around her almost as if in hopes of somebody else to whom she might tell her secret tale—about the fly—about Maria-Fly. And then, as if at a signal, she hopped down suddenly out of the arbour, almost as lightly as a thin-legged bird herself, and was off, flying over the emerald-green grass into the delightful sunshine, without in the least knowing why, or even where to.

THE PIPES IN PARADISE

The pipes they smoke in Paradise
Are carved from Eden tree;
The large long pipes that angels fill
Are carved with cunning, carved with skill,
The long, deep pipes they smoke until
Philosophies agree.

The pipes they smoke in Paradise
Are made from Eden wood;
Fine fashioned pipes and well bespoke
Are treasured by pre-Deluge folk,
Since Saints first learned the trick of smoke,
And saw that it was good.

The smoke they pipe in Paradise
Is smoke of man's desire;
The dreamy smoke of distant charms,
The smoke that soothes, that slays alarms,
The cloudy smoke that never harms;
The smoke without the fire.

The smoke they smoke in Paradise—
 The columns rise and soar,
 In skies that rise above the skies
 By wise old men at last grown wise,
 The smoke they smoke in Paradise
 Goes up for evermore.

J. D. GLEESON.

IRRESPONSIBLE OUTBREAK OF ONE WHO,
 HAVING COMPLETED A BOOK OF ENOR-
 MOUS LENGTH ON THE POET CHAUCER,
 FEELS HIMSELF FREED FROM ALL BONDS
 OF INTELLECTUAL SELF-RESPECT AND
 PROPOSES TO DO NO WORK FOR AN
 INDEFINITE PERIOD

*“Wot ye not wher ther stout a litel town,
 Which that icleped is Bob-up-an-down.”*

—*The Canterbury Tales.*

THEY babble on of Babylon
 They tire me out with Tyre
 And Sidon putting side on
 I do not much admire.
 But the little town Bob-Up-and-Down
 That lies beyond the Blee
 Along the road our fathers rode,
 O that's the town for me.

In dome and spire and cupola
 It bubbles up and swells
 For the company that canter
 To the Canterbury Bells.
 But when the Land Surveyors come
 With maps and books to write,
 The little town Bob-Up-and-Down
 It bobs down out of sight.

I cannot live in Liverpool,
 O lead me not to Leeds,
 I'm not a Man in Manchester,
 Though men be cheap as weeds:
 But the little town Bob-Up-and-Down
 That bobs towards the sea
 And knew its name when Chaucer came,
 O that's the town for me.

I'll go and eat my Christmas meat
 In that resurgent town
 And pledge to fame our Father's name
 Till the sky bobs up and down;
 And join in sport of every sort
 That's played beside the Blee,
 Bob-Apple in Bob-Up-and-Down,
 O that's the game for me.

Now Huddersfield is Shuddersfield
 And Hull is nearly Hell,
 Where a Daisy would go crazy
 Or a Canterbury Bell,
 The little town Bob-Up-and-Down
 Alone is fair and free;
 For it can't be found above the ground,
 O that's the place for me.

G. K. C.

TO A GREAT AND VERY FINANCIAL
 NOBLEMAN

My Lord, they slander you, they say
 You sold your honour yesterday.
 My Lord, they lie; it is not true:
 You chucked the thing away
 Long, long ago, before you knew
 It might be made to pay.

A. M. C.

THE MAN AND THE VAN

By "Quo"

A MAN saw A van. It was on the eve of Yule. He was A bad man. The van was at A pub. A bag was in the van. A bar was in the bag. It was A gold bar. The good man was in the pub. It was his van and his bag and his bar. The good man saw A bar in the pub. It was not A gold bar. He sat at the bar in the pub. The name of the bar man was Ted. Give the good man A pat on the back, Ted, and A mug of ale. For he is A good man and has A van. And it is the eve of Yule. Let us be glad.

The bad man took the bag and the bar out of the van and ran off. Oh bad, bad man! And on the eve of Yule too. How could you be so bad?

The good man saw A van when he came out of the pub. It was the eve of Yule. He did not see A bag nor A bar. So he went back to the bar of the pub. He was not glad. Give the good man A mug of ale, Ted, for he has lost his bag and his bar and is sad. And it is the eve of Yule.

And when the good man had had his mug of ale he saw two vans. But he did not see A bag or A bar of gold. And he was still sad.

Now, Bob stood at the side door of the pub. Bob had A blue coat and A blue hat and he had blue pants too. And Bob had A belt and big boots and A club. Give Bob A mug of ale, Ted. For he is A good Bob. And it is the eve of Yule.

Take your club, Bob, said the good man, and run and give the bad man who has gone off with my bag and my bar A hard bang on the nob. I can not run fast, said Bob, if I do not have A tot of rum. And it

is the eve of Yule. Give Bob A tot of rum, Ted, that he may run and give the bad man A big bang on the nob with his club. Give the good man A tot too, Ted. For it is eve of Yule. Then the good man saw two Bobs and three vans. Run, both Bobs, said the good man. And both the Bobs did run with clubs to find the bad man and bang him on the nob.

But the bad man sat on the bag in A low pub and Bob did not find him. So Bob came back and told the good man. And the good man went home in one of the vans. And he was sad and sat on the hob and did sob.

Now A rich man as he did pass by did pop in his head and he said, What is this 'ere and why do you sob and be sad? And the good man said, I have lost my bag and my bar. A bad man took them out of the van. And the rich man said, Do not sob or be sad. For it is the eve of Yule. Here are two bars of gold for A Yule gift. And what do you say to A tot of rum? And to A mug of ale? Then the good man was glad. And they went to the pub. And each had A mug of ale and two tots too of rum. And as they went home in A zig and A zag they met the bad man with the bag in his hand. And the bad man too went with A zig and A zag, for he had had bad rum. And it was the eve of Yule. And the bad man went bump into Bob, who was back at the side door of the pub with A mug of ale in his hand. And Bob hit the bad man A bang on the nob with his club. And the bad man fell down dead. And Bob took the bag and gave it to the good man. And the good man was not now sad. He was glad. For he had got his bag and his bar, and it was the eve of Yule.

And the good man said, Well done, good Bob.

Give Bob A mug of ale and A tot of rum, Ted, for it is the eve of Yule. Let us all be glad.

Q. Where is the bad man?

A. He is dead.

Q. Where is Ted?

A. He is at the bar.

Q. Where is Bob?

A. He is at the side door of the pub.

Q. Where is the good man?

A. He sits on the hob and is glad.

Q. Where is the rich man?

A. He sits with the good man on the hob and has A tot of rum. A good Yule to you all with lots of rum and ale in mugs.

THE NEW ATLANTIS

By GREGORY MACDONALD

NOBODY thought of the Devil, but it was the Devil nevertheless who sent out little imps dressed in frock-coats and top-hats with a prospectus for the Atlantis Dredging Company. Yes, there it was in black and white. Engineers were already at work with steam-winchies, dredgers, pumps, and besoms, fishing Atlantis out of the bottom of the sea, wringing Atlantis out quite dry, sweeping barnacles and old wrecks off the surface of Atlantis, and laying Atlantis out as a Utopia, which was to preserve the best features of Peacehaven, Port Sunlight, and the Garden of Eden.

That was the prospectus. Who was going to take shares? At all ends of the earth immediately folk began to throw away whole libraries of Karl Marx, Shaw, Wells, Stoddard, Dell, Sexton Blake, and all the authors by whose writings we live in happier

dreams than the realities of life can give us; and they came in coracles and war canoes, in tugs and liners, swimming, floating, and in all manner of ways to the Devil himself, in a frock-coat, standing there just underneath the Statue of Liberty, which he had erected at the chief port and entrance of Atlantis.

And they said to the Devil, "This is Utopia?"

And one of them, a Scotsman, put his foot inside the gate, but he drew back and asked, "Now, how do you define Utopia?"

Behind his beard the Devil said, "I define it as a *petitio principii* and a trap for fools," but through and in front of his beard he bawled out loud enough for all to hear that it was a virgin land where each man could realise what was for him the best life in community with his fellows.

"That's good enough for me," said an American. "*C'est raisonnable*," said a Frenchman. "Will it work?" asked an Englishman. Only the Scotsman seemed inclined for metaphysical questionings, but the Devil pushed him in and slammed the gate behind him. And there they all were in a virgin land, well-disposed towards one another, political philosophers every one of them, each determined to make Atlantis a land of plenitude after his own heart. Green fields and blue waters stretched before them to the hills trembling under a summer sky, and beyond them could be imagined horizon after horizon to the very edge of Eden.

There they were, all happy. There were agriculturists, industrialists, monarchists, simple-lifers, distributists, monopolists, republicans, anarchists, doubters, theorists, organisers, talkers, born leaders, poets, credit reformers, proportional representationists, fixed pricers,

liberals, socialists, social democrats, conservatives, communists and all manner of men.

"Well, now," said one of them expansively, "we choose the strongest to be king."

"King?" said another. "Who talks of kings is a traitor. Utopia is a republic."

"We are all kings together," muttered a communist, "and we all hate ourselves."

"Anyhow," said a distributist, "let's spread out on the land first and found families."

"Be damned to you," shouted a monopolist. "I own all the land, and you work for me."

Then, before you could say knife, there arose a great shouting and bawling from all sides, and within a moment the shareholders of Atlantis were kicking each other and their fists were swinging up and down, and the whole great clotted mass of Utopians went on bouncing about Atlantis, turning round and round for three days and three nights.

At last the Devil crept out of the heap, with his immaculate clothes torn off his back, and he was scratching his head in perplexity.

"Fools," he cried; "you men will be no good until you lose your minds and your memories and your tongues, and the use of all the five senses that you have. Since the beginning of history you have saved your souls by fighting, and I thought that I could damn you by giving you peace."

Then he went to the front door of Atlantis for some fresh air, and suddenly he jumped up in the air with joy and scurried off across the sea with little hops and jumps into the blue sky. And he came back with a miserable worm of a man, the only one who had been too wise to take shares in Atlantis. And the miserable

little worm was sniggering at all the Utopians with their collars torn off when the Devil gave him a great thwack on the side of his head that sent him sprawling into Hell.

Then Atlantis sank into the bosom of the sea, and all that blessed company of Utopians ascended in a struggling mass to Heaven.

STOP PRESS NEWS

NOTHING to print. Stop Press? Ay! Stop the Press! We only print to keep our circulation. For Ads. diminish when Net Sales grow less. Yet without news . . . Well, here's the situation—The bathing belle is stale; for half the nation, Holidays done, resumes its occupation. The other half's in hiding. Marriage? Yes! But *More Divorces* makes a poor relation. Baldwin has made the usual oration. Paris reports the usual change in dress. *Murder*. Thank God! "*We learn with deep distress. . .*" Give Baldwin half a col.! Barnes? Oh, two sticks! Why should he wear our Headlines for a Mitre? Divorce; two columns. Just a line for Jix. Leader on how to make Trade Unions brighter. One col. to prove that Mr. Cook's a blighter. *Hindenburg cheered*: one col. About, between, Spread the glad news, told by a famous writer; "*Murder!! More Clues!!! Last night at five fifteen. . .*" MURDER! Hurray! There's Jenkins from the *Whoop*. Briggs from the *Yell*. Griggs from the *Megaphone*. *The Daily Liar* has got a priceless scoop. *The Weekly Liar* is rather near the bone. MURDER! The posters rollick down the street. How strange to think the news they tell is *true*! (Or thereabouts.) "Murder!" They all repeat. "MURDER!!! THE HUNT!!!! EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!!!!!"

W. R. TITTERTON.

MONKEYING WITH MEGALOPOLIS

BY C. E. BAINES

FORTIFIED, doubtless, by a glass of Guinness, the L.C.C. have pushed over Waterloo Bridge, the balustrades having first been removed and distributed among those gardeners who are wise enough to appreciate the use of sundials and bird-baths as a labour-saving substitute for bedding-out plants. That is all right: but what disquiets me is the announcement that the opportunity will be seized for beautifying London: in other words, the familiar landmarks on the Surrey side are to be removed and replaced by buildings in a unified design. This will probably mean a white wall a hundred feet high traversed by perfectly regular rows of many thousand rectangular windows. The comic relief—I beg pardon, the bas-relief—will probably be supplied by Epstein.

Now, I don't think this will be an improvement. It is not merely that I like the old buildings because they are familiar—the Shot Tower, the Lion Brewery, and that haunt of mystery the India Store Depot—but I am sure that on purely artistic grounds a low and broken skyline is preferable as a background to a wide river. Of course one knows that picturesqueness has often to be sacrificed to sanitation, and that old-world buildings are often hotbeds of disease: but there is no such excuse in this case. The men who drop lead from the top of the shot-tower and who deposit India Stores (whatever they may be) are probably very much healthier than the typists and executives who will succeed them.

The mammoth block of offices which is the last word in modern urban architecture must always be

a depressing sight—a typical example of bigness without greatness. A great building should express a great idea: but the block of offices represents merely the endless repetition of a very small idea—a little man working in a little room with a little window, and looking forward to the moment when he can stop working. That is where an office-block or a tenement block (which is similarly a mere accretion of small cells) differs from big buildings in which the whole expresses a single purpose—a cathedral, a town hall, or even a factory. Like a sponge or a coral-reef, it is a collection of organisms but not itself an organism. Until quite recently, architects would try to disguise the essential insignificance of this type of building by loading it with ornament; but to-day they realise that this won't do. The architecture of the modern Megalopolis should, they rightly think, symbolise modern mass-civilisation. And, as mass-civilisation eliminates the significance of the individual, so the new architecture eliminates the significance of details, and produces its effects by the mere manipulation of masses. Thus we get the impression of vast power, passionless and impersonal. Now, this is all very well: but the whole essence of this kind of art is that it should be completely unselfconscious—and that is just what the moderns are not. They do their best to make a building look cold and inhuman; and then they turn on the floodlights and dance round it in an orgy of febrile self-congratulation, shouting:—“See how cold and inhuman we are!” But they are not really inhuman—only slightly sub-human. Again, the architects of Megalopolis, owing to their unfortunate habit of thinking big, seem completely to have lost the sense of contrast. They imagine that if every

building in sight is big, the effect must be one of bigness. Probably that was just what Nero thought when he embarked on these Town-Planning schemes which helped to make him famous. But the men who planned Florence and Chartres and Bruges and Lincoln knew better: they knew that a spire never looks so tall as when it is glimpsed at the end of a narrow alley, and that a palace should ride like a ship over a sea of lowly, huddled, roofs. And (although here I speak in complete ignorance) I have the impression that it must have been the same in the pagan world. We picture the later cities of Asia Minor which were the last word in civic splendour, as consisting entirely of temples and colonnades; but there must have been homely wharves in the foreground, and taverns, and fishermen's huts—in fact, all the things that our town-planners want to sweep away.

There is one common-sense rule which was a trite proverb among the ancients—that public wealth must seek display, and private wealth must avoid it. Where this rule is observed, in the buildings of a city, the effect will be balanced and probably beautiful. True, in old times it was often broken, as we see in the insolent palaces which housed the plutocrats of most mediæval towns. But in those days there was a limit. The house of Jacques Cœur was the marvel of Bourges—but at least he did not have a shop bigger than the cathedral, or an office bigger than the Hôtel de Ville; and his clerks and workmen were humbly enough housed. But to-day poverty itself is lodged in palaces that overtop the pyramids; the business of a thousand market-stalls is concentrated into a mammoth Department Store, and all the latest architectural triumphs of London have been office-blocks. The picture is ill-

balanced not because private wealth is too ostentatious, but because private poverty has been thrust out of sight.

Do I then suggest that we should preserve our slums because they are picturesque? The answer is in the negative. I do not suggest that we should preserve any building at all in London. Far from it. The trouble with London is simply that it is, to use the latest official phrase, a "built-up area"; and the only thing to do is to unbuild it. That I take to be a self-evident proposition; though I hesitate to suggest how this should be achieved. I fancy that a promising beginning could be made by a simple one-clause act which would effect a re-alignment of our streets by compelling the owner of every house facing a main thoroughfare to set back his frontage, say, twenty feet. This would simplify the traffic-problem by simultaneously widening the streets and reducing the day-population of London. After that, one might start on some real Planning: I would straighten out the main arteries of traffic: I would throw St. Martin's Lane into Aldwych: I would throw Grays Inn Road into the Victoria Embankment: I would throw Thames House into the Thames. I would have forty-two bridges all converging on the present site of Waterloo Station, and there I would establish a super-roundabout where all the traffic of London would eternally revolve in seven mystic circles.

But I wouldn't abolish the India Store Depot.

C. E. B.

“. . . WHAT we have to state, and for some time probably stand alone in stating, is that in this age the idealism is base. In every age the materialism is base. In the Dark Ages the Danish pirates might be looking

for nothing but loot; but in Alfred the heroism was really heroic and in Dunstan the devotion was really devout. Many a medieval prince or baron would marry and give in marriage only for the sake of dowries; but St. Francis did really marry the Lady Poverty for love. There were small self-seeking rascals in the French Revolution, who crawled into the senate-house through the sewers; but nobody doubted that some idealists, when they had starved in the garret or died on the scaffold, had a right to their *Sic Itur Ad Astra*. But in our age it is the idealism that is almost more muddy than the materialism. When we read a philanthropic appeal for a more humane organisation of industry, as I did some time ago, and the writer recommends some American model factory because 'the workman can leave the works looking like a stockbroker,' we can feel that in the last word a human enthusiasm has reached its top-note. The philanthropist does really mean that it is low to be a labourer, but lofty to be a stockbroker. Or when I read, as I also read the other day, the phrase of some American organiser of World Peace, who expressed a radiant hope that all humanity will soon come into this Brotherhood business; 'and the French will leave off talking about honour' and come in with the rest, I recognise a monstrous and half-witted sincerity, which really does imagine it is idealistic. The man really does think he will be serving the Ideal, if he persuades people to put safety first and to forget whether they are dishonourable or dishonoured. That is the state of things which is so mysterious and amazing; that men are being dragged down by the very dreams that have commonly drawn them, or drawn some of them, towards heaven. The Virtues are tempting men; or rather,

of course, the Vices wearing some of the white garments of the Virtues. In this unidealistic age, the most dangerous things are the ideals. Slavery is an ideal; it is called Service. Avarice is an ideal; it is called Efficiency or Production. Impudence is an ideal; it is called individual enterprise and so on. It is not merely, as the poet said, that the light that led astray was light from heaven; it is rather, as was said by one more than a poet, that if the light in our body be darkness, how great is the darkness."

G. K. C.

MRS. MARKHAM'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND

By HILAIRE BELLOC

On the Locarno Spirit

TOMMY. Pray, Mamma, what is the Locarno Spirit?

MARY. Oh! Mamma! Have you seen how some wicked man has been pretending to print what you say in a thing called *The Nation*?

MAMMA (*with dignity*). My dear, it is beneath my notice. I am sure it deceives no one, and is not at all like me. In any case, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord!" I will say nothing, but leave him to the Lord God of Hosts.

TOMMY. Is there a Lord God of Guests, Mamma?

MAMMA (*rising from her chair in a fury*). Tommy, I have warned you too often, and now . . .

TOMMY (*in terror*). Oh, Mamma, I beseech you! You quite misunderstand me! I really did think—

MARY. Oh! What a lie!

TOMMY (*earnestly sticking to it*). Yes! I did, indeed, Mamma! Don't listen to her. I did indeed wonder

whether there were not a Lord God of Guests. It has always puzzled me.

MAMMA (*eyeing Tommy suspiciously as she sits down again*). Well, I will accept what you say. . . . No, my dears. The expression "Hosts" here signifies large bodies of armed men ; in the original "Sabbaoth."

MARY. And what will He do, Mamma, to the wicked man who pretended he was reporting you without telling a word of *G.K.'s Weekly* in which you really are reported?

MAMMA (*grimly*). My dear, it is not for me to prevent Divine Vengeance (*a pause*). . . . You were asking, I think, about the Locarno Spirit?

MARY. Why do we say "Locarno Spirit," Mamma, instead of "Spirit of Locarno"?

MAMMA. Because, my dear, Spirit of Locarno is very old-fashioned English, such as Tennyson or Gladstone used to talk years ago, and would not be understood by our dear American cousins, or our Brethren from the Britains beyond the Seas. So we say "Locarno Spirit."

TOMMY. It is like "Rome Correspondent" instead of "Roman Correspondent."

MARY. Yes, and like "Bishop Duffy" instead of "Dr. Duffy," as Granny says, and Marchioness Weevil instead of Lady Weevil. Granny has told me lots and lots of them. She says they're disgusting.

MAMMA. My dears, you must always listen respectfully to what your dear father's mother has to say: but, of course, she belongs to an older generation.

TOMMY. Rather!

MAMMA. Silence! . . . To an older generation; and naturally looks askance at change. But we must move with the times. Well, then, the Locarno Spirit . . .

TOMMY. Is it a kind of gin?

MARY. How silly you are!

MAMMA. No, my dear, it is not a Spirit in that sense, but a mood, a state of mind, and is used of a good and fine mood.

TOMMY. Yes, Mamma! I understand now. Papa read out from the paper the other day about a young lady of Twickenham who ran after a man who had snatched her handbag; she vaulted a stile, caught him, stunned him with a blow over the side of the head, and handed him over to the police. Papa said: "That's a girl of spirit!"

MAMMA. Your dear papa did well to commend this young person for taking steps to re-obtain possession of her property. But we must return to the Locarno Spirit, which it is most important you should understand and acquire. It is a new spirit of goodwill among those who were lately foes in the Great War.

MARY. Oh! Mamma! How delightful! And it came all of a sudden-like?

MAMMA. My dear, you mustn't say "all of a sudden-like." It is vulgar.

TOMMY. Nurse says it.

MAMMA. You are no longer in the nursery. You must behave like young ladies and gentlemen. . . . Yes, it came with marvellous swiftness; indeed, within two days. People suddenly saw, in a flash, how deeply the Prussians had been wronged, and their late enemies became eager to welcome them as friends.

MARY. But, Mamma, are we also to be friends with Frenchmen and Belgians and horrible people like that?

MAMMA. Yes, certainly, my dear: it goes against the grain, but we must do our best: it is in the Locarno

Spirit. Indeed, one of our politicians was kissed by a Frenchman openly in the street.

TOMMY. Indeed? How very strange!

MAMMA. Well, my dear, it was certainly an extreme case, but it helps you to understand the Locarno Spirit.

MARY. And does that apply to Italians, too, Mamma?

MAMMA (*hesitating*). My dear, I am not quite clear as to whether Signor Mussolini sees eye to eye with us in this matter; but certainly it is our duty to treat even Italians with courtesy, for, after all, that beautiful word Locarno is an Italian name, though it is in Switzerland.

TOMMY. And Poles, too, and Irishmen?

MAMMA. Everyone, my dear child. You need not extend the list. The Locarno Spirit is one of goodwill to all human beings and of sympathy with all nations. All shall be free (*she casts up her eyes to heaven*). You know the Bible words, my children? "The Egyptian, the Syrian, the Moor, and they of Mesopotamia and of the Islands, the Nubian also and the Cypriotes and every bondman shall be free in the Word and in Truth" (*reverently and simply*). That, my dears, is the true Locarno Spirit.

TOMMY. "The Lion shall lie down with the Lamb, and there shall be righteousness in Beth-Shemosh."

MAMMA. Precisely.

MARY. "I cast up my eyes and, lo and behold, I saw one clothed in . . ."

MAMMA (*sharply*). That will do, Mary!

MARY (*demurely*). I was thinking of last Sunday's lesson, Mamma. Will they let the Hungarians have their King again?

MAMMA. Really, I cannot tell, my dear!

TOMMY (*eagerly*). And, oh, Mamma, I do hope they will do away with all armies except ours and all navies too, except ours, don't you?

MAMMA. Yes, my dear, heartily. That also is the true Locarno Spirit. But remember that much the most important part of it is making friends with our late enemies, and not exactly enemies of our late friends, but, anyhow, showing less partiality for them.

TOMMY. It seems to me that in this way everyone will be happy.

MARY. Yes, because everyone will be good. Mamma! Tommy is kicking me under the table.

MAMMA (*severely*). Is that so, Tommy?

TOMMY. I only moved my foot.

MAMMA. Let me hear no more complaints. That is not the true Locarno Spirit. And now, my dears, I hope you have both understood me and are ready to carry out the Precepts of this New Locarno Spirit.

TOMMY & MARY (*in chorus*). Oh! yes, Mamma.

MAMMA. Our late foes, the Germans, being under the rule of Prussians, who are the best and highest of them, fought against us indeed; but they always fought cleanly and chivalrously—which is more than can be said for some of our allies.

TOMMY. I should think so, indeed! Dirty Toads!

MAMMA. Hush, my dear! That is not the Spirit of Locarno—I mean the Locarno Spirit. We must forgive and forget, even our former Allies. But meanwhile let us do all we can to become warm friends again with our noble German cousins. A natural friendship is only strengthened by an honest fight well won and lost.

TOMMY. Aye! Aye!

MAMMA (*continuing, with a beautiful look*). And what a consoling thought it is that during all the long

struggle we never spoke or printed a word which could have offended our gallant foemen.

MARY. Other nations cannot say the same.

MAMMA. No, indeed, my dear. Alas! I am afraid not. . . . Next week, then, we are having to dinner a young German naval officer who sank one of our hospital ships, and I think we should all . . .

MARY (*interrupting excitedly*). What! Mamma? The one in which Cousin Jack was drowned when he was coming home so badly wounded?

MAMMA (*beaming*). Yes, my dear! The very same!

MARY. Oh! How exciting! It will be interesting to hear him telling us exactly how he did it!

TOMMY. He must be awfully clever.

MAMMA. He is, indeed; and I am sure he will be good-natured, as all Prussians are, and talk a great deal to you children: but you must not pester him too much with questions.

TOMMY & MARY (*in chorus*). Oh, no, Mamma!

MAMMA. Now we will sing that beautiful hymn "Lest we Forget"—No, I think we will have "O God, our help in Ages Past," and remember, that also was written by a German.

MARY. How clever of him to have written it in English!

MAMMA. It was not written in English, my dear; it was written in German. But the two languages are almost exactly alike, so it was easy to transpose it.

TOMMY (*beginning to chant*). "O God, our help . . ."

MAMMA. Be quiet . . . wait till I have opened the piano, and we will all take the note. . . . Now.

OMNES:—"O God, our help in ages past, Our, etc., etc.

(*Left singing*)

II

On Revolution

MARY. Pray, dear Mamma, is it true that we are to have a revolution next May? For, if that be the case, I think Tommy and I should make proper preparations for our safety.

MAMMA. My child, there has been some talk of such a thing: but the sound common-sense of our British working man will, I am convinced, make short work of any such peril.

TOMMY. What, then, Mamma, is a revolution?

MAMMA. A revolution, my dear Tommy, is a tumult wherein foreigners (usually of the French, Italian, Spanish, Irish or Russian sort) set upon each other with the utmost violence. A machine called the Guillotine (which is a sort of slicer) is set up; heads are cut off; songs are sung in great numbers; meanwhile mobs parade the streets.

MARY. Oh! It must be most exciting! But since it is only the worst kind of foreigners who do these things, it seems clear we need never fear their being done in Britain.

MAMMA. Exactly, my dear. And that is what I meant when I said that the sterling common-sense of our people was a warrant against any such follies.

TOMMY. How could anyone have thought it possible, Mamma?

MAMMA. There have been alarming symptoms of disorder not only in Wales, where such is to be expected, but in our own dear England itself. A Dean has been mobbed. Baronets and their sons have been jeered at. Banners have been displayed with the words: "To Hell with all Bishops."

MARY (*stopping her ears*). Oh! Mamma. I cannot allow myself to listen to such language.

MAMMA (*severely*). Language which I think fit to repeat for your instruction is fit for your ears.

TOMMY. Yes, indeed, Mamma! I only hope that you will give us some more of these horrible examples . . . but pray what is the cause of such enormities?

MAMMA. The working men, who form three-quarters at least of our population, are excited by cunning agitators who stir in them a wicked envy of gentryfolk and make them discontented with their lot.

MARY. Which?

TOMMY. Which what?

MARY. Which "their"?

MAMMA (*to Mary*). Silence! (*To Tommy*). Tommy, you must not talk across me thus! (*To Mary*). What did you say, my dear?

MARY (*demurely*). I said "Which?" Mamma.

MAMMA. How "which"? Which when or where? Explain yourself, my child.

MARY. I meant, Mamma, which were discontented, with what lot, and . . .

MAMMA (*sternly*). Did I for one moment suspect, Mary, that your remarks, rather than seeking information, were designed . . .

MARY (*eagerly*). Oh no, Mamma. I assure you! I had no such intencion. It was but the desire for instruction!

MAMMA. Very well. . . . Learn, then, that agitators have been stirring up our honest working men to Envy, Greed, Uncharitable Thoughts, Discontent and all that St. Paul so fearfully denounces in Thesalonians I, chapter ii, verse 16. A text, my dears, which I urge you both to commit to memory.

MARY & TOMMY (*in chorus*). Yes, indeed, dear Mamma!

MAMMA (*continuing*). And to-morrow, after tea, I shall take you both and hear you repeat it, and I warn you that I shall expect you both to have it perfectly by heart.

MARY & TOMMY. We will, indeed, dear Mamma.

TOMMY (*alone*). And please go on about these wicked men.

MAMMA. Well, first they told one set of workers that their wages were not sufficient, and then another and another, until at last nearly all our people became thoroughly dissatisfied, and some of them even *stopped* working altogether in the hope of obtaining larger sums.

MARY (*shocked*). Can you mean, Mamma, that they did this without asking leave of their masters?

MAMMA. I do, indeed, my dear. The Railwaymen, then the Miners, then the Dockers. I don't know how many more! It has been going on for three or four years, and more. Alas, it is getting worse!

TOMMY. Are we to understand, Mamma, that these common men will not take the orders of the better-class folk whom God has set above them?

MAMMA. Yes, my dear. You could not have put it better. And now, at last, the very worst thing possible has happened. Our loyal British sailors, by whom we set so much store, seem to be infected by the germ.

MARY. What is a germ, Mamma?

MAMMA (*doubtfully*). I believe it to be a little animal with six legs. But I am not quite certain. At any rate, it has a very poisonous effect, and is the cause of cancer, colds and many other ailments, among which we must include Bolshevism.

MARY (*eagerly*). Ah, there, Mamma, is a word that I have always wanted to have explained to me. Pray, Mamma, what is Bolshevism?

MAMMA (*simply*). It is roughly, the Bolshevists.

TOMMY. And who are the Bolshevists?

MAMMA. You must understand they are Russians, and therefore cannot read or write. They wear top-boots into which they tuck their trousers. Conversely, they wear their shirts outside.

MARY. Oh, Mamma, how disgusting!

TOMMY. Good God! Do they wear their braces next their skin?

MAMMA (*very angrily*). Upon my soul, Tommy, if you use such words again I shall . . . I shall indubitably banish you from my presence.

TOMMY (*relieved but still arguing*). But, Mamma, you must admit that if they wear their shirts outside their trousers——

MAMMA (*furious*). I will have no discussion or argument. I have a mind to cease your instruction altogether. If you are unable to give it intelligent and proper attention——

MARY (*humbly*). Pray, dear Mamma, pay no heed to this foolish lad, for I am all agog to hear about the Bolshevists.

MAMMA (*mollified*). You must know, then, that apart from their sartorial habits . . .

TOMMY. What is sartorial?

MARY. Oh, do shut up; you are making us all sick!

MAMMA (*continuing*). They also have long black beards, and wear a sort of round woolly cap, and are called Moujiks. Indeed, you may see pictures of them in the newspapers.

MARY. And what are the names of their principal men, Mamma?

MAMMA. Cohen, Isaacs, Samuel, Elijah, Moses and Einstein . . . I mean Braunstein.

MARY (*astonished*). But, Mamma, all these names sound like Bible names?

MAMMA. I can only suppose, my dear, that the Russians have adopted them. At any rate, these men are teaching a doctrine which I very much regret to say has taken some little hold on our working population.

MARY. And what is that doctrine, Mamma?

MAMMA. It is called the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. It commands the murder of almost everybody and the torturing of the rest.

TOMMY. My God, I mean Good Lord. (*Timorously*.) I am sorry, Mamma, I mean Great Snakes, how horrible!

MAMMA (*looking at Tommy suspiciously*). It is indeed, but so it is. And at last our own brave seamen are now in some degree poisoned by this monstrous creed.

TOMMY. What is a creed, Mamma?

MAMMA. Tommy, you are becoming perfectly intolerable. But to continue. The sea-faring men, some of them at any rate, have refused to work for our magnificent ships which bind us to our cousins of the United States and to our other cousins the Dutchmen of South Africa; with the result that thousands of tons of good food have been destroyed, and that three dozen ladies and gentlemen travelling first class are still detained at the Cape.

TOMMY. What Cape, Mamma?

MARY (*exasperated*). Oh, don't let him interrupt, Mamma. It is so interesting.

MAMMA (*continuing*). But happily wiser counsels are prevailing, and the sailors have remembered old England and are now working again.

MARY. Oh, I am happy to hear that! I was sure that these splendid fellows would not be misled for long!

MAMMA. You are right, my dear. An English sailor knows his rightful master. You are too young to have heard the great story of the *Titanic*, but those of us who lived in those heroic times remember it well. And it is stories like that which have made us what we are and give the British seaman his firm confidence in his owners.

MARY. Will you not tell us the story of the *Titanic* some day, Mamma?

MAMMA. I will do so with great pleasure. But it is getting late, and, what is more, before I can talk to you on the matter it will be my duty to consult your dear father's lawyer, his bankers, and a certain friend of ours who occasionally meets those great men who control our public life. I shall also have to look in at the detective office, and I shall further have to make certain that we are not overheard. So you will see, my dears (*smiling*), that it may be some little time before I can tell you that great story of the *Titanic* and of the glorious heroism of her owners. That alone, apart from the record of all our great mariners, the Cunards, the Peninsulas, the Orientals, and Generals, the Steams, the Navigations, the Companies and the rest. . . .

MARY. Oh, Mamma, what a great roll of names! It makes me think of Drake's Drum.

TOMMY. Don't interrupt.

MAMMA (*continuing*). Anyhow, my dears, the great

ship-masters of England to-day are what they always were, and our sailor folk know the right way, and are now, I am glad to say, only too honoured and too proud to serve them upon their own terms. You may be very certain that now they have come to their senses all the others will follow suit, and that there will be no revolution at all.

TOMMY (*with a sigh of relief*). I cannot tell you, Mamma, how glad I am to hear it. I shall now sleep quiet in my bed.

MARY. Thank you, dear Mamma, for having settled all our doubts and fears. I can now look forward to Aunt Mary's coming next May, relieved of all trepidation and anxiety.

LOVE'S LANTERN

THE Sun's a stout fellow, he's brave and kind-hearted.
He ripens the wheat, he sets soul in the vine.
He's kind yet inconstant; for, daily departed,
He leaves me alone in the dark to repine.
Oh, ho! my stout fellow, a fig for your kindness,
My pleasure begins when your labour is done.
Though Love is a lad who is stricken with blindness,
When Love lights his lantern, I laugh at the Sun.

The Moon is a maiden: inconstant though tender.
She beams on fond lovers at midnight astray.
The Devil be damned for her feminine gender!
She's a will-o'-the-wisp, and she smiles to betray.
Oh, ho! my fair maid, with your artful deceiving,
You light me too late, and you leave me too soon.
Though Cupid's a cove you're an ass for believing,
When Love lights his lantern, I laugh at the Moon.

I've a nodding acquaintance with the Stars in their courses,

As a cue to the compass, the Pole Star's a gem.

But the cues and the stars often lead to divorces,

And the comfort is cold to fond lovers from them.

Oh, ho! my Bright Sparklers, I scorn your affection.

Though I bless the conjunction of Venus and Mars.

For the son that resulted beats all the collection,

And when Love lights his lantern, I laugh at the Stars.

W. R. TITTERTON.

“. . . THE French will not fall; because they will go on doing the only two things that ever fundamentally count in human history: farming and fighting. The man who can produce food out of the earth and the man who will die before you shall take it from him is the man possessing the two ultimate things on which all other things turn in the long run. Great immediate and superficial changes can be wrought by more polished and elaborate arts of civilisation. A far-sighted financier may ruin an industry; an economic expert may dexterously throw thousands of people into unemployment and starvation; a benevolent banker may stop payments or refuse loans at the exact moment when it produces the greatest unhappiness of the greatest number. But these finer issues only touch a few million of individuals. They only affect one generation or one social situation. Sooner or later we come back to the realities of food and fighting. Sooner or later even the usurer has to fight for his interest or to come and ask for his food. If a ring were run round France to-morrow and all questions of exchange and creditors were cut off by war, France would be in a far stronger position than our own country or perhaps any country similarly

placed. As long as the conventions of civilisation remain, as doubtless they ought to remain, a certain illusion about these things almost necessarily remains with them. Finance wields an immediate and immense power; but it is like the power of a spell or spoken charm. The victim of the magician, like the victim of the mesmerist, is always partly to blame for his own paralysis. An element of consent, and sometimes of legitimate consent, lies behind any such convention; it is indeed confessed in the very word convention. But nobody ever knows when such spells will snap or how long such conventions will last. But we do know that the spade will last, and it is exceedingly probable that the sword will last. Both in Europe and in America the future of the farming type of culture may be much greater than the urban manipulators imagine."

G. K. C.

BUCKLEBURY COMMON

THE Lord our God was brave and gay
Before the first created day,
When Wisdom breathed across His mind
The swift conception of the wind.

The wind—then fluttered clouds He drew,
And firmly moulded skies of blue,
Wherein our startling sun He whirled
Around our small and lonely world.

He piled the rocks of England up
And made the hollow seas a cup,
In which eternally He spills
The rivers from the English hills.

At Bucklebury (why not then,
Before His mind came down to men?)
He put rebellious gorse as well
As red-green pine for sentinel.

But Adam laid the roads that pass
In white by paradisa grass;
And Adam walked at God's right hand
Through Bucklebury common-land.

GREGORY MACDONALD.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

PRIMITIVE Man (who was so rude and ignorant as to design his own wall-paper) picked up the primitive crayon with which he had just drawn an accurate sketch of a stag and began to make more mysterious marks on the wall, muttering softly: "Three arrows make a pot; six pots make a cow; three cows," and so on. Professors of prehistoric science will readily guess that he was under the impression that he could make a pot out of arrows. They will also believe that he thought he could construct a cow out of a sufficient number of pots. Some will see in this the simple credulity of primitive men; some the simple credulity of professors. Anyhow, they will err; for he was only engaged in reciting a convenient measure like Troy Weight thousands of years before the fall of Troy. It was a table found useful under the rude conditions of barter. He then rose, and loading himself with clay pots, plodded across the valley to a neighbour's hut, where he exchanged them for a cow. He did not want a cow; that was the paradox. He bought a cow because he wanted a canoe. He then began to drive the cow several miles up the river to the man who made

canoes; but on the way he met a man, one of those great men to whom we owe all our progress. He was an Inventor, and looked a little sly. He said to the other: "Do not waste your time in carting cows and canoes about to the ends of the earth; I have found a way to simplify all that. You observe these flat yellow stones by the river; they are just sufficiently rare to be distinctive; they are portable; you have only to accept a stone instead of a cow and then give it in exchange for a canoe. Let us agree that this large stone is worth twenty cows and proceed." Primitive man replied simply: "There seems to be something in it; and as a fact I want to sell my twenty cows, for I am taking to fishing. Give me the stone and I can buy twenty canoes. A canoe is counted equal to a cow." "Canoes have gone up lately," said the Inventor; and his companion, not knowing what he meant, stared up into the sky for flying-ships. "Moreover," continued the expert, "the stone you have just obtained is not worth exactly what it was this morning. It has fluctuated." "What is that?" asked the very Primitive Man. "Wobbled about," answered the expert; "it is now worth only five and a half cows." Primitive Man, in his superstitious terrors, eyed the stone to see it wobble; but could not detect the slightest movement in it. "Do you really mean," he asked, "that I have got to give up my stone for five and a half canoes?" "Three and a half," said the expert calmly. "It has wobbled again." "Well," said the other, "it doesn't seem to me that your stone is much use after all." "It will be the beginning of all civilisation," said the Inventor: "it is the Lubricant of Exchange." "Well," said the very Primitive Man thoughtfully, "perhaps you're right; a stone is always

useful in a way." And with that he heaved up the stone and knocked the Inventor's incomparable brains out. It has been intelligently suggested that Primitive Man buried people because he was not sure they were dead. But it is an error. The Primitive Man made quite sure that the Inventor was dead. But he buried him under a heap of yellow stones, that he might have plenty of money with him in a better world.

NOTE ON SHAKESPEARE'S WILL

" His life was gentle, and the elements
 So mixed in him, that nature might stand up
 And say to all the world, ' This was a man. ' "

For he was not afraid to die
 As simply as he passed his life.
 To mention that he left his wife
 The big fourposter called the second-best :
 What thought was underneath that bald bequest ?
 Care for her needs, or just his property ?
 Or was this cumbrous gift her rosemary ?
 There is no knowing what a man will do
 When he is Philistine and poet too.

* * * * *

If he had lived to-day
 He would have relished Bairnsfather
 And Strube's Little Man—and Belcher's char-
 women,
 (Low being for highbrows like Jonson).
 He might have worked to-day as he did of old, in
 Fleet Street
 (Though possibly not in the glare of the *Daily
 Express* Building),
 Never blotting a line,
 Never re-reading what was written yesterday.

He might have been a novelist, rather like Christopher Morley,
Picking up gold in the streets of New York.

* * * * *

Getting material at second-hand
From every other trade and other land,
Hob-nobbing with the great,
Loving for what they were, the second-rate;
Reporting what he knew, and making up the rest—
Accepting for its worth, the second best.

* * * * *

When he is Philistine and poet too
There is no knowing what a man will do.

K. C. MACDONALD.

PROLETARIAN ART

FOR reasons we have explained, we do not agree with the policy of putting Communists in prison for the pamphlets they write. But we should have an involuntary sympathy with anybody who should shoot or hang them for the pictures they draw. There is something which is apparently called "Proletarian Art"; the very name of which is about as sensible as Servile Art. We have never understood why the Bolshevists should boast of being wage-slaves any more than any other slaves. Anyhow, in various Bolshevik magazines can be seen something that, even by modern standards, seems the last laborious striving after the meaningless. One thing is certain: there is no proletarian in the world who would even take the trouble to look for its meaning.

We have a much better suggestion to offer. Surely there ought not to be any difficulty about deciding what is meant by Communist Art. It ought to mean mass

production that has no relation to any individual aim or ambition. That the painter should hold the paint-brush in his own hand is itself an intolerable assertion of the privilege of private property. True, it may be answered that many of these pictures are consistent with the idea that the artist held the brush in his toes or in his teeth, or in some other way marking that defiance of tradition which is the only true mark of genius. But it would still have an individualistic taint about it, if the man used his own teeth; and it is often quite difficult to use anybody else's. It seems clear that in the past the whole conception called art had suffered under the limitations of the idea of property. Sculptors have greedily clutched graving-tools which they called their own. They have sometimes even tried to possess the clay; which is obviously a mere variant of the preposterous claim to possess the soil. They have become a sort of petty landlords, the owners of a clay soil. Violinists have held individual bows, with individual fingers; and have been quite annoyed if the instruments were taken away from them abruptly, at a delicate moment in the rendering of fine music. All these passions of greed and egotism testify to the truth that what we need is a real Communist Art.

It is obvious enough what a true Communist Art should be. A gigantic paint-brush as long as a street should be constructed, in such a manner that it can be supported by hundreds of hands, like the old battering-ram used against a wall. A canvas should be spread, something larger, something wider (as Mr. Wells would say) than our petty canvases; and then the whole mob should make a charge with its coloured battering-ram against its canvas wall. The combined movements of countless arms, urging, modifying and even checking

each other, should steer the paint-brush across the picture in some long, grand, perhaps somewhat wavering curve. If that line seemed to lack something of the obvious direction of merely academic art, if there were in it a mysterious and even broken quality, a vast vagueness, perhaps here and there even a majestic hesitation, it would but embody more mystically the Soul of the Folk. It would have very much the effect of voting and other forms of herding in the present phase of the herd instinct. The same principle would, of course, be applied to the sculptor and (after a little tactful talk) to the violinist. Anyhow, we are sure that this is how the Bolshevik pictures ought to have been made. And indeed it occurs to us, on looking at them again, that perhaps they were.

“WHAT’S IT ALL BLOOMIN’ WELL FOR?”

By ERIC GILL

THE quotation from Mr. H. G. Wells’s *Food of the Gods*, which makes such an elegant title for this essay, is the question which marks man among created things—he alone can ask it. And as the presence of an “artifact” proves human habitation (“some man hath done this,” the archæologist proclaims), so we may well ask: What is art and does it matter?

We must begin at the beginning. . . .

“None is good save God.” But how many men in our factory towns or in our London studios know that and what it carries with it? “This is the will of God, your sanctification.” How many know that or even what it means? Sermonising? Yes. But how to blaze can we help that when everything depends upon it? Here we have a world in which nine men out of ten are, by the circumstances of their employ-

ment, turned into irresponsible idiots, instead of being responsible workmen, artists; and nine "artists" out of ten are, by the flattery of their customers, their own natural vanity and the foolish training of art schools, where they get neither art that is skill nor schooling that is discipline, nine artists out of ten are turned into . . . lap dogs, purveyors of lovable sweetmeats, dexterous trick-cyclists with paint-brushes, sentimentalists and sensualists. Art is "the expression of emotion," they say (following that ridiculous old man, Tolstoy). It is not true. Art abides entirely on the side of the mind. It begins with the mind, it ends with the mind—the emotions are only by the way; they are not the essence of the thing. And the minds of men have either gone to rot or they are chained up.

But the rot of mind for which we artists are so conspicuous ('pon my word, though, they suffer a bit from it in Throgmorton Street and, yes, in Park Lane!) is comparatively unimportant. After all, we are few in numbers, and nobody minds. What is more horrible and more disastrous is the chaining up of millions in Birmingham, in Glasgow . . . in any industrial town you can name. How can the arts of a country flourish when the men of the country are enslaved? And it's not the good old slavery of ancient Rome, wherein a man wore a neat little chain on his ankle and was pretty free to be as good a workman as he chose (hence a lot of quite excellent pottery in about a mile of glass cases in the British Museum—all slave work), but a vastly more devilish thing—a slavery of the mind unknown before what we choose to call the Industrial Revolution.¹ Before that thing happened, however bad

¹ It was no revolution; it was simply a corruption—you cannot turn back again to a place you were never at.

a workman a man was, he was a responsible person—responsible not merely for what he did, but also for what his deeds effected; responsible not merely for the technical quality, but also for the intellectual quality of what his deeds effected. Now where is he? Who can be held responsible for anything? Whom can I kick or even curse for making the beastly pen I'm writing with (my fault for using it, but that's not the point just now)? What would be the use of inditing a polite or impolite reproach to the Civil Service Stores? I ask you. Oh, this is really a devilish serious matter! Big business, large-scale industry!—big money rather and large-scale slavery—that's the truth of them.

* * *

All the controversy, then, about the Hudson Memorial in Hyde Park, is so much fiddling, while we leave the main business unremedied. The Hudson Memorial is what one would expect it to be. Shall I have the effrontery to add another criticism to the already too many? I say it is what one would expect it to be, considering how it was done. Consider. You have a writer—peculiar sort of writer, wrote some marvellous but very odd romances and some books of observation on Nature—good books, very, no one doubts that. But he's not exactly a popular hero—most people won't have heard of him before they read about his monument, and few will read his books even then. There is a committee to decide about the monument—very mixed committee, mixed in mind. There's no harm in a mixed committee if the mixing is merely due to the variety of trades or professions followed by its members (one king, one bishop, one hairdresser, one journalist . . .

but all of one faith), but there's every harm if the mixing is due to the variety of misbeliefs held by its members (one agnostic, one C. of E., one Jew . . . but all of middle class). What can such a committee agree about but what the most forceful "high brow" among them can persuade?

What happens next? There's an architect. Oh, my Lord! What's an architect for? Why, to defend his customers from the rapacity of the commercial building contractor and to supply what such a person naturally somewhat lacks—a sense of beauty in design. Well, they choose an architect—very good architect, very good choice—no more Albert Memorials in Hyde Park—back number that! Strong silent men's turn. And there's a sculptor—must have sculpture. ("I do love sculpture; it has such beautiful lines." Lady's very own words—truth!) So they choose a sculptor. Oh, my goodness! What shall I say about Epstein?

Well, Epstein is a very gifted man and has done some monstrous fine bronzes, but stone-carving doesn't happen to be what he's best at—the stuff isn't flexible enough for him; he can't control it as he can clay. Result unfair to Epstein—unfair to architect, the thing ought to have been done in bronze—then we should have had the pleasure of seeing all Mr. Epstein's thumbmarks and none of the marks of his chisel. But committee gets what it deserves—a mix up. Then there's the building contractor—he's never been no pal of mine, so I can say what I like, and I can tell him that he provided some jolly rotten stone for the letter-cutter to work on, and he ought to be told. For the rest, his work is what you'd expect—dull, mechanical, lifeless—making the sculpture look as

though Epstein had gnawed it with his teeth. But why blame the contractor? How could he help it? He's not any sort of workman; he's a man of business—a person who manipulates the building trade so that it yields him a return on his Capital. It's quite likely he never even saw the job. Whom can we blame, then, for the dullness and lifelessness of the masonry? The masons? Poor fellows—Trade Union rates, steam saws, someone else's design, someone else's profit—nothing to do with them—nobody to blame!

So there it is, and that's how all such jobs are done—or at least nine hundred out of nine hundred and one. And that's how everything must be done to-day. What? We can't be ancient Britons? We jolly well can—but not all of a sudden. Meanwhile let us hammer away at the question: "What's it all bloomin' well for?"

RELATIVITY

WHEN

I stand

On my head

As

I often do,

Atlas

Is nowhere in it.

I've got him cold.

With mighty effort

He

Holds the world

On his shoulders;

With very little

I

Poise it on my head.

P. G. S.

THE SILVER BIRD

By K. C. MACDONALD

ONCE there was a silver bird whose home was in a birch wood on a hillside; and he spent his days in a state of passionate wonder because he did not know how he came to be.

The world he had always found to be full of splendour, and he knew that there was no bird in or about the woods and fields so bright and beautiful as he was. But the knowledge made him proud and sensitive and fearful of himself.

He feared the laughter of the crows and the commonplace chatter of the sparrows; and the blackbirds, whom he would have sung with, could not understand his song. He hid himself; but he could not hide his beauty altogether. And so on sunny days he danced on the branches of the silver ash, and showed himself in flashes when the wind blew the silver under-leaves upward. On days when the sky was silver-grey he spread his wings across it, flying among the bright broken edges of the clouds. But in winter he returned to the wood and hid beneath the roots of the many-stemmed old silver birch, where he made himself a little dry house in a hole, behind the screen of the sparkling raindrops.

There he would sit hour after hour, while the rain dripped mournfully from the trees; and he would fluff himself into a ball and veil his bright eyes, lest perhaps the children in passing might see him; and he dreamed of the silver pussy willows that would come out at last to herald the return of spring. Only on moonlight nights he would venture out and sing in the moonbeams, a thin high chant that was like the song of the stars.

He might have gone south with the migrating birds; but he feared their company, and he did not know if in other countries he would find the protection that he craved. So he lived alone through the winter in the birch-wood, and talked, when he needed talk too much, to the wise and kind old birch tree who had given him shelter.

“Dear birch tree,” said the silver bird. “Are you never restless standing in the earth?”

“My roots are deep and wide,” said the birch tree. “Look out and see them, little bird, how they are rayed about me over the ground. I love the earth, and I spread and spread my fingers to clasp and to hold it.”

“But do you never long to leave it, as I do?” persisted the bird. “And fly up, into the sky, and away into the distant fields?”

“My head is high,” replied the birch tree, “and I love the sky, and lift it ever higher and higher that I may see.”

“Yet you are bound to earth and cannot leave it,” said the bird.

A shiver of laughter went through the branches of the tree, and the raindrops came down in a shower.

“You are not bound, little bird,” he said, “and you are full of restlessness and bewilderment. The past and the future trouble you, and neither earth nor sky is yours. But I have told you what I am. I am old, and my desires are not so simple as they were in my childhood, when I swayed my slender body in the wind as though I would break my bonds and tossed my garlanded branches to the sky. Now I am many-stemmed and portly, and my silver coat is barred with black. But look at me, little friend, and understand. Through many trunks I have pushed my strength and my being

into the sky, up and ever upward, and widely over the earth my roots spread outward."

And the bird sighed and returned to sleep, because he could not understand the mind of the birch tree. But one cold winter's day he looked out through the glittering veil of the rain, and a little scuttering silver thing came running into his shelter. At first he was frightened; for he thought it was a squirrel, and the squirrels always scolded him and hurt his feelings. Then he saw that it was nothing of the kind. It was fluffy and round as a ball, and it had great dark mischievous eyes, and an innocent curving mouth, and little paws that darted in and out to play with the raindrops as they fell. Around its neck it wore a ribbon with a little silver bell, that tinkled sweetly with every move it made.

The bird perceived at once that this was a creature of his own kind, a being he could trust and love. "Pretty creature," he cried in ecstasy, "tell me your name."

The furry thing looked at the bird very solemnly, as though he had only that moment noticed that the shelter was already occupied. And then out came his little paw to touch and caress. "I'm just Kitten," he purred, "and I've run away from home. Let me play with you."

"How beautiful you are!" said the bird. "You are like the Spring come back, and the silvery willows. Tell me, do you know how you came to be?"

"Oh, yes, of course," said Kitten carelessly, and then added rather hastily, "Never mind about that now. The raindrops are so bright and sparkling. Come and help me to catch them before they fall."

"Are there any others like you?" the bird persisted.

"Of course," replied Kitten. "There are my

mother and my father, and my brothers and sisters. They are all beautiful like me. Have you brothers and sisters too?"

The bird drew himself up and turned his jewelled eyes inward. Not for worlds would he have confessed his ignorance to this confident young person. "My family is royal," he said. "And every one of them is twice as beautiful as I. They sing full-throated, and they dance in the light of the sun without fear."

"Really?" said Kitten politely. He did not sound convinced; but it was only that he was not really interested, and he went on with his game quite happily.

So the kitten and the bird became fast friends; and day after day they played in the shelter of the woods, and crouched dreaming together beneath the roots of the birch tree. The bird looked up to the kitten because he knew all about himself, and understood so well the ways of the world; though when he sought for knowledge he got nothing, for the kitten preferred to play. But the kitten, on the other hand, looked up to the bird, for he had lived through the seasons, and had wonderful stories to tell of the coming of Spring, and the green leaves on the trees, the blossoms, the beauty in which life began. At last, as he had prophesied, the green buds showed on the trees, and the air grew warm, and the crocuses pushed through the ground, and the bird left his hiding-place and flashed out into the windy sky, forgetting all about the kitten, who in his turn forgot the bird, and became absorbed in the business of growing and studying the ways of a cat.

* * * *

Spring passed and summer passed; and with winter the bird went back to the birch wood, for his thoughts were turning once more with longing to his little play-

mate of months ago. For days he lived there alone and unvisited, and wondered why the kitten did not come. But on a still evening he sat expectant outside his house, waiting for the moon to rise above the trees that he might sing. And suddenly he heard a soft step on the leafy ground, and, starting up, he saw that his friend had come back to him.

But he was changed. The round furry scrap of a kitten had grown into a sleek and supple cat, with glistening silver coat. What was worse, he was now four times as big as the bird. He stood still a moment, purring, and waving his tail slowly to and fro; then suddenly he sprang forward, and knocking the bird from his perch, he crouched and stared at him as he lay between his paws.

The poor bird was too frightened and distressed to struggle; he did not understand, and he lay still, with his jewelled eyes fixed pleadingly on the face of his friend. But Kitten only smiled, well-pleased with himself, because he had profited so well by his mother's instructions. Then he patted the bird encouragingly and helped him to his feet, dusting and smoothing his bedraggled feathers with caressing paws and tongue.

"My games are a little rough, I am afraid," he murmured. "But you mustn't mind. If you notice another time that I am about to jump, just hop out of the way, won't you? It will be much more fun."

The bird was soothed by his gentle tone, and they returned to their old companionship, but with more liveliness than before, and less of dreams. For now when the kitten slept he slept uneasily, ready at any moment to spring into volcanic action; and the bird was watchful, not daring to nestle against his fur in careless ease. And when, in thoughtful pauses, he

returned to the old eager question, "How did you come to be?" the kitten became impatient, and said that his talk was foolish. Nor would he listen now to the old tales of the awakening of the spring, for he said he had seen it all. The bird became harassed and weary, though he would not admit that his loving certainty was gone. But when spring came again, he was thankful to escape into its brightness, and to return once more to his normal life of beauty and the worship of beautiful things.

Still he retained his loyal affection for his tormentor, and with the fall of the year he went back to the wood to watch for him. But for a long time after the leaves were dead and the trees had gone to sleep, he lived alone and saw no living creature that he dared to speak to; and sorrowfully he wondered if the kitten were dead, or if, angered at his distrust, he had left him and would return no more. However, the day came at last when he felt rather than heard the stealthy approach, and half in joy, half in terror, he spread his wings. But the terrible spring was quicker than he could avoid, and the bird lay once more beneath the kitten's claws.

And again there was a change. Kitten had become a cat; and the imprisoned bird, peering in timid welcome into the beloved face, read something sinister in its smiling look. So he struggled to rise, but in vain, and the cat laughed at his misery and cruelly struck him down. Then he said: "Do you still want to know what I am, little bird? Do you know what you are? Tell me, where are your silver brothers?"

"I lied to you," sobbed the bird in agony. "I have no brothers, and I know nothing of how I came to be."

"You deceived yourself and me with a pretty tale," sneered the cat. "Do you know now whence I come?"

From the strong. I was born in anger, not in love; in ugliness, not in beauty. And as for you, you are not a prince, but just a common silly little bird. What lies are told to the young! I have tried life for myself and there is nothing wonderful in it. It yields to the stroke of my paw. There is nothing so beautiful that I cannot destroy it. See! I have broken your wing, and all the brightness is gone from you, and soon you will die and decay!"

Then the bird's heart broke, as its wing was broken, and it died of grief. And the kitten, not being by nature either bad or unkind, but simply led astray by things it did not understand, laid it in the sheltered place where they had played so often, and heaped earth above it and went away. The birch tree moaned, creaking and swaying in its many branches, for the tragedy that it could not have prevented. The night grew cold, and the air was filled with sparkling frost, and out of the midmost of the frost came a spirit like a silver flower. Stooping, she took up the little bird, cold, grey, and dead, encrusted with mould. She breathed on him, and he stirred; she passed her hand over his broken body, and it was healed.

Then the spirit laid the bird against her heart and said: "I am taking you home. For you are a Bird of Paradise. Bid farewell to the birch tree, and weep no more for Kitten, since in Paradise all your questions will be answered."

She rose into the air; and as they travelled swiftly she began to answer the questions that the bird had been asking all his life. She said: "In the days of your making all was light and song, and I wove you from frost and moonlight and jewels, and filled your throat with the song of the streams; for I was filled

with a longing to emulate the works of God; and because He had endowed me with poetry and love of song, I desired that the creation of my hands should not be begun in simple and unbeautiful things. But when in my pride I brought to Him the creature I had made, He smiled upon me, and He took a handful of earth and made a bird more beautiful. I was ashamed, and I let you slip through my fingers and fly away; and your wings were not yet strong, and you fluttered to the earth. But when I would have gone out to find you and bring you home, He said to me: "Let him go. For the beauty that is lacking in him, the things that you forgot, he will find for himself by contact with the earth."

And after she had told him this, and smiled to see his happiness, they came to the Gates of Paradise, the great outer gates in the mist that we cannot see, that yet bar the way. But the bird could see them now clearly, built so slenderly of silver that it seemed a child might force them. Before the gates a great angel stood, dark-robed, with drooping head. And this was Azrael.

Azrael lifted his eyes and looked upon the bird; who knew that he had seen that face before, very briefly, as though in a dream, in the moment of agony when he lay beneath the kitten's claws. But then he had thought it cold and terrible, and now he perceived that it was kind and sad.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The angel answered him: "I am Death. You had no need to fear me, for I understand. There was a time, long ago, when I moved swiftly and carelessly, sword in hand, and struck where I was bidden. But on a hillside, at last, I came face to face with Life Himself; and out of love He yielded to me, and yielding

broke my sword. I too felt, in that awful moment of joy and anguish, the unutterable pain of death. I too went down in that hour into the infinite deeps of desolation. My stroke has returned upon myself, and the wound will never heal. Little bird, tell me that you are no longer afraid of me."

The bird looked into the eyes of Death, and found great pity and sorrow in them; so he said: "I am not afraid." The angel stood aside and let them pass, through the silver gates into Paradise.

The quiet of early morning was in the fields, and there was a streak of red over the forest lands that curved about them. The brightness grew, and the disc of the sun appeared above the trees.

The bird looked into it gladly and said: "It is the sun. And I no longer wish to hide."

"God walks in the garden," said the Spirit.

"But is it not the sun?" persisted the bird.

"The sun is there," replied the Spirit. "And more than the sun. Look again. Look deep. What do you see?"

The bird looked deep, and it seemed to him that the beauty of the garden was reflected in it; and for a fleeting moment he saw the birch tree, and for a moment again a little mischievous face.

"No, it cannot be," he said. "But for a moment I thought I saw Kitten."

"It is quite likely," smiled the Spirit. "Look again."

He looked again, and it seemed to him that all the beautiful things he had ever seen were there. And he looked deeper, and saw such things as he had never imagined possible. And he said: "Can there be more than this?"

And the Spirit answered: "There is yet more."

Then the bird looked deeper still, into wisdom and beauty, and he cried out in terror: "Will it never end?"

The Spirit replied: "It will never end."

But with that word, his terror ceased, and he rose and stretched his wings; and like a lark he flew singing into the face of the sun.

THE JOURNEY

My little boy was not yet four years old,
His tongue was familiar with a few words only.
It was scarce three summers since he had learned to
walk,

And yet he has been called upon that long journey—
Without any mortal companionship—

Whereon even the wisest and stoutest of men

Gravely consider before setting out.

He smiled farewell without speech.

But with a sigh, I know not whether of joy or of sorrow.

Between his fingers we clasped a flower,

Quickly fading.

Oh, only in hope

That it may make his errand known to those Strangers

To whom, being so young, he might not else be able
to explain

Whence was his coming or what his destination.

WALTER DE LA MARE.

“. . . THE highest use of the imagination is to learn from what never happened. It is to gather the rich treasures of truth stored up as much in what never was, as in what was and will be. We are accused of praising and even idealising retrograde and barbaric things. What we praise is the progress which was for those

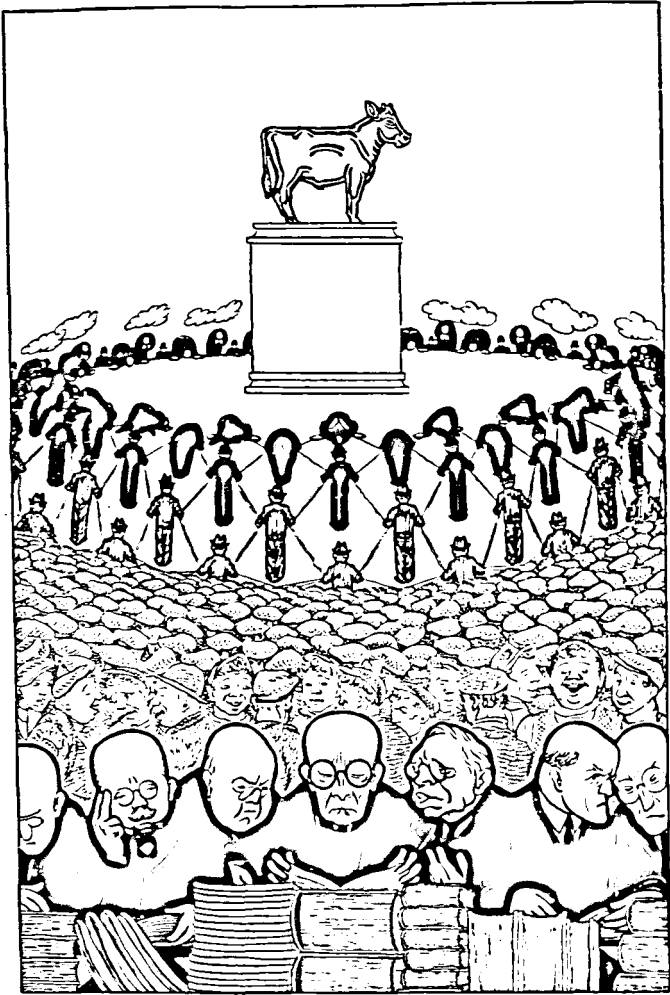
retrograde things prevented; and the civilisation that those barbarians were not allowed to reach. We do not merely praise what the Middle Ages possessed. It would be far truer to say we praise what the Middle Ages never possessed; what they were never allowed to possess. But they had in them the potentiality of the possession; and it was *that* that was lost in the evil hour when all other possessions became a matter of scramble and pillage. The principle of the guild was a sound principle; and it was the principle and not only the practice that was trampled under foot. The ideal of the friar was the right ideal; and it was the ideal and not only the reality that men were forbidden to realise. It was all the best potentialities of the age, things often still young and growing, that were cut down in the panic that followed the blind wrath of the king; even as another king sat in his dark pavilion curtained against the blazing star; and heard the cries of the dying children who never grew to be men."

G. K. C.

LINES TO THE STATUE OF COBDEN
IN THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE

HERE Cobden, with a carven face,
Stares on the traffic of this place:
Transfix'd with wonder to behold
Such very golden fleeces sold:
Clearly astonished to hear
The curious fables whisper'd near:
Frankly discomfited to be
Watchdog to such a company!

But Cobden, is it not a bore
Always to stand upon this floor,



THE GOLDEN CALF

Pouys Evans

Always to hear within this room
Tales of the booming—of the Boom :
Always to see from that high steep
Crush'd hats and bowlers—never sheep?

Don't you get weary now and then
Of tending flocks of stupid men,
Are you not tempted once for all
To step down from your pedestal,
And stamp out thro' the swinging doors
To find real sheep upon real moors :
To hear real shepherds talk of wool
Till it seems almost beautiful?

Sometimes when I look up, I think
Your carven eyes relax—and wink!

ALFRED J. BROWN.

THE MAN, THE WOMAN, AND THE KEYS

God gave the Keys of Heaven to a Man,
And he was faithful to his trust.
He kept the gates close-locked
And only let in
People he had known at school,
Or whose political views
Did not conflict
With his own.

God gave the Keys of Heaven to a Woman,
But somehow or other
She lost them.
The gates stood open all day
And all sorts of people
Strayed in.
By nightfall there was nobody left

On the Earth,
 Or in Hell either.
 When they came to examine the crowd in Heaven
 They could not tell which were angels
 And which not.
 But nobody minded much,
 Least of all God.
 But the Man re-affirmed with perfect justice
 That women ought never to be trusted
 In responsible positions.

ALAN BLAND.

EXTRA-TERRITORIALITY

By GREGORY MACDONALD

THERE was an Attaché once, in a Foreign Embassy in London, who was not a very good Attaché because he was lazy. But he was extremely clever. What little work he did from time to time he did well, so they kept him. He spent much of his day just wandering about town, looking very well-dressed and diplomatic but not at all useful, thinking out things he would do if they were not against the law.

He had a great respect for the law because he had been brought up in a country where people still believed in the Social Contract. In fact, he was a bit snobbish about the Social Contract. He rather looked down upon the English because they never talked about that at all. It seemed very funny to the Attaché that the English could not appreciate an abstract, reasonable concept, but concentrated all their Law in fat blue policemen, thin black barristers, and elderly judges of various shapes and colours.

Then one day the Butler at the Embassy, an English

sergeant who had seen many Attachés come and go, told our Attaché about the principle of Extra-Territoriality. The Butler said that the Attaché could do anything he liked in London because he had diplomatic immunity. It would not be safe, he said, to do something serious, like arsenic. But if it was just a question of stealing from Woolworth's, or driving on the wrong side of the road, or drinking after the man said, "Time, gentlemen, please," the police could not touch him, because he was not amenable to English law. He said that the Attaché could waive his diplomatic privileges if he really wanted to go to prison, but otherwise it was perfectly all right whatever he did, and the policemen would stand back and salute.

So next day, early in the morning, the Attaché waited for the first policeman to pass the Embassy. Then he ran out very quickly and knocked the policeman's helmet off. Then he ran back to the doorstep of the Embassy. The policeman walked up to him and said, "What do you think you're doing?" The Attaché said, "I am an Attaché and I have diplomatic immunity. You daren't." Well, policemen have special classes in International Law, so this one stepped back, saluted, and said, "Good morning, Sir," before he went on his beat again.

Such an example of respect for the principle of Extra-Territoriality encouraged the Attaché very much indeed. He went round to the back of the Embassy, took out his car, and drove it all the way down the street on the wrong side. He was cursed at most horribly, but everyone got out of his way, until he came to a traffic block and stopped, facing south, in a whole squadron of cars and buses which were facing north. A policeman came up to speak to him, but all the

policeman could do was to stand back and salute when the Attaché explained the position. "Nevertheless," said the policeman, "the position being what it is, I do ask you, as a matter of courtesy, to proceed now in the same direction as the vehicles around you."

The Attaché could not refuse a request urged upon grounds of courtesy. So when the squadron of cars moved on, the Attaché went with them, but backwards, which was indeed all that the policeman had asked. To do this he had to look over his shoulder. Every few yards he had to twist his car to right or left a little, so the cars on either side of him got piled up on the pavement or else drove straight into the stream of traffic which was coming from the opposite direction. Long before the squadron reached the next crossing where it was to stop for a time, it was sadly depleted in numbers, disordered in alignment and collectively cross. More than likely, some of the less courteous of the surviving drivers would have ambushed the Attaché in the quiet places of a traffic block, without regard for International Law, and this would have led to a state of acute political tension, perhaps to a war, perhaps to the payment of an indemnity by this already over-burdened country, perhaps even to the fall of the Government, or Heaven knows what else. Fortunately, however, the Attaché was suddenly struck by a new idea. He swung to the left, down a side street, across the line of the advancing squadron, which he left all of a heap in the gutter while he drove thoughtfully home to lunch.

In the afternoon the Attaché took a bus to Bond Street—refusing, of course, to pay his fare because he held a diplomatic passport—and there he bought an up-to-date superior burglar's outfit, with full instructions for use. Then he went to the Bank of England. Nobody would think, to look at it, that the Bank of

England is easy to burgle. Indeed it is not, especially in daylight, with policemen about and soldiers inside, and typists passing by, and Mr. Montagu Norman and all the Directors. The Attaché was not deterred by such speculations. He walked boldly up to the front doors and began to prise them open with a stick of dynamite which he imagined, in all his inexperience and after a hurried reading of the instructions, to be a jemmy.

Very soon he was surrounded by officials, who took the dynamite away from him. Then they set about arresting him, but when he explained what his position was they all stood back and saluted. A Police Inspector gave him the jemmy from the superior burglar's outfit, but with this plea: "Sir, we do ask you to break in by the tradesmen's entrance, for if you ruin the front doors of the Bank of England you will increase, however inappreciably, the taxation to be laid upon this already over-burdened country."

With unflinching politeness the Attaché proceeded to break in by the tradesmen's entrance, watched and applauded by a large crowd of people who were aware of his diplomatic immunity. Soon he was seated on an ingot in the vaults, running gold-dust through his fingers. Meanwhile the Cabinet had been hastily summoned to consult upon this unusual situation. The Attaché's own Ambassador was informed, by a Note from the Foreign Office, of what was taking place. After no little debate, and pending a reply from the Ambassador, it was resolved to send the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs himself down to the Bank of England to remonstrate with the Attaché. So when the Attaché emerged from the tradesmen's entrance a little while later with an ingot of gold under each arm, he was confronted by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who pleaded with him to put them back.

"But," said the Attaché, "you cannot arrest me, because I enjoy the privileges of extra-territoriality."

"This is the Devil of it," replied the Secretary of State. "On the other hand, our financial position is too precarious to allow of a run upon the Bank of England in this way. You, sir, are interfering with the Gold Standard. The gold in the Bank of England backs our notes. If you take some of our gold away we must tear up some of our notes, or else the value of the pound will sink on every market of the world."

"I admit the force of your argument," answered the Attaché. "I shall restore the gold to the vaults. Nevertheless, I have to-day vindicated the principles of International Law, and because the English people have allowed me to do so I can no longer despise them for their ignorance of the Social Contract."

After this speech the Secretary of State shook hands with the Attaché, who drove him to the Embassy surrounded by cheering crowds of Londoners. He was sent for immediately after tea by the Ambassador, and the Ambassador, claiming Sovereign Powers, sentenced him to three weeks' hard labour in the Embassy coal cellars, a term which is not yet expired.

TRIOLET FOR LORD ASHFIELD

God gave the road to us,
 And all the profit;
 Why this unseemly fuss?
 God gave the road to us,
 "Nobis non omnibus,"
 Damn you, get off it!
 God gave the road to us,
And all the profit.

G. C. HESELTINE.

TO A NURSING SISTER UNDER FIRE

By W. R. TITTERTON

GOD kept her lips from laughter, she had no time to weep.

She had no strength for sorrow, and pity seemed too cheap.

She only knew that dead men lay with live men in a heap.

Out of the night they staggered; into her arms they fell;

The naked soul that jibbered, the dumb and sightless shell.

And her heart grew calm within her because she was in hell.

Out of the night of tumult, uprushing in a flood,
With stink of flesh gone rotten and excremental mud,
The great black wave engulfed her, and choked her soul with blood.

She breathed the sickening odours of the kennel and the tomb.

She saw one shapeless horror crowd on another's room.

And pain grew rank about her, with a ghastly waxen bloom.

Dawn after dawn to darkness; from darkness to the grey;

Daylong she toiled unwearied, she worked the night away.

Till a tired man brought a tasteless cup, and said that it was day.

God kept her lips from laughter. But these about to die:

Limb-shattered, entrails gaping; but these with lips gone dry—

Laughed. And I think God wondered at that undaunted cry.

There's much she must remember, but surely will not tell;

For flesh may turn to vapour in the quick fires of hell. Silence! God rest the frightened lads, brave lads she loved so well!

Rest? From the dawn to darkness, from darkness to the day,

Her hands, like a mad shuttle, moved. And she dared not stay

The hands that knit the torment of reeling night and day.

She had no strength for sorrow; and pity seemed too cheap.

She watched the nightmare passing with eyes that could not weep.

Until God dropped the curtain, and gave the sleepless sleep.

W. R. T.

“. . . LIBERTY ought to be the self-expression of the State. And that is exactly what it has not in practice been. It has not been the norm of the nation gaining the national organs and liberating its soul through them. It has been other things, alien and abnormal things, but very wealthy things, gaining possession of those organs; invading, enslaving and exploiting without limit. The freedom of Piggletton-on-the-Pond ought

to mean that the place is as all Piggletonians have in their hearts really wanted it to be; but modern freedom does not mean that at all. Modern freedom means that somebody from somewhere, not always very distinguishable from nobody from nowhere, is free to put up placards and sky-signs and big buildings for all sorts of strange and sophisticated purposes, until Piggleton has turned into something totally different, nobody quite knows how. Whatever it is, it is certainly not the *work* of the Piggletonian people. They may or may not accept this feature, dislike that, or perhaps like another. But they know well enough, and can be heard saying so in the bar-parlour of the Duck-in-the-Pond, that these things are done over their heads and happen without any reference to them; that they are engineered by men in distant places, or often even in foreign lands. It is mostly a question of capital; it is often a question of advertisement; and perhaps of that servile subconscious conversion which is achieved by advertisement. But there is no self-government for the ordinary citizen; it is not he who changes the city. For instance, there is nothing that Englishmen really like better than English landscape; and well they may, for it is perhaps the most beautiful in the world. If it is spoilt to suit the convenience of motorists, it is not really because all men are motorists, or even because all motorists are cads and contemners of landscape. It is because the practice of motoring, unlike the practice of pottering about, has behind it big vested interests which are generally not English at all. The Englishman of the traditional type liked, and still likes, to walk about the country lanes with a walking-stick and a dog. But there is no Walking-Stick Trust, to be invoked by those who want solid support for the cause

of walking. There is an Oil Trust, whose interests are involved in the use of petrol for motoring. There is no millionaire trying to make a Corner in Dogs; there is many a millionaire who would like to make a Corner in Cars. There is no bright American salesman trying to make a turnover by the sale of sunsets. There is no enterprising firm that has put all its money into the Wind upon the Heath. There is therefore no such thing as a driving force of capital behind the Love of Landscape; which is for us so much bound up with the love of the land. The English more than any people preserved a tradition of water-colour painting. But that sort of water-colour is too watery for poster-work; and that sort of water will not mix with oil. Of all types the Englishman has best understood the Hobby; but hobby-horses were never so made as to run races with motor-cars." G. K. C.

I HEARD THIS RUIN SAY . . .

I HEARD this ruin say: "One night
 Mary, the lovely Stuart, came:
 Eyes clear as glass, hair bright like flame,
 And set sweet foot in our staunch house
 Ere bloodiness bespoiled her brows.
 Proud peak of all our fame! . . . One night
 We vased the hapless Lily-White.

"Alack! we crumble down this day . . .
 Yet all unceasing, our grey stones"
 (I heard this ancient ruin say),
 "Till they be dust as dust her bones
 Cry out upon you, Fotheringay."

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.



THE LAST OF THE SOCIALISTS

E. Squier

LOW LIFE IN HIGH FLATS

By C. E. BAINES

AFTER twenty years in a Victorian house, I have moved into a flat; and I feel that I have at length got into the main stream of civilised European life—as it has always been lived by all but the very wealthiest in every great city since the days of ancient Rome. It was only eighteenth-century London that systematically adopted the principle of dividing the big building-blocks vertically instead of horizontally; and the reason for this was not, as some writers would have us believe, British love of domesticity, but plain British snobbishness. The bourgeois insisted on living like an aristocrat: the big houses of Bloomsbury imitated the nobleman's palaces of St. James', and were in their turn imitated by Bayswater and Ealing. The result is all the inhumanity of Aristocracy without its luxury or its dignity. Thus, it is, in a sense, fitting that Chathams and Devonshires should stow away their servants at the bottom of their palaces and their children at the top, and devote themselves to living magnificently on the piano nobile. But the thing doesn't work well on a small scale: the spacious amenities of the town-mansion lose their effectiveness when they are reduced to a half-dozen yards of dank garden, a vestigial conservatory at the half-flight, and that superfluous extra sitting-room on the ground-floor—the "study" of a man who has neither the leisure nor the training to be a student. In fact, London is like a Japanese garden—a wilderness of little stunted growths which, upon close examination, reveal the characteristic structure of the great forest trees.

Of the stunted social life that these stunted growths were built to harbour, we hear enough abuse nowadays: though most of our anti-Victorian satirists fail to realise the true ugliness of Victorianism. It is easy to laugh at aspidistras and antimacassars: but the modern French middle-class live lives crowded with things just as stuffy as antimacassars and as stiff as aspidistras, and yet they are without a taint of the snobbery with which we associate these things. For the French social code is traditional and not competitive: it would never occur to a French citizen to vary the tradition, to add a course to his solemn dinner-parties or to open champagne when etiquette prescribed a sirop, in order to enhance his social importance. But the Englishmen of the first industrial period knew no such wholesome restrictions: the comfort and security of a settled tradition meant nothing to them: life was a struggle, and the only proof of success in the struggle lay in that ghastly social ostentation which is recorded in the pages of Thackeray, and which produced the pretentious discomfort of the London dwelling-house. But gradually, as wealth centred into fewer and fewer hands and the great mass of even the most prosperous men became employees, a new spirit arose. A salaried society has less incentive to snobbery than one whose members own independent businesses, since one's neighbours can guess pretty accurately what one's salary is; and it's no use pretending that it's any bigger. So gradually folk have abandoned—not without relief—the Victorian game of “keeping up appearances” in favour of the more promising one of Having a Good Time. With this object they have sought to cut their liabilities wherever possible; and the Victorian house offered

considerable scope for retrenchment. It consisted, as we have seen, of three divisions: children on top, servants below, and Oneself in between. What more simple than to cut out the first two?

The more thorough-going economists of this kind invented the Residential Hotel—a splendid and luxurious development of the dingy boarding-house beloved of Victorian humorists—where bright young things can be as completely irresponsible as Communists in a Bolshevik hostel—and, perhaps, on the whole rather more comfortable. But others, while thankful to throw off the Victorian incubus, still felt the need of a home; and these have returned to the ancient European tradition of the Flat. Here they live with, perhaps, fewer children than their grandparents; certainly with fewer servants. Anyhow, the bad old tripartite division is now abolished. The drawing-room of the middle-class flat is also the nursery—and the mistress no longer has to knock before entering the kitchen. The latter fact seems to me even more significant than the former. The Victorian house was divided against itself, and the party in the basement was in more or less open league with the enemy outside—for it cannot be too emphatically stated that the tradespeople are the natural and inevitable enemy of the housewife—indeed, it is not too much to say that all trading is and must be “trading with the enemy.” Unless this is clearly recognised, the proper balance of power between seller and buyer cannot be maintained, and thrift becomes impossible.

The Victorian house was an Empire, of which the basement was a distant and disloyal province. The flat is (or should be) a kingdom, where the housewife is the sovereign, and the single servant her sole and

sufficient minister. And, since no tradesman cares to scale these fastnesses, there is no more "calling for orders"—no area conspiracies with the butcher or the grocer to maintain the weekly books at a satisfactorily high figure. The wife does her own shopping like her French sister: perhaps eventually she will acquire the Frenchwoman's deadly efficiency at the business: if so, the Distributist Revolution will be only a matter of time.

Of course not all flat-dwellers have sense: many, I am afraid, do their shopping by telephone with the Stores. Some even fall for the Ideal Home, and spend their substance on vacuum-cleaners and electric refrigerators; but I am told that it is not so easy to get these things across as it used to be. Anyhow, I hear on every side that, since the slump, people are putting away more money than ever they did before.

This new economy has many queer cross-currents, some of which may strike Distributists as dangerous. For instance, I have found that the shoppers in our block of flats have a slogan: "If you can't get it at Woolworth's, try Marks and Spencer." It must be admitted that neither of these firms stand for the highest ideals of craftsmanship: but on the other hand, neither of them advertise.

EMPTY VESSELS

(With Apologies to Mr. John Masefield.)

PALANQUIN and Ethiop, the train of Abyssinia;
 Balkis pearl-spangled, and the ostrich fans swing,
 Shuttles for her problems,
 Proverbs and conundrums,
 To test the wit, to seize the heart, of Solomon the King.

Alchemy and Aristotle, rags of the Renaissance;
 Swords drawn to conquer El Dorado and the Main,
 With dreams of an Elixir,
 Youth in a fountain,
 Of Prester John, and India, and all men's gain.

Dirty modern Thinker with a salt-caked Ego,
 Butting through the Cosmos like a mad March Hare,
 With programmes of birth-control,
 Psycho-analysis,
 Coueism, brain tests, and sterilised air.

GREGORY MACDONALD.

LINES TO THE STATUE OF FERDINAND FOCH

Opposite Victoria Station

We should not carve in stone. If putty fails
 Or soap or sand or muddy-melting snow,
 Did not some great Colonial artist show
 A bust in butter of the Prince of Wales?
 Something whose stuff is mutable as our own
 Panic in puffs and shame a passing shower,
 But not the memory of our generous hour
 Throned like a judge. We should not work in stone.

Before his face whose ever-lifted head
 Looks to Our Lady Of All The Victories
 The yellow sheets spatter his land with lies
 And of his land and ours defile the dead.
 Our perishing people, without wall or barn,
 Raves by in rout; and over its loud retreat
 Forward and foe-ward, against the streaming street,
 Rides head to wind the Horseman of the Marne.

G. K. C.

CAPTAIN MANUEL MUÑOZ

By PETER BELLOC

It is a long step from the warm waters of Rio to those chill, grey wastes which tumble beyond the Pillars of Hercules.

Two weeks out from Rio, the four-masted barque *Golondrina* lay in a sea as smooth and motionless as a ballroom floor. Every stitch she could carry was set in the hope of catching some light air, for this was the third day of calm. But her canvas hung listless from the yards. There was not air enough to ripple the water, and the reflection of the moon was as near perfection as anything in this world can be.

Sitting on the fo'c'stle head, wrapped in the deep shadows cast by the moon against the sails, Barraguby, a 'foremast hand, was tinkling a bandarria gently and uncertainly to himself. He was picking out with a wide margin of tonic errors, "La Sardana," the native dance of his native Cataluña. His messmates, having grown weary of his efforts, had driven him forth to soliloquise with the night.

In its thin uncertainty, his music served to accentuate our intense loneliness upon this vast expanse of sea. I was glad when my relief turned out and I went below.

The small state-room which we all shared (for in Spanish ships apprentices berth aft) was stuffy to a degree with the familiar reek of stale tobacco, cheap spirits and a quaint chemical odour not so easy to define. I arrived below at what was apparently the climax of a very bitter argument between the mate, one Frederico Sardá, and the Old Man, Manuel Muñoz.

With my hands still resting upon the rail of the companion and my feet upon the last step, I listened

in amazement to their vituperance. Immediately I entered, however, both became more guarded in the presence of a subordinate. Anger had not yet mastered their sense of discipline, which, I know to my cost from previous voyages, was developed to the utmost.

I say I listened in amazement for good reason. The Old Man was ever of a taciturn disposition. When he spoke it was law absolute for us all: none dared contradict nor even comment upon his most commonplace remark (when he chose to make such) without inviting a cascade of well-balanced and carefully calculated invective. Frederico, on the other hand, was ever a placid and charming companion. Both were keen of eye, quick of hand and level of temper; no matter how careless they may have been of the meaning of words and an occasional split-head in the fo'c'stle. This was something very new indeed.

They sat glaring at each other across the narrow width of the state-room table, upon which the Old Man was resting his elbows. In one hand he clutched with all his gigantic strength a scrap of yellow, faded paper. It appeared to be newsprint. "So it's no use, isn't it?" he said with a sneer, apparently addressing me. But I knew the remark was entered against the mate, and I did not answer. From the breast pocket of his reefer, Captain Muñoz withdrew a much-soiled note-case, and, folding the fragment of paper, he placed it in the note-case and the note-case in his pocket. He then stamped straight out of the state-room, and for an hour and more afterwards, as I lay in my bunk, I could hear him pacing up and down the quarter-deck above me. I could not help being impressed by the Old Man's expression as he replaced his cutting in his note-case. It was one of extreme

reverence, and the impression it made upon me was to remain for many a day.

With the exception of ship's business, Master and Mate exchanged not another word together for the rest of the trip, and when we reached the Canaries, the Mate went over the side, was rowed ashore by a hireling, and we never saw him again.

Captain Muñoz was locking up his cash-box when I came in answer to his summons. "You're acting second mate to Cadiz," he said tersely, and I went out completely mystified.

But it was after clearing Cadiz—in fact, it was not until Mont Juich lay off our port bow distant three and a half miles, that I got anything like a hint to the solution of this mystery which had intrigued me so much because I understood it so little. My last trip in sail with Captain Muñoz was drawing to a close. The pilot had us in hand and the watch was aloft, where sail was being shortened. I was on the lee side of the poop, and the Old Man holding the weather rigging. He called me over.

"In a few hours' time you'll be saying good-bye to the sea, man. The choice is yours, and I'm not to blame you. I've little doubt but what *Golondrina* herself will say it soon. She's about the last skys'l yarder afloat. But be that as it may,—do you suffer from rheumatism at all?"

This sudden change of subject and the intense feeling with which he expressed it threw me clean off my balance. For a moment I was possessed of an ardent desire to laugh in his face, but discipline becomes second nature.

"Yessir," I replied shamelessly, never having felt it in my life. "I get it in bouts, sir."

His old wrinkled face lit up suddenly like that of a boy. He thrust his hand into the inside pocket of his reefer and extracted a note-case, and from the note-case a faded piece of newsprint.

"Take this, *chico*," he exclaimed, thrusting it into my hands. "But for that I should be all crumpled up on a bed to-day, as I was fourteen years ago, and never a vessel to my name."

There were tears in his eyes. In the privacy of my bunk I examined my treasure more closely. It was a cutting from the *Vanguardia*, October 17th, 1907—an advertisement for a patent medicine.

Eureka! The strange odour in the state-room, the quarrel with Sardá, the reason why the steward emerged periodically from the Old Man's cabin with a bucketful of empty bottles. Fourteen years ago Captain Manuel Muñoz had been a sick man. This mysterious mixture had cured him, and for fourteen years he dosed himself regularly in gratitude! Even as I pondered these strange thoughts I heard the steward on deck call out, "Cuidado con la cabeza, abajo!" A squall of bottles—pale blue ones—hurtled through the air past my port hole and splashed into the placid waters of Barcelona Harbour.

THE GREAT AMALGAMATION.

(From the lost Book of Arthur, mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth.)

. . . BUT when Sir Percivale, the good knight, came to the mouth of the mighty cavern where the monster lay, he was sore astonished to behold the heaps of whitened bones of them that had gone before him on the quest, with here and there the cloven shield or splintered

lance of some knight who would ride no more. And there went to and fro amid the mounds of death an aged man with a grey beard, that was a wizard, and seemed to be numbering the bones and writing down the names of the dead in a great book.

“By my science,” he said, “I am thus enabled to prophesy what are the chances of any champion’s good fortune. For the laws of number cannot lie; and it is my pleasure, fair sir, to bid you know that there are now five thousand three hundred and seventy-two chances to one, that the end of your venture will be evil.”

But Sir Percivale, being young and careless of science, hardly heard the words of the wise man; but rather lamented aloud over the dead, among whom lay many whose crests and quarterings he knew; and cried weeping:

“Alas, Sir Fortinbras, the good lord, that was clad from head to heel in copper and red gold and his hair red as a sunset; like a fire or a moving furnace was he ever in the front of battle; and here he lies pale like ashes. And woe is me for the good knight Sir Scudemore that dwelt in the high wood and drew the bow of which the shafts were like thunderbolts; six heathen kings they slew in the path that went down to Severne.

And while the young man wept, the old man smiled and said, as one who speaks comfortably to another:—

“Trust me, Sir Knight, that all is well with them; and that they have but amended the folly of their first attempt. For it was their error that they went always one by one, so that the foe could devour them piecemeal; but now they have become part of a mighty order and act together always, without it being possible for one to go lonely or to stray; fierce and smiling youth at which the sun stands amazed; and when that might

and splendour comes out of its cavern, it is as though there were a new sunrise at moon."

And even as he spoke, there was a far-off movement as if in dim and distant halls hollowed out of the very heart of the mountains; and along vast and vaulted corridors there was a trampling as of many terrible feet and a high hard noise like the trumpets before an army; and a moment after there came out into the sun a vast and fearful thing, covered with scales larger than scutcheons, and rayed with spikes standing out like many spears; carrying with it all the weapons of an army and yet one soul and one body, such as God permits to walk upon the hills of the world. For this was the Dragon, that had devoured many men, and Sir Percivale spurned aside the sage and the scattered bones, and, with a great cry, set his lance in rest. . . .

THE POET LOST ON PARNASSUS

(No doubt on a November evening.)

SEEKING I know not what, without a guide
 I pass unlighted in the gathered gloom
 From one room to another barren room;
 I pause unrested, rise unsatisfied;
 I find the chamber vacant of the bride;
 I find the table empty of the groom;
 I find a statue of I know not whom
 Holding a lantern, but the light has died.

Was this your palace, Pindar, or your tomb?
 Down from Apollo's forehead, floating wide,
 Drifts lifelessly and stiff the poet's plume,
 And clouds like wings close round Parnassus' side,
 While all the many-echoing drums of Doom
 Beat for the charge there are no gods to ride.

BERNARD KELLY.

TRIPLET

A correspondence by advertisement in the Agony Columns of *The Times*:—

I told her she was beautiful. 'Twas true,
But I said nothing when I wrote to you.

REPLY

“Nothing shall come of nothing. Speak again!”

Yet out of nothing God made time and space,
The sun, the stars, the summer, and your face.

MAURICE BARING.

ALEXANDRINES

SWEET foreign throats rejoice the garden; trees uprear
A craft of leaf and blossom super-imminent:
In bridal avenance, all surrender, all consent,
The soul will out to meet a lover. O have great fear!
Lest haply, when the archangel, God's gonfalonier,
Come plumed with fire, on unreprieving errand bent,
A terrible gleaner, come to press his complement,
—Lest then, when fibre on fibre each must re-appear,

Grain upon grain, themselves of clay reconstituting,
Of sliddering waterfloods, of inapprehensible air,
He find beneath an elderbush, where gravestones
reel

Amongst the nettles, Pan, on a flawed pipe disputing
A soul with Michael, Pan goat-horned, with tousled
hair.

Pan hunkered on the paynim houghs that cannot
kneel.

J. S. PHILLIMORE.



IN THE SOUP

Low

THE WRONG PLAY

By K. C. MACDONALD

THERE are quaint corners and ancient buildings in London that one may stumble on by chance, and never find again; coming upon them in the course of walks so aimless or so inattentive that afterwards we cannot recall their exact direction. In such a manner I discovered an ancient inn that stood in a narrow cobbled alleyway running down towards the river, somewhere east of Temple Bar. It should be there still, but no one that I have asked knows anything of it, nor have I ever succeeded in finding it since one Christmas Eve not very long ago.

I was alone that night, with hours to waste, walking in the depressed, crowd-hating mood that so often assails an idle and lonely moment in town. In such moods the noise and glare become remote, one has the sense of wandering ghost-like and unseen, a visitor from another world, having no part with the cheerful, hurrying people in the street. I remember being in that frame of mind when I came to the head of the alleyway just described, and turned into it to escape for a while from the holiday throng.

The light behind the latticed windows of the old inn was friendly, and I went in. The bar was nearly empty. A plump and rosy young woman, whose black hair was covered with a cap that made me stare a little, took my order, and I went to warm myself by the fire. A cosy, low-raftered room it was, very softly lit by candles. A bush of holly overhung the chimney-piece, and a mighty Yule-log burned beneath it. A pleasant place in which to spend a Christmas Eve, I thought. My mood of loneliness dropped from me. The noise of Fleet Street

seemed to have died away. I heard boys' voices in the distance singing crisply a familiar Carol. Somebody set a tankard at my elbow. It was not what I had ordered, but it did not seem to matter. Warmed and dreamy and content at last, I drank mulled ale and did not stop to marvel that such pleasures were still to be found in Fleet Street.

A candle spluttered near me and went out, leaving that part of the room dependent on the firelight. Somebody sighed deeply, and I began to take cognizance of my neighbours.

Two men sat with me in the chimney-corner, and the glow from the hearth cast fantastic shadows of them against the tall backs of the settees, distorting their outlines. I thought that one wore a high-standing ruff and a dress of a rich red colour—an ill contrast with the harshness of his face, which in the flickering light showed fitfully in heavy lines of bitterness. The other sat more in the shadow and seemed more soberly dressed, but I could clearly trace his profile, which was strong and thoughtful and in some way familiar.

He turned around slowly as his companion said: "Two years ago I did not think that I could listen with such a heavy heart to the singing of that Carol."

"Two years ago," replied the other, "we were not blinded and blackened by the smoke of a Gunpowder Plot."

"Gunpowder!" cried the first angrily. "I could blow your Gunpowder Plot to the skies, if any one would listen to me! I tell you, I know Guy Fawkes. He is a man to be trusted with a secret, as I have found. But he is no plotter."

"You are right, he is no plotter," returned the other drily.

The first man continued as though he had not spoken: "Catesby is dead; and I suppose we will never know now if he was more knave than fool. But when we are asked to believe that a man could hire a cellar in such a place with no questions asked—and fill it with gunpowder, still with no questions asked, and then go abroad, returning at his leisure to fire the mine when Parliament was assembled——"

"That story was not meant to appeal to subtle minds," put in the other quietly. "Of course, it will improve with age and telling. But as it stands it is ripe for the people to swallow. The Secretary knows well enough that the mob must be fed with such stuff, else it will begin to notice that its pockets are being picked. A Gunpowder Plot—a Spanish Plot—and the danger well averted before anyone had a hint of it. Why, the thing is sure to succeed. I have not seen such bonfires since they killed the Queen of Scots."

"If the Queen of Scots were ruler of England now, instead of this poor son of hers——" began the first man, but the other interrupted him:

"Too many are saying that," he said quietly. "And that is reason enough to drag the unhappy lady from her grave, to call up sleeping fears and prejudices to the fury of the people and the bewilderment of the King. Gunpowder! Have you ever noticed how your cunning schemer, successful once in the perpetration of a plot, is often tempted to repeat it in detail? The Cecils, father and son, have had one mind between them. Forty years ago a King was blown up in Edinburgh. King James, thank Heaven, has escaped his fate. But the Scots are more logically-minded than the English. I wonder if they exceeded their instructions?"

His companion exclaimed sharply, and he laughed,

“My imagination works too fast,” he said. “But I have sometimes wondered if it was by an afterthought that they tried to fasten that brutal crime on the poor soft-hearted Queen.”

“They did fasten it upon her, as far as the public was concerned,” said the first man bitterly. “A bare-faced, noisy, impudent lie is generally accepted for truth. The Cecils have discovered the very best use for gunpowder.” He was silent for a moment and then asked: “Did you ever see the Queen of Scots?”

The other man had returned his gaze to the fire. “Once only,” he replied, and he did not lift his eyes. “I saw her mangled head displayed at Fotheringay. I had not wished or intended to see it.”

He went on thoughtfully: “My earliest memories are connected with her. I remember a Christmas Eve at Stratford, and a traveller who sat by the fire with us for a while. I think he was some one whom my father knew. I must have been five years old or thereabouts. He was on his way to Coventry with messages from the Duke of Norfolk in the Tower to the Queen of Scots. That much I know, for I heard him whisper it to my father, and he showed him a ring, sent to the imprisoned Queen by her imprisoned lover, the poet Surrey’s son.

“He told us stories about her. She was wonderfully beautiful and kind, he said. It was not surprising that our Queen Elizabeth would not allow her to come to London, for only to see her was to be her servant forever.”

“That is perfectly true,” interposed the man beside him.

“Yes, I know it is true,” he replied, and I thought his features contracted with pain. But he went on:

“He said that she had been most cruelly treated and cruelly maligned, and I asked how that could be if everybody was her servant. But he said that too many men in the world were wicked, and that she did not understand. Neither did I, but his vivid stories brought before my childish mind a beleaguered fairy princess, and I said that when I was a man I would go and rescue her from the wicked people. The traveller smiled and my mother sighed, and said that it would indeed be a long time for the poor lady to wait. I could not help remembering that when I stood wedged in the crowd at Fotheringay.

“All through my boyhood my imagination possessed her, though once when I played a game with my sister in the street, and made of her a Queen of Scots for myself to rescue, my mother came out fearfully and forbade it. I began to understand that she was not one of whom it was good to speak too well. I found that in the minds of many of my companions she was no fairy princess at all, but a witch and a bogey. When the bells tolled for the massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day, our teacher told us that just such a massacre might be done in Stratford, if ever the Queen of Scots went free. I remember I denied it hotly and was caned. And that was the first and only time I ever suffered for her cause.”

He sighed and continued, “A valiant dreamer is rarely valiant in action. My lady had long ago been taken north from Coventry. I stayed at home, and idled and quarrelled with the work I had, until my belief in fairy tales was lost. Another business sent me wandering from Stratford. But when I stood at last in the crowd at Fotheringay and saw that devastated head, I knew that even if I had come years

earlier to fulfil my childish dream of rescue, I had been too late. The axe meant little to her; for she died long before."

"Done to death with slanderous tongues——" his companion quoted softly. The lines of bitterness seemed to have been all smoothed out, and only sadness remained. The other turned quickly.

"It is true," he said. "Since then she has been often in my mind. I thought of her when I fashioned Constance for *King John*, and other unhappy royal mothers for other plays. In the Forest of Arden I enacted again my dream of a beleaguered lady. And in these past two years I have begun to wonder if such a play might be written—a play in which all is true—but it is not possible, it comes too close. There are things that it is better to leave hidden in the heart."

"Yet such a play," murmured the man at his side, "such contrasts. She had been so happy, so sheltered and petted in France, and she came straight from its sunny fields into the coldest of Scottish fogs and the harshest railings of John Knox. She who had been Queen of Hearts, whose hand had been sought by every royalty in Europe, became a shuttle-cock between Moray's ambition and the Queen of England's policy. Her mind, accustomed to poetic images and far too chivalrous ideas of love and honour, must try to fit these things to most unchivalrous circumstances. No wonder she did not know friend from foe! No wonder her quick angry speeches made enemies as fast as her generous character won friends. Yet there has not been a woman before or since to whom so many men have given love and so many women sworn eternal friendship. She has been dead, her loveliness unsung, for nearly twenty years. And now——"

“And now, it is Christmas Eve in the year 1605,” said the other, with a return to his first dryness of manner. “And we have a Gunpowder Plot, and I am not the stuff of which martyrs are made. And Mr. Secretary has indicated that His Majesty’s players may amuse the people with a tale of a Scottish Queen on murder bent; remote in history, it is true, with witches, and a procession of the Royal ancestors—save one—and a reference to the Royal gift of healing to bemuse and flatter His Majesty; but plainly recalling to the good people of London the Scottish bogey of their childhood.”

“You will not write it,” whispered his friend.

“It is nearly written,” he answered, and he rose, threw his cloak about him, and prepared to go out. “It is well written. But there is not a spark of life in it. When you see it you will understand. I have never worked in such a mood. Death and damnation are in it from the first page to the last. Even the clown talks like a porter in hell. It is a tale——”

His voice faded. The two had passed out into the shadows and were gone before I knew. I rose and went after them, but when I reached the door I saw no one. Only the melancholy voice seemed still to pervade the cold air of the night—

It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”

For a moment only I stood there shivering and bewildered. Then suddenly from far and near the bells of the City Churches began to ring, and I remembered that in truth it was Christmas Eve. I became aware once more of the noise and traffic of Fleet Street and made haste to join the crowd.

K. C. M.

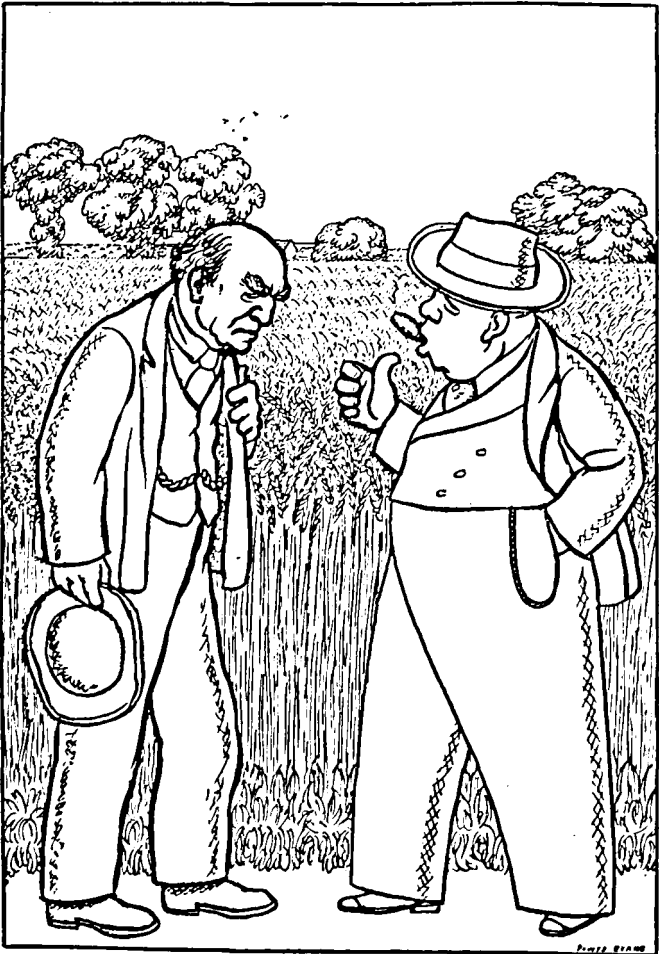
“THE only thing we can really hate is a state of mind. Nobody can really hate races like Russians or Jews; Mongols because they have flat noses or Semites because they have long noses. Now the active atheism of many Bolshevists is a state of mind much more deeply dehumanised and repellent than any mere state of society, such as riot or mob law or even massacre. I will not argue here about details of persecution; for I have no direct evidence, and I am perfectly prepared for unlimited lies on both sides. But the destruction of all mystical instincts in infancy, for instance, is admitted and boasted of; and that is far more unnatural to my mind than mere persecution. If I have to choose between two crimes, I have much more sympathy with mobs murdering an old bishop, whom they might really regard as a wicked old bishop, than with an official sitting down in cold blood to convince a baby of a philosophy of death and despair. I could imagine myself, under some circumstances, being tempted to bash an old gentleman on the head, if I were filled with a furious certainty that he was a hypocritical and horrible old gentleman. I cannot imagine myself, under any circumstances, taking advantage of my accidental superiority to a perfectly innocent child, to bash and bludgeon to nothing that spiritual confidence which makes the beauty of childhood.”

G. K. C.

THE BLACK COUNTRY

HE makes his furnace of the fields of God,
Mammon the wastrel, from whose presence fly
Nature and grace to leave, where he has trod,
Wan corpse of earth beneath wan shroud of sky.

H. E. G. ROPE.



“NOW BURN IT”

Powys Evans

CROOKED

THE little picture of the Mother of God
Hangs crooked upon the wall,
Blue and bright gold like a butterfly pinned askew,
Only it does not fall,
As, stooping ever and falling never, an eagle
Hangs winged over all.

And it suddenly seemed that the whole long room was
tilted

Like a cabin in stormy seas;

The solid table and strong upstanding lamp and the
inkstand

Leaned like stiff shrubs in a breeze

And the windows looked out upon slanted plains and
meadows

As on slanted seas.

And I knew in a flash that the whole wide world was
sliding;

Ice and not land.

And men were swaying and sliding, and nations
staggered

And could not stand:

Going down to the ends of the earth, going down to
destruction,

On either hand.

And knowing the whole world stiff with the crack of
doom,

I pick up my pen and correct and makes notes, and
write small:

And go on with the task of the day, seeing unseeing
What hangs over all:

The awful eyes of Our Lady, who hangs so straight
Upon the crooked wall.

G. K. C.

AT THE WELFARE

By F. KESTON CLARKE

A CURIOUS habit, this English one of concreting abstract terms for the sake of brevity. We don't go to the Labour Exchange, but to The Labour; what we receive is not insurance benefit, but The Unemployment; and our wives sally forth weekly with their prams and toddlers, not to the maternity and child-welfare centre, but to The Welfare.

As though The Welfare were something measurable and weighable that could be housed in a red brick hall and doled out to the deserving and under-welfared, like cod-liver oil and malt. Perhaps it is. I don't know.

But every Tuesday at about ten to two they look at the clouds from their backyards and snatch in their oddments of washing, those citizenesses of the Council houses; and sort out their babies and take down the membership card, the weight card, the teeth ticket and the eye papers from the agglomeration of insurance-books, football coupons and other quasi-legal documents on the mantel-piece; and bung on their hats and straggle along the lane to the Village Hall. They come like the conquered yet still half-defiant, to pay homage to those potentates the Welfare Doctor and the Welfare Nurse; and they come bringing gifts. Rickets they bring, and dubious glands; suspected ringworm, running ears and spots of impetigo; and promises of red, wriggling additions to the local statistics.

To-day, though, these offerings are merely to be aired and exhibited mother to mother in the ancient way. There will be, officially, no weighing or doctoring. It is a special occasion; the lecturer from

Harriss is telling someone, " 'and fourpence what I owed,' I says, 'is three and a penny. And there's sevenpence off for my Rosie's shoes,' I says. 'Oh no, there ain't,' he says. 'What,' I says, 'why, you bloody old twister,' I says——"

"Order now! *Sh—sh!*"

Mrs. Follidew, Chairman of the Welfare Committee, is on her feet. She has placed her empty cup on a chair.

"Now, mothers! I know you're all looking forward to hearing Miss Dovely continue her talks; and this, I'm very sorry indeed to say, is the last of the present series"—Mrs. Follidew shoots an indiarubber smile towards Miss Dovely, who bears up—"So I mustn't take Miss Dovely's time. The other evening my husband came home from a dinner with some business gentlemen, and said to me, 'You know, chairmen should be chloroformed after three minutes,' and when I came here to-day I thought, thank goodness I'm a *chairwoman*, or our splendid Doctor might want to do something." Extremely loud laughter, not shared by the doctor, who is searching her hand-bag for a Form Q17, nor by Mrs. Harriss, who is searching her memory for something she called the rent-man.

"Well," continues Mrs. Follidew. "Of course there shouldn't be any need for me to say anything about Miss Dovely; but I think I see one or two faces who haven't attended here for some months, so I will just remind you that Miss Dovely is very well known as the author of two very splendid books, *Half Hours with Your Body* and *Peeps at Many Glands*, and she is the President of the Working Mothers' Temperance Rally, and she has come specially from London to conclude her very splendid talks on 'Baby and his Many Parts.'"

London is to give her monthly talk. The doctor will preside, aloofly. The nurse will buzz, and whisper mysteriously in the ears of her favourite cases: the cases who are staunch and loyal, congenital Cases who will always be Cases. The Committee will be there, with its fat hands, its petrified faces and the loud mouth of the consciously middle-class. The Workers will be there: a lesser breed, neither Efficient Matron nor Working Mother; just earnest, unimportant females who put chairs in wrong places and brew thin tea in thick cups and wrinkle their brows wildly over the card-index that is never quite straight.

“Lectures!” says Mrs. Liptree, heaving at her pram in the porch. “Lectures! I dunno. What with the wireless. I wouldn’t have come, only I got to do a bit o’ shopping.”

“Sh—sh! ’ere she is.”

Miss Dovely, all the way from London, pays off her taxi and swishes into the Hall; complete with attaché-case which always seems somehow to float behind her through the air, she is so hurried and preoccupied. The Working Mothers key down their voices. The Welfare Workers scuttle like ants. The Committee gather Miss Dovely to them. So clever, she is. Such a fine character. Her books: so very valuable to the Working Mother. And to anyone, my dear! After all, one can always learn, can’t one? From anyone, don’t you think? Two lumps, did you say?

That Mrs. Harriss, down by the door, is the last to come to order, as usual. You’d think, with her seven and the way her ole man drinks, she’d keep her mouth shut.

“‘Two weeks I paid you last week, I says,’ Mrs.

Mrs. Follidew sits. As Miss Dovely rises, the end door is opened; a male face peers in and is quickly withdrawn. Little Mrs. Aployd in the fourth row gives a squeak of dismay. "Oo's that?"

"Caretaker, silly," replies Mrs. Taptry.

"Thought it was the School Board. And I've got my Monica at home minding young Denis what's got the St. Vitus. And only last week the School Board said 'e'd 'ave me for sure if I kept Monica away again."

"Him? You don't know how to talk to him."

"I dunno. Four times last year 'e took that Mrs. Huggins up."

"Oh, her. Checky cat. Here! Know what she said to the Sanitary——?"

It fades away in whispers. Miss Dovely is beginning.

"——so we come to the last of my little talks on this very important subject. I have told you all about Baby's Skin, and Baby's Skeleton, and we went on to Baby's Organs, and last time we went all through Baby's little Intestines. Now for that very wonderful process by which Baby's Food is broken up into its wonderful chemicals and made into Baby's Bones and Muscles and . . . and so on; and those won—er, remarkable changes taking place in Baby's body, yes, and our bodies while we sit here"—young Mrs. Hodery looked slightly alarmed, as well she might—"and these changes we call Metabolism. Met-a-bol-ism," insisted Miss Dovely. "Baby's Metabolism."

"'Struth!" stage-whispers Mrs. Harriss, "did I leave the gas on under them blasted bloaters?"

"Be quiet, Harriss, do," says Mrs. Tonkins. Mrs. Tonkins doesn't want to miss the Metabolism. When she was an infant they had nothing only the Catechism. Better times. Husband's a studious sort of man, too.

London is to give her monthly talk. The doctor will preside, aloofly. The nurse will buzz, and whisper mysteriously in the ears of her favourite cases: the cases who are staunch and loyal, congenital Cases who will always be Cases. The Committee will be there, with its fat hands, its petrified faces and the loud mouth of the consciously middle-class. The Workers will be there: a lesser breed, neither Efficient Matron nor Working Mother; just earnest, unimportant females who put chairs in wrong places and brew thin tea in thick cups and wrinkle their brows wildly over the card-index that is never quite straight.

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“‘Two weeks I paid you last week, I says,’ Mrs.

Won a dictionary worth a pound in a competition. Dictionary worth a pound? Blimey, there must be some pretty 'ot words in it.

Mrs. Tonkins is drinking it in. Quietly but obstinately Mrs. Taptry knits a jumper, and Mrs. Harriss mourns her bloaters. Mrs. Follidew smiles on and on. The doctor beckons the nurse, and whispers:

“What happened to that Form Q17?”

Nurse is a little censorious. Doctor spends too much time on Coty and cocktails. Doctor's waves are expensively permanent. Doctor has no respect for the Committee; for any Committee. Doctor is a Bright One.

“Oh, don't bother,” says Doctor wearily. “Only the Ministry will simply *scream* when they don't get it. Five to four. Nurse, how long is that *cow* going on?”

But Miss Dovely is finishing. She is exhorting the Working Mothers to read some splendid books. On Diet, by Miss Snooks. On Bathing, by Miss Took. On Regular Habits, by Miss Dooks. On Convulsions, by Miss Hooks. On Expectancy, by Miss Jooks.

“Funny,” observes Mrs. Aplôyd to Mrs. Taptry. “Books by Miss This and Miss That. I s'pose there's nothing they don't know about babies except——” Fortunately it is drowned in the clapping.

Miss Dovely departs. Doctor vanishes. Nurse is counting the packets of zinc and starch. Somebody snaffled one last week. The ladies of the Committee gather together and shout at each other about Servants nowadays and one's Social Work. Still, they are happy. They are in the New Philanthropy; all the kick and uplift of private charity, but paid for by the State. The poor are so grateful, my dear, and it costs one nothing except one's time.

Mothers, toddlers and prams are oozing into the street. There goes that Mrs. Huggins, cheeky cat. Told me she paid six bob for those stockings, and they're just as good out of Moonshine Cigarettes.

"How's your husband, Mrs. Taptry?"

"Still on the Unemployment, Mrs. Tonkins. Pore feller. Gets that fed up, you know. He made me come out this afternoon. It don't run to the pictures now. Well, I like to come. Something to do, ain't it?"

EDUCATION

TOM, Tom, the piper's son,
 Learned that pipers' days are done
 Since oaten pipe and pastoral song
 To rude and rural scenes belong;
 And all the tune that he could play
 Was *Over the hills and far away.*

The Schools receive him; and he reads
 The round of all our real needs;
 The daylight hope of liberal days,
 One life to live, one world to praise,
 The life that ends where it began—
 Here in the market-place of man:
 They bid him trace in wheel and star
 The God of all things as they are:
 They called the laurelled lords of fame
 To put his petty pipe to shame:
 And rock-hewn Homer's hornèd lyre
 And Maro's harp of heart's desire
 Moaned with the tears of mortal things,
 And Shakespeare clashed his thousand strings,
 Crying and replying like a crowd;

And Dante's iron lute was loud
 With high unhuman love and hate—
 —At the calm signal of the State
 And just enactment of the School
 They drowned the piping of the fool.

But all the tune that they could play
 Was *Over the hills and far away.*

G. K. C.

BITS AND PIECES

By A. M. CURRIE

Theobald's Race

WHEN the discovery was made last week that a number of bogus tickets were in circulation for one of the largest of the Derby sweepstakes, the promoters were careful to explain that only genuine tickets would have the chance of winning a prize. This is, of course, generally true; but it is by no means certain what the position would be if a forged horse were to win the race. The only time that this occurred was, I think, in eighteen-twenty-odd, when a last-minute entry was made in the names (then unknown) of James Watt and Stephenson. The owners preserved the strictest secrecy regarding their horse, and such scant information as did leak out (as, for example, that it had a spout and a handle across the top) did nothing to encourage the backers, ignorant as they were of the propulsory properties of steam. On the morning of the race "The Adjudicator" in the *Westminster Newsletter* was alone among the experts in referring to the horse (Theobald, it was called; but falsely, as shall transpire), and he mentioned it last of the whole twenty-three, as a

possible winner in the event of the ground being badly broken by earthquake. But Watt and his friend had been astir early that day; surreptitiously they had laid a complete set of rails around the course and had erected a few crude, but sufficient, signals. When, as the horses were lined up for the start, it was noticed that Stephenson was pushing his mount and that, instead of the customary crop, he carried a small shovel, a great burst of ribald laughter arose from the spectators. Their hilarity turned to dismay, however, when, a few seconds after the start, Theobald, with Stephenson up, was seen to dart ahead at incredible speed. Around the course he flew, past the winning-post and around again, overtaking his competitors for the second time as they struggled around Tattenham Corner, past the winning-post again, the winner by 3,221 lengths. It was not until the numbers were up that the triumphant jockey disclosed the secret of his success. Tearing the cunningly-contrived outer skin from his supposed horse, he revealed the steam-engine beneath, modestly remarking: "I felt that it could be done and that England should do it."

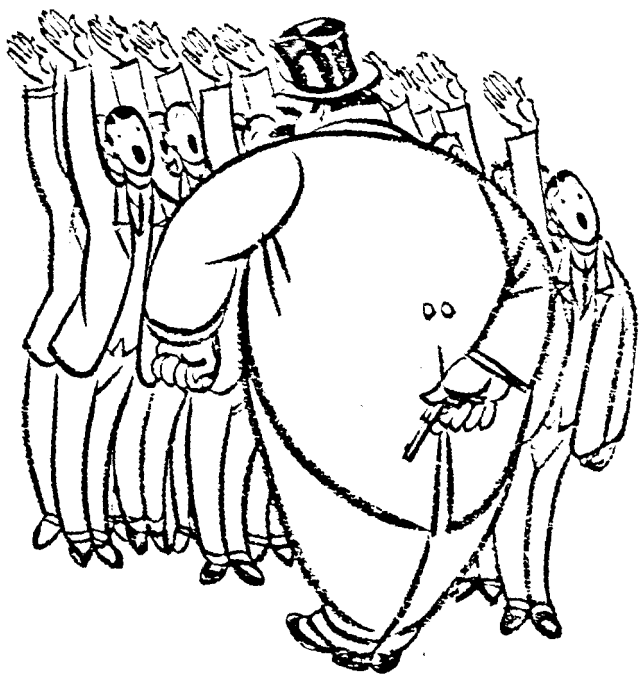
Christmas—À La Mode

I see that it is suggested that the fashionable Christmas present this year is to be a block of shares, and a large number of the new companies are having their robin and holly-leaf *motif* introduced into the design of their script. A City friend has explained to me one of the advantages of the new fashion. Last year he presented his aged mother with a number of Kuala Lumpur Uniteds (6 per cent. First Pref. then standing at 68½). A few months later, when he came to sell for the old lady, he obtained for her, in addition to the market

price, not only the cost of the shares, but a fair turnover, owing to a sharp rise in anticipation of dividend. A less thoughtful son would probably have made a cheaper present of a perishable sort and, when forced to realise, would have reaped no return at all for his outlay.

Dividing the Collection

It was recently reported that a certain tax-gatherer, coming to a remote, but sporting, village in the Caucasus was met, somewhat to his surprise, with demonstrations of the utmost cordiality and good-will on the part of its inhabitants. A banquet was prepared in his honour, at which the wine was permitted to flow freely, particularly in the direction of the honoured guest. The delighted revenue officer was just achieving that happy mood in which a man feels that he must tell all these nice, kind strangers about the old home in Tchblosk and the boyish dreams which came to him there, when the son of the mayor, a pranky lad, caught him behind the ear with a piece of the local woodland scenery, which has so justly earned for the district the name in song of the Forest of Paradise. The hearty villagers, when they had recovered from their laughter, determined to follow up the joke by playing another upon the police, who would be certain, sooner or later, to make enquiries; so they proceeded to divide the remains among them—here a leg, there an arm, and an ear for little Petrushka—and then separated, Bright Young People fashion, to secrete the remains in various parts of the hamlet. Such a thing, you will say, making a wild stab at it, could not transpire in England. As it happens I am in a position to confirm your presumptuous, blustering, entirely unsupported, judgment.



THE PRESS GANG

Thomas Derrick

A New Invention

A large number of aeroplane accidents have recently been caused by the engine having fallen out of the machine; and I am encouraged to hope that my own invention to obviate this serious embarrassment to air travel may at last be given a fair trial. The principle depends mainly upon a selenium plate, impervious to heat and containing not more than 0·04 per cent. of boric acid, which is carried on a long stick at some distance beneath the under-carriage. The engine in falling from the machine strikes this plate and by a series of electrical controls the pointer of a gauge on the pilot's switchboard is swung over to read "Engine Fallen Out." So soon as the pilot receives this warning he pulls a lever, releasing a kind of grab-thing, which overtakes the engine and draws it back into position. De-luxe models in alligator-skin can be provided at an extra cost.

Chrythothtom

I have been privileged to hear from his own lips, or, rather, from between his upper teeth and his nether lip (for he has inherited that family trick of delivery), the gist of the maiden speech which the Hon. George Quelps is to make in the House next Tuesday. The subject is one which will strike a warm note of sympathy in every British heart, for this brilliant young statesman is to urge the necessity for legislation to prohibit the publication of the reports of sporting contests in which one British team is defeated by another. The Foreign Office has already recognised the importance of maintaining our sporting prestige in lands over which the Flag does not yet fly, and the efficacy of censorship to

Downlift

It is the duty of every citizen, as most of us would recognise even without the printed injunctions which constantly remind us of the fact, to help to keep the Underground—I mean, Underground—carriages clean. It is, however, rash in the extreme to assume that no discretion need be used in determining the best method of assisting Lord Ashfield in this important public work. There can be, of course, no objection to doing a little dusting or sweeping on our way to the City, or, for that matter, to cleaning the windows. Those of us with a talent for the task may, quite permissibly, polish the brasswork with Glitter-O. These are orthodox and legitimate expedients for the expression of our gratitude. No such unexceptionable course was adopted by the passenger whose fate is cited as a codicil to the notices. Belonging to an older school of hygienists, he spat. And before he had time to rub, they had haled him before a magistrate, who, mindful of the necessity for maintaining the prestige of our public companies, had fined him the sum of three pounds.

How Absurd!

The Principality of Monaco in the throes of a political disturbance, in which the leading parts were being taken by hotel-proprietors, waiters, casino employees, theatre-managers and the like. Truly, some of these foreigners are un-English to the point of absurdity; it seems incredible that they do not recognise it themselves. Of course, the excuse is that these people represent the industries of the little state; but fancy anything of the sort occurring in this country. Just

imagine what would happen if moneylenders, or stockbrokers, or industrialists, or big business men attempted to participate actively in British politics, on the excuse that they were representative of the commercial activities of the nation. Suppose the Federation of British Industries, for example, tried to get its own members into Parliament! Ha, ha! Just fancy.

A Use for Everything ; No. 471.—Snow

Snow, if heated in a small saucepan and mixed with eight times its volume of whisky, will make an excellent substitute for Beefo.

MR. RAM BAM CHANGES HIS JOB

By “Quo”

I WAS wandering one day through the picturesque grounds of the Bottliwalla Educational Institute near the well-known town of Buzzeewattee, when I observed my intimate and valued friend Mr. Ram Bam squatting on the turf under the shade of a large white umbrella lined with green, and gazing with a rapt expression at the Venerable Pile. So detached was his mien that I had approached within two or three yards of him unobserved, when I noticed, to my utmost surprise, amazement and consternation that tears were trickling down his cheeks.

“What now, my old friend?” I gently enquired.
 “What now? Why this dolour?”

Saying which, I sat down by his side and mingled my lamentations with his.

At this, Mr. Ram Bam cheered up wonderfully, such is the effect of sympathy on the human soul; and wiping his eyes with the tail of his "Kummis" (literally "chemise") he himself adopted the rôle of comforter.

"Sir," he adjured me, "weep not. Conserve those tears for a happier occasion. My veneered and respectable friend, cease these sobs or I shall fain break down likewise."

Saying which, he again burst into a fit of uncontrollable grief.

At this I held my woe in leash and thus addressed my grievous crony:

"Good Mr. Ram Bam, bear ye like a man. Confide to me your troubles; else I fear me that I too shall break down."

And, indeed, I would have done so but for receiving a painful jab in the neck from one of the spokes of Mr. Ram Bam's umbrella.

At which we both arose bowing profoundly and apologising amiably. And so the spell was broken and we wiped one another's eyes; and having exchanged "calipash" and "calipee" and lighted our "birris," we strolled arm in arm in sympathetic silence through the glorious and luxuriant precincts of the Bottliwalla Educational Institute. All was peaceful and silent save for the singing of some crows in the tree tops, and the dying embers of Mr. Ram Bam's grief in the shape of semi-suppressed hiccups.

At length, on arriving at the limits of the attractive and decorative grounds, Mr. Ram Bam furled his umbrella and, planting it firmly in a flower-bed, turned to me and in impressive tones addressed me as follows:

"Yes, my dear Sir, he has gone."

"Gone?" I asked, looking round bewildered.
"Who? Where?"

Mr. Ram Bam bowed his head and spoke in an awed whisper.

“ The Colonel Bloodberry, the General Manager of the Bhattarbhug Guaranteed State Railway, my very respected patron, is no more.”

“ Dead? ” I gently queried.

“ The poor old blighter is as dead as a mutton,” was the firm but respectful reply.

“ Dear, dear,” said I. “ What a tragedy! My good old friend, I offer you my warmest congr—sympathy. When did he die? ”

“ To-morrow,” said Mr. Ram Bam.

I fell back a pace or two in amazement, wondering in my mind whether time had indeed reached its utmost limit and were returning on its tracks. But I recollected in time to save my reason that in Mr. Ram Bam’s own language the word for “ to-morrow ” and “ yesterday ” was one and the same, and I understood. Not wishing to hurt my old friend’s feelings, I instantly decided to play up to his little side slip.

“ And the funeral, my dear Mr. Ram Bam, will be—yesterday? ”

“ The funeral,” Mr. Ram Bam solemnly replied with one final heave, “ the funeral, my good friend, was to-morrow.”

“ How did it happen? ” I faltered.

“ To-morrow morning,” explained Mr. Ram Bam, “ I was entering my humble office when an urgent note was handed to me calling me to the Colonel’s bungalow. Arrived there, I found him in his bed, and I cannot disguise from you, my good Sir, that the colour of his face was that of an over-ripe tomato.

“ ‘ Ram Bam,’ he gasped, ‘ you infernal scoundrel ’ (it was his playful way of addressing me), ‘ pay me at once the arrears of my commission.’ ”

“ ‘Your honour and reverence,’ I replied, ‘times are too bally bad. My bank account is minus zero.’

“ ‘Ram Bam,’ he yelled, ‘pay me the arrears of my commission ek dum or your name will be removed from the list of contractors.’

“ ‘Sir,’ I pleaded, ‘a post-dated cheque?’

“ ‘Post-dated be d——!’ he shouted in a frenzy of rage, while his face assumed the hue, my dear Sir, of a rotten apple, and picking up this self-same umbrella, which he kept under his pillow, he cast it at me and expired. Poor blighter! A hasty glance assured me that there was no handy loot—I should say, my dear Sir, keepsake; and, hearing steps approaching, I seized the umbrella and fled. ‘Alas! Alas! He is gone, the good old man. I ne’er shall like the look of him again’ (Milton).”

“A very great man,” I volunteered.

“Too great. And now,” wailed my friend, “there is no one to make fight with. Begone, business! Henceforth a scholastic life for me. His memory will ever to me be like to a pimple on the nose. Stodged as I am with the wisdom of the late demented, I have applied for the post of professor of advanced and applied mathematics in this ancient Educational Institute of Bottliwalla. Indeed, I have submitted a thesis to prove my capacity for the job.”

“And what, my greatly valued friend, is the subject of this thesis?” I demanded.

“None other than that of the Colonel Bloodberry’s famous dictum, my good friend, that, in business, ‘two and two make five (including return commission).’ Pray deign to enter my humble bungalow, where I will read to you a copy of my thesis.”

“I shall, my trusty friend, be pleased and proud to draw upon the Colonel’s store of ripe experience.”

“Rightiho, my very dear Sir; and when may I expect the favour of your presence to hear this thesis?”

“I shall come,” I replied, still bearing in mind the aforementioned side slip, “I shall come, my most staunch, valued and intimate friend, at six p.m. precisely, on the day after yesterday.”

“Snip,” said Mr. Ram Bam.

THE TALE OF HALF A PANTOMIME ELEPHANT

HAVE you ever seen an elephant performing in a show?

Not a lordly, lonely elephant that weighs a ton or so,
But a pantomimic elephant with painted canvas hide
Which two of Nature's gentlemen conceal themselves
inside.

I used to be the headpiece of the Jumbo in a show.
I worked the trunk, the ears, the eyes: I made the
forelegs go.

I gave an entertainment both uplifting and refined.
I used to be the headpiece once, but now I am the
hind.

One day as I was peeping through the window in his
mouth
When Jumbo was performing at a circus in the South,
A lovely, laughing lady in the stalls I did espy.
I blush to say I pulled the string that winked the
Jumbo's eye.

She waved her dainty hand at him with all the grace
of Spain,
And like a fool I went and pulled the beastly string
again.

Came peals of raucous laughter from the gallery and
pit,
But, in the stalls, the critics frowned, and soon I heard
of it.

For the critic has a conscience and he'll tell you from
his heart
That you must not make a gesture inconsistent with
your part,
For the headpiece of an elephant with dignity is
graced,
And you'll only find him vulgar and absurd abaft the
waist.

And when I sought the lady out she turned her head
aside.

"I know you not; I like you not. Police! Police!"
she cried.

"'Tis one thing for an elephant to wink his eye at me,
But wink nor word I'll not endure from such a worm
as thee."

So, flouted by the lady, by the critics vilified,
I yielded up to Hind-legs the Fore-legs of my pride.
I gave to him the dignity and set him in the van,
While I became the rearguard and the foolish funny
man.

Degraded to a part which no buffooneries can mar
(For the hind-legs of the pachyderms are the hindest
legs there are),
I'm doomed to dance the Charleston, and to stagger
or to lurch,
While Fore-legs, just in front, behaves as if he were in
church.

For now I am the tailpiece of the Jumbo in a show.
I twitch the tail, I hump the back, I kick the legs also.
And the laughter I excite is often ribald and ill-bred.
Yes, now I am the tailpiece. Ah! But once I was the
head.

C. T. B. DONKIN.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION

By F. KESTON CLARKE

HERE I am, then, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, in accordance with the summons issued by His Majesty's Justices of the Peace; information having been laid by one Joseph Blaggas, deuce rot his soul.

I must find out when and where it is to Come On. Stairs and vestibules and draughty stone corridors, thronged with a Chaucerian medley of dignitaries, citizens and offenders, waiting for their spots of trouble to Come On. Odd shots of conversation that spurt from earnest groups, hover in the disinfected air, and vapour upwards towards the retiring-rooms, where doubtless they add imperceptibly to the accumulated wisdom of the Bench.

"Seven solid hours a day. A night, I mean. Just think of it. And it's such a rotten pianner."

"Then look here, old boy, what you really want is a Injunction——"

And on the stairs—

"'E says 'What,' 'e says. 'Why, you couldn't knock the skin off a rice puddin', 'e says; so o' course I gives 'im a fourpenny 'un to be going on with——"

And at the leather-inlaid table of the Learned Gentlemen—

"My dear fellow! My dear fellow! Don't you

realise that if you bring up *Hodby v. Hodby*, the Bench will be morally bound——”

“Not this bench. Hidebound, if you like. But morally——”

A sudden warning hush; a hiatus that makes even arguers on the entrance steps to stop and sniff; and causes the Probation Officer to pause in the very act of rescuing a juvenile offender from a life of arson and sabotage.

“Silence, *please!*”

Things are Coming On.

Police look bored; witnesses look alarmed; solicitors beam and bob as Their Worships file through a secret door that lets them straight to the Bench; free from contact with the lawless and the litigious. A pageant of respectability, they walk to their places on eight legs stiff with experience of the wickedness of the world. They sit. We also that have seats to sit, let us sit. The others line the walls, prop themselves against broiling radiators; lean against doors that are constantly being jerked open by court-duty constables, constables harassed and bowed beneath a weight of urgent business that never by any chance includes *our* business.

“That’s ’Iggins, ’im in the Chair. Now we’ll be all right, Nobby.”

Nobby is a constable of very junior aspect; lithe and lily-checked. Perhaps in a couple of decades he will be a proper copper; stout, red-necked, and with the correct air of personal grievance against minor lawlessness. As yet he is raw and in need of reassurance.

’Iggins, known to a more polished public as Sir Hector Higgins, is seventy-three, swivel-eyed, and deaf on one side. That is what makes him a good Chairman of Justices: he hears no inadmissible evidence; and

he is able to scrutinise the faces of the witnesses when everybody thinks he is staring at the brilliant baldness of the Clerk.

Silencers that do not silence. Licences that have expired and been deceitfully resurrected. Noises that should never have been, and insurances that should. Brakes that were insufficient, and speed that was more than enough. The defendant has a week in which to pay. The officer is commended on the lucidity of his street-plan. Still no sign of our own little bother. We drift into the other Courts. Crime is graduated; in our town we have a First Court for Grave and Shocking Offences; a Second Court for Very Serious Offences; a Third Court for licence applications and such-like minor offences; and a Juvenile Court where the successful Sikeses of twenty years hence make their first bids for fame. Fame, alas, is just what they are denied. We may not enter the Juvenile Court unless we disguise ourselves as the anxious father of a Problem Child.

One such Problem Child (aged perhaps nine) stands here now, facing a Justice who, while neither swivel-eyed nor deaf, makes up the deficiency with a white beard of incredible length.

"You are charged with feloniously stealing and receiving a bottle of Kola, value 3½d."

"Will you be tried here, or in London before a Jury?" asks the Chairman.

The felon says nothing. No doubt he would rather enjoy going to London and being tried before a Jury. But his mother is prosaic and unenterprising. He will be tried here, please, and, Sir, he is guilty.

"The facts, briefly, your worships——" It is the Detective-Sergeant. The Detective-Sergeant is *svelte*, nicely tailored, grey-striped. He has enjoyed one of

those blatant shaves peculiar to plain-clothes officers, which are more conspicuous than stubble itself. He carries no notebook. But from his capacious memory it appears that he Received certain Information (one pictures a lurking ruffian gnashing his teeth as he decides to turn King's Evidence) and in Consequence of This, he Interviewed the Defendant at his Home, and Interrogated him in the Presence of his Mother, who is, Your Worships, a Widow.

While we wonder why he didn't simply question the kid, the Widow drops a widowly tear.

A Justice wonders, audibly, what became of the Kola.

The widow speaks. "Sir, 'e necked it."

The Clerk speaks. "He drank it?"

The Detective-Sergeant speaks. "He consumed it. And afterwards Deposited the Container in a neighbour's Dustbin."

A pretty problem, but not ours. Wearily we retread the corridors.

"But I wouldn't 'a minded so much if it wasn't such a rotten pianner—"

"I keep tellin' you, the only thing is a Injunction."

We sidle into the First Court, the clearing-house of real crime. But crime in romantic real-life proves far less interesting than in realistic fiction. No criminal is visible. Perhaps they have shot him out of hand. But there are Justices, and Witnesses, and Depositions are being taken: unintelligible chronicles that go on for days and days and days; and it looks as though our local court does all the work, while the Amazing Revelations and Human Dramas are saved up till the thing gets to the Old Bailey. We get out, and into the Second Court, where across the heads of the Learned Gentlemen a neatly-dressed and vivacious young lady

accuses a neatly-dressed and impassive young dairyman of being the father of her child. Curious, this impassivity of accused persons; and the honesty of witnesses who flatly contradict each other. However can a Bench arrive at Truth? In this instance it doesn't; gives it up; dismisses the charge for lack of corroborative evidence.

"I bet it was 'im, though," whispers Nobby.

"If it wasn't," remarks Q87 of Z Division, "'e must a been dam' slow, with all those opportunities."

Now it is Nobby's turn. And we realise how deeply shocked this gentle young constable must have been when—as he tells the Bench—he had the accused (four youths) under observation, and heard them exchanging Foul Language to the annoyance of passers-by. Everybody tries to look uninterested while the officer repeats some phrases which consist almost entirely of initial letters. The youths look scornful. Nobody looks shocked. No passer-by has come forward to exhibit his blushes. They are discharged; but the officer was quite right to bring the case. Oh, quite right.

"You can go," says the Clerk.

"And don't come here again," adds Swivel-eye, as the youths slouch out.

"Oo the b—y 'ell wants to?" retorts the leader; but the only person to catch the words is the Court Missionary, and he doesn't mind.

Twenty past twelve, and we've been here since ten in the morn—in the forenoon. Perhaps it will Come On in the Third Court. There, marvellously, we find an atmosphere almost convivial. Can these plump and pomaded stalwarts be mere defendants like us? Certainly not. These are the Applicants.

"Is this the Annual Dinner?" asks the Chairman.

"Yes, sir." The landlord of the Brazen Bull and his supporters, the Secretary, Treasurer and two members of the Saturday Afternoon Piscatorial Brotherhood, smile fishily and bow. Extension of licence granted. But the Lady Magistrate feels she should say something.

"You'll see that good order is kept——?"

The landlord of the Brazen Bull smiles reproachfully. The Lady Magistrate smiles sympathetically. The anglers smile generally. The next applicant, a dance-hall proprietor, is unlucky. So while the fishermen are mopping it up till eleven p.m., the couples at the Cinderella Dance must shuffle on and shuffle on with scorching forehead and with parching tongue. A weary world.

A weary world. For now Their Worships in all the Courts have agreed to adjourn for lunch. That pompous summons is wrong, after all; it won't Come On in the forenoon, perhaps not even in the afternoon.

A surging into the corridors of officials, solicitors, and of people who have been assaulted, threatened, evicted, swindled, deserted, battered, betrayed, defamed, molested and neglected; or who have done these things unto others.

"It ain't reasonable, I say, not seven hours a night ain't, not on a platter like that——"

"Then all I can say is, what you gotter get is a Injunction."

And what I gotter get, as I take in deep breaths of outside air, is a life-saver, quickly. There, on the steps, I meet Joseph Blaggess himself, the layer of information against me. He too has been waiting for it to Come On. I look at him. He looks at me. We look across the road, towards the saloon-bar of the Brazen Bull.

We pause. We go, together.
 And now, Worshipful Bench, so far as old Blaggess
 and I are concerned, it'll never Come On.

INSIST ON THE LABEL

IF music be the food of love,
 Turn on the radio,
 For "Sauce Madère" and "A la Reine,"
 "Truffé," "Delmonico,"
 "Bonne Femme" and "a la Meunière,"
 "Au Four" and "Béchamel,"
 All, all come out of little tins,
 To keep our people well.

J. B. MORTON.

RAILWAY RHYMES

III.—THE COLLECTING DOG

A BUSINESS-LIKE, sagacious Dog
 Is very often all agog
 At termini, with box on back;
 Responsive to the name of "Jack"
 You'll see him gravely "giving paws,"
 Collecting for a noble cause.
 Whenever he receives largess
 He barks a bark of gratefulness
 Implying "Thank 'ee, you're a toff;"
 Should you attempt to choke him off
 He'll follow you and chew your socks
 Until you patronise his box.
 When he attains a ripe old age
 He passes, but the Orphanage
 Does *not* collapse because he's gone,
 The Dog is stuffed and carries on. R. W.

MARGINALIUM

I THINK the story of Shalott is wrong ;
 Oh ! not the " four grey walls and four grey towers,
 The placid isle and prettiness of flowers,
 Nor the sweet incongruity of song.
 The river slipping by the summer long,
 The lads and lasses, barley fields and bowers,
 The listless maid, weaving the livelong hours,
 The knight—all these are proper ; these belong.

But not youth cursed by love, unwitting how,
 Drifting to death upon a senseless tide !
 Girl, let your mirror break, your web blow wide ;
 Nail love's bright flag with life's upon your prow.
 Know that you have not ever lived till now.
 Who said that love would curse and kill you, lied.

SISTER M. MADELEVA.

THE BONFIRE

AFTER the sun had sunk we lit the bonfire.
 Day was fading in the clear delight
 Of saintly sleep, closing her eyelids over
 The iris of the heavens, brooding deep.
 There was no taint upon the shrinking hills ;
 Hard eastern jewels laid upon the west,
 They shone so faint, as music soon to fade
 Above the clear-plucked wires of harpsichords.
 The silhouette of a nest with its tangled lace
 Stood in a twig-bare tree against the sky.
 Enboughed above it glowed two choral birds,
 Hymning the grace of evening, joyful, loud.
 The vesper star distilled her tears of light,
 And the Hunter glittered bright, and fierce, and far.

Then we turned, and stooped, and lit the bonfire.

Slowly a little musing wisp of thread
 Was twisted and drawn up from the mound
 By some invisible hand overhead. Grey,
 Unbroken, untouched by the air, unfanned
 By the wind, it rose with a gentle cobra-sway,
 Swinging in some faint tide of the ethereal sea
 Which sense feels not; which the spirit knows must be,
 Since the soul with its hope in the same tide-rhythm
 flows.

Slowly the frail thread thickened into rope;
 Still drawn up by the Unseen overhead;
 Silken, and quickened to silver from the white
 First pallid aftermath of light.

No sound

Came from the trees. The thrush in her own song-
 trace

Was bound, and hushed into silence.

Then a breeze

Came seeking the tomb of the day, to lay its sad
 Tribute of perfume, holy breath of the mould.

Still for a moment the column of smoke unrolled.
 Then the trees murmured, and in the mound beneath,
 The Demon of Fire turned, heard the sighing again,
 With sudden scream of pain leaped up and burst
 Through the piled sods of the wild Ætnean mound!
 With eyes aghast we looked around on a world accursed;
 On a tumid sky and the livid and leering forms
 Of shadowy hordes that struggled, advanced, withdrew,
 Hovered unseen, then leaped on the earth we knew,
 Engulfed it, dwarfed it in the tumultuous caverns of hell.
 Darkness fell; but not on that Walpurgis ground.
 Silence fell; but there no consecrated couch it found.

For from this running wound in the breast of night.
 The slouching demons of fire, with shout, with torch,
 Streamed out, and Earth was a place abhorred,
 A midnight continent dreamed by the sick, insane,
 And fever-goaded brain that dare not die.
 Above, in the sky, the Savonarola-born
 Billows of smoking blood-fire writhed and rolled.

As though to mock this travesty of morn,
 A cock crowed thrice; and in our hearts there bowed
 The treacherous Peter, who had denied the Lord,
 The reticent Glory, the Evensong of the bird.
 Before His smoke-veiled throne we stood afraid.

RICHARD CHURCH.

THE SONG OF DON LUIS DE MONTE- MAYOR Y QUEVEDO

THE storm is up, and the rioting clouds are riven and
 torn asunder,
 A challenge is hurled across the hills, and the trumpet
 sound again;
 I will take my wrath to the roaring wind, and the
 rolling summer thunder,
 Turn my face to the stinging swords of the singing
 summer rain.

I'm riding into the windy weather,
 Mad as the wild black howling skies,
 Wild as the wind that raves around me,
 But more of a man than the day you found me;
 Galloping, galloping hell-for-leather
 From your lullabye voice and your lying eyes.

The storm's abroad, and my wrath is up for a thing so
 lightly broken,

My heart is leaping to answer the wind; as a friend
 will call to a friend,
 Black anger to black anger cries, with the echoing
 hills for token
 Of comradeship for a twisted man with a broken life
 to mend.

I'm flying into the windy weather,
 Mad as the wild black howling skies,
 Wild as the storm that raves around me,
 But more of a man than the day you found me;
 Galloping, galloping hell-for-leather
 From your lullabye voice and your lying eyes.
 J. B. MORTON.

A PROPER NEW BALLAD ENTITLED
 CHURCH AND KING

Tho' Hereticks on every side
 Belabour and attack us,
 And manie schisms men divide,
 Yet all men bow to *Bacchus*;
 Tho' men will burn alive for creeds
 And hang for waies of thinking,
 The hyres yt. Dissencioun feeds
 Are quenched dead by drinking.

Hey, Dick, a jugg, a stoupe, a payle,
 Let every rafter ring, sirs;
 A Toast in honest English Ayle,
 The English Church and King, sirs.

The *Pope* of Rome, so full of pryde,
 Is monstrous nice and dainty.
 His doctrines I cannot abide
 Altho' I like *Chianti*.

Whene'er the *Papists* I abuse
 My Conscience I am prick't in;
 For doe not they make Green *Chartreuse*
 And golden *Benedictine*?

Tho' in a *Churchman's* nostrils stinke
 The false beliefs they bring in;
 Yet wee will use the Papist drink
 To drink to Church and King in.

The *Calvinist* I hold to be
 A verie vile deceiver;
 The liquor's good, but not for mee
 The doctrine of *Geneva*;
 He holds yt. God from truth entraps
 A soul to reprobacioun;
 By'r lakin, I can stomach *Schnapps*,
 But not *predestinacioun*.

Altho' the Rascalls make such din
 With mournful chaunts they sing-a,
 Wee'll sanctify the Hollands gin
 By drinking Church and Kin -a.

The *Jewes* were cherished of ye *Lord*,
 Tho' now they are forsaken;
 But honest drinke they ne'er abhorred
 And onlie flouted bacon:
 The *Turk* he prateth sorry stuff
 About his sole Divinity
 For why? Hee does not drink enough
 To see there is a Trinity.

For all ye *Heathen* men and blind
 To Church's fold we'll bring in,
 If but wee'll give them liquor kind
 To drinke to Church and King in.

And now when *Croppies* us annoy
With imposts and exaciouns,
And seek our Church for to destroy,
And steal her benefaciouns,
And rob the poor box of the poor
The stipend of the vicar,
Their tyranny wee'll not endure
Because they love not liquor.

Wee'll make the knaves that cocoa swill
From gallows high to swing, sirs,
So all together, with a will,
The English Church and King, sirs.

E. F. P. BARTLETT.

ALEXANDER AT PERSEPOLIS

By K. C. MACDONALD

DOWN into the ancient garden of the world came Alexander, and Darius the Persian fled before his approach. Down into Persepolis he came, and rested a while amid the palaces and rose-arbours of the city of the Persians; for the dark-eyed ladies, the poets, the courtiers with their curled and scented beards, had fled. The columned halls echoed no longer to their laughter and their music. The marching processions on the walls, the slaves and courtiers, the soldiers and captives, the kings bringing gifts, alone bore testimony to a people that had passed.

Alexander, reclining in a pavilion in the garden set with trees, looked with admiration on the scene before him. Terrace above terrace, garden above garden, the palaces of Darius and of Xerxes dominated the town and adorned the plain. The pyramid on which

the temple of an ancient worship stood was dwarfed by them; its terraces were grass-grown and rank. The mountains, purple in the distance, seemed to have stepped back in deference to this boastful achievement of mankind. Alexander, vivid in youth, boundless in his ambition and a lover of magnificence, gave it the homage of his admiration too.

Yet he acknowledged a culture more refined than this; a Macedonian, he was one more Grecian than the Greeks. He thought of the exquisite perfection of the Parthenon, and scorn rose up in him. His love of display gave place to national pride. This Xerxes, long ago, had plundered Athens; now Athens was avenged. It was in his power to carry vengeance further, by setting fire to these halls as the Persians had fired the old Acropolis more than a century ago.

It was in his power to do it. In fancy, he saw the great winged Cherubs, which now looked out so proudly over the plain, defaced and broken. He saw the flames raging over the buildings, so that the carved bulls that supported the rafters came crashing and leaping to the ground and the carven king on his tall throne within the hundred-columned hall started to his feet in terror; and the bearded god above his head stirred and lifted his quiet wings, as though he would soar away into the Persian twilight, having no longer any reason to remain.

For a while he played with this fancy, picturing himself, as though he were indeed Achilles, whom he loved to emulate, raising a mighty funeral pyre to comfort the shades of his departed friends. But he knew that there was no need. The boastful cry of Artaxerxes still rang upon the terraced walls, but it was void. "A great God is Ahuramazda, who created

this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created delight for man, who made me, Artaxerxes, King, the one King of many, the one master of many. Thus saith Artaxerxes, the great King, the King of Kings, the King of lands, the King of this earth. . . .”

Xerxes, Darius, Artaxerxes, all were dead. Of their magnificence only this shell remained. The last King of Persia, “the King of Kings, the King of lands, the King of this earth,” had fled into the mountains of Bactria, and Alexander of Macedon, whose great-great-grandfather Alexander of Macedon had once paid tribute to the conquering Persian, sank into peaceful slumber amid the roses of his garden in Persepolis.

As he slept he dreamed. Night came down, and over the flower-strewn lawns the soft winds swept the fragrance of the roses. Upon the terraces of the palace torches glowed, lit by no living hand.

The leaves stirred, and it seemed to the dreaming King that one stood by the door of the pavilion who was not of his time. The stranger turned towards him in the faint light; it was a Greek, an old man, grotesque of countenance, yet serene, patient and kind. With a thrill of emotion, Alexander recognised his visitor. That face, ugly and strong and wise, had been pictured to him many times; it could be none other than Socrates. Not for Aristotle his school-master would he ever have done such reverence as he did now for the great Athenian whom he knew only from tradition and from books.

“Why are you here,” he asked, “upon the plains of Asia? What has drawn your restless shade from Elysium, to wander in a country that you did not know in life?”

“Never say that I am restless,” replied Socrates with a smile. “In death, as in life, my spirit is patient and enduring, waiting for the secret of the gods to be revealed. Why do you ask me what has brought me here? Did you not call me, Alexander? Are not these gardens on the borders of Elysium? But now, I sit with my friends about me, in cheerful conversation and the voices of the gods called me hither and I came; your voice, my son, and other voices of a time beyond your time Listen!”

Alexander listened, lifting his eyes, as Socrates did to the torch-lit palace. From somewhere within it came faint strains of music, as though the courtly Persians had returned and made revelry again within its walls. Yet this was music of a kind that he had never heard before. In the flickering torchlight he thought that the carved processions moved indeed pacing slowly around the walls and across the terrace and up and down the stair. It seemed for a moment that it was they who sang, and the mighty Cherub at the gates opened their stone mouths and joined the chorus. But in an instant they were silent again, and only the long lines of warriors and courtiers and slaves marched on.

“They too are awake,” said Socrates. “Oh, King, this is something that will not return. In Elysium we sit expectant, poised between Time and Eternity waiting for the moment when the gates of heaven shall open and the truth shall be revealed. We have been watching for your coming, Alexander. In this place to-night, east touches west, past touches future, Time glimpses for a space Eternity. Come, let us find out what is here.”

But as they turned to leave the garden, another

came rapidly striding over the starry lawns, and he too was Greek and a stranger. His face was noble and eager, his eye piercing as an eagle's.

"What has brought you here," he cried, "oh living Alexander, conqueror of the world, to the country of desire?"

"Say rather, what has brought you here, oh Pindar, prince of poets, to the gardens of Persepolis?" returned Socrates, laughing softly. "You have wandered before you were aware."

With a joyful rush of greeting, Alexander advanced to the newcomer. "Do you too know me, Pindar?" he asked.

"I know you, Alexander," replied the poet. "Who does not? For to us, waiting and listening in the fragrant meadows, the songs that men sing with their lips come faintly, but the song of turbulent youth that your spirit sings sweeps about us in the ocean-borne breeze; at times sweet, at times thunderous and irresistible; at times discordant too. Why did you spoil my city, Alexander?"

"I spared your house," replied the conqueror.

"That is true," said Pindar. "Not so easily may we condemn. I know you, Alexander. You are ruthless and ambitious, passionate and revengeful, tender and pitiful, generous and romantic. You are always dreaming of worlds and life beyond the life you know."

He looked up also to the torch-lit palaces, and then it seemed that he smiled in recognition of some one who stood upon the terrace. Alexander turned his head. Down the broad stone stairs a warrior came, a splendid and spirited figure, in armour rich and strange. The torchlight fell upon his plumed helmet,

upon his proud face, upon his gold-encrusted arms. He came down to them, and with admiration and wonder in his gaze he addressed the conqueror.

“Is it your voice then I have heard, oh Alexander? Or who was it roused me from my long rest in the shades, bidding me arm once more and go out to meet the King of Kings?”

“That is a title that many men have claimed,” said Pindar. “And why not Alexander, conqueror of Asia and the realms of all the proudest kings on earth?”

“Wait a little, Pindar. Wait a little, Achilles,” said Socrates. “Let us see what the night may show us. For these are words that the winds of Elysium sigh over and over, with longing and with expectation. To carry such a title were a heavy burden for any man.”

He turned from them and began slowly to climb the stair, and they followed without questioning his leadership. Through the tall doorway they entered the palace. Music still lingered in the air about them: and it seemed to Alexander that the marching stone figures turned their faces in salute as they went by. But whether that homage was to him, their conqueror, or to Achilles or to Pindar or to Socrates, he felt that he could not know.

In the vast and many-columned hall the throne of Persia stood empty, and the rich silk of the hangings swished mournfully as the wind swayed them. But on the tall carved throne on the high door King Xerxes sat upright and proud as he had sat for a hundred years. His enemies were beneath his feet, the Being to whom he had given worship spread protective wings above his head. Achilles crossed to the empty throne. He mounted the steps and stood stiffly beside the golden chair, waiting for Alexander to take

his place upon it. Proudly the King of Macedon seated himself upon the throne of Persia. Xerxes bowed his head, in greeting more than in submission, and the wings of the spirit stirred. Yet it made no further sign, but continued to look upward in inscrutable silence, as though it were in its power to speak but it would not. Through the many windows the starlight came faintly, and the perfumes of the garden floated in upon the wind.

“The day is mine, Xerxes,” said Alexander.

“The day is yours,” said Xerxes. “See that you use it well.”

His voice was calm, and in the heart of Alexander was no triumph, but he spoke as to a friend. “Have we two no other greeting?”

“Is it to greet me only that you have come to this place?” returned Xerxes. “Or is it for this moment only that I have waited so long upon this throne? What do you seek?”

“The conquest of the world,” said Alexander.

“Are you then He for whom I am waiting?” asked Xerxes.

The conqueror of Athens turned his troubled eyes to meet the troubled eyes of the conqueror of Persepolis. A silence fell upon them. Pindar sat now with clasped hands and dreamy eyes on the steps of the throne. But Socrates stood still in the middle of the hall, as though he were too humble or too forgetful to find his own place, and he looked about him with searching eyes.

“There is a riddle here that seeks an answer,” he said. “Where are your wise ones, oh King of Persia?”

The King struck three blows with his staff. In the shadowed vistas of the aisles something stirred, and there was a sighing and a soft trampling of ghostly

feet. From the walls the marching slaves came forth, and in procession approached their master's throne. From the walls the soldiers came marching, with quiver and bow on shoulder, with spears held aloft. From the walls the princes came, with dark curled hair and long robes, deep purple in the strange dim light. Silently they crowded about the throne of Xerxes, giving no heed to the place where Alexander sat eagerly watching.

At the end of the procession came the Magi, and their white beards flowed down over robes that were dusky blue and strewn with silver. They came, three in number, and bowed before the King.

"You sent for us, oh Master of the World!" they cried together. But the chorus of their speech made only a thin and tremulous wailing, as though the wind had moaned suddenly through the hall.

"You name me wrong," said Xerxes. "See where Alexander sits enthroned. Which of us now is Master of the World and King of Kings?"

The three were silent; still they gave no heed to Alexander; and still the face of Xerxes was troubled and dissatisfied.

"Can you not see into the future, oh wise ones?" he asked.

"We are of the past." The wail of the three Magi trembled about the walls once more.

"Nevertheless, ask of the future, oh wise ones of Persia, what it is we wait for. Where is the King of this earth, the Mightiest of the Mighty?"

"Not here, oh Xerxes," sighed the Magi. "Not on the throne of Persia."

"Then He is not Alexander?"

"Not Alexander." Their sighing echoed.

Silence fell again, and the Persian multitude swayed in the wind as though it were flickering torchlight. But Socrates still stood, forgetful of his own dignity, in the middle of the floor, and after a while he spoke.

“Xerxes, you have told us nothing new. Alexander may carry his triumph to the ends of the earth, and remain Alexander still. Have you nothing more to say, oh wise ones?”

The three turned at his voice, and advanced into the centre of the hall. As they did so they seemed to come out of the shadows and to assume more palpable shape.

“There is no one wiser than Socrates,” they said, and they bowed low before him.

“There must be,” returned Socrates simply.

“You look for a solution of the mysteries of life, oh Socrates,” said the tallest and most venerable of the three wise men. “But we look for a solution of the mysteries of heaven.”

“They are one and the same,” said Pindar, and he rose suddenly and came down to them.

“I have watched and waited,” said Socrates, “believing that wisdom was not alone within the minds of men.”

“Who knows?” sighed the Magi; and the second one went on: “We know only that we have searched the heavens for a sign.”

“And have you seen nothing?” Pindar asked.

“How can we be sure?” sighed the Magi; and the third one added: “It may be that the answer is something very simple. But we have gathered together the knowledge of all mankind, and we have not the answer.”

“Nothing at all?” asked Socrates.

“Nothing but a dream,” replied the Magi. “A vision of a child and of a star.”

There was again a silence, while the wise men of Persia communed with the future; then suddenly they spoke together:

“Oh wise men of Greece, what gifts may be brought to a King?”

Achilles came down from his place and stood before the Persian throne. With a clang of metal he lifted his mighty arms, and shouted: “Gold!”

But the hands of Pindar swayed, and his eyes were uplifted, as though he gathered together in one smoking censer all the devotion of his songs. “Frankincense,” he said.

And Socrates bowed his head over his cupped hands as though he held in them a draught of bitterness that he did not fear to drink. And he whispered “Myrrh.”

Impetuously Alexander left his seat and descended into the hall. The shadowy throng seemed to fall back and to dissolve into the night air at his approach. Only the Magi remained for a moment visible, yet subtly changed, more regal in their aspect, and in a new, warm light. Their hands were laden and lifted as though they offered yet withheld their gifts, their smiling faces bent as though to the eagerness of a child upon the ground. Then they too faded. The King on his throne sat stiff and still. A strain of music drifted again about the pillars, and it seemed that Pindar sang. The footsteps of Achilles echoed as he strode from the hall, and the voice of Socrates murmured out of the darkness: “A little longer. It is not consummated. . . .”

Bewildered and excited, Alexander felt his way to the door.

“Where now, Alexander?” whispered the voice of Achilles from the shadows.

“To the world’s end,” he answered.

He thought that Socrates murmured once again: “A little longer.” But he came out on to the terrace and it was empty, save for the sentry pacing to and fro. A nightingale sang in troubled snatches in the garden; the waiting trees sighed, and their leaves rustled softly, as the winds passed through them and away to the ends of the world.

FOREBODING

ONE day the Saviour, crowd-pursued, escaped
The noisy multitude, and stole away
To quietness, when, right before Him, shaped
The figure of a cross against the day,
Where some wild bandit (caught and crucified
By Roman masters,) told the uncaring skies
In every line how hideously he died,
And stared at Jesus with unseeing eyes.

And when at last, the hour grown dusk and late,
They sought and found Him, there unmoved He stood,
Gazing in pity, musing His own fate,
Silent before the robber’s bloody rood.

S. B. J.

MOONLIGHT

I AM the moon, the light of half the world.
I watch the caravans troop silently
Across the hills. The palm trees know my touch.
I cast long shadows where the pine trees stand.
The vast fields of the snow bathe in my light.
I am at home where oceans rage and storm;
No stranger to the friendly little hills.
I fill the marble halls of mighty kings

And humble cottages of poorer folk.
 I throw a screen of quiet radiance
 About the sordid details of the day.
 I am the friend of all the lonely ones—
 The brave young mother with her ailing child,
 The sailor at his solitary watch.
 I am the lovers' patron, hear their vows,
 And with an evanescent beauty make
 Their eager faces fair. Old men dream dreams
 On haunting moonlight nights, and young men dare
 To face the future armed with glorious hope.
 The mother of all genius, I guide
 The artist's hand; beneath my magic spell
 The poet's ears are filled with melody.
 I am the moon, the light of half the world.
 On silent moonlight nights great deeds are born.

ANON.

PARTNERS

By DILYS CADWALADR

WHEN I met them, they had climbed up a hundred yards from the Union. They were obviously tramp partners, mates of the open road. Though it was but half-past eight of the morning, they looked as if they had not ceased their tramping all night; the rest given by a charity house did not seem to have eased their travel-tension. They were not starting afresh: they were merely carrying on the journey of yesterday and to-morrow.

The woman was like a desolate moor on a rainy day, not without bleak, stark splendour, a hefty-boned creature of big movements and deep voice. I barely noticed him; he was a mere little echo of a man, who had learnt to keep in step with the woman, and whose

LIBER ET LEGALIS HOMO EXIT



But I'm a Free and Lawful Man..or at least my grandfather was.
DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT MY BOY. YOU ARE AN INSURABLE PERSON

himself; and, as far as I could gather, her replies were no replies, but mere curt observations quite irrelevant to his complaints.

Then I understood that the two walked apart, though side by side, two beings whose feet were harassed by the same rough paths, whose faces were beaten by the same winds, but whose hearts were bent on varying goals. She was bound for Heaven, her Eldorado of shining tiles and warmth; he was making for the workhouse. It would always be so! That was the reason for the hopefulness of her—she was daily nearer her goal. As for him, to-morrow morning would find him as far from his goal as ever. Indeed, one can be so much more certain of the ideal than of the actual.

I thought it quite likely that both would die on the roadside. Even so, at that last hour, her optimism would undoubtedly be rewarded, as would his pessimism be justified; for as her eyes drooped in that most utter sleep, I daresay the kind fairies of fantasy would be very near her to carry her away into her dream cottage. As for him, his eyes would close even then on the vision of a milestone that spoke of yet another mile to make to the Union door.

At this point in my reverie, the woman gave me another insight into her spirit—she turned to the man and lifted the sack for a moment from his weary shoulders, to replace it more firmly and comfortably. Simultaneously, I saw her eyes. There was in them an unselfconscious compassion, a flash of mother love that made her one with all ageless, timeless things. Hitherto, I had ached for her, her broken boots and cold-bitten hands; but now I knew she pitied not herself, but this man of hers. It was then that I too had pity for him, for he had not seen that flash; only the earth upon which he crawled.

The man talked in as loud a voice as he could summon, now. I gathered that, for some reason or other, he was taunting her, and I saw the peasant temper of her, heard her sharp, aggressive answer. They were quarrelling, illogically and coherently as the ignorant do, but with a deal of righteous indignation on either side.

They drifted apart, raising their voices, each seeking the green fringe of the road, and walking with a certain childish petulance on the raised embankment; a tacit denial of that which, above all, kept them together—the road.

Their individual loneliness had a quality of pathos in it, with the barren white strip of highway between them. She was dejected in her strength; he so broken in his weakness.

But it was the little man who urged parting, told the woman to "go her own way." He could, it seems, "do without her well enough."

At this point, because people's quarrels are essentially their own affair, I retreated behind the hedge; for they too had stopped, as if to await the crisis of the situation. . . .

When I emerged, the man was sitting alone! His little sack was trailing in the gutter, and his staff lay abandoned on the green.

He was not weeping, except that the whole framework of him was sob-shaken. I passed him by; he looked at me with unseeing eyes, and I knew well enough that he could not go on alone. There was blankness in his look which I understood with my heart, if not with my mind. Reliance, the hand that lifted the sack, the steps that led, the enveloping bigness of her—gone!

I hastened on, and came within short distance of her again.

She walked with the same uncouth vigour, her arms spread outwards grotesquely, her head held high, and her back unbent. But as I drew closer, I knew that there was a difference. As she walked, she made low moan, like a priest's chanting in a dim chancel.

I forged abreast of her, and saw the large tears on her cheeks, the coarse hands clutching the little brass poker, that thing which meant that some day, somewhere, was Heaven. With a short fierce glance at it, she made as if to hurl it away; but her fingers hesitated, then relaxed into great gentleness. She pushed it back clumsily under her left arm into the torn sack.

I passed her by, and hurried with throbbing throat until I came to the bend of the road. There I turned to seek her following figure.

But the woman was not following. It was the strong, squat back of her that I saw, head held high, arms and feet hurled out aggressively.

With terrible, slow haste, she was "going back" to her partner.

"SACKED"

THE Master hummed and hawed; his face turned red,
"I'll have to stop you, John," the Master said,
"You're past it, lad, and that's the truth of it. . . ."

John turned and shambled on his old, stiff legs,
And looked across the farm; ploughland and grass;
And in that moment knew how all things pass. . . .
He saw his life, the shining youth of it,
A mirage in the sun, and felt the ruth of it. . . .
Scaring the rooks and taking pee-weets' eggs,
Or scrambling with his milk pails through the snow,

Or carting turnips to the upland tegs. . . .

Last week, or was it sixty years ago?

John, gazing up the hill slope, did not know.

The flailing years since first he was a lad

Had threshed his life and knocked out all he had;

The grain was gone, and now the chaff must go. . . .

"I've had to stop old John," the Master said;

"He can't do any work at all to mention. . . ."

The Mistress acquiesced, nodding her head:

"He'll be all right—he'll have his old-age pension. . . ."

KENNETH H. ASHLEY.

FEAR

I AM weary of youth—I wish that I were old:

For then my present would be full of peace,

My future free from fear, since it could bring

Nothing more strange than death.

Oh, maybe then

I should not have this riot in my heart

Of ecstasy, these gusts of sudden joy,

Swift as the winds that shake the woods in Spring.

I should not know delight nor feel desire,

Nor with love's golden star-dust fill my eyes,

All bright and blinding-sweet.

But then, oh then

I should not have this panic in my soul,

These moments when I shrink from life's unknown,

Desperate, sick with fear; these craven moods,

Moods when the blackest shadows of to-day

Seem white against the blackness of to-morrow,

And terror stifles thought.

If I were old,

Serene and safe, I should not suffer thus.

Wisdom would temper feeling. I should know

How little or how much or not at all

Life matters. I should look with tranquil eyes
 And quiet understanding on the young,
 And pity them—I who had found content
 Instead of joy, and rest instead of sorrow.

I am afraid. . . . Would God that I were old.

JAN STRUTHER.

WILLIAM MORRIS

(1834—1896)

By H. D. C. PEPLER

SHOULD anyone now pass over the Creek and by "the Doves" at that bend of the Thames which supports the despised but immortal boro' of Hammersmith he may notice, on his left, a stone pig. Perhaps I should say a stone hog, for its species was settled by the proximity of Hampshire Hog Lane which it faces until the destroyers of ancient landmarks and insanitary homes shall have been replaced by the improved dwellings, flats and what-nots of this enlightened age. This hog was carved by Joseph Cribb to indicate the site of the Hampshire House Workshops and Trust which came into being, some twenty-five years ago, as a result of the post-pro Morris enthusiasm of three men. One of these became the owner of Kelmscott House, and many plans of "social" work were drawn up in the famous coach-house at its side. In 1962 these buildings are to be transformed into a Guest House of the Socialised England and inscribed:

"Guests and neighbours, on the site of this Guest Hall once stood the lecture-room of the Hammersmith Socialists. Drink a glass to the memory! May 1962." (*News from Nowhere.*)

Near the tablet the hog, I hope, will be poking up its stone snout for recognition, a reminder that workshops tend to be more productive than lecture-rooms. I began this essay with the pig because it is a kind of link between the nineties and the thirties, the Morris alive and the Morris dead, an epitaph of the "Arts and Crafts" movement. "Morris came tumbling in" not only to the rooms of Burne-Jones the undergraduate, but into the smug prosperity of the later Victorian era. Ruskin and Carlyle talked, Morris did. His doing stirred the arts in their sleep and brought the Crafts out of their graves. The effervescence of curiosity in art and life which began with Morris and the pre-Raphaelites has to throw up before it could subside, the Post-impressionist, cubist, futurist and other forms of self-consciousness inevitable in those who discuss their work and its significance. Cribb, the carver of the pig, myself and our contemporaries are the end of that bubble, not the beginning of the next. It is unfortunate that the emblem is a pig, for few know it as the fastidious animal it is. Piggishness, as generally understood, is not the mark which one would associate with Morris or his followers, especially among the printers! But that is a geographical accident not to be escaped.

So far as I can catch his character there was something boisterous and Rabelaisian about Morris which never reached his work, the inhibitions of Oxford and the age were too strong for him. Morris in his grosser moments may have felt like a pig, I feel sure he felt like "Blast" (one of the few examples of typographical eccentricity produced in England and now, I believe, defunct), which is a printer's form of pigginess, notwithstanding the fact that he printed like a cloistered monk. It was what he was rather than what he did which left

its mark upon England. It was not the Kelmscott Press which set me printing, it would be more accurate to say it turned me away from it, but as his influence only reached me through the filtered sources of his friends and his work, I cannot tell. The fact is that I became a Socialist before I became a printer, and fought a Borough Council election as one of the I.L.P., a party with whom I might have remained longer but for the war, which absorbed so many enthusiasms and ended so many hopes sprung from the great heart of Morris. Many a night have I seen the "young moon halfway up the sky tangled in the branches of the tall old elm" opposite to Kelmscott House, rather ineptly described by Mackail as "a large Georgian house of a type, ugly without being mean, familiar in the older London suburbs." There, "looking over the low wall to note the moonlit river, near upon high water, go swirling and glittering up to Chiswick Eyot,"—I have argued Socialism with brother idiots. Not that *News from Nowhere* had ever captured any of us as even indicating a remote gleam of heaven upon earth, we had simply caught Morris's enthusiasm for the good life which he lived better than he described. We worked for the time when

that which the worker winneth
 Shall then be his indeed,
 Nor shall half be reaped for nothing
 By him that sowed no seed,

thinking that this was a "strange new wonderful justice," as those might who had never even heard of the *Rerum Novarum*.

The Kelmscott Press was the last flower of his abundant life. Many of us might feel that his criticism of ordinary modern type was, at that time, unnecessary. The lateral compression of "all later type owing to

commercial exigencies" did not apply to the former types which were equally available to the printer, and that "thickening and thinning of the line which is the essential fault of the ordinary modern type" was no often so exaggerated as to make it more difficult to read than the type which he designed as an improvement on it. Morris had, perhaps, an undue regard for the appearance of a thing. The paper, made specially for him by Batchelor (still one of the finest paper makers in the world), had to be modelled on an Italian pattern of the Middle Ages, and "the wire moulds were woven by hand to reproduce the slight irregularity in the texture of those (papers) used by the earliest printers." But water-marks cannot add a quality which age alone can give.

This may seem a small fault, but it is one he would have avoided had he mastered the craft more thoroughly himself, but his enthusiasm for getting things done was too urgent to be confined to one job. It is a fault which failed to get interred with his bones, among his followers it spread, disease-like, until the Arts and Crafts movement died of it. It is impossible to reproduce good things by a process of copying without the degeneration of the work because one begins with the outside, the appearance, and the "kingdom of heaven cometh not by observation," but is ever within. However, not all his friends, successors and co-heirs suffered this weakness, those who have kept alive his typographical enthusiasm being noticeably exempt. It is naturally, with these I am best acquainted, and I may perhaps suffer from Press-pride. The Kelmscott Press made a considerable mark when one considers that it was only in existence during the last five years of his life.

Some man of Hammersmith, in another age, will write a book on the influence of that Borough upon

Typography. He will find the stone hog between the two most famous presses of the last century and weave his romance about it. The Public Library will not only show its treasures from the Kelmscott and the Doves, but also MS. penned by Edward Johnston and stone-cut letters by Eric Gill, which will, I hope, have been rescued from the spoilers of Hampshire House. There will be plates by Emery Walker and possibly a dredger will have brought up the Cobden Sanderson type. Indeed, he would have a fine collection to go upon; he might even reach across the world to San Francisco to find the Grabhorns, most skilful of living printers, typographical descendants of Morris and Cobden Sanderson.

When the shades of Hammersmith's typographers are permitted to return, or perhaps are forced to do so as a part of their purgatory, there are not a few who will be found lurking between the Hog and Kelmscott House! May both survive the great change! The Hog, being of stone and having weathered many years of street-boy attention and London fog, should last into the future to remind, perhaps, the passer-by of Presses, Printing and a small attempt to defy the world of Progress! I say a small attempt because, in perspective, the work of William Morris, and of those few who have sought to carry it on, has never been big. It was always highly individualistic in practice despite the Cause and its creed, it was and is an enthusiasm of the small man who finds a need to "rejoice in the deeds of his hand."

William Morris no longer confuses the Cause with the Holy Ghost and we doubt not of his crown, for

Good men he loved and hated bad,
Joyful days and sweet he had,
Good deeds did he plenteously,
Beneath him folk lived frank and free.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

commercial exigencies" did not apply to the former types which were equally available to the printer, and that "thickening and thinning of the line which is the essential fault of the ordinary modern type" was no often so exaggerated as to make it more difficult to reach than the type which he designed as an improvement on it. Morris had, perhaps, an undue regard for the appearance of a thing. The paper, made specially for him by Batchelor (still one of the finest paper makers in the world), had to be modelled on an Italian pattern of the Middle Ages, and "the wire moulds were woven by hand to reproduce the slight irregularity in the texture of those (papers) used by the earliest printers." But water-marks cannot add a quality which age alone can give.

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THE PANTOMIME

So what was in the story books was true :
 There is a demon-haunted wood that hems
 The singing fountain and the land of gems ;
 And hark ! that is the horn of the Boy Blue !
 And look ! in that portentous towering shoe
 Hundreds of children dwell ! and from the stems
 Of flowers the fairies swing with diadems
 Of gossamer, and fluttering wings of dew !
 And now the Prince has kissed the slumbering lips ;
 And winter roses and midsummer snow
 And sheaves of spring together fall and grow
 And perish in a wild apocalypse ;—
 Till from a cataract of golden rain
 The mottled clown cries, “ Here we are again ! ”

MAURICE BARING.

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

(The effect of these lines depends entirely on their being sung very slowly indeed to the beautiful Welsh air.)

Jazz is jerking, jazzers reeling,
 All through the night !
 Raucous saxophones are pealing
 All through the night.
 Din like all damnation dealing—
 Yelling, banging, howling, squealing,
 Suit this air when played with feeling
 All through the night.

Noise that keeps the night-clubs going
 All through the night.
 Fizz and cocktails always flowing
 All through the night.
 Showy women not worth showing ;

Men well-known and not worth knowing—
Loudly their own trumpets blowing
All through the night.

Naught can stay the mad gyrations
All through the night.

Or the latest chic sensations
All through the night.

Save alarming indications
That the local police stations,
Also stretch their operations—
All through the night.

Woeful poet, sit not weeping
All through the night.

Peace a wiser world is steeping
All through the night.

They that have our lives in keeping :
Digging, planting, ploughing, reaping,
Still retain a taste for sleeping—
All through the night. G. K. C.

THE BALLAD OF THE TRUE POLICEMAN

As I was walking down the Strand
With my wife and her sister—
My wife was on my dexter hand,
The other on my sinister—
Who should be standing in the road
But a great big policeman?
He didn't look a nasty sort :
In fact, he looked quite decent.
A lady came to cross the road
And she seemed very poor ;
Her age, I thought, was sixty-odd,
But my wife thought it more.

Some policemen would have let her risk it,
 But he was not that kind :

He paid respect to women, though
 Their clothes might not be fine.

He stopped the traffic coming on
 And made it stand quite still
 Till she had crossed to the other side
 And reached there safe and well.

He smiled at her as she passed by,
 Which he need not have done
 (No one expects a policeman to—
 How could he, at everyone?)

So to my wife I then remarked,
 And to her sister, too :

“ That was a very kindly thing
 For that policeman to do.

’Tis easy to be kind, if you want,
 To a sister, a wife, or a mother ;

But the man who can be kind to a strange old lad
 Is a gentleman all over.” A. M. CURRIE.

THE WOODEN HAT

By C. T. B. DONKIN

IN 1777 William Murdock, the inventor, tramped from Scotland to Birmingham and sought employment with the firm of Boulton and Watt. James Watt, who was often morose and irritable, is said to have received him without enthusiasm (Murdock was then unknown to fame), and to have shown him the door.

As the mechanic turned to go he chanced to drop his hat, and the astonishing noise it made as it struck the floor startled Watt out of his morose humour. He looked sharply from the hat to its owner and back to the hat again.

"What the devil is that hat made of?" he asked gruffly.

"Wood, sir," replied Murdock, and went on to explain that, as he could not afford a good beaver hat, he had imitated the shape of one in sound, well-seasoned, enduring timber.

"But how did you make it?" asked Watt, whose scientific curiosity was aroused.

"I turned it on a lathe," said Murdock, as he retrieved the thing and looked at it fondly, with his head on one side.

"But," cried Watt angrily, "it's oval, and you cannot turn things oval on a lathe. You're talking nonsense, man."

And then Murdock told exactly how he had devised a way of doing that very thing. Watt engaged him forthwith. Thereafter it was the hand of William Murdock that interpreted the ideas of James Watt, as well as those of William Murdock.

Now, if a modern king of industry were to tell that tale he would point some such moral as this: "See how we have benefited by that absurd and unsaleable hat of William Murdock. The man was unbalanced, of course, but a genius nevertheless. A wooden hat!" And then he would point with one hand to fifty truckloads of mass-produced oval wheel-spokes or what not; and with the other to five hundred shops full of mass-produced hats.

But the real point of the story is surely this: William Murdock wanted a wooden hat (yes, you may laugh; but then you are not William Murdock). He wanted it badly enough to set himself to invent and construct a means of making it, and then to make it. He may even have stolen the wood for it, I do not know. But he did not sub-let any part of the contract; nor did

he float a company, engage a thousand men, and begin manufacturing wooden hats on a commercial scale. No, he did everything himself and did it only once. He just invented and made one wooden hat (which was, admittedly, like nothing on earth), and, having made it, put it on and walked to Birmingham in it. What has twentieth-century Birmingham to say to that?

THE GARDEN SUBURB

By EDWARD J. MACDONALD

(A long way after Tchekov.)

SCENE:—*The room that is still a drawing-room.*

Any background or hangings may be used so long as these are of a dull tone. A window, L., looks out on a suburban garden. A telephone stands on the table, C. At the back C., stands a cabinet (carved wood) against the wall.

MRS. RAVEN *is discovered standing by the window L.*

BARBARA *is seated on a couch, R., sewing.*

ANNA, *in a chair by the table, C., is reading a book.*

THE MAN OF BUSINESS *is pacing up and down the room.*

It is nearly six o'clock of a spring evening.

ANNA and BARBARA *do not change their positions at any time during the action, and never pay any attention to each other or to MRS. RAVEN or THE MAN OF BUSINESS. It is an essential to the proper acting of the piece that the players behave as if they were stone deaf and do not realise that anyone else is in the room. THE MAN OF BUSINESS alone is aware of his companions, though MRS. RAVEN speaks to him occasionally.*

ANNA (*without looking up*). I enjoyed the comedy we saw to-day. Murders are so amusing.

MRS. RAVEN (*slowly and sadly*). No, no. I cannot do it. I used to sit in this room in the evenings when I was a child. I used to watch the growth of the suburb from this window.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS (*irritably*). What does it matter? It's only a suburb. You must have money, and here is a chance to get it.

BARBARA (*dreamily*). I wonder if my great grandmother was married?

MRS. RAVEN. But I cannot sell the suburb. I could not bear to see it destroyed.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS. That's just the point. You need not sell it. Make it—

ANNA (*without enthusiasm*). What would I be like if I had green eyes?

MRS. RAVEN (*reflectively*). No, I cannot part with the suburb.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS (*who during these remarks has been trying to think what you could make it*). A cherry orchard! You can get a big income if you sell all the fruit to the jam-makers.

MRS. RAVEN (*musingly*). I was born in the suburb. Father shot himself in the garden, mother was killed in the High Street, and Uncle collapsed in the super-cinema.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS. Listen to this. If you do not turn the suburb into a cherry orchard it will be sold by the tax collector. Then where will you be?

ANNA (*dully*). I saw a balloon go up in Paris.

There is a long pause, during which the M. of B. continues to pace up and down the room.

MRS. RAVEN. I wonder where I could raise enough money to pay off the mortgage?

THE MAN OF BUSINESS (*suddenly pulls out his watch and looks at it. Then leaps on the telephone and takes off the receiver*). Regent double O double O. My wife wants to divorce me (*without turning away from the telephone*). No, Miss, I was not talking to you. (*A pause.*) Hello! . . . Is that you, George? Have you done it? Yes? All right. It may not rain to-night after all. (*Replaces the receiver.*)

ANNA. The Underground is not very cool in summer.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS (*with immense satisfaction*). Well, that's done. I have bought the suburb.

MRS. RAVEN (*turning and for the first time acknowledging his existence*). You have bought the suburb!

THE MAN OF BUSINESS. I told my agent to buy it if he did not hear from me before six o'clock. For two hours I have tried to make you agree to my plans. You would not. You did not want to see your precious suburb turned into a cherry orchard. Well—now it is too late.

MRS. RAVEN (*turning back to the window*). They have sold the suburb. They have sold the garden, the High Street and the Super-Cinema. Alas! my poor father, my mother, my uncle!

THE MAN OF BUSINESS. Yes, the suburb has been sold. If you had listened to me you would have made a lot of money. As it is you gain nothing and the suburb becomes—

BARBARA (*drearily*). I suppose my grandfather drank.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS (*overlooking the interruption*). A cherry orchard. My cherries will become famous throughout the land. My cherry jam will be eaten in every home. People will say: "How wonderful

are the cherries of the Man of Business.” Ha! ha! I was once an office boy.

MRS. RAVEN (*wistfully*). The suburb looks very wonderful in the twilight.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS (*cheerfully*). What marvellous jam I shall make! I shall advertise it in all the papers—“ A Whole Cherry in Every Jar.”

BARBARA (*sighing*). Twenty-two misfortunes.

ANNA (*lackadaisically*). Charlotte Gooper was very funny in the play this afternoon. She was murdered in the first act.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS (*ecstatically*). A cherry orchard! (*He resumes his pacing up and down.*)

MRS. RAVEN (*plaintively*). I wonder why Uncle collapsed in the Super-Cinema?

(*Curtain.*)

JELLIPATAM

By “ QUO ”

SIR, and my very, very worthy old Friend and Patron,

It is since the too long that I had this stupendous pleasure for which your good readers will be awaiting the news with the champs of the impatience.

For, my worthy Sahibjee, I am just in the burstings with the informations to the so extent that even my the well known and certified by the learned and venerable the Professorjee Moteewalla, (“ Fat-Man ” my good Sir, Wah, Wah.) of the Bottliwalla Institute grasp of the colloquiality of your tongue is waggling in the balance to the so much degree that notwithstanding or as we say in South Kanara nevertheless I seize my typewriter to disclose to your Honour in

the deepest confidence the welterings of my Family tragedies.

I am in duty bound and as such will ever pray to give to you the official and too authentic news with the overweening lamentableness. For, my old old friend, I can no longer disguise from your too sympathetic auriculas that Uncle Chukkerbutty has slipped off this life's vicarious twig and that his corse is even now cumbering the turf. In other words, my very very valued Sir, to my too deep grief and sobbing Uncle Chukkerbutty is no more, that is to say Uncle Chukkerbutty is dead, or as we say in South Kanara the old Chap's Number is Up. In short he has pegged it.

The good and worthy old Buffer has not only only plunged heads and crops into the recesses of the Tomb and left his too sorrowing relatives what we call in South Kanara huddledy-puddledy but he has to his lasting debit constituted the Ram Bux and my worthy self what we legal chaps call his heirs executioners and assigns.

His wealth, my dear Sirjee, is too proverbial, having followed the honourable and lucrative profession of Cat-guts Merchant since the too many years. Cats, my good Manjee, and my very very dear and over-valued Editorjee, were the mainest object of his career and the profits must have been obstreperous. The figure is computed as the four and one-a-half lakhs. In the midst of my griefest mournings I cannot but ache to shake his shade warmly by the hand. His crest viz. two disembowelled felines ramping now becomes the family insignia of the good Ram Bux and my better Self.

As chief of the mourners, my dear old friend (if I may so classify you without offence, for I have con-

ceived a strong affection for you born of your supreme contempt of my existence which leads me to place you in the list of my "almost personal friends") at funeral of lamented Chukkerbutty I bore myself I trust with customary equilibrium although more "per se" in role of strong silent business man than of public crier. To greater impression of admiring throngs I made the considerable and affecting play with far famed Blood-berry Umbrella, what we call in South Kanara, Parashade. Beneath which, shaken with the sobs, splitting the Jinkin with my howls, whilst with left arm and knee supporting the pudgy and sobbing carcass of Auntie Chukkerbutty, I yet preserved the rigid self control by surreptitious calculation of the Rupees Four and one-a-half lakhs into the sterling at the exchange one and sixpence seven thirtyseconds for demand Bills on London resulting subject to your kind confirmation in £34,277 6s. 10d., whereof one half to the Ram Bux saving only the one halfpenny to be devoted to the Pinjarpole Purposes.

With these three-two remarks permit me my esteemed W⁷⁴ & L⁷⁴ & L⁷⁴ & L⁷⁴jee to reciprocate myself,

Yours humbly to account,

RAM BAM.

THE BULLOCKS

I could not sleep for thinking of the skies.—J. MASEFIELD.

I COULD not sleep for thinking of their eyes,
 Their patient eyes, their lovely haunting eyes
 That look into our hearts with no surprise.
 So patient of the yoke they stand to brood,
 Drowsed with the turgid drumming of their blood
 Like Noah's archaic bullocks carved in wood.

ANON.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

FROM Padstow to Bradstow
 Once lay a land as fair
 As any under Heaven,
 And God was worshipped there:
 For lane and road and foot-path
 From farm to steeple went,
 And cow-bell answered church-bell
 From Cornwall to Kent.

From Padstow to Bradstow
 Is many a weary mile,
 With many a fence of barbed wire
 Where once there was a stile:
 And all the roads of England
 From town to city go
 Without a pause or turning—
 The rich have made it so.

From Padstow to Bradstow
 The roads are for the rich,
 And for their slaves to ride on,
 And they are black with pitch:
 And it were well for England
 That men should farm and pray,
 As when the road to London
 Was the King's highway.

PHILIP HAGREEN.

“. . . THE blind and blundering obstinacy with which a few aged atheists in France still prod on their politicians to quarrel with their own countrymen, to say nothing of their own ancient culture, seems to us to throw another light on a mystery we have often been asked to consider. A correspondent recently put it to



God forbid that I should glory
in the Cross of Christ!
Pausanias, *Mytho*

G. K. Chesterton

us in the form of asking why in the world the Prussians, who were the worst of our enemies, were allowed to come off best, while the Austrians, who were the best, were allowed to come off worst. We have never been able to make head or tail of it ourselves; but the more we have noticed since, the more we have suspected that it was simply and solely a religious prejudice. It was the rigid religious prejudice of the irreligious. These dreary and irritable anti-clericals, who are still tormenting France in time of peace, were probably pulling some strings even in time of war. And they pulled against any proposal that could make any concession to the Catholic Court of Vienna. Anybody really concerned for France, for civilisation, for humanity, or even for liberty, equality and fraternity, must see at a glance that the tradition of the southern capital is at least more humane and liberal than that of the northern. Anybody must see that there is more humanity in the legend of Maria Theresa than in the legend of Frederick the Great. But these fussy and funny little monomaniacs can never quite forget that the queen had the disgrace of being a devotee, while the king had the advantage of being a blasphemer."

"... WE are beginning to be tired of being told to read the Sermon on the Mount and to realise that we need no creed or dogma in the presence of so simple a pronouncement. About the hundredth time that our Christian friends told us to read the Sermon on the Mount, there suddenly dawned on us a profound and disturbing doubt about whether they had ever read it themselves. Here we have Lord X——, the well-known capitalist, saying that all would be well "if the clergymen would confine themselves to lectures

such as that given by Our Saviour on the Mount, with practical admonitions for the conduct of life, avoiding dogma, doctrine and theology—subjects which interest very few.” Now it may be that Lord X—— goes forth and looks at the flowers in his garden and decides at once to take no thought for the morrow. It may be he is in the habit of gazing at ravens and resolving in consequence not to store anything into his barns. But to hear him talk, so to speak, one would really suppose that the Sermon on the Mount actually was a lecture, and rather a dull lecture, full of nothing but moral truisms. As a fact it is full of most extraordinary mystical paradoxes, the meaning of which is as much disputed as any dogma; but paradoxes which are certainly not carried out in any of the various suggested senses by people like Lord X——. It may be, as some say, that they refer to a special vocation; or as others say that they refer to a new social order; but anyhow, if they were applied by everybody to everybody exactly as they stand, Lord X—— would probably exclaim: “Give me theology.”

“. . . Now it is due to what remains of that aristocratic tact and flexibility to say that it has even now, at the eleventh hour, saved England from the very worst of that collapse of Capitalism that has occurred in the very heart and home of Capitalism; The United States. America went ahead with complete confidence in Capitalism; just as Prussia went ahead with complete confidence in militarism. This much is only justice to the English gentleman; that he never quite believed in mere militarism, even when he imposed it on his subjects; he never quite believed in mere

Capitalism, even when he imposed it on himself. He had the huge disadvantage of having no faith; but at least he had all the advantages of doubt; and he took advantage of them. He was never so long attached to any heresy as to harden in that heresy; for he was not a heretic but a sceptic. There is something in him of Ulysses, that ancient mariner; perhaps the English adventurous spirit has really something in it of the fluctuation, almost the shiftiness of the sea. But anyhow, he has gained out of the collapse of Capitalism the privilege which Ulysses gained from Polyphemus; the privilege of being the last to die."

G. K. C.

CAT-ALEPSY

IN somnolence upon the floor
Observe the pensive Polydore,
Who, raised above the need to strive,
Ascends to the contemplative,
Till rhythmic breathing faintly sings
The perfect harmony of things.
Hypnotic flames, a cushion's silk,
And happy certitude of milk,
Combine to banish discontent
Hateful to feline temperament,
Which shrinks from all things that deny
An utter equability.
Now stormy kittenhood is done,
And sleek maturity begun;
Robed in the glossy beauty that
Enfolds him, the perfected cat
Purrs through a life that never cloys,
And breathes the comfort he enjoys.

MAURICE B. RECKITT.

A REFLECTION

“ His interests are legion.”
 (An adulatory article.)

“ His interests are legion! ”—Nay! have done!—
 The Spirit's Legion, but the interest one.
 Potash or petrol, pearls or orpiment,
 The only question is “ How much per cent. ? ”
 Strange that he cannot see how very odd it is
 Never to think of goods but as commodities.

Now once more Legion, by the Voice Divine,
 Ranging the world, has entered into swine,
 Oh! can we hope to see, with bated breath,
 The downhill scamper of Gennesareth!

W. K. SCUDAMORE.

SONGS OF LOST INNOCENCE

THIS is the House that Jack built.
 This is the Mort that lay on the House that Jack built.
 This is the Bank that held the Mort that lay on the
 House that Jack built.
 This is the Ring that owned the Bank that held the
 Mort that lay on the House that Jack built.
 This is the Hyphenated Yank
 With ginger-pop in his petrol-tank
 Who bossed the Ring
 That owned the Bank
 That held the Mort
 That lay on the House that Jack built.
 This is the Sociological Crank
 Who worshipped the Hyphenated Yank
 With ginger-pop in his petrol-tank

Who bossed the Ring that owned the Bank
That held the Mort that lay on the House
That Jack built.

This is the Rivet in Grandfather's Neck
—A horrid line, but it rhymes with the Cheque
That was paid to the Sociological Crank
By the Pious but Hyphenated Yank
That bossed the Ring that owned the Bank
That held the Mort (to cut it short)
That lay on the House that Jack built.

. Alas! Poor Jack!

KESTON HAYES.

THE BARREL

By C. T. B. DONKIN

It is a strange thing that most of the really great writers, artists and composers seem to have got their names engraved on the scroll of fame, while most of the really great inventors are utterly forgotten or unknown. The artist produces something which you can admire or ignore (according to your personal tastes) and still lay claims to sanity; but you cannot ignore the great inventions—such as wheels, ploughs, pottery, boots, glazed windows and a thousand others simple and familiar things—without getting yourself into prodigious and quite unnecessary difficulties. Yet we remember the producers of the beautiful things and entirely forget the contrivers of the useful ones. But it was ever thus with engineers and craftsmen. It is the price they pay for perpetually stealing and improving upon one another's ideas. The thing (whatever it may be) is nobody's child, though it has a pedigree as long as a prince's.

Thus we cannot tell who invented that almost perfect

thing, the barrel. Probably it grew to its present state under the hands of many generations of coopers. However that may be, the barrel, the ordinary beer barrel of commerce, is one of the finest examples of good design extant. It fulfils the various demands made upon it in a way that can hardly be matched for simplicity and economy.

In order to judge of the merit of a work of art you must possess that elusive quality called "taste," for if you have it not you may be discovered admiring something which, by all the canons of Art, you ought not to admire; and that will lead to an interminable argument in which you keep repeating "I like this," while your opponent reiterates "But I like that."

On the other hand, when two people of ordinary intelligence are discussing the design of some common article of use, every comment on the relation between the design of the thing and its purpose is a definite contribution to the discussion, because both parties are speaking from experience.

Let us return, therefore, to the subject of the barrel. What has it got to do? Primarily, it has to contain a liquid, and so it must be water-tight like a jug or a glass; but the liquid is not water, it is beer, and consequently the barrel must be beer-tight—a more exacting requirement. Beer is a fermented liquor, and releases a gas which must not be allowed to escape, for if beer is exposed to the atmosphere for a certain time it loses its gas and goes flat. Hence the barrel must be able to withstand an internal pressure of gas and liquid, besides supporting the mere weight of the liquid alone; and it must do this without leaking. So far, the barrel shows no advantages over the stone jar or bottle.

Now we come to an entirely different set of conditions.

The barrel must be economically transportable, for it seldom remains for long in the place where it is filled. This means that it must be reasonably easy to handle and not too heavy in relation to the weight of its contents. It must be handled by rough men, taken off drays and lorries, manœuvred across pavements or up alley-ways, lowered into cellars of various shapes and depths, dodged across encumbered floors in semi-darkness, lifted on to trestles, and, finally, tapped. Later on it must return empty by the way it came. Hence it must be strong and mobile; capable of propulsion; not demanding to be carried further than is absolutely necessary. This is where it beats the stone jar and the bottle, for they become unmanageable long before their capacity matches that of the 36-gallon barrel.

How does the barrel meet these conditions? Well, in the first place, it would meet all but one of them better than it does if it were a hollow sphere; that one we will deal with later. A hollow sphere gives the maximum of capacity for a given amount of enclosing material; moreover, it is strong, its shape is ideal for resisting internal pressure, and it is very mobile.

The question of manufacture has not been mentioned. It introduces another objection to spherical barrels: they are not easy to make out of wooden staves. But the shape of the barrel is near enough to that of the sphere for practical purposes. Its sides are curved in two directions—transversely and longitudinally—and a curved surface is stronger than a flat surface, and the flat ends are comparatively small.

The barrel is made of wooden staves held together by external hoops and grooved to receive the wooden discs which form the ends. Now, wood swells when it is wet, and the effects of this swelling on the wedge-

like staves and the end-pieces is to force them all together against the enclosing tension of the hoops, which do not swell. Hence the very presence of the beer in the cask helps to make it beer-tight; that is to say, a disadvantage is turned into an advantage, and the beer, desiring to be free, is made to defeat its own ends—an example of admirable design.

Next, as to mobility, the barrel is almost as good as the sphere. It balances naturally, in stable equilibrium, on its largest diameter, whether it is full or empty; and, while it will roll straight as well as a cylinder can, it can be made to turn sharp corners infinitely more easily. Thus there is no difficulty in manœuvring it in awkward places.

Then it has the great advantage of adapting itself as a pulley when a couple of ropes are passed round it, so that it can be lowered through a cellar-trap by one man with some simple tackle. This is where it leaves the otherwise ideal sphere quite definitely and finally behind, for the sphere would merely push itself between the ropes and fall like a bomb to the cellar floor below.

In recent years steel barrels have been introduced for carrying petroleum and tar. They are cylindrical, and have to be fitted with a couple of large projecting hoops on each side of the centre to strengthen them and enable them to be manœuvred round corners about a quarter as easily as a wooden barrel can be. But no human fiend has yet put beer in them.

This brings us to the last and most gracious quality of the ancient wooden barrel. Over and above all its astonishing mechanical properties it actually improves the beer. That is where it leaves behind so many of the inventions of our brilliant scientific men. They do not improve the beer.



ADAM

SMITH

TP

AZRAEL BY THE CROSS

WITH each winged rush to earth, with every stroke
 Of this dark sword of mine, through watching years,
 With every silver thread of life I broke
 I knew this moment. Lord, these are not tears
 Filling my spirit. This is joy, not sorrow.
 I who am Death, give Life! Rise up, defeated!
 Break open all your graves! To-day, to-morrow,
 Be free, until my triumph is completed.

Yet must I snap and cast away my blade
 Since you, who made me angel, yield to me.
 Oh Love, the veil is rent: the dear skies fade
 And you, unsheltered, lean against this tree,
 Whom kings and shepherds welcomed: come away,
 Close-wrapt beneath my cloak, till it is day.

K. C. MACDONALD.

GRISELDA

OF mothering my boy
 I had small joy.
 Sharp on the bitter hour of birth,
 With my returning mirth,
 Thy father snatched thee, love—
 Tho' milky-mouthed thou wert fast upon my breast
 With cuddled, crumpled limbs.
 He took my rosebud hope and left cold fear.
 My wing'd will like a dove
 Flies after thee and broods upon thy nest,
 Crooning those little nursery hymns
 Are proper to a sleepy baby's ear.
 Tho' ignorant where thou art
 My wise pulse is attuned to thy small heart,
 And should'st thou die
 Then, too, I think, shall I.

F. ASHFORD.

A New Invention

A large number of aeroplane accidents have recently been caused by the engine having fallen out of the machine; and I am encouraged to hope that my own invention to obviate this serious embarrassment to air travel may at last be given a fair trial. The principle depends mainly upon a silenium plate, impervious to heat and containing not more than 0·04 per cent. of boric acid, which is carried on a long stick at some distance beneath the under-carriage. The engine in falling from the machine strikes this plate and by a series of electrical controls the pointer of a gauge on the pilot's switchboard is swung over to read "Engine Fallen Out." So soon as the pilot receives this warning he pulls a lever, releasing a kind of grab-thing, which overtakes the engine and draws it back into position. De-luxe models in alligator-skin can be provided at an extra cost.

Chrythothtom

I have been privileged to hear from his own lips, or, rather, from between his upper teeth and his nether lip (for he has inherited that family trick of delivery), the gist of the maiden speech which the Hon. George Quelps is to make in the House next Tuesday. The subject is one which will strike a warm note of sympathy in every British heart, for this brilliant young statesman is to urge the necessity for legislation to prohibit the publication of the reports of sporting contests in which one British team is defeated by another. The Foreign Office has already recognised the importance of maintaining our sporting prestige in lands over which the Flag does not yet fly, and the efficacy of censorship to

And the spirit of law is the spirit of doom; I mean that this philosophy conceives of law callously, as something crushing efforts with which any generous imagination would sympathise. I will give only one example which illustrates exactly what I mean. I read the Bolshevist defence of the compromise made in Lenin's time, by which concessions were granted to foreign Capitalists. The defence was definitely founded on the idea that Capitalist competition would ruin the small owners and so leave them helpless in face of Bolshevist bureaucracy. It said: "Some may call this Capitalism; we call it a brilliant understanding of economic determinism." I do not call it Capitalism; I call it caddishness; a dirty modern financial trick for breaking the honour and self-respect of the poor. But what I would emphasise is that, much as I hate Capitalism, there is one thing that must always be more hateful to the spirit of any free man; and that is economic determinism."

G. K. C.

SPINACH AND THE MINOTAUR

By H. H. HUTCHINSON

AN American scientist is said to have constructed a robot which is almost perfect. It will not tackle a beef-steak, but it "reacts favourably to spinach." It is superhuman. Here it seems that scientists are at last approaching a solution of the problem of how to produce the Perfect Employee. Hitherto they have attempted production by breeding methods. What was good enough for Pouter pigeons or Gloucester Old Spots was thought good enough for machine-minders. But the employee thus produced had one great disadvantage. At his work he was satisfactorily poor-spirited; he would tolerate a dull routine of drudgery, a monstrous

serpent of repetition; he would live on next to no wages; and without complaint spend a lifetime minding a machine which punched holes in pieces of metal. Any and every kind of intolerable insolence and tyranny he would stand from his employers or their narks, for he was meek and submissive. But he drew the line at welfare work. He could not stand the smiling of the crocodile, or the cold and close caresses of the snake.

The history of the welfare-for-employees movement in improved, labour-saving, mechanised industry is this: One man can lead a robot to his spinach, but ten men can't make him react favourably to it.

There are sports clubs; welfare organisations; rest-rooms. There is screaming music to pierce the cacophony of the machines. What attar of carbolic, what eau-de-chlorine, to out-scent the smell of hot oil, and the odour of ten thousand human breaths crowded together! There is the kindly, labour-saving, human machinery of Charles E. Bedaux Ltd., wherein humanity is a unit of production. There is the benevolent and efficient "human factor" of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology Ltd., where humanity is a factor of the profits. But is there happiness? Not a bit! Will they act favourably to their spinach? Not they!

Ingrates!

But the new scientific robot so absorbent of spinach will change all that. He steps ready-made into an untouched and unclaimed inheritance of carbohydrates, calories and vitamins. Not for him the primitive, half-savage foods of factory hands—the chemical jams, the post-dated eggs, the frozen, skim-milk cheese. A whole world of concentrated nut butter, ultra-violet

vitamin gammas and Scrape-Guts, the well-known breakfast food, lies waiting for him. No one else wants it.

But though this new robot seems destined to be the perfect employee of the future, there remains the question: How to dispose of the old? The antiquated ideas of our fathers have been swept away; but what brisk broom will sweep away those fathers too?

The Ministry of Agriculture, with the aid of fumigations, traps, and haulm-to-haulm searches extending over 2,000 acres of potatoes in Essex and Kent, have stamped out nineteen Colorado Beetles, or twenty if you count the squashed one which was found first of all. It was a famous victory, and attainable only because prompt steps were taken to confine the outbreak to a small area. One might mention in passing that this action seems curiously at variance with the Ministry of Agriculture's declared policy of increasing consumption. It is true that the Colorado Beetle would not have paid any money for the vast number of potatoes it might have consumed; but England's greatness has been built upon cheap food, and the farmer must produce at a price which the consumer is prepared to pay.

However, the Colorado Beetle is past, and we must not desire the past even if it increases consumption. We must tackle our immediate problem, which, since the coming of the robot, is the stamping out of the mechanised workman. I do not pretend to be an expert at extermination, but when I see the monstrous mechanical labyrinths that factories are to-day, I sometimes think of the first labyrinth in Crete. Factories seem like prisons where that strange monster—half machine, half ape—Mechanised Man is con-

fined. And who better than Virgil could describe the twisted labyrinth of modern business: "*Hic labor, ille domus, et inextricabilis error*"?

A SORT OF SONG FOR THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

(At a very exclusive gathering of delegates to the Conservative Conference at Yarmouth, held in honour of Mr. Stanley Baldwin, an official of the Unionist Central Office had his pocket picked. There is considerable speculation concerning the identity of the successful delegate.)

(*Recit.*):

It might have been Harold de Haviland Vere,
A lad so impulsive, you know;
It might have been Becky from Petticoat Lane,
The soulmate of Macintosh Mo';
It might have been Schnietzer, the Lollipop King,
Or Alfred, the Purity man;
It might have been—well, almost anyone there,
But it couldn't have been our Stan.

(*Chorus*):

'Cos Stan,
He's straight,
And no one can deny it.
He hasn't got the talent
And he'd never even try it:
For the nimble-fingered gentry must be crook
as well as fly—
It might have been the Primrose League;
perhaps the F.B.I.

BUT IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN OUR STAN.

(*Recit.*):

It might have been Polly, the Marquis's wife
 Taking after her father, the Dean:
 It might have been old "Rag and Whiskers" himself
 (The Muggleton member, I mean);
 It might have been "Smelly" Mactavish (né Blohm)
 Who urges the Aliens Ban;
 It might have been—well, almost anyone there,
 But it couldn't have been our Stan.

(*Chorus*):

'Cos Stan, etc., etc.,

A. M. C.

PREVENTIMENTS

By GREGORY MACDONALD

THE Press played a great part in that period of enlightenment and progress known as the twentieth century. Every day it attacked some of the fallacies of the existing order. It exposed the superstition of the doctrine of original sin (about the time that Professor Lightfoot Leaper reared a superman on barley water and fresh fruit). . . . It did away with the mistaken notion of the immortality of the soul (when Professor Leaper's superman died of fits a year later). . . . It finally established Positivism as the national religion; and this it managed to do by taking advantage of the national regret when Professor Leaper committed suicide, having, as he nobly remarked, "Nothing to live for and nothing to die for."

So every day the Press attacked a widely held misconception, and every day the Press marched faster and further in the van of Progress. There was at first a small body of obscurantists, who held to the old opinions. They produced a paper which set forth in

a calm and unimpassioned way that the soul was immortal, that there was a God, and a number of the older beliefs; but the wiser instinct of the people could be relied upon. The people looked at this paper and said: "Why, everyone knows that. We've heard that all our lives. How dull!" And so nobody read the obscurantist paper.

But when the Press had deified Professor Leaper (for giving such an incentive to Human Progress) and the Editor of the *Daily Echo* (for taking advantage of the Professor's sensational discoveries), it really seemed that the Process of Evolution had reached its sum and triumph.

Then a German, Professor Ronstein, discovered the great doctrine of Preventivity, which only one man in the world ever understood, and which was accordingly hailed as a self-evident truth. Everything in the world that has ever happened, he said (only he said it in a much more complex manner), would not have happened if it had been prevented from happening. Therefore if things that prevent things from happening are prevented from preventing things from happening, a lot more will happen. The whole world is a Cosmic Balance, he declared in his technical way, of Events and Prevents.

So, of course, after that the human race, which was nearly dying of inanition because the Press had no more fallacies to expose, gained a new lease of life. The new theory, for instance, revolutionised Education, which became known as Prevention—the prevention of Prevents. Instead of trying to bring out in a child its inherent qualities, educationists now left the child entirely alone, teaching it nothing at all, but protecting it from everything which had in the past prevented it from learning all things that could be

learnt. The new theory applied to everything in life. To take a small instance, in London, as the *Daily Echo* pointed out, the town was prevented from spreading by the Parks, and the Parks were prevented from growing by the town. So it was decreed that neither should be prevented from encroaching upon the other. Then some enterprising Philosopher noted that the policeman on point duty at Hyde Park Corner was preventing things from happening. The policeman was removed, and a lot of things did happen. But, unfortunately, Professor Ronstein was there in a taxi at the time, and when he was buried in Westminster Abbey, the theory died with him, because no one really understood it, and it got merged into the Theory of Necessity, which was: that by preventing the Prevents we recognise that all sorts of things should happen. Therefore they are sure to happen by Necessity, and the business of man is to stop them from happening. Thus all Professor Ronstein's work was undone; and as the first thing that was prevented from existing was the Press, all further progress in this interesting philosophy is lost in the obscurity of the future.

CUCKOO

(Scire nefas)

A YEAR ago, my friend Cuckoo, I heard you speak
First on a Tuscan hill where thicket, blossom-starred,
Folds like a cowl on garden-plot and olive-yard:
A day that seemed full summertide in Easterweek.

And now, so late this June, in altered notes you threw
Your greeting from the desecrated Syon shades
Across the river, along the shadowy colonnades,
The devious freshnesses, the royal swards of Kew.

O cuckoo, will you give me next year's rendezvous?
 —Lest one party be there and the other far to seek:
 I by the bend of some wan-willow-fringed creek
 Of Lethe strain a disappointed ear, and you

In meads a quick and sparkling water races through,
 (Be it Itchen, Test or Meon) you, the hedgerow bard
 High posted over a hazel copse—without regard,
 Without recognisance of augur—sing *Cuckoo*.

J. S. P.

ABSINTHE

By W. A. SWEENEY

RICHARD NEWSBY was a very serious young man, and no amount of persuasion from his two friends, who called for him at the office, would permit him to go with them to motor down to Brighton for the evening.

"You're wasting your youth, my lad," said one of the friends. "Do as you please, but this musty old den of yours will be going strong when you are dead and gone."

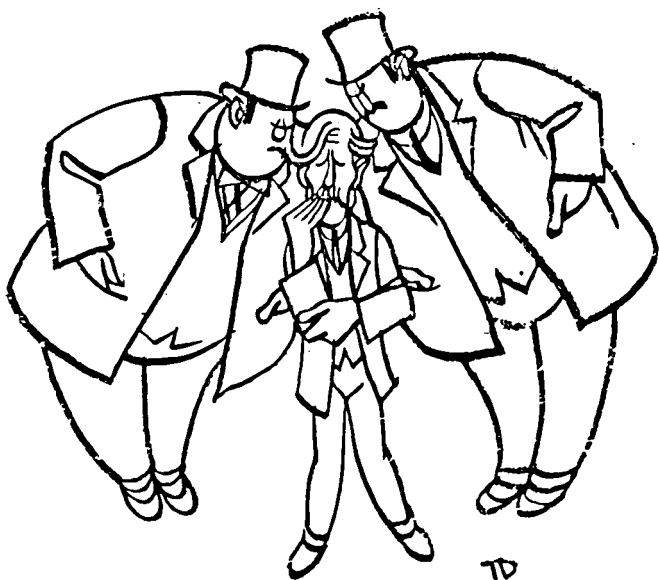
"That's what I intend it should do," said Richard quietly.

* * * *

Such things were not for Richard. After they had gone he sat on and wrote steadily into large ledgers. His office was his own, and he was rapidly amassing a fairly considerable fortune.

What his business was does not concern this story. Richard was realising the ambitions of his boyhood, which had been hard.

Outside it was raining, a miserable, drizzling evening. He glanced out of the window, beyond where



“HEAVY INDUSTRIALS REMAIN FIRM”

Thomas Derrick

his secretary sat, and saw the lights shining from the narrow street, blurred through the rain.

From where he sat he could see the back of his secretary. Richard never paid any attention to his secretary. She was a machine, like a dictaphone, for taking down things. They had seldom spoken more than ten words on any subject outside business since she had been with him, and she had been here for three years.

"Miss Robinson, you may go home if you wish," said Richard, "unless you've something very important you wish to finish."

"Thank you, Mr. Newsby," said the girl, rising immediately and gathering up her things.

When she had gone a feeling of melancholy descended upon Richard. Were these other men right when they said he was wasting the best years of his life? Why, after all, should he not enjoy himself once in a while? His mind wandered to certain haunts of gaiety he had heard of. He would like to try some of them for once.

"Damn it, why shouldn't I?" he said, jumping to his feet. He was a man of quick decision, and a few minutes later a taxi was taking him to the Café Napolitan.

* * * *

Richard dined at the Café Napolitan, and then went out to watch the world in the great brasserie. The Café Napolitan is a wonderful place—where one goes when one wishes to feel that one is really seeing life: night life, Bohemia, the playground of the great unconventional and so on. Artists go there, and what can be more thrilling than that? Some of them even live in Bloomsbury! . . .

Richard wanted to be thoroughly reckless, so he ordered absinthe after his dinner. Everyone knows the effect of absinthe, especially after dinner. Richard began to feel, before very long, that he didn't care if it snowed boiling tar. He ordered another one, and began to look around him with still greater interest. A noisy babble was going on everywhere. Long-haired men were talking to short-haired women. Waiters were ministering to everybody with a rapt earnestness, as if this were the most solemn and important moment in everybody's life. Richard had another absinthe.

Then he observed the girl on the other side of him, and immediately raised his hat.

"How do you do?" she said, smiling. He noticed she was drinking a cup of coffee.

"I'm very well," replied Richard. "I hope you are. Do you often come here? Great place, isn't it?"

The lady looked at him, slightly curiously, for a moment. Richard's eyes were a trifle inflamed around the rims.

"Not very," she replied. "Sometimes. When I feel just too stuffed up to suffer ordinary life any longer. You see, I live in Ponders End. . . ."

"Have a drink?" observed Richard.

"Thank you. A cup of coffee, then, please."

Richard ordered another absinthe and a coffee. He prepared then to settle down and enjoy himself.

"This," he said, indicating the café with a sweep of his arm, "is Life, the life that I have missed. I have been a fool, a blithering, muddling ass. I slave and toil for what? Answer me that. Youth will not last for ever. When I am dead and gone that

office will still be going on." He paused. "Now, who the deuce said that before? Must have been one of the poets," he went on, vaguely. "One of these poets, perhaps," he added then, gazing down dreamily at a group of long-haired young men.

The girl looked at him hard, and then glanced at the absinthe.

"Now, you," continued Richard, "you are so different from the women I usually meet. My landlady and my secretary—dull, unimaginative. None of the fine frenzy or *flair*. Not like this." He swept his arm around once more. "Moreover, you are very beautiful. Do you know you are very beautiful?"

The girl replied with a ripple of polite laughter.

"You are," reiterated Richard, earnestly and stubbornly. "You are very beautiful. Your clothes are charming. If only the women I meet would dress like you. . . . You are all charming. Why is it I have deprived myself of the society of people like you for so long? Have another drink?"

Another absinthe and a coffee were brought, and Richard poured the water over the sugar with great deliberation.

"Your intellect appeals to me strongly," he observed, after another sip. "The intellects of all these people here appeal to me strongly. One day England will echo with their praises when they have painted their pictures, sculpted their sculptures, written their books." He paused and sipped some more absinthe. "Or whatever it is they want to do. . . . I see great careers for all of 'em," he murmured. "But for me? What is there for me? Nothing. Except—" He paused again and gazed at his companion. "With *you*, perhaps, I might be happy. You are so sym-

pathetic. Your conversation stimulates me. You so quickly grasp my meaning. If only I dared—if I might hope that——”

“That what?” asked the girl, softly.

“That you would consent to marry me,” breathed Richard. “Oh, I implore you, say yes! I love you to distraction. I loved you from the first instant I clapped eyes on you. I beg of you, do not send me to my doom by a refusal. I shall hurl my body into the Thames if you say no!”

“All right,” said the girl (her fourth remark that evening), “I’ll marry you.”

Richard, in ecstasy, caught up her hand and pressed it to his lips. It was near closing time, and he saw her to her home in a taxi, with a promise to meet again next day.

The next day saw a young man called Richard Newsby cursing absinthe and the Café Napolitan with a zeal worthy of the missionary in Somerset Maugham’s *Rain*.

“Oh, why did I make such an exhibition of myself?” he moaned bitterly. “Proposing marriage to a perfect stranger! I don’t even know her name. Thank Heaven, she does not know mine!”

As his secretary entered the room to take down the morning’s correspondence, he looked at her in her demure costume with admiration. How different she was from that awful woman of last night, with her décolleté dress and powder on her face! thought Richard. The other woman might be beautiful and his secretary plain, but what was the real value of looks? Skin deep, only skin deep.

As Richard gazed at her he realised that if he had asked anyone to marry him, it should have been Miss

Robinson. Why had he never noticed before the wonderful qualities of this jewel among females? No Café Napolitan nonsense about her.

He was a man of quick decision. Suddenly he stood up.

“Miss Robinson,” he said, “will you marry me?”

The girl smiled and sharpened her pencil.

“How many more times are you going to ask me,” she replied. “Didn’t I say I would last night?”

RAILWAY RHYMES

VII.—THE GUARD

Do not be hard on the Guard,
His is a difficult case.
When he wants to jump in
At the risk of his skin,
Don’t slam the door bang in his face,
Nor form yourself into a “barrage”
And let him go leaping in vain;
Remember—when Guard’s in his carriage
All’s right with the train.

R. W.

SONG OF LITTLE THINGS

FOR little things a song
I play on a penny whistle.
Motes in a sunbeam strong:
Flying down of a thistle:
Little red caverns in fire:
Pine-needles globed with rain:
These are my desire
Again and again.

Butterflies, golden dust
 Rarer than miser's gold is.
 And dragon-flies that must
 Die ere a season old is,
 Are fair as fire of the sky.
 They are worlds larger than this.
 Heart knows not, nor eye,
 Their mysteries.

Even little poems like this;
 Little words, like love;
 Are not empty of bliss.
 Did not God above,
 God the Father who sees us,
 His little children at play,
 Smile down on the little Lord Jesus
 Asleep on the hay?

F. W. HARVEY.

THE CRADLE OF THE WINDS

FROM frozen ice lands blows the wind of the North,
 The cold wind of danger, wild wind of wrath,
 Mystery wind, sing loud, sing deep,
 Sing to a Babe that is lying asleep,
 Sing loud, sing deep;
 Blow wind, blow through the stable door,
 Scatter the dead leaves over the floor.
 Mary, fold closer the covering hay;
 Wind of the North that comes this way,
 Is quick to harden, quick to slay;
 Pray, Mary pray.

From the high mountains blows the wind of the East,
The dry wind of menace, anger released ;
Magical wind, sing low, sing high,
Sing to an ass that is standing by,
Sing low, sing high.

Blow wind, blow through the narrow chink,
Ox, ass and sheep may tremble and shrink.
Mary, wait for the sign of day ;
Wind of the East that comes this way,
Ready for battle, ready to flay ;
Pray, Mary pray.

From golden deserts blows the wind of the South,
Wind of the spices, a kiss on the mouth ;
Whispering wind, sing up, sing down,
Sing to a Maid, that shall wear a crown,
Sing up, sing down.

Blow wind, blow through the broken rafter,
Fill the pitiful stable with laughter,
Gently blow where Angels play ;
Wind of the South that comes this way
Ever to wander, never to stay.
Pray, Mary pray.

From the deep forest blows the wind of the West,
Wind of the Spirit, wind of the Quest,
O changing wind, sing shine, sing rain,
Sing to a world that is born again,
Sing shine, sing rain ;
Breathe, softly breathe and lift the hair
Of the Child that lies in slumber there,
Wind so gracious, wind so gay,
Wind of the West that comes this way,
Lightly let His cradle sway,
Pray, Mary pray.

He holds the great winds in His helpless hand
 From forest and desert, mountain and land,
 The octave notes from near and far
 Call to the men who follow a Star

From near, from far;

Winds, shake the bells in the high church steeple,
 Summon the king, the priest and the people,
 Each in his ordained array,
 To holy night, to holy day;
 The winds of God have come this way.

Pray, Mary pray.

FRANCES CHESTERTON.

THE CRY OF CÆSAR

By K. C. MACDONALD

AND Cæsar cried aloud, "*Et tu Brute!*" and covering up his face he went away, into the shadows.

In Europe, even to this day, the cry re-echoes. But in the green Elysian fields its wailing died upon the perfumed air; the birds, the winds, the rivers murmured oblivious music. Cæsar, his sudden journey ended, rested beside a slanting olive tree, upon the low stone wall that rimmed the lawns.

And as he sat there, pondering on the mystery, that man after all, even Cæsar, was not sufficient to himself; since all his strength of mind and body, his genius, his perfection of achievement, had broken in one cry of protest against the uncertainty of even Brutus' friendship: Lucifer came and stood below him, on the rocky path that leads to Tartarus. And sneering, he said: "Man is nothing!"

Cæsar the magnificent looked down at him, at his charred absurdity, like a candle guttered and gone out;

and he smiled with scorn. "Man, it appears, is not enough," he answered. "Can you, perhaps, add what is lacking to him?"

"I am Lucifer, the most beautiful of the angels," furiously replied the ruined spirit. "Though you have been the greatest of living men, you are still immeasurably beneath the feet of my contempt. You gave service to no other man on earth. But why should *I* serve you?"

"I have never asked it of you," replied Cæsar wearily. "Yet I would serve another man, if I could find one greater than myself."

"Why not serve God?" asked Lucifer with cunning.

"I have honoured religion," Cæsar replied, "for its expression of what we are. But God I do not know."

"I know Him!" said Lucifer, in violent anger. "Do you know what He asked of me? Of me, Lucifer? To serve, to bow to, to worship, a creature like you—a mere man, that every intelligent being knows is lower in the scheme of creation than the angels: and not even a man fulfilled, as you are, replete with natural virtues, a conqueror in every sphere of life,—but man at his most ridiculous and helpless. Would you humble yourself before a creature without beauty, without strength or sight, without intelligence—a newborn child?"

Cæsar frowned, but did not speak.

"You see, you cannot accept it," said Lucifer. "You have a mighty mind, even if you are something less than I. You are revolted by it, as I was."

Puzzled and disgusted, the great Dictator turned away. "Poor imp," he murmured. "Our women would trample you underfoot. But what is this garbled

nonsense?" He crossed the flowery field, and the air warmed and brightened as he went. A tall old man came to greet him with outstretched hands.

"Welcome, my dear child," said Abraham. Cæsar understood that this was such a patriarch as in the distant pastures of Gaul he would have treated with the respect due to age, to wisdom and to simplicity. "Welcome, my dear child," said Abraham. "Be happy. Never again need such a cry of bitterness come from your heart."

Cæsar remembered how he had left the world, and he was ashamed. "I have no bitterness," he said.

"I have told you, it is passed," Abraham replied. "Nothing but good is left. You were a splendid pagan, Cæsar; you relied on your own virtues, and until the moment of your death they did not fail you. God waits on our sufficiency until we question it. Can He leave the question long unanswered? For now, Rome calls—Rome calls with the voice of Cæsar! Heaven has heard your cry, dear child, and we will not have long to wait."

Leaning on Cæsar's shoulder, Abraham walked with him among the trees. Where the shade was thickest, he stopped suddenly and held up his hand. "Listen," he said, "Virgil is singing."

From the world above a voice came, distant and distinct in snatches. Cæsar heard his own name. But the words of the song stirred chords of wonder in his heart.

"The Golden Age is coming," Virgil sang. "The sibyl spoke the truth. Justice returns. . . . A child shall come from heaven, who shall take the guilt of all our sins upon Himself. . . . How quick the earth to heap her gifts beside Him! . . . Honey and wine

and grain! The trembling stars shall bow before Him . . . Oh that I might live, to sing my songs to Him, to see His smile. . . . Orpheus, Apollo, Pan would join with me!" . . .

* * * *

"He spoke my name," said Cæsar.

"He would never believe that salvation could be found in any name but yours," Abraham replied. "We expect heaven to act according to our ideas of our own world."

They walked on, and coming out of the woods they stood in silence for a while beside the river.

"The years are passing," said Abraham presently. "It will come quickly now. Listen! Virgil speaks again."

But Cæsar heard nothing. They went back under the trees, and at last they came to the place where Virgil stood, bewildered and disappointed, among whirling leaves. Abraham greeted him as affectionately as he had welcomed Cæsar. He caught the falling leaves in his hands, and he showed them that on each of them was written the same word: "Magnificat." He led them on again, bidding them notice as they went that among the branches overhead the wind murmured "Magnificat." And in the flower-strewn meadows a girl's voice sang "Magnificat!" But the ground trembled and muttered, where in the caves beneath Lucifer battered and shouted to be free.

"Virgil, you sang true," said Abraham. "Cæsar, your answer comes."

They stood, while every moment the light about them grew more glorious. "Was it nothing, after all, my hewing and building in Europe?" asked Cæsar in amazement.

"It was more than you dreamed," said Abraham.

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