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Money is No Expense

**money is
no
expense**

BY A. BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

'Hod' of Punch



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*The characters in this book
wish it to be known that they are almost
entirely fictitious*

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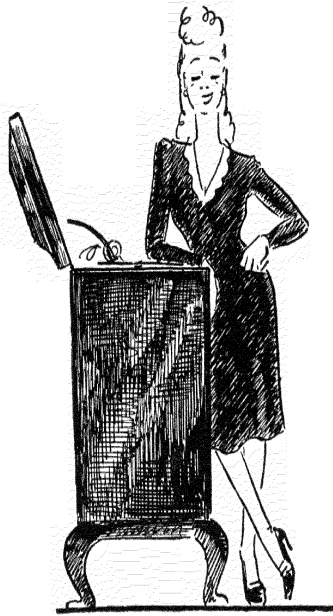
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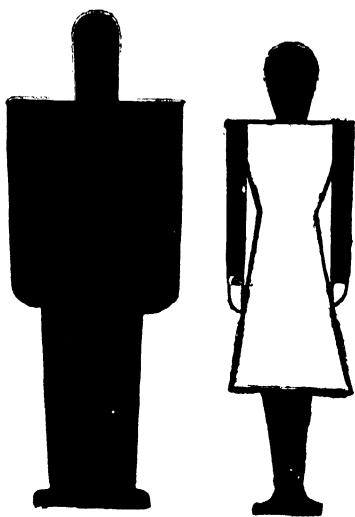
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FOR MY MOTHER



Hollywood

*“Gosh, isn't it marvellous to be back in the inter-war
years again?”*



Prologue

THIS BOOK concerns you—Citizen No. 30,800,901, for instance. You, my friend, are living in a revolution. Socialism, a set of shibboleths or a glorious ideology (according to taste) is no longer just around the corner ; it is here and now. And, what is more, it is here for at least four more years. What has Socialism meant to you in its first year of Power ? You are still alive, of course. But what's happened to your metabolic rate ? Does the world look *more* or *less* rosy than it did ? Does the very word Cripps set your teeth on edge ? Or does it mean what Sinatra means to the bobby-sox girls ? Do you still say capitalist, or *capitalist* ? Is the red tape-worm gnawing at your very vitals ?

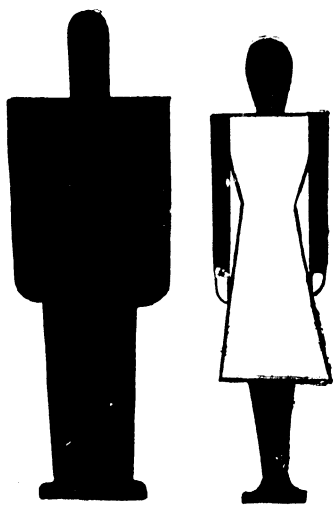
Have you a house, part of one, a promise of one, a promise of a part of one, a bit of a part of one, or a promise of a bit of part of one ? Or haven't you *tried* to find accommodation ?

And what about austerity ? Do you find rations slimming ? Or are you starch-heavy and lb. foolish ?

Have you thought recently about your post-war credits ? Have you forgotten the People's Car ?

And have you done anything at all about the size of your family ?

These are pertinent questions, friend. And this book is designed to help you answer them. Any day now there'll be another one of those forms to fill in. Be prepared.



How They Brought the Good
Bad
Indifferent } News .

WHERE WERE YOU on the night of July 26th, 1945? Were you . . . at the National Liberal Club, where the waiters moved like shadows about the tables of the majolica-bound dining-room? Was it something in the atmosphere that warned these men of impending danger and told them that this night of all nights good service should be as unobtrusive as possible? The room was strangely silent; members ate and drank mechanically, without relish. The jugged hare stuck in their throats and the wine lay like heavy water on their stomachs. From time to time the silence was broken by a heavy thud and a crash of glass as one by one the portraits of the whiskered forefathers of Liberalism registered their disgust.

It was the night of the long faces.

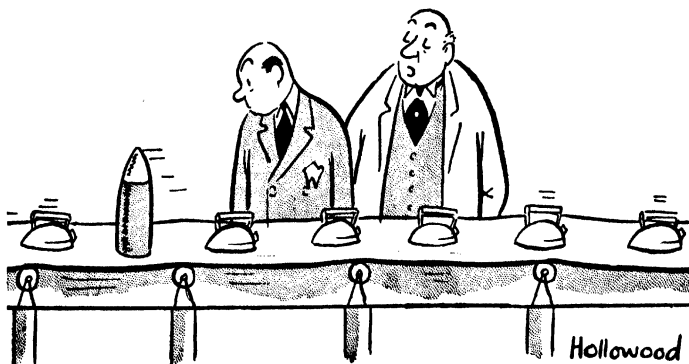
At five minutes past eleven o'clock a nervous wreck of a waiter carrying coffee in the lounge had the misfortune to drop a spoon. Seventy fully paid-up members glowered and the aged Lord Bynding of Mossop (near Barnsley) broke Rule 187 and a small blood-vessel by thundering "That's right, man, destroy the b—— club!"

Some two hours later Sir Wilmot Beaker rose unsteadily to his feet and took a vicious swipe with a folded copy of the *Evening Standard* at the nearest waiter. Then as he glanced blearily at the magnificent tiled walls—those incredibly sanitary walls—his subconscious mind once again played him a strange trick; his hand moved involuntarily and unnecessarily as if to adjust his dress before leaving. But nobody smiled. Sir Wilmot lurched

out into the lobby. It was the end of the Great Liberal Revival. Sir William Averidge had let the side down . . .

Or were you in the Mile End Road to celebrate the victory for Communism? The victory that doubled the party's representation and destroyed Willie Gallacher's splendid isolation in the House of Commons. This was progress indeed; not perhaps the Red Revolution dreamed of under the hammer and left-handed billhook of the *Daily Worker*, but a sign and a portent. No other party had shown such precise geometric progression. By 1950, after the next election, there would be not two, surely, but four members in the House; by 1980 there would be 256 and by 1985 Yes, it was a truly great occasion. Intelligentsia and hoi-polloi hobnobbed in perfect amity and concord. Once Labour had agreed to affiliate. . . .

Or were you among those unhappy revellers at the Carlton Club, where the landslide finally came home to roost in Stygian gloom? Oh, dreadful, baleful things were witnessed here. Strong, upright captains and vice-captains of industry and kingpins of finance sobbed like children or lay in the depths of melancholia too weak to order double whiskies and too weak to refuse them. Young Blimps shook admonitory fingers at their elders and called down curses upon The Men Who Led the Party Astray. And in



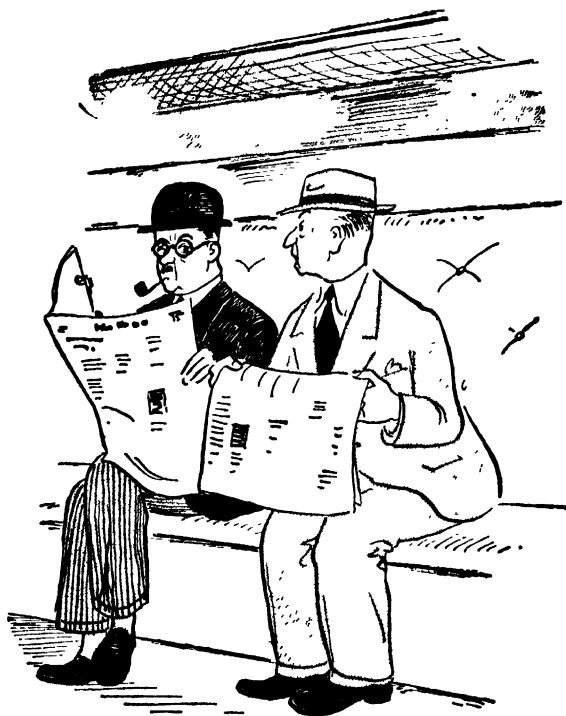
"Don't let that worry you—it's only one in 150 now."

How they brought the Good (Bad) (Indifferent) News 7

an inner room, heavily shuttered and curtained, the lost leaders sat like broody hens—juggling with safe seats. . . .

Or were you at the B.M.A. in Tavistock Square, where scenes of unparalleled joy greeted the news of Sir William Averidge's defeat? If only the electors of South Wales could have shown equal commonsense in dealing with that annoyin' Bevan. Still, the fellow might settle down. . . .

Or were you with the mad throng at Transport House? Here, great bursts of cheering supported every new statistical detail of the bewildering triumph. Stern,



Hollowood

"I suppose the next thing will be a WHISTLING atomic bomb."

unbending, doctrinaire Socialists pinched themselves, slapped each other on the back, hugged and kissed, and even, it is said, lay on the floor kicking ecstatically.

There were wild excesses, of course. Sir Stafford Cripps permitted himself a Gioconda smile and an extra handful of diced carrot. Professor Laski, the sinister leader of the home and colonial Gestapo, alliterated fiercely about Beaverbrook. Mr. Bevin and Mr. Morrison capered arm



“ And as for your wife, I think we can put a lot of it down to war weariness.”

How they brought the Good (Bad) (Indifferent) News 9

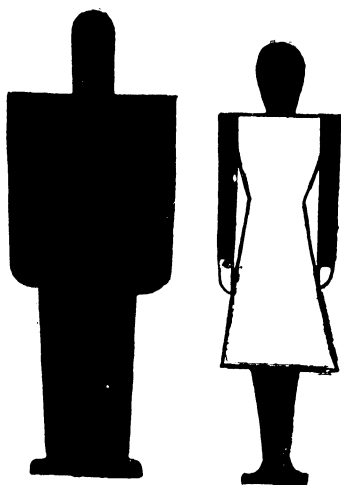
in arm, wreathed in smiles. Mr. Dalton looked schoolgirl all over, and Mr. Attlee

Yes, it was a glorious, riotous night. And yet, apparently undisturbed by the uproar, a neat clutch of Fabians sat in concentration round a little table at the back of the hall. They were hatching a policy for the new Government. . . .

Or were you at home, like me, on that memorable night of July 26th, 1945 ?



“ And let’s be quite certain this time that our man can afford to lose his deposit.”



Austerity Just Around the Corner

THERE IS NO DOUBT about the havoc wrought among our arteries and ganglia by the terrors and privations of six years of war. We are so irritable. One has only to mention the word Cripps to set most people's nerves a-twanging cacophonously. One has only to travel a few miles by tube to realize how complete is our moral degeneration. Fraternity is dead: we live in a nasty brutish world of the survival of the rudest.

Only a few weeks ago I set out one morning determined to be a little ray of sunshine. Compliments are cheap enough, I thought.

"Good morning," I said to the girl in the tobacco kiosk. "Do you mind if I tell you that you look remarkably pretty this morning?"

She looked up showing a lot of white in her eyes.

"Really?" she said. "How interesting! Well, we still haven't got any matches, see!"

"I assure you . . ." I began.

"Oh, stow it!" she said.

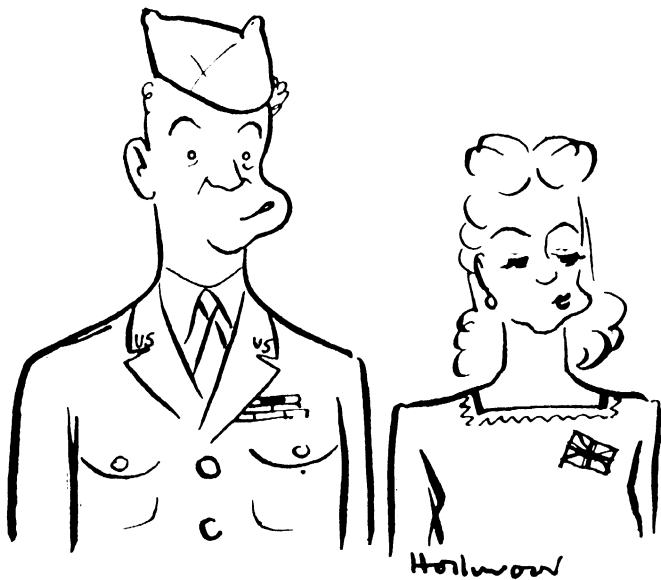
The conductress was handing me my change. I looked at her and smiled.

"What the 'ell you grinnin' about?" she said, "An' if you can *read*, mister, it says kindly 'ave exact fares ready—if you *can* read."

"I'm so sorry," I said. "I was merely thinking how very pretty you look this morning."

She straightened her back and raised her battery of bus tickets menacingly.

"Listen," she said, "you're the fourth to-day who's made a crack about my 'ay-fever. Come to look at it, your map don't look too sparklin' neither."



Bilateral Agreement

At Oggolindo's in the Strand I tried again. The lift-girl really did look most attractive in her bright uniform. Her hair was close-cropped and jet black. Her tunic was olive green with gold buttons and epaulettes. The red girdle matched the stripes down the sides of her trousers.

"Fourth floor, please," I said; "and if you don't mind my saying so, you look very, *very* pretty this morning."

The look that greeted this innocent remark was rather terrifying. Only a cavalry officer—a South American cavalry officer, that is—could have looked so many daggers.

By this time I was bitterly disappointed. My shorthand-typist wept a little when I told her how well I thought her spectacles suited her. The waitress at Moot's complained to the manager.

I felt very miserable when I reached home. After supper I tried to read, but concentration was difficult. At two minutes to nine I asked my wife to switch on the wireless. She did not move. She was lying huddled up on the settee. She was crying softly.

"Oh, Bernard," she said, "you're so different these days. I'm sure you've stopped loving me. You used to tell me"



One sign of the appalling breakdown in our national morality is the increase in petty theft. The new kleptomania is common not only among working-class youths but among the so-called professional or black-coated classes. And the odd thing is that what they steal is of little financial or economic value: it is not so much the goods they want as the sensation of thieving.

Not so long ago all this was confirmed for me very strikingly by an incident at the ironmonger's where I was endeavouring to obtain a new door for my meat-safe. By my side stood a young woman. She wore a mink coat. I noticed that her small son (about three years of age) was playing with a long rope which had a metal hook fixed at



"Say When, Charlie"

one end. As the attendant spoke to me the woman bent down, ostensibly to apply spittle to an incipient ladder in her stocking, but actually, as I observed with amazement, to attach the hook to a set of harness displayed before the counter. The attendant advised me of the shortage of doors for meat-safes and I departed. A minute later the woman left the shop dragging her son by the arm. She walked quickly away and as she did so I saw the rope

emerge from the shop with the harness securely attached to its end.

I followed the procession into a nearby alley. . . .

There were protestations of innocence and then tears.

"Have you a horse?" I said.

"No, no. No, I haven't."

"Then, why on earth"

"Oh, don't you see," she said, "it's not the harness I want, it's"

"I understand," I said. "I think I know exactly how you feel. And I am going to say nothing about it. You have had your lesson and I am quite sure you will know what to do."

I walked home in a very thoughtful mood.

A few days later I noticed this item in the columns of the *Daily Dose* :—

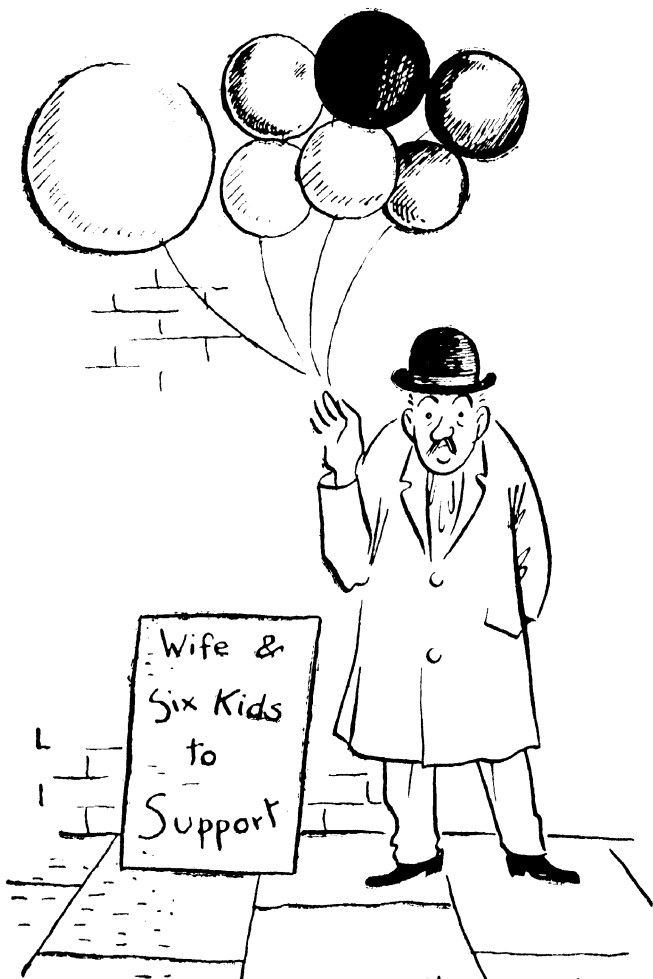
WANTED, urgently, pram, any condition, in exchange for complete set harness, as new.—Box A317.

Lifts for Motorists

Now take road discourtesy. Very seldom nowadays do you meet that wonderful comradeship of the broad highway that carried us through those dark winters of the war. If you ask for a lift a motorist feels he has a good enough excuse for running you down and will not stop even to take the number of your identity card. If you concede a lift you can expect nothing but truculence. Well, that is my experience.

This happened to me *very* recently. I was tootling along thinking about post-war credits and family allowances as pleasant as you please when I saw a thumb jerk. I stopped the car and opened the near-side door. The potential "lift" put one dirty boot inside and said, "I don't suppose you are going to Lincoln, sir?"

This kind of talk infuriates me. "I don't suppose I am," I said, "since I'm travelling in an exactly opposite direction—that is, to Leicester."



Hollywood

“Well,” he said, “could you possibly take me to Ixtholme? It’s not out of your way and I could get a bus for Wimpey there and catch a connection.”

I agreed. Ixtholme *was* out of my way by about four miles or twenty-three degrees, but it is difficult to leave a man standing in the rain on a dark night, especially when he has one leg inside your car.

He was silent for about thirty yards while he took off his soaking trilby and swished it smartly backwards and forwards two or three times in order to transfer its excess moisture to my spectacles and neck.

“This is a Scrammer, 1937 model, isn’t it?” he said. “Surprised at you buying it. Terrible acceleration. A very poor job altogether. By the way, do you always change like that? Much too late, you know. This car will not stand it.”

He then took my scarf from the dashboard recess and wiped the windows with it.

I thought we must be somewhere near Ixtholme and said “Just let me know where to stop for you.”

“I’m afraid you’ve missed the Ixtholme road,” he said. “You should have turned to the right about two miles back. This road will take us to Cranleck. A little out of *your* way, perhaps, but not much—and much better for me except that I’ll have to go on to Medlip to catch the 9.50. Do you mind?”

I choked back an impulse to become thoroughly uncivil and allowed myself a non-committal “H’m.” Medlip, if I remembered correctly, lay at least thirty miles nearer to Lincoln than Ixtholme, but the man’s effrontery fascinated me. I wondered what further reserves he had.

At Medlip I bought him a drink at the “Choristers’ Arms” (he had no change but offered to pay by cheque), and in return he gave me numerous unsolicited tips on driving, selling typewriters, and growing onions.

At Tinkershill we changed seats and he accompanied his facile manipulation of the gears with a commentary



“How long have the Socialists been in office now, dear?”

on the Far-Eastern situation, the futility of Socialism, and absenteeism.

When he stopped at a place called Raddish to enable me to buy him another drink, he informed me that we should not be long now.

I said "Do you mind telling me where we are exactly?"

"Don't worry," he said, "you will soon be in Leicester. This road will take us to Nodthorpe and I can easily walk into Lincoln from there. That is, unless you would care go to out of your way and go *into* Lincoln. As a matter of fact, I think that would be your best course, since I could put you on to the right road for Leicester more easily in Lincoln."

He drove steadily for another hour and smoked several of my cigarettes. Then when the suburbs of Lincoln lay before us the car began to cough. He stopped.

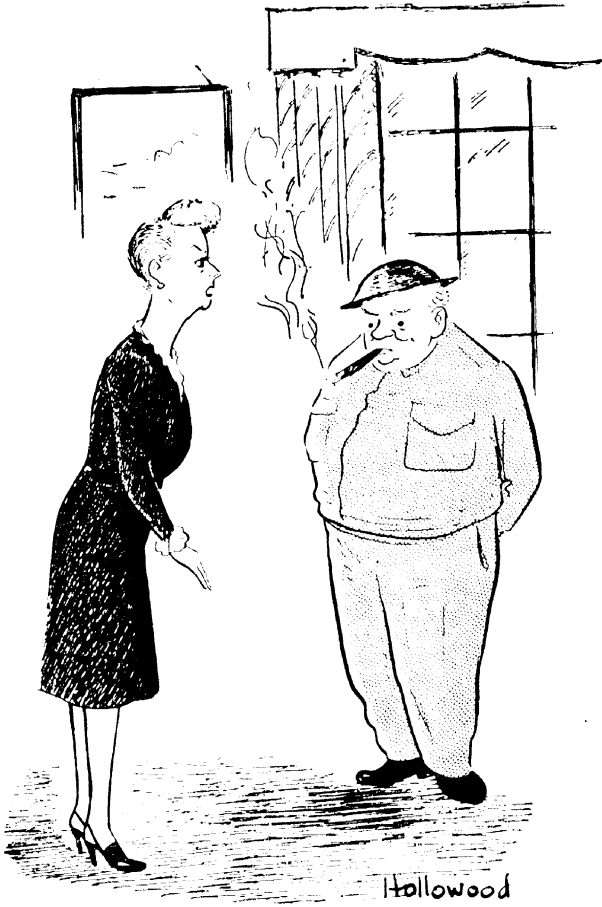
"You'd better take over now," he said. "I can manage on foot from here. All you have to do is to go back. The road is as straight as a die."

He climbed out of the car and put his head back through the window. "Don't forget," he said, "straight road to Leicester. Thanks for the lift. Grateful, I'm sure. Well, ta-ta for now."

I sat perfectly still for five minutes—thinking. Then I turned the car round and covered eight of the yards between Lincoln and Leicester. The car spluttered to a standstill. A glance at the dashboard told me that I was out of petrol. I pushed the car into a field and sheltered under a tree. Soon lights appeared, moving swiftly towards Lincoln. I made the appropriate signals and the car stopped. The door opened and I put my foot inside. "I don't suppose you are going to Leicester?" I said.

Suspicious by Nature

Another sign of our post-war weariness, I think, is our increased tendency to be suspicious—merely for the sake of being suspicious. Even I am like that. I've watched



"I thought you promised not to influence my vote in this election, George?"

myself at it, sneering quietly to myself about one man's actions and another's intentions.

I am suspicious of the butcher ("No offal, I *like* that!")

I am suspicious of America ("Wot, no loan," or "Wot a loan!")

I am suspicious of my tobacconist—well, not *my* tobacconist, perhaps, but one on my round ("Only scented cigarettes with lino tips?")

I am suspicious of my wife's suspicions ("Where the hell d'you think I've been if I haven't been to the Buffaloes?")

I am suspicious of my doctor ("So even *you* won't tell me what even my best friends won't!")

I am even suspicious of *you*.

But I am luckier than my friend Cumberbatch. If ever a man had a grievance. . . .

Jervis Cumberbatch lodged with a Mrs. Boswell of "Chinook," Mortgage Road, Ealing. He was a serious-minded young man with a weekly consumption of about four tracts. He distrusted the Conservatives, despised the Liberals and loathed the Socialists. He called himself an anarchist. Government propaganda infuriated him.

Jervis Cumberbatch kept his savings in silver (or what he thought was silver), for he felt quite certain that before long an uncontrolled inflation would render all paper-money and securities worthless. He hoarded the coins in a vase made in Stoke-on-Trent, Japan.

One night Jervis returned very late to his rooms. He had spent a tiring evening in a fruitless attempt to convert a sensible jig-operator named Gladys. Before retiring he emptied his pockets of the day's takings of silver coin. The vase was almost full. As an engineer Jervis should have foreseen the effects of overloading on the stability of the vase. As he deposited his last shilling the vase overturned and a cascade of coins crashed from the mantelpiece into the tiled hearth. For a minute Jervis stood motionless, listening. Then, satisfied that he had not disturbed the

slumbers of Mrs. Boswell, he bent to his task of financial recovery. He worked quickly. In ten minutes the precious vase was safely under lock and key. He crept up to bed.

Two days passed. On the third day Jervis returned from work to find Mrs. Boswell in a dangerous mood.

"You can pack up and get out," she said. "To-night!"

The finality of the command was evident from its mode of delivery.

Jervis looked nonplussed but cool. He asked for some explanation.

"Don't want any sauce," said Mrs. Boswell. "Trying those tricks on me—*me*, who was in service long before you was born. That dirty trick's as old as the 'ills."

Jervis's truculent protestations brought an angry flush to Mrs. Boswell's neck and ears.

"Surprised, weren't you," she sneered, "when your two ruddy sixpences was still under the fender? So you puts two more under the coal-scuttle, you low-minded little good-for-nothing. If Mr. Boswell was alive 'e'd 'ave knocked the light out of you for this."

Jervis made one hopeless attempt to explain and departed.

He has bought a number of Savings Certificates and is living temporarily at the Y.M.C.A.



Of course, women are at the bottom of most of our unrest. That Mrs. Boswell is typical. We men have allowed ourselves to be driven into a corner. This idea of having the family allowances paid to the wife! Women policemen! Women in Parliament! Women doctors!

Do you sometimes wonder as I do?

Are you a man? Look at your identity card. Is there a quantity of dry tobacco in the fold? Is the back covered with almost meaningless pay-as-you-earn computations? Is the thing No, what I meant was—are you a man or

a louse? If you answer these questions quite fairly you should be in no doubt.

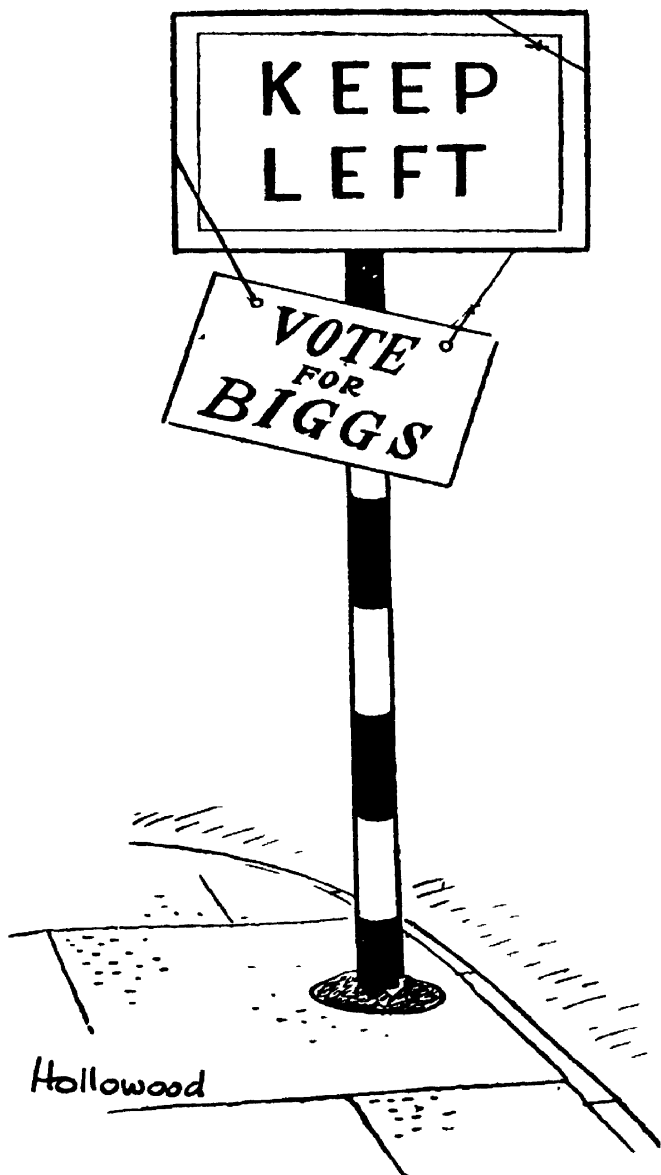
1. Would it surprise or shock you to see a female on the front seat of a tandem bicycle?
2. Do you derive a sense of triumph from the fact that restrictions on men's dress have been relaxed while those on women's remain operative?
3. Do you think that the woman member of the Brains Trust should tidy up afterwards?
4. Are you prepared to open the portals of your profession (trade or gainful occupation) to women?
5. If so, how wide?
6. If you saw a man beating his wife in the street would you (a) raise your hat? (b) look in the shop window opposite? (c) go home and tell your wife how lucky she is?
7. Are you more than usually on the lookout for spelling mistakes, anachronisms, and general errata when your novelist is a woman?
8. Do you try to discourage your daughters' practice of borrowing your ties and flannels?
9. Do you call your car "he" or "she"?
10. Have you ever been treated by a lady doctor? Have you ever been treated by a doctor? Is your doctor a Sassenach?

You may have seen this *questionnaire* before. It was put to me by one of those aggressive women one meets so often these days in the vaults at the "Sheet Anchor." I was chatting idly to Crabstock when she bounded from a corner seat and whipped a tattered broadsheet from her hip-pocket.

"Did I hear you say reconstruction?" she said. "Because there's one or two things I'd like to ask you. . . ."

I understand that there are thousands of them up and down the country. They have their own printing press. They are well organized. They may, for all I know, carry firearms.

It may be your turn next.



KEEP
LEFT

VOTE
FOR
BIGGS

Hollowood

What Did You Do . . . ?

There's another thing that's worrying me besides women—children. The more I think about austerity the less easy do I feel about how it will be interpreted in the years to come.

I am speaking as a father—for fathers. Already at the back of my mind a disturbing question is beginning to take literary form, a question that will be put to us some day in 1966 or thereabouts.

“And what, father, did *you* do after the last World War?”

“I did my duty, son”

“Explain briefly, giving examples.”

“Very well. In 1946 my generation decided to put Britain on a sound economic footing by scorning delights and living laborious days. We wished to do two things—to atone for our failure during the inter-war period to establish permanent peace and to leave a legacy of prosperity to succeeding generations.

“We decided therefore to build up an immense export trade by sending overseas everything we could possibly do without. For years we lived at a bare subsistence level, just as we had during the war. They were long, lean years. . . .”

“For us, too, father. Remember that.”

“Well . . . yes, in a way. But we thought only of *your* future. To leave you and your generation with a rich inheritance was our only aim, the mainspring of our sacrifice. And we succeeded. We put Britain back on her feet and made the world safe for democracy.”

“H'm, thank-you, father. Do you know I'd never thought of it like that. I'd always thought. . . . Oh, never mind.”

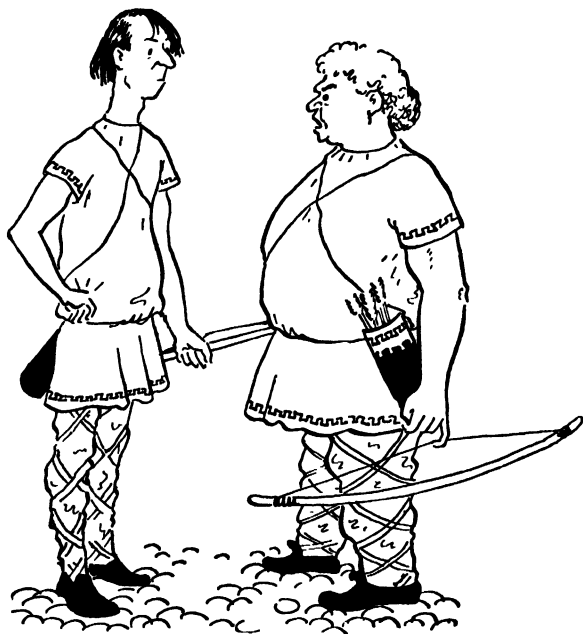
“Out with it, son. Speak your mind.”

“Well, my generation thinks you have motives altogether different. Like this. In 1946 you were scared about the size and composition of the population of

Britain, were you not? You knew that the proportion of old people in the community was certain to increase and that the number of workers or producers would decline. And you put two and two together and realized that your generation would be having a pretty thin time of it by 1966 unless something drastic were done."

"But, look here. . . ."

"Let me finish, father. So what did you do? You bumped up the retirement pensions so that now, in 1966, they account for two-thirds of all our social insurance benefits and you made us live like paupers so that enough real wealth could be accumulated to support your selfish paper schemes. In short, father, I am suggesting that your



Hollowood

"Goodness only knows what the next war is going to be like."

previous austerity was a mere blind to cover your plans for a luxurious retirement.”

“ I never heard such ”

“ Your generation contributed only a fractional amount of the total saving on austerity account, but you now make a pretty big hole in our national income—you, and the rest of the endless stream of pensioners.”

“ Why, you . . . you ”

“ Be more explicit, father, please. I must go almost immediately. We’re working overtime to pay off the interest on those debts you incurred for us in 1946.”

Now do you see what I mean? That’s how the ungrateful wretches will interpret austerity in twenty years’ time. Is it worth it?

After all, anything may happen between now and 1946. Think of the immense possibilities for good or evil in this atom business. If evil prevails the economic position of the next generation will be relatively unimportant. If good triumphs, then the mighty forces unleashed will make our present efforts seem puny and laughable.

To push austerity to its extreme is a fine gesture, no doubt, but don’t let us look more ridiculous than pensioners need in 1966.



But there is still hope. I honestly believe that 1950 or thereabouts will see us through the worst. Are you ready for 1950—the year in which Britain will turn the corner from austerity to graceful living, from make-do-and-lend to carefree prosperity.

Let me show you how this conclusion was reached.

It is not always realized how deeply the habits of six years of war economy have embedded themselves in our subconscious minds. Even now the sound of a bus changing gear will make people walk on unconcernedly just as they did during the raids. A few people, it is true, react differently. They dodge into some shop or other,

pretending to be engaged on a genuine errand. But invariably they ask for the very something that the shop-keeper has not got—in spite of the notice on the door advertising the deficiency. This, of course, gives them away. These people are habit addicts, and we should pity them, not blame them.

Then, again, see how people react to the newspapers. The war is over and with it the possibility of some sudden catastrophic announcement. Yet people go on buying newspapers and it is clear that they half expect to see that trouble is brewing or has brewed somewhere.

Once these reflexes get deep down in the human system they take an awful lot of shifting.

It is the same with saving. Long ago we developed the habit of saying, "Well, we can wait a little longer after all these years, can't we?" and we are going to go on saying it, I think. There is a certain satisfaction in the Spartan life.

I know scores of men who prefer, from some profound and obscure motive, to wait a little longer before they begin to catch up with arrears of domestic repairs and renewals. The garage door and the drain pipes can do without their new coats of paint for a few more months; the kitchen door, which needs a spokeshave on its trailing edge, can stick for another winter; and why bother immediately about those loose tiles in the bathroom?

Why spend now when by waiting a few months longer it will be possible to buy better paint, better carpenter's tools and better tile adhesives? The average male argues, as I do, that the thousand and one inventions of war must some day confer immeasurable blessings on the arts of peace. The scientific background of "Mulberry" and "Pluto," and the rest, will almost certainly, sooner or later, revolutionize the daily round of civilian life. Why, indeed, spend sooner than sooner or later?

Do you begin to see what I'm driving at?

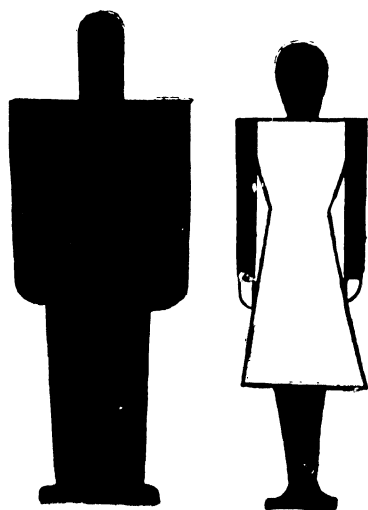
Another thing, take the advertisements. Practically everybody knows that the car of the future will have its engine at the back and will be made of plastics impregnated

with penicillin or something. These cars will be dirt cheap—so cheap that we shall discard them like paper handkerchiefs as soon as they are slightly soiled. What man in his senses is going to buy a car of the old breed now when by waiting four or five years at most he can get what he deserves? It is exactly the same with washing machines, refrigerators, radio and television sets, lawn mowers, electric irons—everything, in fact. In the circumstances it will not be surprising if industry hesitates to commit itself too soon. The manufacturer's best policy might be to wait and see just what science has up its sleeve.

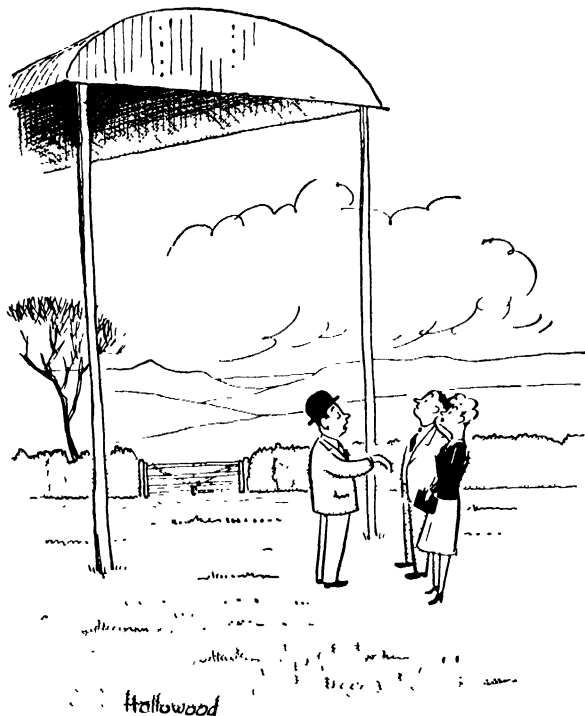
I fix on 1950 for my dead-line, then, because that is just about the earliest date when :

1. The public will have shaken its mind free of the shackles of economy ;
2. Repairs and renewals will brook no further delay ;
3. The science of war will be harnessed to the needs of peace.

And even that date may be optimistic. Should any dramatic new discovery in the world of the atom be announced some revolutionary change in man's control over the forces of nature that will put him right in line for ease and plenty—we may have to wait until 1960, or even 1970, before the common man gets what he needs.



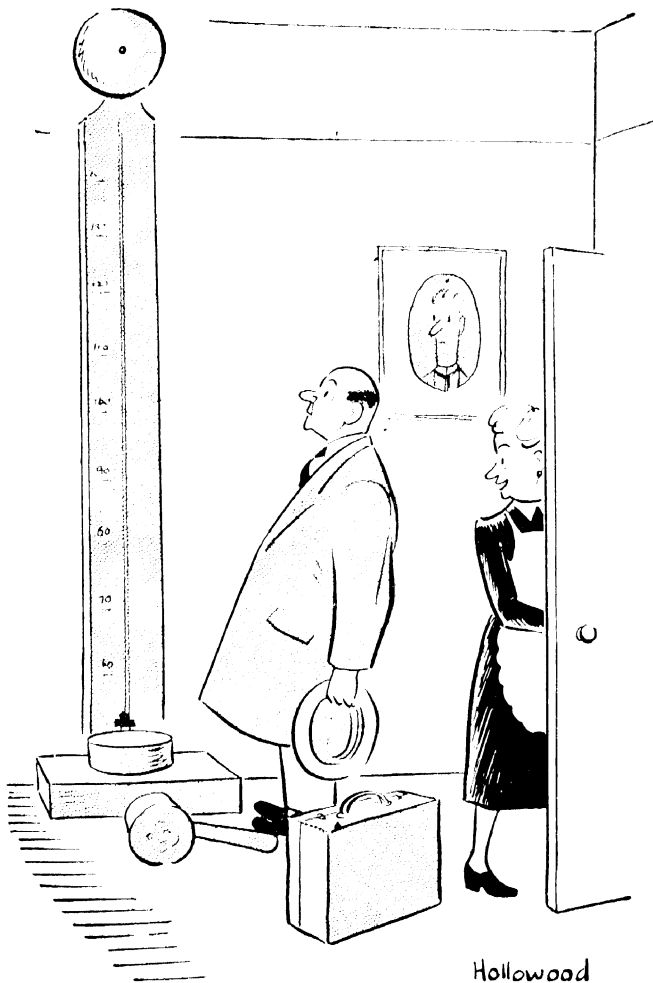
Homes for Heroes : Portals for Immortals



“Were you or were you NOT the young couple advertising for a roof to put over your heads?”

THE WAR ended a little too soon for most of the planners.

“Do these Americans *ever* consider anyone but themselves?” said my friend Haggriker, the economist, when the news of the atom bomb attack on Hiroshima leaked out. “Just to think what I might have accomplished in another year!”



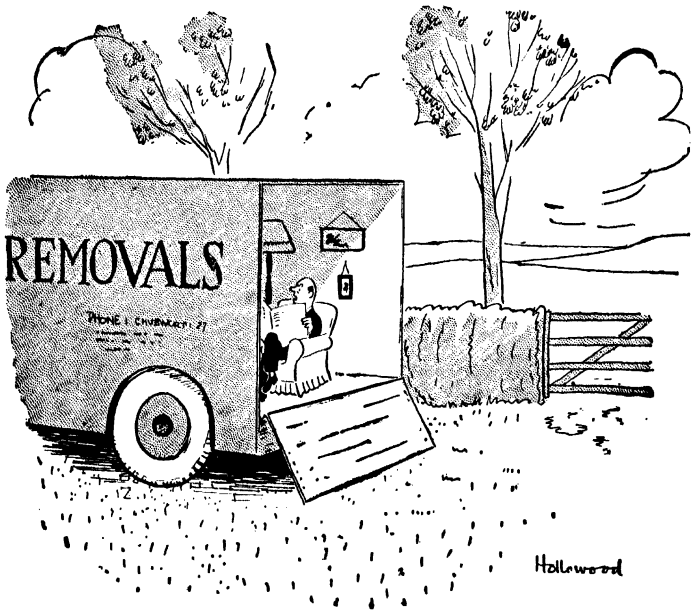
Hollowood

“ . . . , And if you want anything just ring.”

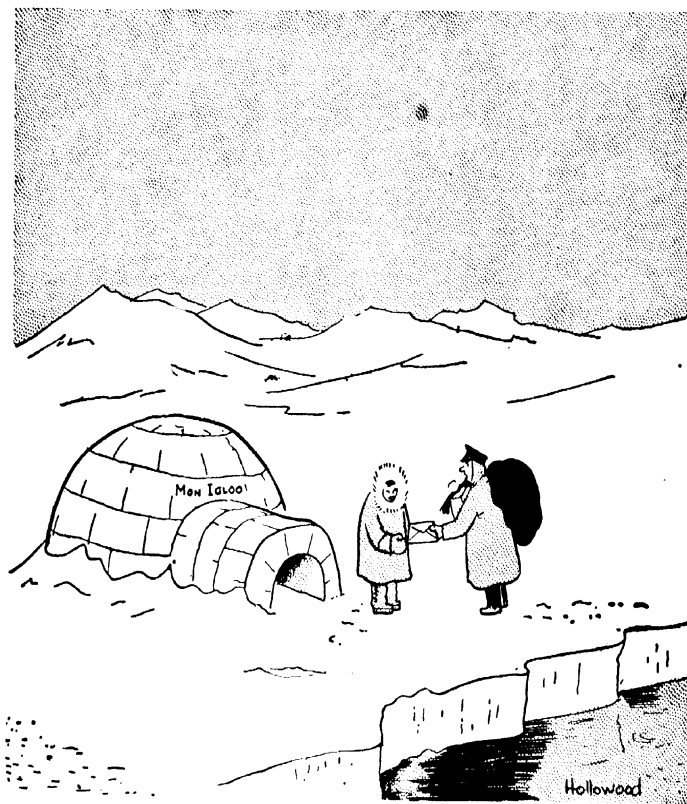
Hearing those words, my mind raced back to that sultry day in 1939, when we had listened to poor Neville Chamberlain's plans for a three years' war and Haggrider had startled me with the laconic comment, "Not nearly long enough to prepare the blueprints for successful reconversion and reconstruction."

How right he was.

Plans for housing were completed in 1940, when it seemed likely that nobody would live to need a house, and became progressively more rudimentary as peace drew near. Do you remember the loud reports on all sides from Barlow, Scott, Mainwaring, Dewlap, Uthwatt, Knackshaw, Crayling and Slabb? Oh, the promises! The houses, sewers, compensation, betterment, and dream cities we were to inherit! The Portals for immortals!



"Must it be Essex, dear? There's a very nice bungalow for sale just outside Chester."



“Why the deuce can’t you have a number like other people?”

The great advantage of the Portal house (and others out of the same trap) was that it could be *prefabricated* or conjured out of anything—steel, plywood, plastics, brick, aluminium, cast-iron or any other Trade Association. But not for long. It soon became apparent that these materials were entirely unsuitable for the purpose. And the evidence was quite obviously reliable for it came from the industries themselves—about each other.

Steel was too cold. If you sat on it you got pins and needles in your arteries.

A cast-iron house would break if you dropped it.

Plastics couldn't do everything.

Bricks were too permanent.

Plywood encouraged the death-watch beetle.

An aluminium house would become airborne.

And so on.

When the prototypes of the Portal house were first exhibited great crowds rushed to see them. Women cooed with delight when they examined the built-in book-ends and communal feeding-troughs, but nearly everybody thought the houses too small. Mooby of the *Mail* said there wasn't room to swing a cat in them, but Arris of the *Herald* scooped him with a photograph of a Mrs. Birkett of Moorgate flinging her Persian through 360 degrees without damaging either cat or property. Mr. File, the magnate, expressed himself as "agreeably surprised" and ordered two dozen assorted temporaries for his poultry farm.

But the average man's verdict on the Portal was best put forward by a celebrated columnist—"They are not bad, these houses, not at all bad. Actually the difference between them and the ordinary brick fabrication is not too wide; each type is equally accessible to roundsmen and canvassers, and each has a rateable value and either a name or a number. The Portal is a very neat job, well sprung and roomy. It should seat seven comfortably."

Of course, by the time this chapter is in print the housing problem may have been solved. On the other hand, UNO



*“ Good morning, madam, have you any accommodation with
two ‘ M’s ?”*

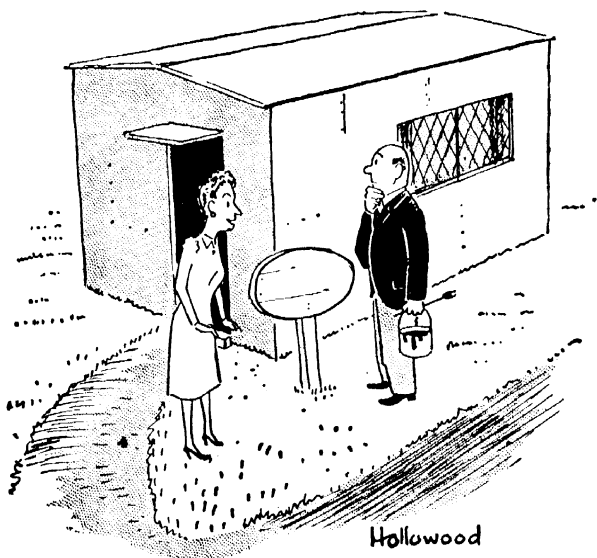


"No—this is the Portal over here."

may succeed and Stalin and Truman *may* be bluffing about their bigger and better atom bombs.

Is Mr. Bevan right in his decision to entrust the major part of the housing programme to the local authorities—or is he just being narrowly doctrinaire? Let us examine the facts. During the inter-war years private enterprise did an excellent job. It built several million houses (the exact number escapes me at the moment) out of which only a very few fell down and with only a trifling loss of life. Most of these houses were handsome brick-type or brick-looking structures in delightful taste. A few were detached and somewhat superior, but the majority were built on the lean-to principle (semi-detached). This made for strength and economy. The central dividing wall was all but eliminated so that one radio could serve two families.

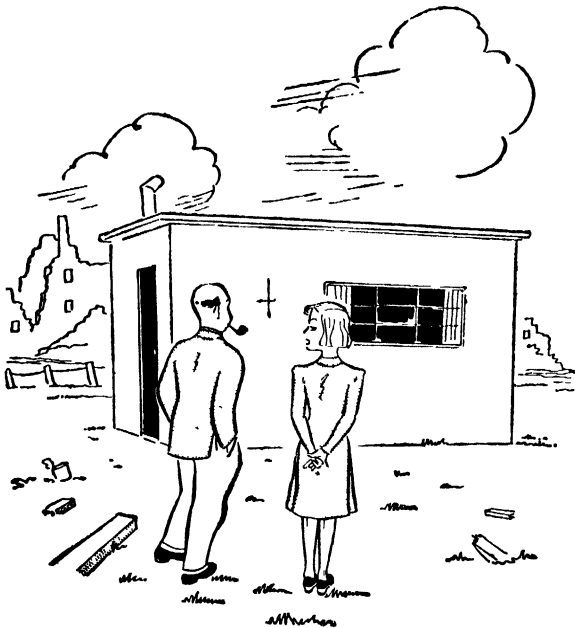
These charming residences which averaged about 15 mins. fr. sta., four gas points and a chromium towel-rail,



“How about calling it ‘Alfred’s Folly,’ Alfred?”

were all designed by either a fully qualified architect or the builder's foreman. The most popular style, Tudor or Olde Tudore, owed its success to the happy partnership of steel and stucco, and to the subtle beauty of mellowing girders.

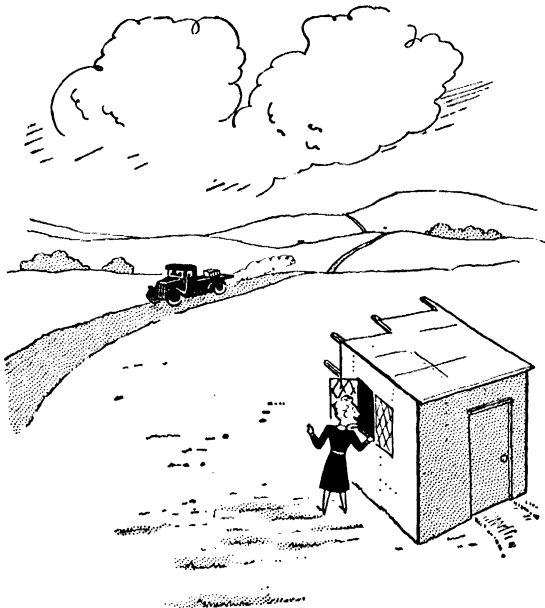
But the local authorities did well, too. So far as I am aware not a single Council House fell down and very few warped at all regularly. They were neat and unassuming in the style known as "Pawlaw Plus." A clever feature of the planning was that the houses were built in blocks of five, six or seven—so that the endhouses were virtually semi-detached, while the rest were supported on both sides. It is a foul slander, of course, to suggest, as some mischief-makers have done, that the endhouses were more or less



Hollowood

"Couldn't we paint some wheels on it or something?"

Hallowood



“Darling, guess what? The dining-room’s come.”

reserved for minor officials and the second sons of aldermen.

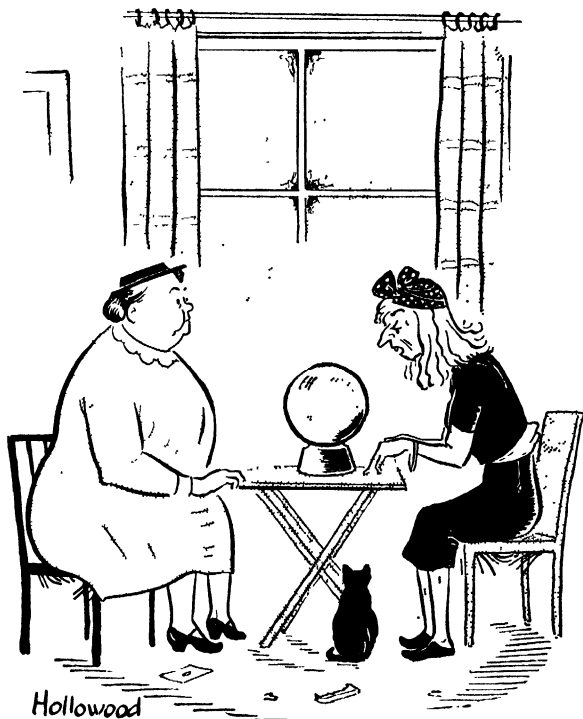
The *pièce de résistance* of all Council Houses was the bathroom—a triumph for Socialism and planning, and another target for the rumour-mongers. Happily the coal-in-the-bath allegations have been killed for ever in the Reid report.

My chief criticism of the Government’s attitude to housing is that too many stones are being left unturned and too few avenues are being explored. Excellent suggestions have been put forward by the public, but they have been ignored, condemned on the ground of heterodoxy. In June a Mrs. Hackbut of Saltaire wrote: “Why not hollow out some of these military road-blocks we see

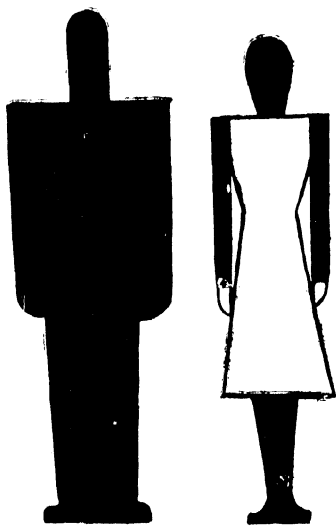
everywhere? They would make excellent little houses, small, but cosy. Are we too proud to learn from the Eskimaux?"

Why not, indeed?

And then there was "Revolted and Alarmed" (Crewe), who said: "There are thousands of houses in the Midlands up to their first floors in mining subsidence, and for every one of these there must be many more totally submerged. Surely something could be done to make them habitable? One would have thought that a two-inch copper tube"



"And now, Mrs. Brumwall, I see you coming out of a Portal house—sideways."



Lovely Grub, Lovely Grub

WHEN JUST AFTER the election the notice "Under New Management" appeared outside all those little estaminets in Whitehall nobody really believed that it would make much difference to the menu. But soon we saw

BEN SMITH PIE

(late)

WOOLTON PIE

- and we wondered. The crust was just as tough at first and glutinous afterwards and the innards were just as nondescript and lukewarm, but the general effect was disappointing. Maybe we expected too much. Maybe we didn't carry out the instructions that went with every pie :

"Try to economize now ! However tasty you find this pie remember to spread your enjoyment. Eat mechanically, without relish. Make eating a job of work, like a cow. Then, when despair rears its ugly head, when the pendulum of life sways towards the pit, ruminate and stabilize the current of your happiness. *Make it last.*"

But it was when Sir Ben and Sir Stafford Cripps (I think) put their heads together and concocted what industry knows as "Standard Eating Time," that we began to feel really disillusioned. One disgruntled worker complained in these words : "They say that too much time is wasted in the canteen and pretend that the lunch hour can be cut to ten minutes by Science with a Capital S. By means of a marked acceleration in the rate of chewing (the tempo is set



"Now, what on earth's the matter with Rover?"

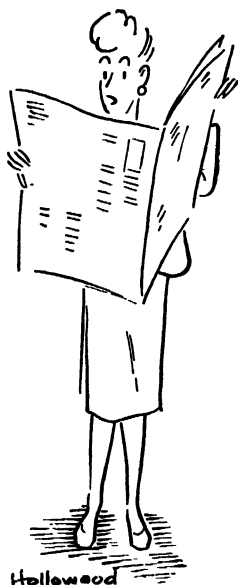
by a metronome), by the scientific distribution and arrangement of cutlery, and condiments, and by the elimination of conversation and the postprandial smoke, they claim that a Standard Eating Time can be established and 3,556,000 man-hours of production saved per day. So this is Socialism, eh?"

Of course, this kind of thing evoked cries of "regimentation," "bureaucracy," "Corsica, Tunis, Nice," and so on, but my view was that the stratagem, though certainly ill-advised, was prompted by the very noblest intentions.



Hollywood

"I won't say the grub was much better in the Army---but at least we didn't know what we were getting."



“ I wonder who started this scare about dried eggs poisoning.”

I hold much the same view of the deceptions practised early in the year when the Minister of Food was getting into rather hot water (when there was sufficient gas pressure) about dried eggs. Then, if you remember, certain restaurants began camouflaging the customary unsavoury croquette as “ Portalhouse Steak ” and we saw this kind of thing on the menu :

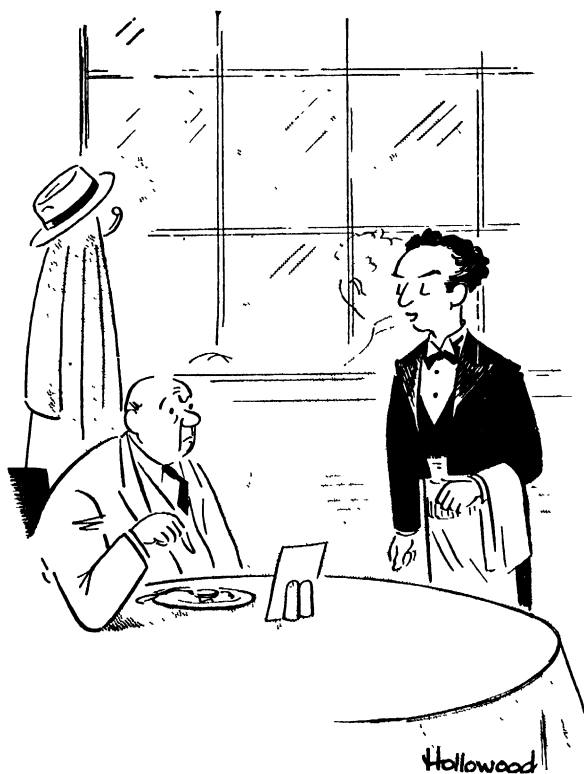
Roast
1 Horse Radish Sauce
2 Veg.

—and were hopelessly misled by the clever typography and display.

No, things have been pretty grim. An army of workers marching on its stomach powders.

Turning to bread, as most of us have had to, we observe that Socialism has stepped up the flour extraction rate.

Now opinions are divided very evenly about the merits of brownish bread. Cranks and die-hard economists contend that the stuff is good for both man and the balance of trade. It contributes "roughage," they say, to our diet so that a hefty chunk of brown bread is as good for the intestines as a flannel pull-through for a twelve-bore shotgun. Moreover, the higher the extraction rate, the nearer we get to Nature. Fat a health-giving slice of 82.5 per cent. and you can almost hear the combined-



"... so that at Christmas there'll be plenty of saccharin for the pudding ..."



Hollowood

“Is there any significance in the fact that the pork sausage is crossed out rather more heavily than the meat pie?”

harvester at work. Step up the extraction rate to 100 per cent. and you find nutritious bits of harness and threshing-floor in the bread.

But psychologists say that brown bread—for all its vitamins and calories—is indigestible both mentally and physically. Don't ask me why. All I know is that starch-heaviness, a feeling of fulness after meals, flatulence, or what you will, can be avoided by a little ingenuity. My wife's method when serving brownish bread is to set the table on an off-white cloth (that is, a tablecloth washed in anything but—er—oh, damn it, you must know the stuff I mean—you know, he thought his bedsocks were white

until . . .) with off-white china, *i.e.*, yesterday's. If a 25-watt bulb replaces the ordinary lighting unit, so much the better. It goes without saying that the diners should keep their hands and cuffs as off-white as possible.

Very well. The preparations are made, the lights are down low and the hungry are salivating and clutching their cutlery. It is the *moment suprême*. Suddenly the door is kicked open and the bread appears, carried aloft on an off-white platter. It is steaming prodigiously. Father carves it into slices and the family fall upon the relatively dazzling whiteness and devour it.

The meal I have just described is very simple to prepare. It consists of an ordinary brownish loaf (garnished with breadcrumbs) that has been popped into a slow oven for four minutes. Sensitive carving makes or mars the dish. Try carving the bread into sausage shapes, fish, diamonds, swastikas or chops and add seasoning to taste.

A few recipes are appended.

Minced Loaf

Take a loaf and pass it through the mincer three or four times. Serve unbearably hot.

Bread in the Hole

Take a loaf and make a small hole in its side with a skewer. Fix a cup beneath the hole to catch escaping juices. Then take a cycle pump, fix the nozzle in the hole and inflate the loaf to three times its normal size. Add salt to taste and eat smartly.

Shepherd's Crust

Take a loaf and cut away one slice of crust. Then scoop out the bread with a spoon until only the crust remains and fill with water. Bring the whole thing quickly to the boil, throw in the loose bread and serve as only mother can.

Diced Broth

Take a loaf and carve into hundreds and thousands. Bake these bone-hard and leave on one side while you cool

down. Then colour each piece with cochineal and arrange as an all-over pattern on a meat dish. Serve to father and watch him simmer.

Now, I hardly know what to say about dried eggs. Nobody would pretend that they were a raging success during the war; they may have kept our vile bodies and tortured souls together, but very few people had a good word to say for them. Indeed, most people had very harsh things to say about them and the Min. of Fd. devoted a

Hollowood



“ I wonder how the seventh Earl of Sandwich would have reacted to this vilification ? ”

large part of the £500,000 a year it spent on advertising to their "promotion." Even so, the public seldom bought its full allowance.

If Sir Ben Smith had taken that correspondence course in elementary psychology as a young man (actually, I believe, he packed in after the first three free sample lessons) he would never have discontinued the importation of the powder suddenly and without explanation. He would have "released" the public from dried eggs with a show of magnanimity. Oh, can't you see the headlines?

DRIED EGGS TO GO

BACK TO NORMAL

Sir Ben Smith announced to-day that he is at last in a position to free the British people from the yoke of dried eggs. In a speech at Crewe he asked housewives to buy up remaining stocks for use as hen and pig food and so help the retailers.

What a difference! It would have been O rare Ben Smith, O upright Smith, and roses all the way.

I don't think anybody would care or trouble to deny that men or males have proved themselves much more the masters of dried eggs than women—than women *have*, I suppose I must say to avoid ambiguity. Yes, we men certainly know how to handle dried eggs. Omelettes, savoury do-dahs, pancakes, egg-nogs and the rest, seem to come easy to us. Take my friend Tellam, a bachelor of some fifteen years' standing and staring—he can get himself a meal in a jiffy at any time of the day or night. I've seen him knock the top off a packet of dried eggs with a single smart blow. Then he will either eat the stuff raw—to keep his strength up, as he puts it—or spread it thickly over a slice of brown bread and toast and poach in one subtle operation under the grill.

For dinner he usually mixes the powder with some very finely chopped sausage-meat and bakes the mélange in a

slow oven. My friend is also pretty hot on pancakes. His talk, "Technics and Pancakes," has always been regarded as a winner with housewives. Here it is.

Kitchenette Front

(Talk by R. Tellam : if absent, F. H. Grisewood)

" . . . Cook over a medium flame until a golden brown, loosen the pancake with a palette knife and shake the pan to prevent sticking. *Then toss the pancake . . .*"

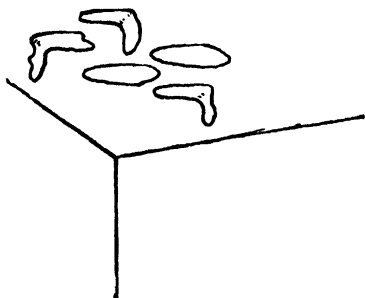
This is where I can help.

Beginners make one of two fundamental mistakes according to their complexes. With their wrists turned to water by nervous excitement the ultra-cautious jerk the pan feebly, much as a palsied man might ask alms into his hat. The force applied is insufficient for the purpose ; the pancake merely rises on one edge, makes a half-turn on an imaginary axis and crumples into an inert mass resembling an outsize worm-cast. To fail in this way is not only ignominious but cowardly.

A pancake is tossed when it is turned bodily through 180 degrees. Any degrees over and above this figure are useless elaboration and involve grave risks. A complete revolution, if successful, merely restores the *status quo ante bellum*, pale side up. This is what over-confident tossers forget. They aim too high. Still, is is a good fault—provided, of course, that it can be corrected.

Let us suppose that you have tossed your first pancake, which is now firmly attached to the ceiling. As you prepare to toss the second pause for a moment and by an effort of will make your mind dwell on lowly things—bedsocks, tripe, poultices, and the like. Better still, try to imagine that you are on the planet Mercury, where (I believe) the force of gravity is so weak that a hop would carry a man over a steeple. Then try again.

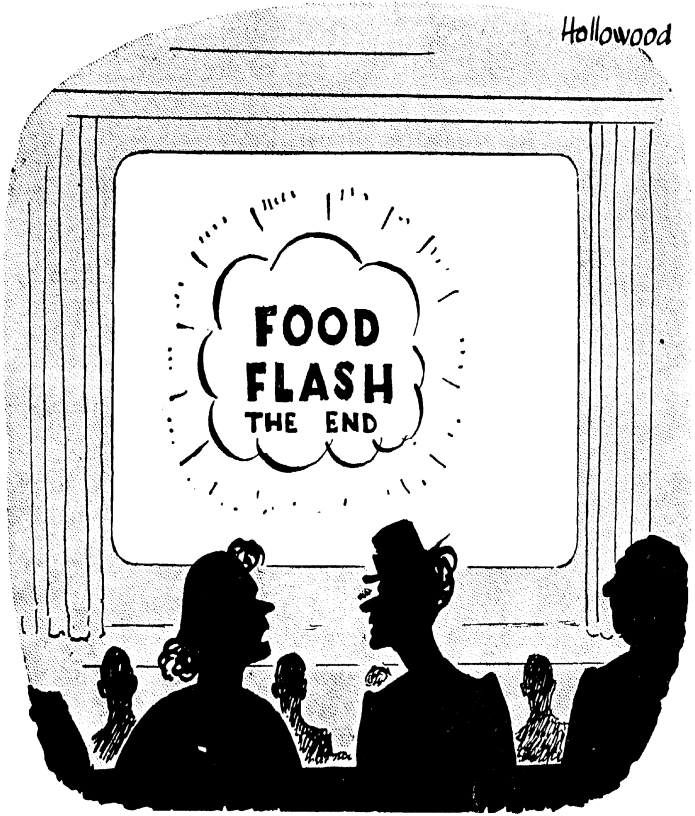
If you cannot break yourself of the habit of tossing too energetically, you must at least take action to neutralize its effects. Try sitting or lying down while you toss the



pancake. This gives you a few more feet to play with. By the way, if several pancakes are suspended from the ceiling do not write them off immediately as a dead loss. As the plaster absorbs their moisture their adhesive qualities are reduced. If you hang about for a time in a state of intense alertness, pan in hand, you may be fortunate



Hollywood



“ In the pamphlet she had four children, all under school age.”

enough to effect a scoop. It is a good idea for inveterate altitudinarians to keep their eyes on the ceiling even as they toss, for the impact of the fourth or fifth pancake often has the effect of releasing the first.

Should you find that even the prone-lying position is



“The beef went off at about 12.30, the liver and bacon at—let me see—say 12.40, the fish-cakes at 1.05.”

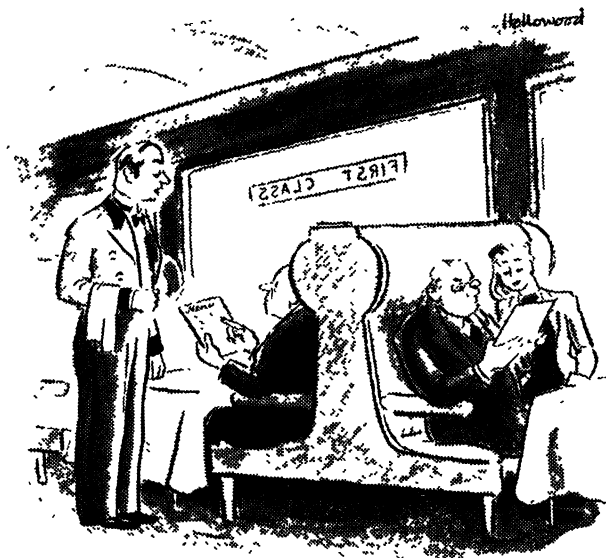


“Of course, if we’d got some spam we could have some ham and eggs if we’d got some dried eggs.”

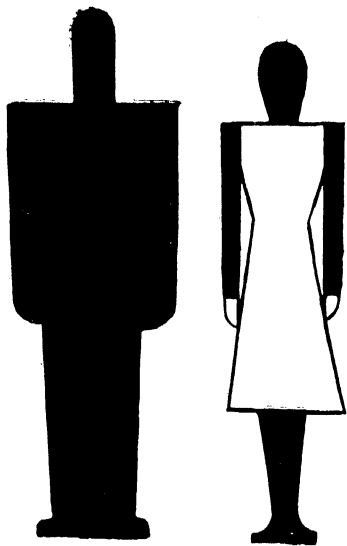
abortive the best thing is to toss the pancake out of doors well away from overhanging eaves. But in this country one cannot rely on getting more than two or three windless days a year.

This brings me to another point. Make sure that all windows are tightly shut. The nature of pancakes is such that when airborne they are easily deflected from their course by draughts. All too often a promising toss is ruined by a careless catch. The leading edge of the frying pan is sharp enough to cut clean through any pancake which falls foul of it. If the pan is withdrawn slightly *in the direction of the pancake's flight* the catch will be made more easily than if the pan is left motionless to take the full blow. Any cricketer will readily appreciate this hint.

Well, I have done my best for you. All that remains is for me to complete the quotation with which I began this lecture, ". . . or turn with a knife." Perhaps it is not so difficult, after all, to toss a pancake. If you see what I mean.



"If you'll look again, Sir, you'll see that the smoked salmon is on the 10.15 via Nottingham."



Export and/or Die

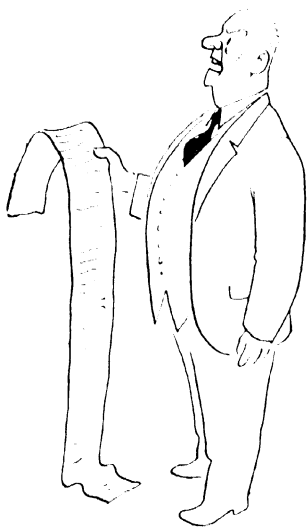
WHENEVER I SEE letters in the newspapers urging the British manufacturer to become export-minded I think of my friend Cardoby, who had a small hollow-ware business in Dudley, and seven children. He was easily the most export-minded man I ever knew.

During his early years he had led a strangely sheltered existence – completely shielded from the harsh facts of life. He was seventeen before he even heard of an adverse balance of trade. The news of Britain's deficit came as a profound shock to him, burned its way into his mental make-up and became the mainspring of a long and energetic career.

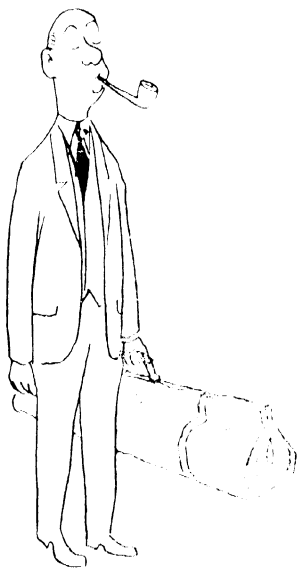
It was always rather disturbing to be in Cardoby's company. He would break off suddenly in the middle of a conversation, fix his eye on some article or other and ring for his man Brewster.

"By heavens," he would say, "that's a lovely job. Wrap it up, Brewster, and export it."

Liverpool stevedores will not easily forget the commotion in the 'twenties when they were instructed to load two thousand seven hundred and fifteen empty packing-cases labelled "Invisible Exports" on to the s.s. *Murchison*. Cardoby's intentions were good, no doubt, but he had to submit to a campaign of ridicule launched by an indignant Press. He countered, cleverly, by announcing that the whole idea was propagandist—that it was obviously *someone's* duty to warn the nation of its peril.



116 Howard



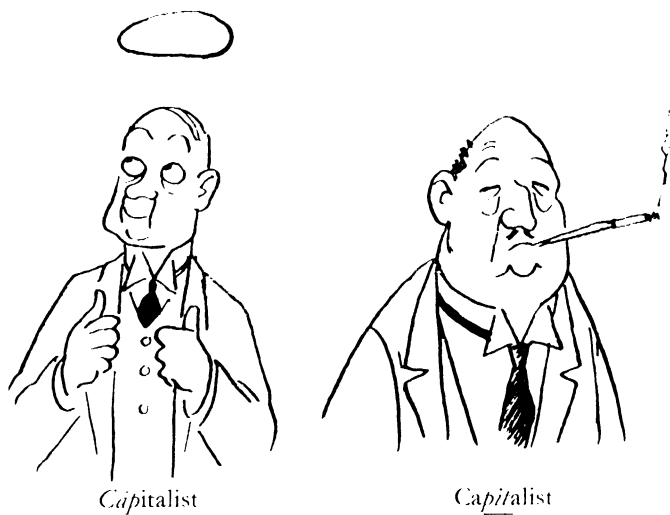
My friends, Cardoby's story—and I will spare you the subsequent details—should be regarded as a message for our times. In the past we British have gone about the task of exporting as though it were merely the business of selling goods overseas. We have neglected, shamefully neglected, the scientific aspects of marketing. A comparative analysis of the salesmanship of Britain, America, Germany and Japan will prove my point.

The American salesman starts by saying "Look, Bud -- I'm not selling *you* anything." Then he slaps the client violently on the back, delivers a highly coloured address on the virtues of his wares and produces an order form already filled in and signed. Within an hour the client has received the "premium" gifts which accompany all sales.

The German salesman bows in old-world courtesy and gives the current salute. Then he makes a short speech loaded with statistics, on the might of the Fatherland—mentioning Frederick the Great, Bismarck, Goethe, Albrecht Durer and of course Krupp. He exhibits his sabre-wounds, recounts the details of his many victorious duels and presents his order form.

The Japanese salesman is faultlessly dressed in a Bond Street cut-away. His name is Smith and he comes from the Birmingham suburb of Tokyo. Before opening the negotiations he places a curved sword on the table and intimates that he will commit hara-kiri if his mission fails. He apologises in advance for any mess he may make on the carpet. Then he produces a wide range of goods marked "British Throughout," and guarantees that they are made by sweated labour. He points out, further, that close inspection of the goods will reveal minute sweat-stains. Finally, he delivers an order form watermarked "Thread-needle Street," places the pointed end of the sword to his stomach and hands his client a pen.

The English salesman apologizes immediately for being two weeks late. He has had, he says, rather a disappointing time in neighbouring towns. He is silent for a spell. Then he suggests a drink. After a heavy and silent meal and a



number of drinks the English salesman and his client bid each other adieu. A fortnight later the client sends a wire to the Englishman :

“ ANYTHING TO SELL? YOU DIDN'T SAY.”

And the Englishman answers :

“ SAME OLD STUFF. WHY? LIKE SOME?”

The client wires back :

“ WHY NOT?”

And the Englishman replies :

“ RIGHTO—BE ROUND AGAIN END OF CRICKET SEASON.”

Anyone can see immediately which of these selling methods is most likely to produce sound results, but we must not rest on our oars. Market research is in the air. Let us try to find out *why* our customers prefer our goods. Let us be ruthless, pushing and high-pressured. Lord Woolton has told us to go out into the world like the

Merchant Venturers of Elizabethan days. My friends—let's go.

Working Parties?

Of course, a sound export trade can most easily be built up on the strong foundation of flourishing markets at home. And it is good to know that the Board of Trade is scheming along these lines. How long is it I wonder, since you were a discriminating customer? All right, it doesn't matter—long enough, anyway, for you to have forgotten the technique or to have grown up in abysmal ignorance of your duties as members of the purchasing public.

You are familiar, no doubt, with Sir Stafford Cripps' "working party" idea, with those tripartite bodies which are planning the reconstruction of our industries. Well, you—yes, *you*, my friends—are represented in these parties. On each of these committees four prominent consumers rub shoulders with four employers and four employees, and see that your special interests are considered and respected. Clearly the new situation calls for a radical overhaul of our purchasing practice. We must make buying, even of the most trivial article, really scientific.

You are about to buy a teapot. You enter the shop and are greeted by an assistant.

"Good-morning, madam," he says.

"I should like to be shown some teapots—teapots in which the material is used intelligently and economically, teapots which satisfy every functional requirement and which are, above all, truly agreeable in an æsthetic sense."

"Certainly, madam, I have just the very thing. Now, this one is very attractive if you like anemones. We also have it in azaleas."

"I am afraid you misunderstand me, young man. I wish first to assess the vessel's fitness for its purpose. Be good enough to brew some tea so that I may test the thermal conductivity of the handle and the pouring efficiency of the spout."

“Er—certainly, madam. . . .”

“Thank-you, just two lumps. Yes, it pours all right, the lid remains in position at an angle of 55 degrees and the whole thing should be quite easy to clean. Now a test of impact strength. Oh, dear, I’m afraid this would never do. Just examine that fracture and you’ll see what I mean. . . . What else have you?”

“I regret to say, madam, that we’ve noth”

“How about the one over there? That certainly looks a nice bit of industrial design.”

“Oh, *that* one, madam. It’s one that is just coming on to the market—the only teapot that can get along without the traditional ‘one for the pot.’ You see, tucked away unobtrusively inside the — .”

“Really, how very ingenious. We must certainly try this one. . . . Just the one lump this time, I think.”

“Would you like me to send it, or would you rather take it, madam?”

“Just one moment, young man. I turn now to the socio-economic background of this possible purchase. Tell me, what was the ex-factory price of this pot? As much as that? If so, distribution seems fairly efficient. And what are industrial relations like in this factory? They are, eh? Would you say that the production committee is a real force or a mere piece of window-dressing? Would you call the directors really enlightened? You would. Well, everything seems to be in order, I’m glad to say.”

“What address did you say, madam?”

“Next, I would like to see what you have in competing materials, what teapots you have in plastics, steel, aluminium. By the way, is there a doctor in the house? You look frightfully pale, young man.”

Can You Feed Yourself?

But there is a lot of careless talk these days among the economists. Many of them are suggesting that, as a nation, we should strive for self-sufficiency, that we should

feed ourselves and reduce our imports. The idea is nonsensical and tantamount to hara-kiri. I have that on good authority.

Imports, friends, beget exports. In towns like Slaggitch this fact is fully appreciated. In Slaggitch you cannot buy home-produced foodstuffs for love or money. They are a cold, unemotional, and calculating people. They know that every pound spent on foreign food automatically sets the wheels of their export industries a-turning.

In Slaggitch they carry economics too far, with their ridiculous Anti-British Restaurants and their crude posters. Signs like :

“ Buy Foreign—It’s Bonded Better ” ;

“ Look for the Name ‘ Imported ’ on Everything You Buy ” ; and

“ You Can’t Afford Not to Buy from Abroad ”

are deeply shocking to the visitor. But this vulgarity merely emphasizes an essential truth.

What, then, ought we to do with British agriculture. First, it must be made efficient. We need more land for larger farms. Our vegetables should be dry-cleaned before leaving the farms and the soil recovered should be put back into rotation. We should experiment with window-boxes on a vast scale. We need more machinery. During the war our farmers had Science at their elbow. They used machines that sow, harrow, reap, bind and thresh—all in one motion. We need more manure. Here prefabrication might help. We need more land-girls and fewer Italian prisoners.

We must do something too for the farmer. He is traditionally a grumbler. He grumbles so much that the Ministry of Agriculture keeps a trained seismologist, I hear, to measure the significance of each disturbance. The farmer’s chief grouse is about Summer Time. He sees this as a device to close the village inn an hour before his thirst is quenched. This, as any townsman would recognize, is a serious matter. The licensing laws must

be revised and every farm must be supplied with mains water.

His second grouse concerns the spate of official forms that he is expected to complete. The farmer is compelled nowadays to lead an unhealthy sedentary existence without any of the compensations of life in the city office. In his war-time extremity he has been granted the assistance of land-girls whose only thought is for the open-air life and who lack even rudimentary knowledge of filing, docketing and accounts. It is not good enough.

The Case Against Efficiency

Does the recovery of British industry and trade depend on increased productivity per man-hour? In other words, can the recommendations of the Reid, Platt, Huskins, Pendlebury, Nash, Maydew, Gosling and Stockton reports be left unchallenged? The common view appears to be that it does and they can. I am not so sure.

The supreme danger, of course, is that all this talk about the relative inefficiency of British industry will be translated into "remedial" action. Those who make such unfavourable comparisons between the productivity of British and American labour will never be content to leave it at that. Even now, I suspect, they are scheming to step up British efficiency in a hundred little ways.

Now I believe in reconstruction and reconversion as warmly as the next man, but I am not accepting any wildcat project for a get-rich-quick Utopia without the closest scrutiny. The more I think about efficiency the more certain do I become that it would tend to professionalize British Industry. Are we prepared to abandon our role of gifted amateur for the questionable and somewhat sordid benefits of professional expertness? I think I know what your answer ought to be.

The production-per-man-hour faddists contend that the average American* worker produces, on a medial estimate,

**New York is, of course five hours back.*

from 1.5 to 10 times more than his British counterpart. In one hour an American machinist, assisted by scientific management, a vast array of horse-power and abundant capital, can turn out as much calico (say) as two and five-sevenths British mill-girls assisted by a glorious tradition, music while you work, and as much capital as the Cohen Committee would like to see divulged.

Not very pleasant reading, you think ?

Now let us examine some of the possible remedies :

1. Shorter strikes ;
2. longer hours (*more* hours, to avoid ambiguity) ;
3. more shifts per day ;
4. more mechanization ;
5. less absenteeism.

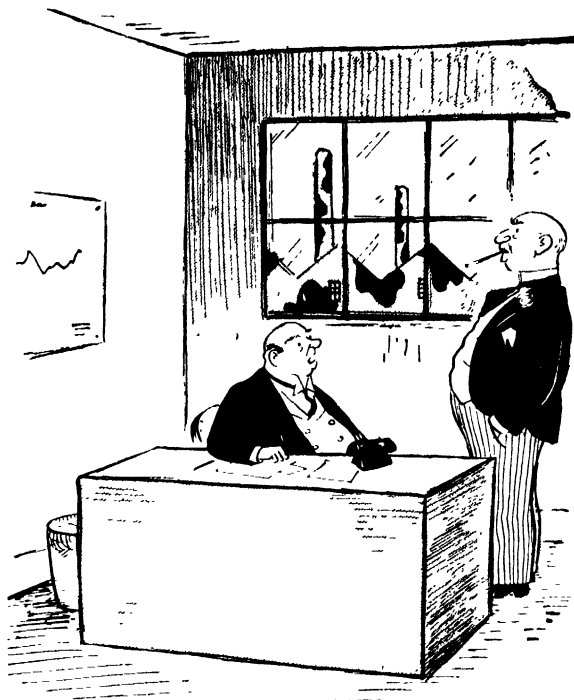
As general aims all these are unexceptionable. They become objectionable only when they are made ends in themselves. If they can be introduced surreptitiously, without figures or fuss, all well and good. But if they are made the breeding-grounds of record-hunters and average-mongers, British industry will have lost its most cherished characteristic. Can you imagine anything more revolting than a worker who is forever thinking of his average ?

The truth is, of course, that once you start working for averages your form goes to pieces. Do we want our mill-girls, the future mothers of our island race, to lose their fine maidenly zest for some trifling gain in statistical proficiency ? What would Miss Marjorie Pollard have to say to that, I wonder !

Do you see this grim future as I do—industrial league tables occupying half the columns of the newspapers, the Board of Trade's Index of Wholesale Prices capitalized by pools promoters, the election of a Production-per-Man-Hour Queen of Plastics, the annual scramble for a thousand ingots in May ?

The Monopoly Peril

The Government are committed to a policy of nationalization, it seems. They believe that the export programme



Hollywood

"I suggest that we remain camouflaged until this nationalization scare has blown over."

will be hamstrung or stillborn unless private enterprise is goaded into activity by fears of public control.

But nationalization is a cure for another malady afflicting British industry—monopoly. Monopoly, *alias* the Trust, *alias* the Cartel, is one of the ugliest developments of our times. The monopolist (but not necessarily the trustee) holds the public to ransom. He lines his pockets with inordinate profits and feathers his nest with excessive margins. Altogether the monopolist does quite well for himself.

Let us suppose, friends, that you want to become a monopolist. How do you set about it? The best thing, no doubt, would be to go down to the employment exchange and ask if they have any vacancies. But there would almost certainly be a long waiting-list. You would be well advised to do your own donkey-work and create your own opportunities.

You decide to buy a small business—in hardware, or haberdashery, say. With the balance of your gratuities and post-war credits you buy a copy of the *Directory of Directors* and a slide-rule. The first day in business you take down your predecessor's notice :

HARDWARE—J. BROWN—HARDWARE
and replace it with:

M. R. CROPPER, F.I.A.,
QUALIFIED PRACTITIONER IN
METALLURGY

You then mark up the prices of your goods by one hundred per cent.

The rest is easy.

Within six months you should be able to buy up all your local competitors for pin-money. And you will never go wrong if you avoid calling a spade a spade and a bucket-shop a bucket-shop.

Your ramifications now become extensive. Your name begins to mean something to the nation and, wisely, you decide to change it by deed poll.

Next you put up for Parliament as an Altruist and forfeit your deposit. (*Note*.—This episode may seem irrelevant but it is a definite part of your career. Don't neglect it.)

Amalgamations, mergers, combinations and consolidations follow in quick succession. At the age of fifty you should be in control of the entire trade and your new name should be synonymous with hardware wherever the English language is spoken.

You have arrived. You are a monopolist.

Of course, all monopolists are not anti-social; some are the best of fellows, kindly and generous to a fault. They are known as "enlightened employers." Such men conduct their businesses for the sheer pleasure of keeping within the factory regulations and of providing gainful employment. The man who wrote recently to *The Dorset Times* and signed himself "Monopolist—and proud of it," must be considered one of these.

I cannot pretend to have covered more than the bare outlines of the problem. I have said very little about vertical disintegration, "octopoid" industries and "bogus incentives"—and I have dealt only superficially with the Sherman Act, the "penumbra of uncertainty" and gentlemen's agreements. But you will now be able to recognize the menace of monopoly wherever it rears its ugly head.

Nationalization

This nationalization I mentioned just now—how does it work? What stuff is't made of; whereof is't born? I find that the average person has only the crudest and vaguest ideas about this immense new power that has suddenly been placed, for good or evil, into our cupped hands. Can we afford not to familiarize ourselves with it—every man Jack of us?

"Nationalization," says Mr. Alec Chivving, of Upton Bridge, "is just what the doctor ordered. There is nothing violently new in the idea. We have had a nationalized debt, a nationalized anthem and a nationalized register for years and nobody has been the wiser. Now, I hear, we're going to have nationalized security. I've an idea, too, that the M.C.C. is nationalized, but correct me if I'm wrong. As my wife is always saying, it was the best day's work this country ever did when it disbanded private armies and merged them in the national levy."

"Nationalization," writes Mrs. Constance Stewell, "is a fair teaser and no mistake. What beats me is why I'd

never so much as thought of it before the election. Then it came to me in a flash. Nationalization—that's me, I said."

"Nationalization," says Mr. Warwick Urgoe, "is dangerous nonsense. I have no time to argue, but my friend Tramplemore puts the case like this—nationalization elevates the state, a state is a condition, a condition implies a bargain, a bargain suggests the basement. And you can't get much lower than that, can you?"

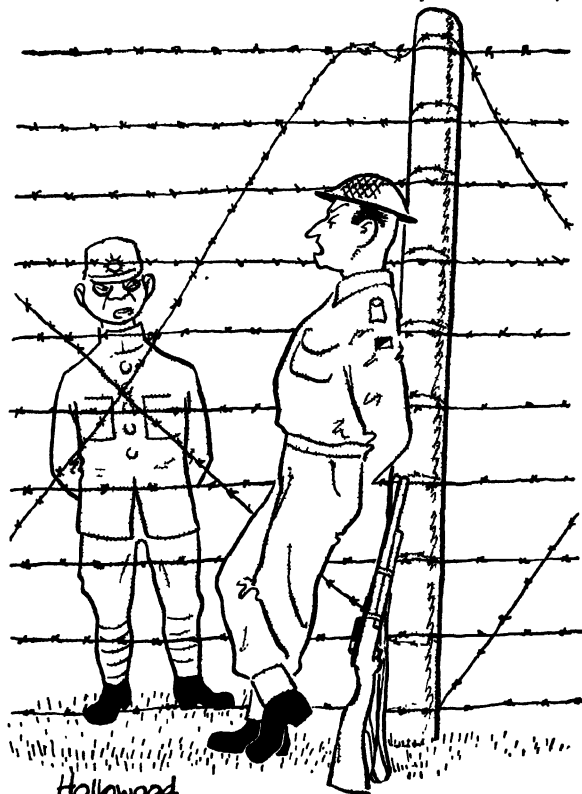
"Nationalization," says George Shrubbs of Ealing, "should never be confused with rationalization, however dissimilar or similar their meanings may or may not be or are. There is a time and a place for everything."

"Nationalization" writes Professor Croom, "adumbrates statization, a condition not inconsistent with Huegel's concept of a quasi-collectivist bureaucracy. In other words, it adumbrates communalization, a state not incompatible with Huegel's doctrine of semi-subsidized, politico-economic syndicalism."

"It adumbrates"; there I think we have the clue to any real evaluation of nationalization. "Any real evaluation"—there, surely, is the true meaning of disinterested research. "Disinterested"—in that one word we see the crux of the entire subject dramatically exposed. But let us, rather, move on.

One has but to think of nationalization for a reasonable length of time to hit upon the notion of denationalization. The logic of such a notion should be plain to all but the out-out-and-out advocate of nationalization *per se*. And similar arguments could be applied, though with less force, to the concept of derationalization.

The point I am trying to make is this—that with the awful power of the disintegrating atom harnessed to man's needs we may ultimately be very glad to find a few loopholes for complacency, fecklessness, inertness, smugness, intrigue, and all the other charges that, rightly or wrongly, are often levelled against unnationalized industry. The atom age may catch us so completely unprepared for



“You’ll be saying next that you were NOT selling at cut prices before the war.”

mirthful ease that we shall clutch at any straw of unrest and discord.

Either that, or man will destroy himself utterly and inconsiderately.

Policy for Coal and Briquettes

Consider the case of coal—the sheet-anchor of British industry. Is nationalization really necessary? To answer this question we start way back at the very dawn of textbooks.

Coal, in one or another of its many forms, is the life-blood of our manufacturing trades. Much has been written and read recently about atomic energy. Most people seem to think that the disintegrating atom spells doom for the coalfields. I cannot subscribe to this theory. The atom will have its place, of course, but it will never quite replace the open coal-fire in the affections of the British people. And it should not be overlooked that the atom, being so unimaginably small, is a difficult thing to harness.

What is coal? Imagine a world of primeval swamp and slime with giant ferns and shrubs growing in rank on rank of profusion. The earth knows not man; and no birds sing. We are near the end of the Palæozoic era and igneous activity is slight. Succeeding ages are as yet unborn.

We are still a long way from coal.

Aeons pass—long, seemingly uneventful aeons with Nature working away quietly and unobtrusively at every frond of fern. Then the pace slackens. Aeons become ages; ages, decades; decades, years. And one day, black and glistening with the pent-up force of millions of years there emerges coal—bottled sunshine.

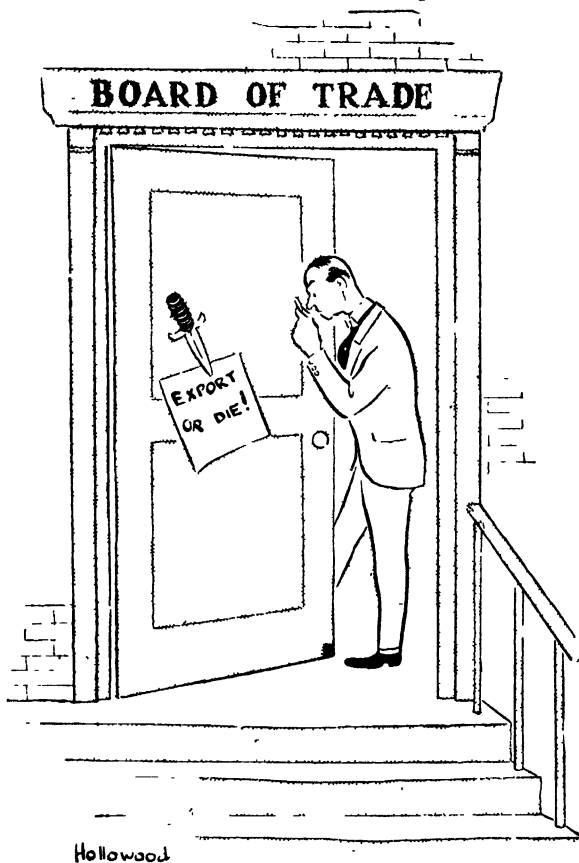
Man appears. With skill and daring he tunnels through the duodenum, hacks his way along the transverse colon and reaches the very bowels of the earth. The bottled sunshine is released!

But the work is hard and dangerous. The œsophagus may cave in without warning and brine may seep through from old workings. . . .

Let me confess, friends, that I was once violently opposed to nationalization as such, just as I was opposed to Bureaucracy *per se*. But that was some weeks ago. I am now convinced that some form of limited nationalization is the only answer, in the circumstances, to a very awkward situation—always provided, of course, that the idea of denationalization is kept somewhere in mind.

But nationalization is not enough. I am pleading, friends, for nationalization *plus*.

We are shockingly prodigal in our use of coal. When



Hollowood

we burn it in open fires the greater part of its goodness disappears up the chimney only to reappear punctually every wash-day in back yards and gardens. One method of eliminating this waste has been put forward by my friend Chawner. He recommends the insertion of a trough of dilute oxymoran acid half-way up the chimney. The escaping goodness bubbles through the liquid (according to plan) and converts it into something like high octane fuel, which can be used to advantage in either home or

factory. There are other gadgets, but none is in common enough use.

Subsidence is another problem. People in the south have no notion of the extent to which property can sink in value. I know of a whole estate of two-storied council houses that have been reduced to bungalows by subsidence. In one of the Yorkshire Ridings there is a small community that has lived underground for years. All that the visitor to this depressed or special area can see of Oglethorpe village is a straggling line of disused surface shelters.

Mr. Shinwell and Mr. Bevan should see to it that every house in a mining district is furnished with a safety margin of at least one additional story.

Pit ponies present us with another problem, but I will avoid the issue except to express the hope that we shall one day see them racing under national colours.

Denationalization?

Now at this very moment at least a little under half the people of Britain are worrying about whether or not an industry that has been nationalized can be denationalized. Are we, as it were, burning our bridges behind us as we move forward bravely into the no man's land of public control?

I will do my best to answer this vital question.

Let us suppose that a nationalized Bank of England proves a dreadful disappointment. Production per man-hour diminishes, the notes become dirtier and less hygienic and the Governor no longer takes pride in his personal appearance. Can the (or a) Government bring in a Bill to push the Bank back nominally under the wing of private enterprise?

In theory, yes. They could reduce taxation so that the people might have something to invest, and then they could float a new company. A few trips with a removals van, a few alterations to the stationery and the job would be done.



"It's rather like a bottle-party—everybody brings something for export."

But in practice denationalization would be extremely difficult. The Government would be bound in honour to offer the new shares to the old shareholders. But the compensation previously awarded to these people (or frozen to their credit) would scarcely be enough to cover the price of the new shares. I'm sure you will agree with me there.

Well, the financial problem would be as nothing to the

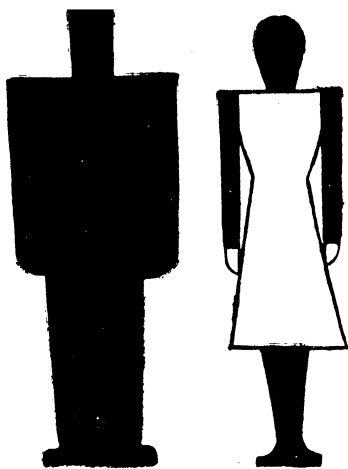
physical difficulty of finding the old shareholders. Most of them, for varied reasons, would be living under assumed names and working in nationalized industries. And not all of them would if they could respond to the broadcast appeals to return at once to Threadneedle Street. No, they would not willingly abandon their new lives—lives enriched and dignified by honest labour, lives with a Purpose with a capital “P” with neat serifs. And so ugly rumours would spread about the land that the shareholders, or some of them, had been liquidated. Class warfare would break out and the economic life of the country would creak to a standstill.

Yes, I can see it all so plainly. What Government could afford to take such risks?

Suppose, again, that coal were the subject of a plan for denationalization. Do you think the former coal-owners would down their picks on the instant and rush back to their desks? And in any case would the Ministry of Fuel and Power allow it?

No, once taken the decision to nationalize is irrevocable. It is true that certain very foreign countries have experimented with denationalization. Escrowvia, I think it was, had its railways nationalized and denationalized fourteen times within two years, and the confusion was appalling. A train would start from Obsjke under the steam of the Eastern, Metropolitan and Grand Circular Railway Co., Ltd., and would arrive in Fis under the auspices of the Government. And tickets were never transferable, so you can imagine At last, a typical Balkan compromise regularized the position. The trains, rolling-stock and permanent way were nationalized and the refreshment-rooms and booking-offices were left in private hands. Of course, the Government lost money steadily year after year, but the demand for denationalization seemed to die a natural death.

Still I cannot believe such a system would work here. My straightforward answer is that the industries we nationalize are off the Stock Exchange for good. They never come back.



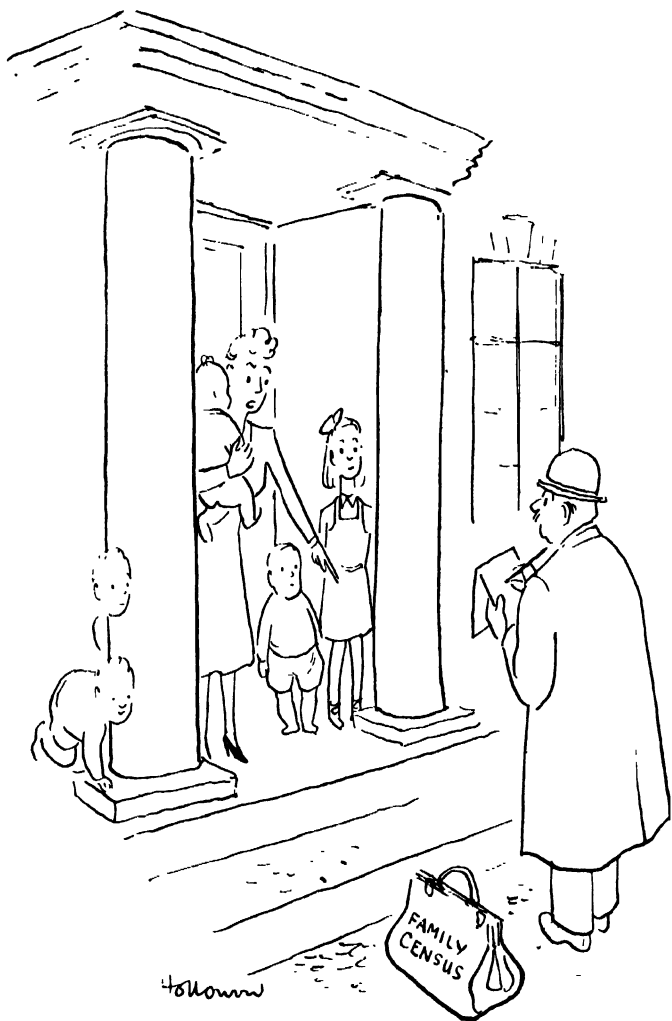
Whitehall Dances

AS SOON AS the crime wave broke against Langley Crescent I took over the defence of No. 17 from my wife. Very old people and women are equally stupid in their attitude to burglars, in their mania for locking up o' nights. Punctually at eleven o'clock, or earlier if late night dance music is available, they switch off the wireless, wind the clock, put out the cat and the milk bottles and start on their rounds of inspection. Front and back doors are made as secure as their wealth of Birmingham ironmongery can make them, window catches are levered into position, and gas and water taps are twisted into the stiffest inactivity.

I suppose we members of the younger generation—and, remember, it is not merely a matter of years—should feel sorry for those who find practical psychology so definitely a closed book. But, gosh, how tiresome their nightly antics can be! You can argue with them until you are black in the face, but they will go on believing that an unlocked door means danger. They cannot be made to realize that a door ajar is padlocked by the immense but invisible forces of elementary psychology. No housebreaker would ever look twice at a job with an open door. Felons are no fools.

My first job, on taking over from my wife as crime-watcher, was to plan our psychological defences. I decreed that when we returned at night :

The doors should be shut but not locked or bolted ;
The windows should be shut but not shuttered ;
The lights in one front and one back room should be
left burning ;



*"I'll not answer a single question until you're told me what's
in that little bag."*

The wireless should be left on—tuned to some all-night Continental station.

If any burglar were foolhardy enough to risk an entry in spite of these precautions, then he should immediately run up against our second line of defences. He would meet :

Trip-wires across the hall ;

· Two ferocious hounds ;

An electrified knob on the lounge door ; and so on.

Moreover, he would find the telephone disconnected and the drawers in the sideboard in such disarray that he would certainly assume that he had been forestalled in his mission.

By day the plan was more simple—merely that the front door should be left ajar.

We did not have long to wait. One Friday afternoon in February someone *did* accept our invitation. He was still there when I returned home from the office. He lay on the kitchen floor with his head near the gas stove. No, he was not dead : he was humming softly as he hammered at the nut thing that connects the stove to the feed-pipe. He was a stoutish fellow with rimless spectacles and dark blue overalls. The floor around him was strewn with tools and bits of stove.

“ What the devil are you supposed to be doing ? ” I said.

The man stopped hammering and turned his head towards me.

“ Mendin’ your stove, mister,” he said.

“ And what’s wrong with it ? ” I asked.

“ Pressure,” he said. “ This ’ere pipe’s the wrong size. Never get no pressure with ’er.”

“ Is that so ? ” I said. “ Well, let me tell you that I’m perfectly satisfied with it as it is—or was.”

He got slowly to his feet, a puzzled expression in his eyes. Then he unhooked his jacket from the peg behind the door and rummaged in a pocket.



“Well, don’t stand just there—go and find some more bricks.”

“It says ‘ere,” he said, “‘Defective pressure, No. 216, Longmore Road. Friday a.m.’ I’m from the Gas Co.”

“Then you can return to your stinking gas co. and tell ‘em you’ve spent the day dismantling a perfectly good and perfectly efficient stove not at 216 but at 261, Longmore Road—that is, when you’ve put it together again.”

He was terribly upset. He apologized, mumbled something about losing a day’s pay, and began to reassemble my stove. In five minutes the job was done and he had left the house.

After tea (I had to boil the water for it next door) I sat down and wrote a stinging letter to the gas company. It was a pretty good effort, if I say so myself.

After supper (I had to boil the water for my cocoa next door) I turned the gas off at the main and went to bed. The bedroom was a shambles. Among the items missing were eight pound notes, a silver cigarette case containing

two Virginian fag-ends, a pair of non-austerity socks and my N.A.L.G.O. tie.

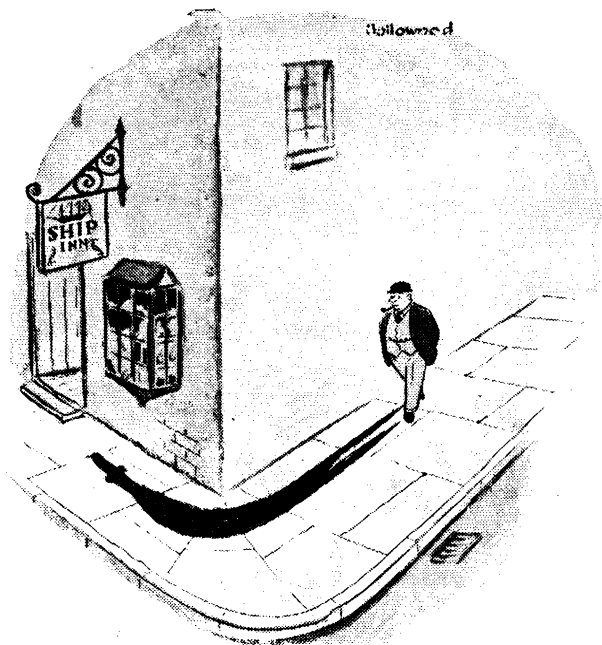
I tore up the letter to the gas company and began again.

You see what I mean? Red tape. That gas co. is typical of all our public services to-day. No imagination, no imagination.

Take the Civil Service and hear what Mr. Geoffrey Ormskirk said of it in his book "Metropolitan Serf": "Every other person you meet in that vast ant-hill of futile endeavour which the modern world knows as London, but which the Romans called *Londinium*, is a black-coated worker. And every fifth of these other persons is a helpless cog in the infernal machine of a decadent bureaucracy." Strong words, those, my friends. Too strong, perhaps.



"I just wanted to let you know that your crime wave has reached
No. 11 Oxton Crescent."



I cannot agree that the Civil Servant is helpless. Only the other day, I was talking to a "high up" in the Board of Trade. "The Civil Servant problem has never been more serious," he said. "They're here to-day and gone to-morrow, independent, truculent and expensive. And, my dear fellow, the breakages!"

"What do you put it down to?" I asked.

"Partly to all this loose talk about social security," he said, "and partly to the fact that evacuation has given them a glimpse of the great world outside Whitehall."

He was sceptical about every suggested reform.

I cannot believe that things are so bad. What do Civil Servants want? First, I think, they wish to abolish promotion by seniority. As things are, a Civil Servant cannot

hope to be in a position to marry much before the age of thirty or forty. He has about twenty years, therefore, in which to sow his wild oats. This is far too long. Just think of the cereals you could sow in twenty years! No wonder London streets are untidy!

You see the devilish cunning behind this scheme? Married in his forties, say, the poor fellow is in his dotage by the time his boys are grown up and employable. He is in the deepest of ruts, violently reactionary but desperately anxious to secure economic stability in his remaining years. In such a state he guides his sons into the profession that offers no advance without security. And it was precisely thus that Lord Toynce, whom I regard as the founder of the service, intended the species to be preserved for all time.

How can he tackle this new revolt? Instead of promotion by seniority let us reward our Civil Servants on the bonus principle. There is a vast amount of legislation to be drafted and engineered through Parliament. Very well, then, let us give each department a financial interest in its work; and let every one of its servants share equally in the proceeds. Tentatively I suggest £10 for a successful First Reading, £5 for a Second Reading, £30 at the Committee Stage, and so on. In addition there would be special talent money awarded to individuals for good prose style, deportment, etc.

It used to be said that Civil Servants, like the fountains in Trafalgar Square, play from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This is manifestly unjust. A certain amount of ping-pong still goes on, it is true, but the old mid-morning seven-a-side cricket in Green Park has been cut down pretty ruthlessly. Shortage of tackle, for one thing. All the same it should be recognized that all work and no play knocks a lot of memoranda into shape. A voluntary sacrifice of their games periods, on certain afternoons, should be the Civil Servants' contribution to the new order.

Civil Servants have a genuine grouse against the practice of reshuffling ministers. It is very disconcerting (at the Home Office, say) to have a new chief, fresh from the



Hollowood

“On the new plans, there’s going to be a subway here.”

Ministry of Agriculture* thrust upon you as soon as you have broken in the former Minister of Works. It takes time to get used to the new man’s tweeds and broad dialect. The problem might be solved by making ministers exchangeable only on payment of stiff transfer fees.

I have said nothing here about women in Civil Service. For them, of course, promotion is not a matter of seniority. Yes, bureaucrats *are* human.

**To say nothing of the Fisheries.*

Too Old at Sixty-five ?

I believe that most of the trouble in Whitehall (and Millbank) can be traced to ageing arteries. Our civil servants, like our politicians, remain in harness for too long.

But at what age *should* a man retire from politics ? This is a question, friends, that is of immediate and paramount importance. If it can be answered authoritatively—and that, I think, means scientifically—we can make democracy more than a mere mockery and knock some of the parley out of parliament.

At a recent conference at Scarborough, the Co-operative Party adopted a resolution instructing the National Com-

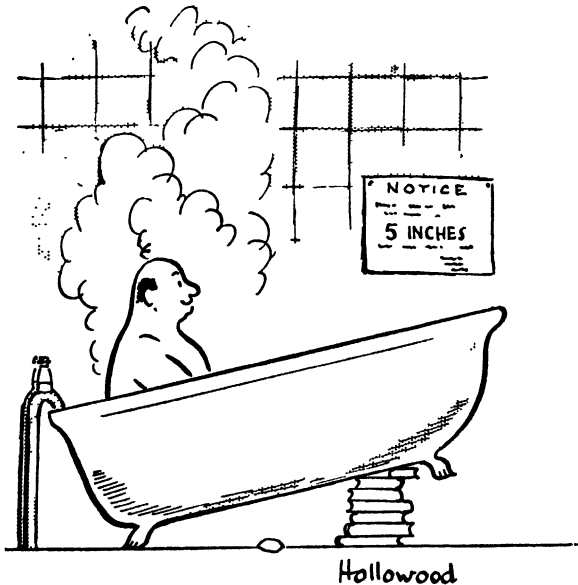
Hallowood



“There’s nothing in the visitors’ book, I suppose ?”

mittee to place an age-limit of sixty-five on parliamentary candidates. This is a sign of the times that deserves the closest consideration. At first sight it would appear a gross infringement of personal liberty to legislate against advancing years. Surely, one might say, a man is himself the best judge of his age. Just as a man should know instinctively when, and when not, to be left out of a round, he should know when to climb down from public office. But does he? There are many men who find difficulty in saying no in any circumstances.

How does a man recognize the onrush of old age? Obviously his first guide is the date, coupled with the knowledge that time marches on. Then he may note a rapid stiffening in the terms offered by the life assurance companies, and the increasing deference paid to his words by near relations. He may deduce something from the height or width of his children. But his arteries will tell him most.





Hollowood

"High spirits are all very well in their way, Mr. Trimblett, but the Ministry is not in Oxford now, you know."

Almost every man over thirty-five worries about his arteries. Every morning, usually just after shaving, he tests them for elasticity. He taps them and analyses the resultant sound for hints of petrification. If the note emitted is staccato and ringing he knows that he is on the downward path. But it is not always so simple. And even though he may be forced to acknowledge the fact of



"Then there will be a question on heredity from a listener in Buxton—but Fluxley will answer that one."

physical decline he is still faced by a cruel dilemma. How far does breadth of experience compensate for organic degeneration? A young man calls to him across the years—a young man with arteries as tender as freshly plucked macaroni—and he remembers blushing the awkward innocence and ignorance of his salad-days. At sixty-five he may well regard himself as a more useful legislator than the callow ass of thirty.

But though each man is the best judge of his own powers, there are obvious if unwritten laws that he should observe. Thus, a 50 per cent. decay of vital tissue *must* disqualify

him from participation in public affairs. An M.P. is not merely a brain. His legislative labours test his physique very considerably. He must be fit enough to march out into the lobbies during divisions—and these are sometimes distressingly frequent. He must be able to wave Order-papers and slap dispatch-boxes at least as convincingly as the Opposition. He must travel frequently between Westminster and his constituency to test the pulse of public opinion. He must be *quite* active.

I should say, off-hand, that a 20 per cent. depreciation is the maximum that any M.P. should allow himself. He can test himself in various ways. Let every M.P. seeking re-election answer these questions :

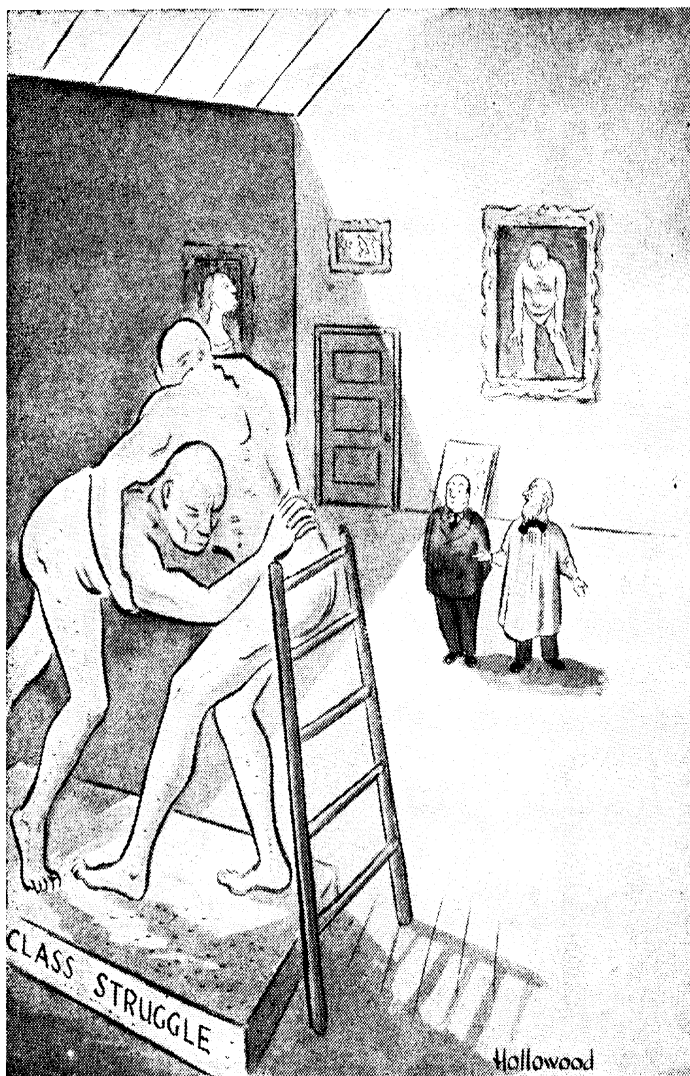
1. Do I sometimes abstain from voting through sheer physical fatigue ?
2. Do I get pins and needles in my arteries during a long sitting ?
3. Do I suffer from butter-fingers when I try to catch the Speaker's eye ?
4. Am I heartily sick of the faces across the floor of the House ?
5. When the cry " Who Goes Home ? " rings out, do I automatically start to think up excuses ?
6. Does my mind wander to the bar of the House during long speeches ?
7. Am I distracted by the presence of lady members in the Chamber ?
8. Am I afraid of the Whips ?

Question Number 7 carries 5 per cent. appreciation and the rest 5 per cent. depreciation for positive answers.

I will say no more. But you, my friends, must go on talking. Ask your M.P. how old he is. Then, sit near the front of the hall when he is speaking and keep your eye on his arteries.



But to get back to this red tape-worm that gnaws so insidiously at our very vitals—how about this family census ? Now I, personally, did not have to submit to



"... And then they go and publish all these bloomin' White Papers on Social Security."

examination by the census snoopers, but I have a pretty good idea of their methods. My wife was prostrate for a fortnight after her inquisition and she hasn't properly recovered even now. If she spoke true to me, and I have no reason to suspect that she did, the appalling interview went something like this :

Family Census Man : " Good morning, Miss or Mrs., I have called to help you with your return. May I come in now that I have one foot over the threshold ?

My Wife : " Really, I don't know what the neigh . . . "

F.C.M. : " Pray do not alarm yourself, Madam, about the neighbours. They must take turns like everybody else. Ah, nice and cosy in here. Know how to make yourselves comfy, eh ! Now then, Mrs. er - ? "

My Wife : " Axlegrit—Amelia Charlotte Axlegrit."

F.C.M. : " Very pretty, too. Now, Mrs. Axlegrit, are all these brats yours ? "

My Wife : " These dear children, sir, are mine—and my dear husband's."

F.C.M. : " I see you spaced them very nicely—or is that one standing on a box or something ? "

My Wife : " We were blessed every eighteen months except for little Jethro, who was early owing to the doodle-bugs."

F.C.M. : " But surely the one in the corner, the retarded type, is much older than the rest."

My Wife : " You are speaking of Grandfather Amos, you wicked man."

F.C.M. : " A thousand apologies, old timer. And now, when were you married ? Take your time. Think it out to your own satisfaction ; I shan't pry too deeply."

My Wife : " We were joined together at Aberystwyth on June 3rd, 1936. It was a beautiful wedding. I was wearing . . . "

F.C.M. : " Yes, yes, quite. Your arithmetic is excellent. Now, this man you say you married—can you describe him ? I mean, would you know him again if you saw him ? "



“Good-bye, darling.”

My Wife : “ My dear husband has a wart, and ‘ I love Amelia ’ tattooed on his torso.”

F.C.M. : “ When did you last see your name in print ? Never mind, forget it. Very well, Mrs. Axlegrit, I now come to what is, perhaps, the most delicate part of my mission. Is it—er—your intention to be—er—blessed again ?”

My Wife : “ Indubitably.”

F.C.M. : “ Good. See that they are men-children. Girls are not wanted except in the lower clerical grades as shorthand typists and such.”

My Wife : “ We shall take what the good”

F.C.M. : "Quite, quite, but you do realize I suppose that the need for miners is urgent. You want coal, don't you? Well, then!"

My Wife : "I've never been so insulted in my life. I shall report you to your superior officer."

F.C.M. : "Right-o. But don't forget, I shall be around again in a few months' time to see what kind of progress you're making. And if I find that . . ."



Hollowood

"She's rather upset, poor dear. She's had three proposals of marriage and a counterfeit half-crown."

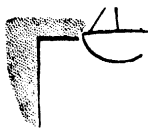
Fairly makes your blood boil, doesn't it? To think that our womenfolk have to submit to such treatment. And no redress!

I know that the population needs revving up and all that; in fact, I've done quite a lot of hard thinking in the matter myself—but wishful thinking is not enough. Quite recently I have been studying the Beveridge Report again, the full unexpurgated edition. It is an excellent book—

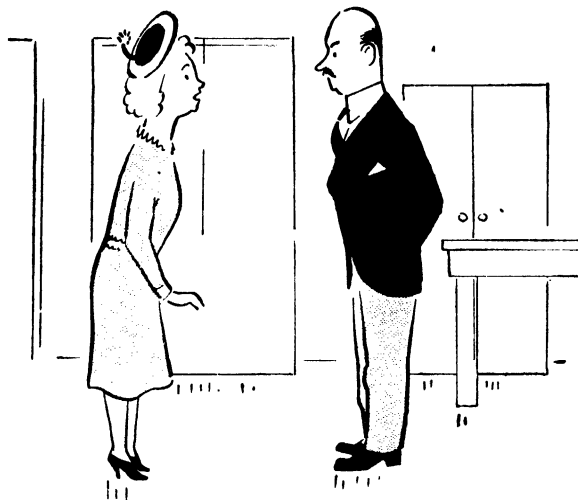


Hollowood

“Very well, smart guy, if you’re not smoking inside you’re standing on the platform—also illegal.”



Hollywood



“ Yes, *Utility*'s quite all right, but *Period* seems to last longer.”

quite the best of its kind since Milton's *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*—and should prove an indispensable guide to those about to marry.



I quarrel with the author only on one point. He is unduly pessimistic in his forecasts of the trend of the population up to (and including) 1951, while he is far too optimistic in his predictions concerning the following decade. The future is not a closed book to those with a gift for statistical inquiry and plenty of helpers. We (my colleagues and I) have collected thousands of “samples” during the last few years. Our method is simple. We stand at a busy point in each of the great cities and interrogate every fifth slow-moving pedestrian. Our chief

question is : " What do you think will be the population of Britain in (1) 1951 and (2) 1961 ?" It is an easy matter to arrive at the truth by calculating the average of all answers given. I find that by 1951 the population will have increased to 64,371,957. This improvement will be due to the following factors :—

1. The long-term nutritive effects of " Slam," " Chup," " Scrunch," and other vitamin-laden lease-lend supplies.
2. The presence in these islands of the Australian Test Team (and manager).
3. A certain amount of overlapping and duplication in census returns.
4. The long-term effects of the war-time adulteration of beer.
5. The return of British lecturers from the U.S.A.
6. The psychological effect of the one hundred and twentieth anniversary celebrations of the death of T. R. Malthus.

But the improvement will be only temporary. By 1952 the population will have resumed its headlong descent into oblivion and by 1961 the inhabitants of these islands will number only 1,159. Think of that ! Worse still, eight and a half out of every ten persons will be over eighty-three years of age. At the time of typing the average age of our Members of Parliament is 58.137 ; by 1961 it will be 91.725. There will be no settled government. The death-rate or turnover of M.Ps. will be so great that 35 per cent. of the electoral districts will be holding by-elections every week. The unemployed will be mad with hunger, and, like as not, there will be the coldest winter within living memory.

There, I have spared you nothing. The grim picture is before your eyes. Every reasonable reader will now be asking himself : " How can I help the country to avoid this catastrophe ?" The idea that the solution lies with larger families is too simple to detain us long. We must do more than scratch the surface of the monster of

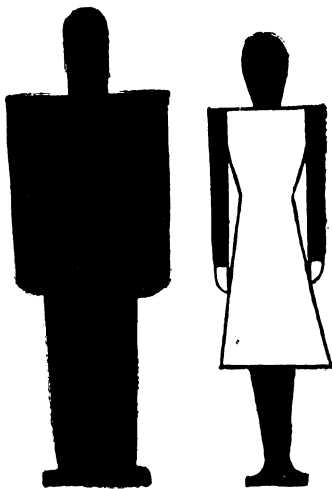
depopulation. Write to your life assurance company about it.

My solution to the problem would take into account the fact that before the war the middle classes chose cars rather than babies. It takes about £80 to run a car for a year and it takes about £80 to rear two infants for the same period. It should, therefore, be the Government's first task of reconstruction to provide cars with lower running costs (say, £40 per annum).

Competition can be more than the life-blood of commerce—it can become the mainspring of an increasing birth-rate. If the production of twins and triplets (to say nothing of further values in the same series) were rewarded adequately the market would become much more lively. I suggest £2,000 for twins, £3,000 for triplets and £10,000 for the “double.”



“For goodness’ sake, Daphne, don’t talk shop.”



Gentlemen Prefer Bonds

IF YOU ARE observant you may have noticed an alarming development in the British attitude to money. I refer, of course, to the general unwillingness to accept it at its face value. A few years ago it was unthinkable that a gentleman should count his change. Openly, that is. Sometimes after pocketing it he would engage the shop-assistant in conversation until his thumb-nail had identified and approved each coin in the dark wash-leather recesses—but the atmosphere of trust and indifference was always carefully preserved. A male's carelessness in petty cash transactions and a sweet disorder in the dress allowance of a female were the hall-marks of gentility.

I have a coin before me as I write. It is a tarnished half-crown. The milled edge is worn smooth and the king's head is almost obliterated by pock-marks—dents made by thousands of eye-teeth. That coin is symbolic.

Watch a conductress on a London bus. She takes your coin, tests it for metal content, checks its date for historical inaccuracies (forgers, I am told, make the most appalling howlers) and announces its denomination in a loud voice. In this way she assures herself of witnesses should a dispute arise. Then she looks at you very meaningfully. Not until you mutter "Yes, half a crown," and so confirm the analysis, does she proceed to the business of puncturing and issuing a ticket. Notes do not trouble her quite so much. A swift inspection against the light is usually



Hollywood

*“There’s nothing to worry about, dear—I’ll be as right as rain
in the morning.”*

enough. Genuine editions exhibit a standard water-mark, and as with all good works of fiction a thread runs through them.

You can judge the length of a conductress's service by the way she tackles these problems. At first, she tends to bite the notes and hold coins up to the light. There follows a period of acute lack of confidence. At this stage she stops the bus frequently in order to submit doubtful coins to the pavement test. Confidence begins to return when she has been left behind a few dozen times by an irate driver. A really efficient conductress can identify a counterfeit coin by the colour of a passenger's cheeks.

Now watch a man withdrawing a sum of money from the bank. The cashier hands over the notes and the customer licks his middle finger and counts them methodically. To-day, only the debtor shrinks from this precaution.

What does it all mean? That we are becoming more mercenary? I hope not. That we are losing our gentility? I am afraid so. In the last six months I have encountered only one person who could really be called a gentleman. He was the bald little back-bencher in the House of Commons who described the annual estimates as "meaningless symbols."



Not so very long ago a letter appeared in *The Times* from Lord Bradbury. He seemed to be in a proper fix: "I have addressed the same question to almost everyone I have met who I thought might know; and the best reply I have been able to get is that it is a promise by the Chief Cashier of the Bank of England to pay at some date which Parliament may hereafter determine whatever Parliament in its wisdom may direct him to pay."

I sympathize with Lord Bradbury. I have been running around for years with this same question—"What is the pound sterling?"—on my lips. It remains unanswered.

When I began my researches I sought the counsel of the financial world.



“Bring it back in about twenty years’ time. I like that!”

“Dash it all,” said one sedentary black-coated specimen (and he may have been representative), “a pound’s a quid, what. I mean to say, it really is—acutely.”

Not very helpful.

I then turned my attention to figures prominent in public life.

Dr. C. O. Mallinger said: “The pound sterling is a, perhaps *the*, symbol of our island greatness. Everywhere it is accepted, though occasionally at a discount, as an Englishman’s bond. A pound is one thing; a pound sterling is quite another. Personally, I would rather have

a good pound sterling any day than twenty shillings. That may sound illogical or quixotic, I suppose, but one cannot change one's nature. I am just made like that, I guess. My people have always been true blue."

Tom McLurk : "The root of all evil, a meaningless symbol, filthy lucre."

Mr. J. R. Cooltap : "A very difficult assignment, indeed. For one thing the inks are most difficult to match and suitable thread is almost unobtainable. Mrs. Cooltap is always complaining about my pyjamas. I can do a dollar in half the time, but with the exchange rate at 4.03 there is not much incentive."

Mr. S. Turner-Thompson : "I don't want to appear snobbish, but the pound is rather *infra*, isn't it? All the



"Hunch those shoulders ; drive the hands deeper into the pockets ; and try to slouch a bit more. Blimey, you'll never make civilians!"



"I suppose you've noticed what they're doing to water—hardly any oxygen in it these days."

same, I don't see what the working classes have to complain about. Personally, I shall always deal in guineas—and fractions, of course. You wouldn't have much confidence in a chap whose fee was in level quids. Now, would you?"

Mrs. Oswald Sunnup : "I confess that I always thought the old pound was backed by gold one hundred per cent. If what you say is true I have been betrayed. I wish I had known all this before the election."

Dr. Evan Willis : "The pound sterling is a scourge—far more dangerous than cracked or chipped cups. It is a common carrier of almost every notifiable disease. Year after year hundreds of our best bank clerks and revenue commissioners are carried off by creeping dermatitis or "creditor's paw." In America about one in every seven

has it without knowing it. My advice is— don't lick your fingers when counting notes. It is better to be a few short than a martyr to thrush all your life."

Well, there you are. Not very informative, these answers, are they? The country is perplexed and worried, but is not sure about what. It may easily be the pound sterling.

Let the people be told the truth. They have faced hardships before. Somewhere in the files of the Treasury or



*"I regret to say we cannot find the record you ask for,
Sergeant Harker."*

the Bank there must be some kind of definition. Let Lord Catto or someone make a plain statement of fact and let it be repeated over the wireless in all three programmes. Only by such means can the fears and doubts of an anxious public be allayed. Without some official assurance in the matter all this talk about previous dollars may be misinterpreted.



This brings me to another question—why is the pound sterling so much more valuable than other currency units? Not so long ago the pound (one pound only, mark you) was worth approximately 4 dollars, 400 francs, 17 kroner, 520 piastres, 44 pesetas, 71 lire and not inconsiderable quantities of bolivianos, cruziceros, pesos, rupees, roubles, soles, lats and yuan. This is a source of constant irritation to foreigners. Why, they ask themselves, should not the English have to offer many pounds to get one of our dollars, francs. . . lats, and yuan?

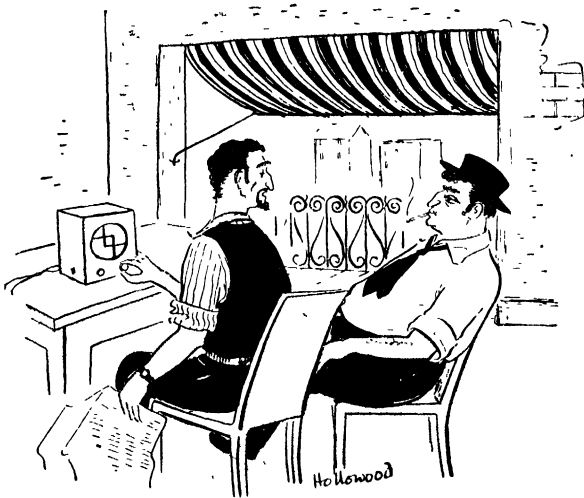
Why not, indeed? At first sight, let us admit it, this financial phenomenon seems decidedly queer—so queer, in fact, that it would be wiser perhaps to let the matter lie on the table. Unfortunately, they let the cat out of the Bank at Bretton Woods and it will not be put back without a struggle.

Which of these statements explains correctly why the pound has the dollar at a disadvantage?

1. The pound's watermark is deeper and less brackish.
2. The pound is backed by more gold.
3. It will buy more in Britain than the dollar will buy in America.
4. An Englishman's word is his bond.

Will those in favour of the second statement please raise their right hands? Thank you. Now their left hands? Reach up, Miss Turnbull. That's *much* better.

Consider the problem from another angle. It is a remarkable fact that the pound gets longer as it nears the equator and is shorter towards the poles. Thus, in the



“Listen, Pedro, ‘Music While You Work.’”
“Manana, Sebastian, manana.”

hottest countries it will exchange for vast quantities of local currency--shells, beads, nuts, etc.--while in cooler climes it almost disappears from circulation. The short pound is sometimes known as the pound Stirling.

My travels have taken me to almost every corner of the globe. At a particularly sharp one in South America, where I was selling plastics forward, I overheard a swarthy wholesaler say to a somewhat sallow colleague: “And remember, *amigo mio*, an Englishman’s word, whatever else it may be, is certainly not collateral.” If this is true—and there is no reason why it should be—we have only ourselves to blame. How can we expect the foreigner to believe what we preach but do not practise? The next time you happen to be in the bank on business try “An Englishman’s word is his bond” on the manager and watch his lip curl back as he shows you to the door.

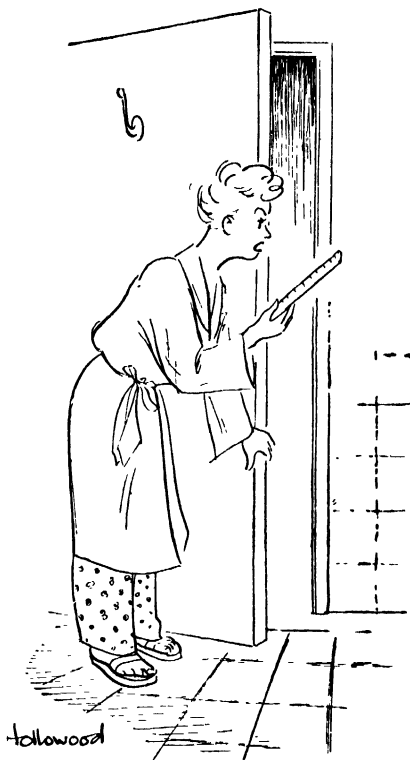
Can We Afford It? I LIKE That!

I must confess that I am just a little tired of those week-end speakers who ask "Can we afford not to afford it?" Once you start on this sort of thing there's no stopping. I have myself used "But have we the means to afford not to afford it?" at the village institute and it was not really well received.

When I say afford "it" I mean, of course, National (*née* Social) Security. I mean progress with a capital £. I mean the hundred and one things that we have promised ourselves since 1940—houses, new and better medical services, more far-reaching education, improved shelters, and so on. No, friends, I am not one of those who fall into the error of treating all problems as financial. I know that £, s. and d. are meaningless symbols—though I cannot help noting that the people who are so emphatic on this point regard the \$ as loaded with meaning and even innuendo.

The truth is that no real analogy exists in matters of finance between the State and the individual. For the latter the distribution of expenditure is a simple exercise in mathematics. He deducts x for his taxes, y for his wife, and z , the remainder, is his and his alone. He may put some of it away for a Test Match at Manchester, or he may squander it on wine and song. (*Note.*—Adjust slightly for bachelors.) The State, on the other hand, first decides how much to spend and then proceeds to collect it. Just like that.

A State, you see, can never be bankrupt. In 1939 there were simpletons in this country who thought that Italy and Germany were on the rocks, merely because they were a bit behind with their payments. And when Germany started fooling about with cardboard tanks these same saps jumped to the conclusion that the German threat was merely on paper or papier mâché. Yet look at Germany to-day—prostrate, destitute and pfennigless, if you like, but not bankrupt.



“I say—I’ve discovered I’ve been measuring my bath-water in centimetres all these years.”

Are we, with our fine plans, cutting our garments according to our cloth? Or are we biting off more than we can chew? Merely to put these questions in a different form—ought we to be so keen on progress while the budget remains unbalanced?

As I see it, friends, we ought. We need more workers in our industrial hive and more workers will not be forthcoming until the State acts *in loco parentis*. It was Hammerfest of the *Argus* who said, “The hand that rocks



“Another time we were due to play at Old Trafford was in 1937 . . .”

the cradle rocks the Malthusian Theory to its foundations.” The State must rock the cradle with larger family allowances. It must rock as it never rocked before—with drive, purpose and energy. And there must be no going back. Risks must be taken. After all, infants have amazing powers of recuperation.

I care little about these things for myself, for in another six or seven years all my own children will be bread-

winners. But I love my country. I do not want it to slip back into the second division of the Great Powers.

Of course, we are much poorer than we were. We have lost our oversea investments—at least, a large part of them. And when I say “we” I do not necessarily include myself. I am not ashamed to say that I have always been rather insular in this matter of investing. Have any of you had a similar experience?

We must also, it seems, distinguish between producers' goods and consumers' goods. No hard and fast lines can be drawn between them for the former tend to ripen into the latter. A private car or a private secretary can also be used for business purposes.

Later : I do hope you didn't mind the way the last bit of this chapter seemed to peter out. The truth is I get dreadfully tired and left it for a few weeks. Still, here I am, fitter than ever and desperately anxious to resume, not quite where we left off, perhaps, but still in search of essential truth.

Let us scrutinize this National Debt, which I propose to rename—

The National Washing

Did you know that between 1688 and 1945 the British people experienced one hundred and seventy-four years of war. (*Note*.—I am dealing only in major wars. Incidents and international tiffs are excluded.) Over the same period the average duration of peace, or what might be called the inter-war years, was eighteen years—not twenty, as is popularly supposed. The actual figures are appended :

4, 25, 7, 12, 7, 38, 44, 12, 20.

It will be seen that the average of the first five of these peace periods (eleven years) is very much less than that of the last five (twenty-six years). Wars are undoubtedly getting fewer and farther between. On the other hand, they are getting bigger. This conclusion is based on a study of figures relating to Government borrowing. Thus,

while the war of 1739-48 added only £31 millions to the National Debt, the wars of 1793-1815 and 1914-18 added £604 millions and £7,180 millions respectively. The National Debt now stands at a trifle over £20,000 millions.

I select 1688 for my base year for two reasons. First, because it seems reasonable to count the struggle of 1688-97 as the first "civilized" war—since none before that time produced a genuinely "National" debt. And, secondly, because Mr. Nicholas Kaldor, on whose figures my own calculations are based, has made a similar selection.



"See now, was Munich before or after the body-line controversy?"

In his treatise on the pure and applied theory of political behaviourism (*Everybody's Political What's What*) Mr. G. Bernard Shaw states that wars break out when the rate of interest falls below two and a half per cent. and that peace does not return until the rate has been restored to five per cent. This is something new and important. It is going to make a lot of difference to the peace treaties.

Of course, I do not accept the statement without substantial proof. Actually, Mr. Shaw is not quite accurate—the real figures are 2.624 and 5.0012 per cent. respectively. I think I know what Mr. Shaw has done. He probably included the Kroblich-Isquamor affair of 1623 in his calculations, forgetting that Trevelyan has said “. . . it was not a war but a skirmish.”

Mr. Shaw's theory is very significant. It means, for one thing, that we have saluted the wrong heroes all the way down the centuries. How many children in our schools (how many adults, indeed) have heard of Chasser, Allerby, Sumo-Waithorne, Jones, Ralph and Enoch Dawlish?—to mention only a few of the peacemakers. It was Chasser who swindled Henry VIII out of £200,000 during a bowling match at Pevensey. It was Allerby who robbed the East Finsbury Bank in 1823. Nearer our own times, it was the Jones' organization that mulcted the Emerald Fire Insurance Company of half a million carpets. By their actions each of these men was instrumental in stabilizing the rate of interest when all seemed lost.

In the 'forties of the last century rates were falling so rapidly that war seemed impossible to avert. The directors of the Bank of England met daily for coffee. As the nation neared the abyss practically everybody held his breath, wondering who the chosen enemy might be. The debate in the House of Commons was very heated. Some were for war against Europe; others agreed that a war against a minor Power (say, Budonia) would meet the occasion. And then, at the eleventh hour, Scrammel acted. By absconding with the entire funds of the Consolidated Trades Union he pushed the interest rate back to three per cent.



“ You can’t expect a box of matches with every ounce of snuff you buy.”

There is, then, no cause for depression. Wars *can* be avoided. But avoiding action must be swift and concerted. Therefore let the cry go out: “ Bankers of the world, unite—you have nothing to lose but your Keynes.”



Before we carry the statistical analysis a stage farther let us look at the human side of the problem. Did the National Debt upset you, friends, in your childhood days ?

It did me. It was a shameful thing that gnawed insidiously at my happiness. Like thousands of other children I regarded it as a slur upon Britain and a millstone about my neck.

To a sensitive youth the stark reality of Britain's continuing liability seemed to make classroom studies a mockery—a hollow escapist sham. As I turned the glorious pages of British history, slips of paper fluttered to the ground. They were bills. The great victories of the Nile and Aboukir Bay, of Waterloo and Balaclava, seemed shabby somehow, incomplete and indecisive, for, by my reckoning, they had never been settled in full. If you have been brought up to believe in the sanctity of solvency there is nothing quite so abhorrent as an undischarged debt.

• Mathematics meant little to me. Proportion, simple interest, decimals, areas and percentages all seemed academic side-issues compared with the urgent need to tackle the National Debt.

I think I blamed my parents most. Their apparent lack of concern shocked me deeply. Of all things inconsistency in parents is most reprehensible to the child mind. A man who regarded his country's indebtedness with equanimity was sadly out of step with a father who would rather starve than (as he put it) "be beholden."

I was seventeen before I learned the truth. A classical* economist named Hook, whom I consulted, diagnosed my trouble immediately. He showed me that the National Debt is an internal or family affair; that it is merely a matter of book-keeping and that it can be wiped out in various ways:—

1. By default.
2. By robbing Peter to pay Paul.
3. By inflation.

*He was "classical" until 1927, "orthodox" from '27 to '29, "Central European" between '30 and '34 and "Board of Trade" until his death (from exposure) in 1937.



"Coughs and colds on top."

Let us examine these methods. Default can be ruled out almost immediately as more or less un-English. It would be easy enough robbing Peters to pay Pauls if we could be sure of enough Peters—and sociologists have shown that the name always becomes unfashionable during periods of heavy taxation. Inflation, too, is extraordinarily difficult. The little that we have now has meant unremitting toil for nearly everybody.

We are left with one other solution—a solution that brings us into the dangerous area of politics. I leave discussion of it to you. If your children are to live clean, healthy, uninhibited lives, my friends, the National Debt must cease to be the horrid spectre of shame it has been for so long. My solution, which I now leave with you, rests with one word—Nationalization.

The Truth About Bretton Woods

I cannot leave this chapter without referring ever so tentatively to Bretton Woods. Does it (or Do they) mean a return to the gold standard? At a moment like this one man's opinion is as good as another's. . . .

“Any old rings, c'grette cases, lighters or watches you don't want?” asked a small tout who appeared at my door recently.

“No,” I said.

“I pay best prices, cash,” he said, “for old rings, c'grette cases, lighters. . . .”

“I've got a few torches.”

“No, no torches,” he said, and a pained look flickered across his eager face.

“Oh, just gold, eh?”

“S'right, why not let it go before this 'ere Bretton Woods knocks prices down. It will, you know, something shocking.”

“But I thought”

“You *thought*! Don't you see that this Monetary Fund will loosen up supplies. All that stuff deep in the heart of



Hollowood

*“ See, what did your husband do in the last peace,
Mrs. Wilmott ?”*

Texas will be dug up and put into circulation and your little pile will look just dam' silly."

At this point I invited the tout into the drawing-room and we went over the Agreement clause by clause. I gathered that he was acting in an unofficial capacity for the Bank of England, the Banque de France and the Italian railways—and that he would not be round our way again for several months. In the end I sold him a cruet and a stop-watch for fourteen shillings. I should have received more, but he had some doubts about the gold which had been attacked by salt or something.

Does that help at all?

Appendix

So far I have treated money as if it were always the root of all evil—mere paper. Have I forgotten coins? I will leave the reader to judge for himself.

You may have noticed that all British coins, with one tiddling exception, are round. There are several reasons for this. First of all, roundness is a device to eliminate friction, so that round coins do not tend to burn a hole in the pocket. Secondly, as every surveyor knows, coins are a valuable substitute for drawing compasses; and thirdly, coins are round so that when one is dropped it rolls for so long that the owner is able to take auditory bearings of its location and recover it at the end of the sermon.

Many foreign coins have holes in them. This gives them a slightly guilty or counterfeit look when tendered as fare in English omnibuses (they do not penetrate the defences of most slot-machines). The reason for these holes is obscure. It has been variously suggested that they are intended to encourage the threading of coins on watch-chains, that they facilitate the drawing of concentric circles, and again, that they are merely due to metal shortage consequent upon the continental pre-occupation with rearmament.

Coins are useful measures of length, weight and quantity. Many medicinal and culinary powders are

directed to be used in the ration—"as much as will go on a sixpence." A useful measure, indeed, but inexact and ambiguous, as my Uncle Wilfred discovered to his cost when he swallowed as much of a certain medicament as would go on six pence.

For linear measurement coins are of particular value. The halfpenny, for example, is exactly one inch (or is it three-quarters?) in diameter, while the penny (or is it the florin?) is precisely one and a half inches in diameter (or is it circumference?) Any uncertainty can be dispelled immediately by reference to the tape-measure or ruler.

There are certain hotheads who contend that money should be abolished and that a system of barter economy should be substituted. These heretics overlook the amazing versatility of coins, their hundred and one uses, their embodiment of what we may call the British Way of Life. Consider a few of the innumerable domestic uses of coins—they are our acknowledged tin-openers ("insert a coin and turn"), their milled edges can be used as files, they are useful things to get out of money-boxes and, like the labels on sauce bottles, they teach us foreign languages.

In the realm of sport, coins have an honoured role. Most games are preceded by the ceremony of tossing. Though games like squash and tennis substitute a clumsy manœuvre with rackets and though penniless sportsmen make do with cries of "'Ump or 'ollow?" "Which 'and?" and "Foot yer for it!" it is the spinning of a coin which is so symbolic of our love of fair play. It will be a sorry day for cricket when the fate of the Ashes is no longer decided by the toss.

Epilogue

WELL, there it is, Citizen No. 30,800,901. I have taken you right behind the grim façades of Whitehall into the small back rooms where your destiny and things are being forged. And you should now be in a position to neutralize some nincompoop's careless vote at the next election.

I am writing this tail-piece in New York where even the war-talk is forgotten as the Press clears its decks for the November elections. The Republicans are beefing about the meat shortage, but the Democrats still find plenty of fat to chew. To the outsider America's domestic problem seems a replica of Britain's problem twenty-five years ago—the same arguments, follies, and misunderstandings, and the same noble ambitions, mass-produced palliatives and original sin. The American who asks "Where do we go from here?" has the answer right before him in this careful compilation which should be re-read in conjunction with *Areopagitica*, *Ulysses*, the early novels of J. Hartman Furch, and any good seed catalogue.

Understand, please, I cannot possibly undertake to answer letters dealing with the questions raised in this book. But enclose the stamp all the same.

