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SIDE-SHOWS

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SIDE-SHOWS

by

J. B. ATKINS

With an Introduction by James Bone



LONDON

JONATHAN CAPE 30 BEDFORD SQUARE

FIRST PUBLISHED 1903
FIRST ISSUED IN THE TRAVELLER LIBRARY 1928

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

TO
C. L. GRAVES

THESE papers originally appeared, substantially as they are now, in the *Spectator*, the *Manchester Guardian*, *Punch*) the *Evening Standard*, the *Morning Leader* and the *Westminster Gazette*, and I have to thank the proprietors for kindly allowing me to reprint them. Most of them were reprinted by Messrs. Christophers in 1908. Now that a new edition is asked for, I have removed several papers which had been deprived of their meaning by time and have substituted others.

j. B. A.

February, 1928,

FOREWORD

AT public meetings and parish concerts the speaker of the evening is usually 'introduced' however familiar he may be to the audience and however inglorious the individual who, being chairman, makes the introduction. My foreword to Mr. J. B. Atkins's writing must be something of the kind except that many who have been pleased and refreshed by his writings were unaware of the writer. Following the older and quieter manners of journalism, Atkins in his thirty years' work on the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Standard*, the *Evening Standard* and the *Spectator*, rarely broke his anonymity further than by the intrusion of initials. He has been war correspondent in the Spanish-American War, the Greco-Turkish War and the South African War, has written the biography of Russell of the *Times*, and collaborated in a delightful, stirring book about living on a Thames barge; but in the main his work has disappeared into the finest substance of journalism.

There can't, of course, be such a person as a typical Englishman, but if there could be, Atkins, it had always seemed to me, might be that person. (He must forgive the idea, for the rarest thing in the world is a typical anybody.) Foreign observers, and our poets, straining our insular character, have always found something of the sailor in the islanders, and even in this urban and suburban age we endeavour, if we can, not to be pure townsmen, and we care about nature and the open air with something of the hunger of the disinherited.

FOREWORD

'There are two classes of people with technical knowledge,' Atkins writes in one of these essays, 'who are, above all other classes, intolerant of ignorance in others. They are agriculturist sand yachtsmen. I think perhaps agriculturists are the worst, although it is not easy to explain the intolerance of either. We have all noticed the scorn of the farmer who has detected some one in the awful mistake of confusing mangels with turnips or rye with oats. The yachtman's intolerance of ignorance generally takes the form of wantonly assuming that every stray passenger on board knows the names of all the spars, sails and riggings.' Atkins would perhaps not be so intolerant himself, but somehow before you left his barge you would feel that a man who didn't know these things was — slightly of course but still — well, letting down his country a bit. Atkins would try to keep from you that he knew all about these things and much about the country and birds and horses, and he would always be urbane and moderate, with a certain friendly malice breaking through. This pervading feeling for the sea and liking of the country touches his writing at nearly every turn of phrase or image. Although he has spent most of his life in London and knows West London well, he always seems to me rather a visitor than a Londoner, bringing standards and perspectives of the sea and country into his London studies. Perhaps for that the London part of his book gives me peculiar pleasure, bringing back

FOREWORD

something of the county-town London of Mr. Spectator, although to most of his friends Atkins may seem the most townlike modern who walks Pall Mall. Add to this his regard for the classics which salts his estimates, his quiet friendly humour and joy in a spirited joke, and the deep feeling that comes out in his foreign studies that good foreigners with a bit of luck might be Englishmen, all expressed in his discriminating and effortless style, and you have a very English store of new pleasures in old subjects. Here they are: cats, sail-boats, coaches, birds, country-houses, a theatrical tavern, a motor-run till dawn, Madrid and Paris. Surely a happy book for the Traveller!

JAMES BONE

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I THE NEW CAT	13
II SANDY	21
III CROSSING THE ATLANTIC AFTER THIRTY YEARS	31
IV IN LINE AHEAD	43
V A STEAM TRIAL	54
VI THE SPIRIT OF SPRING	60
VII MY FAVOURITE HOLIDAY BOOK	69
VIII THE ONLY WAY WITH A YACHT	75
IX ANOTHER OPINION ON YACHTING	83
X AUTUMN ON THE NORFOLK COAST	89
XI THE ROAD	96
XII BATHYLLUS AND HIS ART	103
XIII OUT OF LYNN	111
XIV THE HOME OF LOST CAUSES	117
XV VERY COMFORTING WORDS	123
XVI QUITE A SALON	130
XVII PUT AWAY	136
XVIII A COLLEGE LITERARY SOCIETY	142
XIX MOSELEY BLOGG: CLERK	148
XX THE BANQUET	156
XXI THE LUKEWARM SPORTSMAN	162
XXII IN BISLEY CAMP	168

CONTENTS

	PAGE
XXIII THE ONLY PLACE FOR A HOLIDAY	177
XXIV A COTTAGE IN THE COUNTRY	182
XXV-XXVIII IN A COUNTRY HOUSE:	
(i) THE ARRIVAL	189
(ii) ONE OF THE GUESTS	194
(iii) THE CHILDREN'S PARTY	199
(iv) MAN PROPOSES	204
XXIX-XXXII IN PARIS:	
(i) THE BOULEVARDS	210
(ii) ELECTION TIME	219
(iii) PARIS EXPLAINED	226
(iv) THE DRUM	233
XXXIII-XXXIV IN MADRID:	
(i) THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE	240
(ii) THE BULL-FIGHT	250

CHAPTER ONE

The New Cat

*

THE new cat arched her back as soon as I opened the hamper in which she had been brought to the house. Then she put her *off* fore-paw tentatively outside, as though feeling how far it was to the ground, or as though she had suspicions of the cleanliness of the carpet in this strange place. She was reserved, very distant, very dainty, and very proud.

'Come,' I said, in my most cordial tones, 'won't you step out? We are all prepared to love and admire you. That charming striped rug in the flat basket by the fire is for you to sleep on. That saucer of milk near the basket is also for you. See how carefully we have thought it all out. Do leave that horrible hamper! Let's be friends at once!'

Upon these words the cat withdrew her tentative off fore-paw, and retired entirely inside the hamper.

She stood there eyeing me closely, and swaying her tail, which curled and uncurled rather contemptuously near the tip.

'Would you like some butter on your paws?' I said. 'I didn't propose that at once, because I understood that as a remedy for strained relations it was rather out of date.'

'You were quite right,' said the cat, without, however, making any advance towards cordiality; 'butter on one's paws is an awful bore. It isn't a meal, and yet it

SIDE - SHOWS

all has to be cleaned off. It's like having to wash up the plates without having had dinner.'

'I suppose,' I ventured, 'it was never meant to be so much a meal as a means of occupying the cat's attention till the strangeness had worn off?'

'Utter nonsense!' retorted the cat. 'Of course, when the butter was cleaned away, one was exactly where one was before. It merely created a bad impression of the new house.'

I should say here, to allay doubt and criticism, that Felic, or cat language, is not more difficult to learn than Japanese, and not quite so difficult as Hippie, or horse language, which was mastered by Swift, and later by Mr. Anstey. The method is syntonic: Mr. Marconi could not improve it, or Mr. Maskelyne expose it.

'Well,' I said, 'I shan't venture to lay down any programme, but shall leave everything to you. If you don't want to come out of the hamper, pray stay where you are.'

Upon these words the cat again extruded her off fore-paw, and put it stiffly on the ground. Then she stiffly did the same with her near fore-foot, and then with her hind-legs, lifting them slowly over the side of the hamper, as though it were two feet higher than it was.

She was out at last, and the next step was to draw her attention again to the flat basket and the milk.

'That's right, my beautiful, green-eyed Venus!' I

THE NEW CAT

said enthusiastically. 'I see you are going to do what I propose, and now, just look —'

The cat withdrew a step or two farther away from me as I spoke, then turned and walked out of the room.

I followed her into the dining-room. 'Come, come,' I said; 'it isn't nearly so comfortable in here as in my study.'

'Perhaps,' said the cat; 'I don't know. But, anyhow, this is the room I want to examine. I ought to have been shown this first.'

'Til just wait till you've finished looking round,' I said. When I turned away from the chimney-piece, where I had seized the opportunity to wind up the clock, the cat had sauntered out into the hall, and was sitting with an appearance of immovability under a chair.

'You don't like the dining-room?' I said apologetically.

'I can't tell you yet,' she said. 'I never judge at first sight. It is astonishing how places grow on one. I get so attached to some places which aren't really nice at all that I can't bear to be away from them for more than a few hours.'

'I hope,' I said, 'that some one of my modest rooms will inspire that feeling in you before long.'

To this sincere aspiration there was no answer. The cat sat where she was, beautiful and unconciliatory.

SIDE-SHOWS

'Cruel, but composed and bland,
Dumb, inscrutable, and grand,
So Tiberius might have sat
Had Tiberius been a cat,'

I quoted.

'It's no good quoting Matthew Arnold to me,' she said, 'he liked canaries better than cats.'

'Not at all,' I answered soothingly; 'he only took the part of a particular canary against a particular cat.'

To change the subject, the cat came from under the chair, and went back to the study. I followed.

'Are you coming too?' she said.

She went to the saucer of milk.

'That's right,' I said approvingly; 'have a little drink; it will do you good.'

She touched it with her tongue, and said: 'Perhaps later I may like a little; not now.'

'Have you ever seen Prudhon's picture of "Liberty"?' she went on, as she looked musingly at the fire, 'because I hear there is a cat seated at her feet.'

'Why?' I asked.

'Because that's me,' she answered. 'I want you to understand certain things about me, and if you will only make a real effort we may get on pretty well together.'

'Go on,' I said.

'Well, the first point is that I'm under no obligation to you at all. My ancestors never wanted to live in

THE NEW CAT

men's houses. We've been put there. Domestication has been thrust upon us. You must never forget that I'm not a dog. Dogs have accepted the situation without reservation, and we haven't. If ever I am governed, I must be governed by consent. My affection cannot be bought by fear. I don't lick the hand that beats me. I can be a good friend, but I'm a desperately bad slave.'

'But, my dear Venus,' I said, 'surely you don't think it necessary to tell me all that?'

'You'd be astonished,' she replied, 'how often it is forgotten.'

The cat continued to speak, with her head turned away from me, gazing into the fire. 'There was a time in Egypt,' she said, 'when kings might look at us. Now cats may look at kings.'

'That's very sad,' I said; 'but, to speak quite frankly, you have rather brought it on yourselves. You see, you want to stand outside civilization, and civilization is, among other things, a great system of social discipline. You don't conform yourself to it, so you suffer by the judgments of civilization.'

'Civilization!' she cried. 'Why, that's simply a system of humbug and polite lies. I don't pretend I like everybody all round, like a dog. A dog flatters you all day. Every time he obeys you he draws attention to his conviction that you are a god. Catch me doing that! I always say exactly what I think of people. My

SIDE-SHOWS

candour is unparalleled. If people don't like it, they can—'

'Lump it,' I suggested.

'Exactly,' she said. 'It's very good for them.'

'Possibly,' I replied. 'Anyhow, when I had you brought to this house I knew exactly what your opinions were; so I have no grievance. I knew you were an anarchist, and I have no ambitions about curing you. You are beautiful, but hardly respectable. I don't think the Bible even mentions you. You have always defied everybody. Where did you come from? What is the meaning of your name? What is it derived from? Nobody knows.'

Venus grinned.

'Til tell you something,' she said. 'They often say it is very strange the Greeks did not appreciate the beauty of cats. I'll tell you the reason.'

'I can explain that myself,' I said. 'I have seen plenty of cats in Greece. Nobody would want to put cats like that into pictures and sculpture.'

'That isn't right,' said Venus. 'The Greeks must have seen us in Egypt —'

'Where you were cheetahs very likely, or something of that sort,' I interjected. 'It's difficult to judge from the mummy cats from Egypt that I've seen landed at Liverpool what you were.'

'The Greeks knew our beauty all right,' continued Venus, 'but they simply didn't dare to try to reproduce

THE NEW CAT

it. They knew our gracefulness was beyond them. They hoped to be able to tackle it one day, but Greece came to an end too soon. As it was, they stuck to human beauty — my namesake, for example.'

'I'm going to bed now, Venus,' I said.

'Any children in the house?' she asked.

'Why?'

'Because, if there are, do teach them sensible rhymes about cats.

"Hi, diddledy dumpty,
Puss ran up the plum-tree;
Here's half-a-crown
To fetch her down—"

and all that. It's idiotic. But the most immoral one is—

"I love little pussy,
Her coat is so warm;
And if / *don't hurt her*
She'll do me no harm."

There's commercial friendship for you! I hope the children aren't allowed to make much noise. You yourself don't, of course. We cats judge all men by their manners. I shall soon find out, anyhow.'

'I remember,' I said, 'that Montaigne complained of being disparaged by his cat, and I shall do my best to deserve your good opinion. And now I shall make up

SIDE - SHOWS

the fire, and you can lie in your basket and gaze into it, and think of Ra and Rameses, and you'll find the milk near by if you want it.'

'Good night,' said Venus; Til think it over. I dare say I shall sleep in the dining-room.'

CHAPTER TWO

Sandy

*

I MADE Sandy's acquaintance at a village in Essex through which flows a small river beloved of those who are not too proud for coarse fishing. Some cottage gardens slope down to the river, and on the low bank Sandy, with his face near the water, lay watching the dace, perch, and roach moving in the entrancing submarine avenues among the water-weeds.

Directly I entered the garden, by coming through the house, nothing existed for me but Sandy — though the garden was undoubtedly pretty. He lay in the sun like a piece of amber on green velvet. As I approached him he never withdrew his eyes from the ghostly forms that slid about beneath the surface of the river. Every now and then he would extend his right fore-paw, which, like his other paws and his breast, was as white as snow, towards the fish and draw it back again.

While this motion was being performed I noticed that he curved his leg and paw inwards towards his body, as though he meant to claw a fish on the far side and jerk it towards him on to the bank. But he never proceeded further than this symbolical movement, of which the phantoms below were probably unaware, as the sun was on the other side of the river and no shadow was cast. At each dab forward of his paw he seemed to say to the fish: 'You are all mine. I extend my paw over you in token of ownership. But, after all, you are

SIDE-SHOWS

some way down, and on this particular occasion it isn't worth while to get wet. Perhaps at the next dab - or if not then, perhaps some day. Who knows? What has a cat to do but sit and wait?'

He proclaimed himself by all his movements a leisurely cat of comfortable habits and cautious but sure judgments. I picked him up, and he instantly purred such a rich, resounding purr as I had never before heard. His body vibrated with the expression of his content.

'What do you think of him?' asked the tenant of the cottage.

'I think,' I said, 'he's one of the nicest cats I ever saw.'

'Quite a common cat,' commented the man.

'I know. I like common cats.'

'You can have him.'

This dramatic turn to the conversation would have made a hesitating response seem weak. You cannot temporize with a man who disburses cats without a moment's warning. If, on the one hand, his method was Oriental in acting on the principle that the guest must be offered all he admires, on the other hand, there was an unmistakable genuineness in his voice. At all events I must decide on the spot. So I accepted Sandy.

Sandy had the most engaging personality I have ever known in a cat. I cannot easily explain this, for his character was not altogether heroic; but at any moment

SANDY

of a long friendship I would have said that I could have better spared a better cat. To sit in a room with him was to enjoy a rest cure. He never worried about anything — except when he was shut up in a basket. He was not always in the mood for conversation, and as often as not when I had a proposal to make to him I found that his tastes differed from mine as to the desirability, for example, of going for a walk or as to the flavour of some food which I was willing to share with him.

To set this down in writing seems like saying that he was unresponsive. But he was not; the likeability of his personality did not depend upon his complaisance or his cleverness. It was much more elusive than that. When he was in one's company there was an atmosphere of comfort and goodwill. I liked to know that he was in a room with me, just as I like to know that some persons are in a room with me, although if I were to recount their attractions these would seem to be inferior in point of intelligence and accomplishment to those of other persons with whose company I can joyfully dispense.

Sandy's peculiar character in his new country home came out in impressive contrast with the tribal character of four black cats which my wife and I also owned. Sandy and they differed as much in temperament as in bodily presence. Sandy was large, and his broad flat back seemed to be designed so that he could lie on it

SIDE - SHOWS

with his legs sticking up in the air, like an inverted table-a favourite posture with him. The black cats (three sisters and their mother) were small, lean, and restless. Never was such a sporting family. They were death on rats, and while they were still kittens killed rats as large as themselves.

Muffie, the mother, took their sporting education in hand as soon as they were large enough to be brought down the dangerous sloping roof from the loft where they had been born. No amount of food would make them bigger or fatter. Their tails were long and lank as befitted such lean huntswomen, but you would not have said that they were ugly tails if you had seen them lashing with excitement when the cats were making ready to pounce, or balancing the swift, agile bodies when the cats dashed up trees like squirrels or curved at top speed round a bend in the garden like race-horses swinging round Tattenham Corner.

The three daughters were commonly known as the Mowlies, and answered to that name in a group. They were almost quite indistinguishable from each other, and though they had separate names these were seldom used even by those who knew them apart. Their instincts were all violent and primitive. They lived for war and love, and knew no milder emotions.

Cats may be divided into two classes: personal cats and non-personal cats. The first class consists of those which live in drawing-rooms and dining-rooms and are

SANDY

in daily converse with men. The second class are kitchen cats - though it must be admitted, since no rule is absolute, that a kitchen cat is personal to the cook - and stable cats. The stories to the discredit of cats in general are all founded on the escapades of non-personal cats.

But the Mowlies belonged in an odd way to both classes. They lived in the stable, but they were extraordinarily forthcoming to those whom they trusted. It was a sight to see the mistress of the house step on to the lawn and call the Mowlies. From shrubbery, tree, or out-house four little black devils would dart with the speed of light. If there were food they wanted it, no matter what it was; if a walk were suggested, it was exactly what suited them. They had the simple logic of dogs who say: 'A walk? Of course. I'm ready - naturally.'

'Now Sandy, who was a personal cat, had all the sophistication of his position. He would not jump at a walk as a matter of course. He deliberately weighed the advantages and disadvantages, and would come to a leisurely decision according to his summing up of the situation. First of all he wanted to know whether the grass was wet. Not that he minded wet grass in the early morning, because then a small rabbit might as likely as not happen to be lying out. But he did not consider wet grass to be good enough later in the day when there was hardly any chance of a rabbit.

SIDE-SHOWS

Then he would want to know what dogs were going. One or two of the puppies he did not mind, but he drew the line at the yellow collie, whom he hated. If he decided that a walk was unequivocally desirable, he would lead the procession across the fields, no one enjoying himself more. But if there were too many dogs, or if the yellow collie were of the party, or if it were simply that his mood was out of tune with the rest of us, he would walk behind. To show that he was not in a bad temper, he would nearly always come a short way, but he would fall further and further behind and then turn and saunter home alone.

The Mowlies were invariably good for almost any distance, provided that the way lay across fields and away from habitations; they would not go on high roads or near houses. When Sandy and the Mowlies hunted on their own account their differences were quite as marked. The Mowlies were incorrigible poachers, and as their enterprise was entirely without discretion we knew what their end would be. They were curiously unself-regarding cats.

There is a kind of gallantry that will not bring a man or an animal to disaster unless he have bad luck; and there is another kind of gallantry that will certainly bring a man or an animal to his death unless remarkable good luck saves him. Some men and animals seem to be born to be killed. The Mowlies belonged to this class, and within two years the mother and all her three

SANDY

daughters disappeared never to be seen or heard of again. Any gamekeeper would have told us from the first "moment that that was bound to be the end of them.

But though strictly preserved coverts were all round us. Sandy never disappeared for a single day. He never even got a foot in a trap. When he was not under our supervision he confined his hunting to the garden. He knew a place where a rabbit-run crossed a corner of the garden, and here he would often kill a small rabbit. He would bury what he could not eat at one sitting, and return frequently to the spot to make sure that the prospective meal had not been discovered.

At last we gave up being anxious about Sandy. We knew that he would never be caught out. He had plainly said to himself with perfect self-appreciation and candour: 'I may not kill rats, but I am liked and admired. I am an important member of this household. It is obviously necessary that my life should be preserved.' And he never was caught out - at least not until one day. ... But that remains to be told.

In the winter Sandy was generally brought to London. The first journey he made in a basket is possibly still remembered by the staff of the railway. The maids who had charge of him asked if he might travel in their carriage. The guard said: 'No, certainly not. It's against the rules.' Sandy was accordingly put in the guard's van. Now if Sandy had a rich and resonant purr, his shriek of despair was still more striking. It

SIDE-SHOWS

was incessant and blood-curdling so long as his annoyance lasted. Above the rattle of the train Sandy's cries went through the guard's head till he could hold out no longer. At the first stopping-place — seventy minutes from the start — he brought the basket to the maids' carriage. He was long past the stage of caring for the rules. 'Here,' he said, 'you can have that cat. I'm done with him.'

In London, which he liked quite as much as the country, Sandy at once made great friends with the police. One policeman who used to stand near our front door was kind to him, and afterwards Sandy would always run to the blue uniform. How many lonely spells of police duty he beguiled at night we could never estimate, but the gratitude of the police was often expressed. The Mowlies, for want of gamekeepers' traps, would have died of boredom in London within a few weeks, but Sandy's adaptability was perfect.

In one respect his character was wholly virtuous, and this fact must be given full weight in any honest biography of him. He would put up with almost any amount of pulling about and reasonably friendly tormentings from children. He adored them, and laid himself out to amuse them. Directly the voices of the children were heard in the drawing-room after tea Sandy would come rushing up from the dining-room, where he used to sleep in the afternoons. He would allow himself to be dressed up without protest, and

SANDY

would look very important and much pleased when everybody laughed. A dog can never bear being laughed at, but Sandy felt that his contribution to the fun was essential and therefore personally creditable.

Sometimes, if the game became too rough, he would ask to be let out of the room by pawing the door. But if the children continued to play without him, his curiosity or benevolence would always conquer him, and he would return and cry to be readmitted to receive the pinch 'that hurts but is desired.'

His greatest exhibition of curiosity, however, was excited by a game of Patience which a small boy used to play on the floor, stretched at full length. After watching the cards being pushed about one day, Sandy said to himself: 'I can do that too.' He then began to push the cards about with his paw. Afterwards Patience used to be played rather for the sake of Sandy than for the sake of the game. He never failed to come up to the scratch for a game of Patience.

The death of Sandy was a tragic irony. Having evaded all the snares of the coverts in the country, he met his end in the safe streets of London, and not many yards away, as we believe, from a friendly policeman.

The only evidence on the subject came from a maid. Said she: 'I heard the postman ring, and I went up to get the letters. Sandy was at the door. It was half-past eight [in the evening]. When I opened the door to see if the postman had any parcels Sandy ran out.'

SIDE - SHOWS

There was nothing in that. He had a rendezvous with the policeman, and ran out every evening. But he was never seen again. It was said that other cats in our street disappeared that night. . . . The furriers were said to be in want of fur for cheap stoles. The suggestion may be pure slander. But if any woman is wearing Sandy she wears something that I would willingly have bought back alive for much money.

CHAPTER THREE

Crossing the Atlantic after Thirty Years

*

WHEN the crew of the *Bolivar* were miserably working that mixture of dray and lobster pot across the Bay and saw 'some damned liner's lights go past like a grand hotel,' their jealous indignation, I imagine, reached no further than the sense that it was invidious for a ship to look like an hotel at all. What would they have thought if they could have looked forward a few years to the time when a Claridge's or a Ritz-Carlton would be sent afloat upon the Atlantic? But as I sit here in the *Grand Babylon*, which seems to have been designed to divert the mind from the idea that a ship must be in all ways a ship and to emphasize the idea of its being an hotel, I apply — in my desire to be moderate in all things — a more rational test than the bitter reflections of the men of the *Bolivar*. What would Captain Fog have thought? I keep asking myself that question without finding an answer.

This hotel rushes towards New York at twenty-three knots. I sit in the corner of a huge room which is so clouded with smoke that the faces of men and women on the other side are very dim. Stewards slip in and out swiftly through the several silent swing doors. The lifts from below continually bring fresh arrivals. The colours of the cocktails glint on the tables. With every American it is evidently a particularly solemn duty to be wet in a wet ship. Old Fog's face seems to take

SIDE - SHOWS

shape among the wreaths of smoke and look upon the scene with the eyes of thirty years ago. What *would* he say?

It is thirty-one years ago, less two months, that I crossed the Atlantic in a ship commanded by Captain Fog. He was universally known by that nickname because the luck of the weather was against him. If there was any fog in the Atlantic it always gathered round his ship and was densest there. He commanded a ship of between seven and eight thousand tons, which was considered large in those days, though it was not the largest. Fog was a simple, very competent seaman who accepted his excessive share of thick weather as a dispensation of Providence against which it was not for him to protest. Yet it added vastly to his labours and anxiety.

I can see his screwed-up face now as he gazed into the dripping blankness of the Atlantic fogs; I can see his head slightly turned to one side so that one ear might be a little more forward than the other for listening, though not so far forward that the wind could blow into it. Now the *Grand Babylonia* has submarine instruments of amazing sensitiveness which record distant sounds. The instruments do the listening and tell the officer on the bridge what is about. Blasts of the fog-horn are gradually becoming rather a convention than a precaution. But old Fog's screwed-up face recorded all the heavy responsibility

AFTER THIRTY YEARS

of a man whose load had not yet been lightened by science.

At meals he would take the head of the table as a matter of duty and routine unless the weather was too bad. The tables in the dining-saloon were long and narrow and ran the whole length of the room. The captain's table was in the middle. He was the symbolical as well as the actual head of the life of his ship. Every passenger knew him by sight.

From the time that the ship left England till she arrived at New York, Captain Fog was like the guide of strangers in a jungle. When England dropped below the horizon we lost contact with the world and we looked to Captain Fog to restore it within an allotted number of days. At Sandy Hook a pilot would come on board with news. The news spread from mouth to mouth throughout the ship. Eyes that had for days gazed into the sea with wondering ignorance looked on the sea with new knowledge. Contact was restored. Fog had done it again.

Of all the symbolical actions of Fog the greatest and most dignified was his conduct of 'Divine Service (Church of England),' as the announcement put it, on Sundays at eleven o'clock. He never passed the duty on to the Purser unless the weather was too bad. He devised a service of his own some of the features of which were drawn from the Church of Scotland, in particular a prayer for the ship's company which he thought was a

SIDE - SHOWS

fine thing, as it certainly was. He also added the name of the President of the United States when he read the prayer for the King. His choice of hymns was limited to about a dozen, and of these his favourite, I think, was one by Keble.

' If some poor wandering child of Thine
Have spurned, to-day, the voice Divine.'

I can hear him singing those words with a touching emphasis and earnestness. He cared not at all that he was singing in the morning what was meant for the evening. All these wandering children in the *Grand Babylon* who are consuming the cocktails while the band plays a negro spiritual jazzed into a fox-trot would have weighed heavily on his mind.

The twenty-three-knot hotels which shoot the population of a small town across the Atlantic every few days have their own legends which Captain Fog would not have understood. Was there not a husband who met his wife unexpectedly on the last day of the voyage? They had both walked the several decks and fed in the various restaurants and cafes but had not happened to meet till then. And was there not a little boy who cried for three days because he could not find the sea? Certainly the world does not leave us alone now. We are 'in touch' all the time. At seven in the morning my cabin steward brings me the daily newspaper containing the last wireless messages. A page wanders at intervals

AFTER THIRTY YEARS

through the smoking and reading rooms calling out the names of passengers for whom telegrams have just arrived. As you are no longer left in blissful ignorance of dreadful events, you are saved suspense, but the gain is doubtful in many ways.

A passenger with a poor sense of direction has never learned his way about the *Grand Babylonia* by the end of the voyage. He arrives at the swimming bath when he meant to go to the gymnasium or the squash racquet court; at the Café-Ritz when he meant to go to the dining-saloon; at the nursery when he wanted the library or the kennels; or at B. or C. deck when he wanted the sun deck.

I myself am accustomed to ships and do not usually find them complicated, but the *Grand Babylonia* caught me napping. I had been three days on board when I came across some sets of *en suite* apartments which had hidden themselves from me. It was like discovering some charming little private houses left embedded among great tenements and offices in a modern city. I envied the shamelessness of some passers-by who made the discovery just when I did and tried to peer over the tops of the blinds to see what was inside. It is a disadvantage sometimes to have scruples.

The great passenger hotels are the result of the competition in luxury which is itself the result of the amazing wealth of America. Under Fog you sat at meals in your appointed place in the only dining-saloon and ate

SIDE - SHOWS

what was provided for you — you might almost say what you were ordered to eat. Now you can order any dinner you like. Further than that, you can 'contract out' of being boarded altogether and can spend the amount of your rebate, or less or much more if you please, in the cafe which is separate from the dining-saloon. I have a friend on board the *Grand Babylon* who is an expert in food. He chooses dinners for me. Last night he said that we would have oysters, turtle soup, homard à l'Américaine, golden plover, pêche Melba and pate de foie gras. No objection was offered. This was ordinary 'board' for which we paid nothing extra. At dinner a specially printed menu of what we had ordered was on the table.

In the dining-saloons and the cafe there is no regular sitting down at a fixed time with the captain presiding. Indeed, who would be the captain for this purpose if the captain did preside? For there is a staff-captain as well as a captain, and the staff-captain is the only captain I know by sight. The office of staff-captain for the control of the interior of the ship was created after the loss of the *Titanic*. Breakfast, luncheon and dinner all go on for a couple of hours, and within those limits you can drift in when you please. You sit at one of the innumerable small tables and smoking is allowed everywhere.

America has standardized nearly everything, except luxury, which cannot be standardized. It is impossible

AFTER THIRTY YEARS

to conceive a more extravagant method of serving meals than that on board the *Grand Babylonian*^ but it is a necessary part of the evolutionary struggle towards perfect luxury, at which I should think we must almost have arrived.

Fog would have been shocked by some of the small touches of to-day. The gentleman who manages the cafe wears ordinary London morning clothes. I think he must have stepped straight out of a Mayfair hotel. Fog would have had him in uniform in no time, even if the uniform had had to be made by the ship's carpenter. But now that the stewards in the cafe have become waiters, wearing the clothes of waiters, I can be surprised at nothing — certainly not at my bunk, as Fog would have called it, having become a bed and my cabin a bedroom.

I noticed this morning that when I asked the waiter at my table if one of my fellow-passengers had breakfasted yet he said, 'He's not down yet, sir.' Down! — as though we all slept in bedrooms upstairs and came 'down' to breakfast. If the waiter had said 'up' he would have been strictly accurate. Before the days of the passenger hotels every steward was a conscious member of the ship's company; he was at least a quasi-seaman and he was soon chaffed into enough knowledge of sea-faring language to pass muster.

Much of the promenade deck is cased in with heavy plate-glass windows. When the warmth of the central

SIDE - SHOWS

heating flows out from the interior of the ship the windows are dimmed with moisture like the windows of a railway carriage. I rub a clear patch upon a window to look out upon the sea. Most of the rooms, heated to American taste, are too hot for me, and I make frequent visits to the sun deck, which is windy but fresh. Let me advise anyone, however, who wants to be warm and entirely free from draughts, to cross the Atlantic in the winter.

Captain Fog probably paid no attention to women's dress, but if he had been asked his opinion he would have said that French women dressed better than any others. He would have to admit now that the American women know all that there is to be known and that they will assuredly soon take the lead and dictate the fashions. Some women think nothing of wearing one frock for luncheon and another for tea and of putting on their most resplendent ball gown for an Atlantic evening. In the *Grand Babylon* it is so easy to forget that you are at sea that sometimes it is almost impossible to remember that you are — when, for instance, the carpet is rolled away from the beautiful parquet floor of the ball-room and the passengers dance between the turns of a cabaret performance.

Is it extravagant to suggest that a new type of hotel resident will eventually emerge who will travel backwards and forwards in these floating hotels, instead of staying in the ordinary hotels that overlook the sea?

AFTER THIRTY YEARS

For really these floating hotels, though expensive, are very much better.

I recall old Fog's opinions about dancing on board ship. 'There's nothing against it if the weather is fine,' he used to say, 'but you must have fine weather.' Some of the restless young spirits would generally propose a dance, which of course in those days had to be on the deck. 'I'll have a bit of deck prepared for you - if the weather keeps fine,' he would say. 'I'll have some awning put along the rails and some flags. But, believe me, you won't want to go on with it if the ship begins to roll. The ladies will all be sliding down into the scuppers. I saw a poor girl hurt that way once. She was jerked down to leeward and hit her foot on an iron stanchion. We had to put her in the doctor's hands and she never wanted to dance on board ship again. Not that you can't have a little fun well enough if the weather keeps fair,' - and so on.

When Captain Fog was in his prime the American Civil War was not too distant in time for America to be still peopled with war veterans. It used to be said that the lonely passenger who was sadly conscious of having no friends to bid him farewell as the ship began to move from the New York quays had only to shout 'Good-bye, Colonel!' in order to get a multitudinous response. But such simplicities are out of the picture now. The presentation of flowers to departing American women has become an elaborately organized ceremony which

SIDE - SHOWS

deserves to be mentioned as one of the most remarkable of modern social practices.

At certain seasons the flowers must be an appreciable part of the 'personal effects' which have to be handled by the stewards. I have seldom been more impressed by a social triumph than when I saw an American lady enter the Café-Ritz preceded by two bedroom stewards who carried armfuls of bouquets. The head waiter knew what was expected of him and came forward. He set up a magnificent bouquet on the lady's table, deftly securing it to a pillar with two napkins. Then he indicated the correct rotation of the other bouquets for each day of the voyage and with the lady's approval sent them below to be tended in the cooling room. I wonder what Fog's attitude would have been if private enterprise had set up that great floral structure on 'the Captain's table.'

The care of flowers is so well provided for that there is a gardener whose duty is to keep up the beds of azaleas and other growing flowers. He bears the word 'Gardener' on his collar, so that there is no doubt about the unique importance of his office. The only moment when I felt that he had descended from very high estate was when the tender came alongside at the New York Quarantine station, bringing letters and newspapers, and he temporarily abandoned gardening in favour of selling newspapers.

I wish I knew the captain - or the super-captain - of

AFTER THIRTY YEARS

the *Grand Babylonia* by sight. He has the reputation of being a magnificent seaman, and he must be or he would not be where he is. What a trust to put in any man's hands is the care of this ship! So many eggs are carried in one basket that he must not take even the risk of a risk of letting it slip from his fingers. With old Fog the field of human error was immense, but he never made a fatal mistake. He used to bring his small ship regularly across the Great Bank of Newfoundland and thoughts of the fishing fleets scattered on his path always worried him, but for the sake of his ship and passengers he was glad to have the land not too far away on his weather when there was north in the wind. The great ships of to-day barely touch the southern edge of the Bank.

But although the margin of error has been vastly contracted, the latest gadgets making for precision and safety, all of which are under the eye of the captain of the *Grand Babylonia*, would have made poor old Fog's brain swim. The submarine sound instruments, the radio directional waves, the wind pressure gauges and the rest, are a laboratory in themselves. New patents are incessantly being tested.

The North Atlantic is about the hardest school of steam seamanship in the world, and the princes of the profession who officer these passenger hotels are entitled to regard — as it is said that they do — the officers of liners on the southerly and eastern routes as having

SIDE - SHOWS

easy-weather jobs. 'The Rats of the Western Ocean' - one of those slighting names which have become badges of honour —are the children of science; but the spirit of their Service has been handed down to them by Captain Fog and men like him.

CHAPTER FOUR

In Line Ahead

*

THE Waterford flotilla of destroyers, sixteen strong, and employed in manoeuvres, go out to sea at night. We, who want to know more of what happens, watch them with jealous eyes; the door of the horizon closes behind them, and in that beyond, without light or sign, they dance (like unobserved goblins in the thicket) their jigs and reels—and breakdowns—on the windy floors of the Atlantic or the Irish Channel.

In the daylight black forms fill the mouth of the estuary. At first you are not sure whether you behold merely the tiny fishing-fleet of Passage miraged into loftiness; but the black forms grow silently and quickly; doubt vanishes; the deathly dancers slink up the fairway with salted funnels and cracked paint, and, bearing all those tell-tale traces of dissipation which the daylight underlines so ruthlessly in the rollickers of the night before, they creep to their anchorage in safe waters.

Captain D. — that single and ominous letter officially symbolizes the officer in supreme command of a destroyer flotilla — stood on the quarter-deck of the depot ship to watch his sixteen battered and discoloured charges return. There was a shriek in the wind, and squalls boxed one on the ear. It was easy to guess the weather outside. The leading ship of the long thread of black units approached, slicing her way

SIDE - SHOWS

through the water like a blade of steel, making no sound and leaving no mark. The commodore of the flotilla stood on her bridge at the salute, and Captain D., a solitary figure on his lofty deck, raised his fingers to his cap while his eyes ransacked the line. Half the line passed and faded away to their moorings like black ghosts.

Then came an interval, and beyond that gap of empty water which seemed to ache for its appointed keel a destroyer rushed for her proper place. A whisking tail of white water shot out behind her. The level bellow of engines at high speed reached us; the smoke (though there should be none) poured through her three funnels, and the wind slashed it off at the top of each as with a scimitar. Captain D. glanced at the port side of his ship to make sure that all the small boats had been moved to the other side, and a moment later the water flung in snow-drifts from the destroyer slapped the quarter of the depot, swept over her platform, rushed along her whole length, and squirted past her bows. As the destroyer flashed below us there was a vision of wrenched and contorted stanchions, a snapped rail, where green seas had plied their battering-rams, and the funnels were bird-limed with caked salt. The lieutenant on the bridge - where, again, ripped canvas and splintered ironwork told the plunderings of the sea - had one nervous eye cast on the accusing space in front of him, and one respectfully, if

IN LINE AHEAD

not less nervously, directed at the depot quarter-deck rising sheer above him.

If you are a Navy officer, you cannot explain; you must accept things — even your destiny; but Captain D. himself probably could not have done better with that pump which had suddenly refused to suck. Behind the innocently erring destroyer the slackened engines in the tail of the line openly protested with the hissing columns of white steam, which proclaim how high-power engines dislike the pressure of delay. They were like London drivers rating a fellow ahead who takes too long in 'setting down.'

And the line was all to pieces too, through no fault of anyone or anything except that one pump. Once snap a link in the chain, and the rest of the links flop into a huddled group. At least, that must happen in a narrow channel. Here was the *Snake* ahead of the *Bunny*, who was her leader, before she could stop herself, and the *Parrot* had swerved across the stream to avoid beaking both. A team of horses in a heap want less pulling straight. The lieutenants, with one eye on *Olympus* (which is the depot ship) and one on their own confusion, murmured and besought and deprecated till, wonder of wonders! the line straightened and came on.

The spectacle of that poor belaboured wisp of a ship made one think of the history of the destroyer class. It is one of the most fascinating and most creditable in the

SIDE - SHOWS

Navy. Originally built as a kind of swift war-canoe for swooping on torpedo-boats in calm seas, these craft have become to most intents and purposes sea-keeping ship?, chiefly through the enterprise of their commanders. Because in the beginning destroyers caught in a gale weathered it better than might have been expected, it gradually came to be assumed that a destroyer could take the sea in almost any weather short of the worst we know in the British Isles. Record after record was beaten, and this remarkable advance of practice upon theory was generally unnoticed outside the Navy, till the *Cobra* broke her back with some hogging or sagging strain in the North Sea in weather in which no commander would have hesitated to put to sea.

Then the public threw up its hands at the thought of a ship being absolutely broken in two pieces in the open sea where no rocks were, and asked if such ships were equal to the strain put upon them. The answer of the Admiralty was to build a new class of destroyer which was larger and stouter altogether, and was built up so high forward that she looked rather like the old type of gun-boat known as a flat-iron. Her speed was less, but her sea-going qualities greater; the public was invited to be reassured without knowing, or having any means of knowing, what new uses daring might wring out of this concession to itself.

Captain D. turned away as the last of the sixteen

IN LINE AHEAD

passed out of his scrutiny. Their anchors fell. The chains wailed through the hawse-pipes, ceased, shivered, 'and drew taut. Then bull-like voices through megaphones project protests here and there: Why does the *Snake* lie so close to the *Eagle*? Why, in the name of everything nameable, doesn't the *Bittern* give more room to the *Granta*? Then, at a word from the commander, the high-tension discipline of each ship falls asunder like a house of cards.

The commander himself, who has a brain to relax whenever it isn't the pleasure of his commodore to stretch it to the snapping-point, tumbles into his bunk. 'Don't call me till five, and tell the men to mind how they move about the ship.' The crew — all but those who are still busy about the ship or are manning the boats that cover the harbour like fifty water-beetles - feed and doze and smoke. The sub-lieutenants — the inextinguishable, undampable 'subs,' who could stand twice as much cinderstorm and grease and straining of eyes and ears as they have had in the night, and still come in smiling — wash the ashes out of their eyes, slip trousers over their sea-boots, and make for the cheering mess-rooms of the depot ship.

And that is where I begin - on this occasion, at all events - to make the acquaintance of the 'sub.' His eyes are bloodshot; no sleep for forty-eight hours: the continuous cut of the wind, and the strain of gazing into black nights, are conditions warranted to crack the

SIDE - SHOWS

steeliest eye which ever passed an examiner's test. Four of him are laughing 'fit to burst' in a corner of the smoking-room. 'Silly ass had lost his confidential' orders!' . . . 'Came back and said the bay was full of ships. He suspected the whole of the enemy's battle-fleet. We asked him if he'd seen any rocks, or thought any of the ships happened to be rocks. He said he'd look again — and he did. Saw more ships than ever. We asked him if he'd like a doctor sent on board!' . . . 'Oh, I know the old *Scavenger* is fond of bumping matches. Never goes out without bumping something. Every one thought she was going amuck after she bumped the *Parrot*. Didn't you hear the shrieking match between her and the *Rhino*? Never heard so much megaphoning in my life. If the rocks in the bay *had* been the enemy, they could have heard *us* anyhow! Poor old *Parrot* had her beak fairly smashed!' . . . 'All right, poker-dice for the sherry.'

Such are some *disjecta membra* overheard from the corner. A pale senior who has been sent to the manoeuvres on some special job, and has forgotten what it is like to have the blood turned to mercury by the sea wind and the spirits of a man thrown up to the skies by the watery earthquakes underneath, passes his hand across his brow, and remarks that 'subs' are rather trying sometimes.

In the *Bluebottle* the lieutenant commanding was sitting on the edge of his bunk in the tiny cabin which

IN LINE AHEAD

serves as wardroom and common quarters. He was 'running free,' as his sub observed, about the number of times he had been signalled to keep his place in line ahead. 'What do you expect,' asked B., the sub-lieutenant, 'when you're a gunnery lieutenant? The navigators are only getting back on you, and you've probably given 'em pretty good reason in your time, if the truth be known.'

'Ah,' assented the lieutenant, with a grim smile.

The trousers of an officer of Marines appeared on the ladder, and next the body belonging to the trousers came into full sight.

'Hullo, soldier!' said the lieutenant.

'Good afternoon, Bimbashi,' said the sub.

'What sort of a slipper-hunt did you have last night?' demanded the spotless lieutenant of Marines of the pair with the bloodshot eyes.

'Oh, a jolly old muddle,' said the sub.

'Bosh!' said the lieutenant.

'I didn't mean it was your fault; I'm not throwing asparagus on you,' pursued the sub; 'but I never saw a place so stiff with ships. They kept bobbing up every yard. Oh, we blockaded 'em all right; and we nearly made a hole in a cliff, too. There was a bit of a bumping-match somewhere. Suppose it was the *Lily*. Anyhow, she was pretty comfortable with her bows looking aft in the morning. Did you hear all the challenging?'

SIDE-SHOWS

'Do you mean those fellows who kept calling out, "Are you the *Bluebottle!*" half the night?' asked the lieutenant.

'Yes. Did you answer?'

'Catch me!' said the lieutenant. 'They might have been the enemy. I lay doggo, you bet.'

'You never know,' said the Marine. 'Do you remember those manoeuvres when we were in the *Cats-paw*^ and we fired ten shots at a ship that crept up without lights and wouldn't answer? "Damn it, she shall answer!" the commander said; "and I'll go on shooting till she does!" And he did-till we lost sight of her. The next morning—'

'By Jove, I should think I did!' said the lieutenant. 'It turned out to be the meat-ship we'd scared off, and we got no meat for two days.'

'What repairs is it you want?' broke in a voice from above. 'You've got all your water.'

'Radiators of one of the condensers,' answered the lieutenant.

'Nothing wrong with 'em,' said the engineer of the depot ship, coming slowly down the ladder. 'I've looked.'

'A *little* wrong,' said the lieutenant, with a movement of one eye. 'Just put it right for me while I have a depot bath.'

'Heathen!' said the engineer, 'why didn't you have one sooner?'

IN LINE AHEAD

'Full up,' said the lieutenant. 'They're the best baths in the world.'

'Well, twenty minutes, then, you heathen,' said the engineer, 'and then I shall shove you off whether you're on board or not.'

'Right!' said the lieutenant.

Another pair of legs appeared on the ladder. 'No shut-eye this afternoon,' said the lieutenant, looking at the new pair of legs with a pathetic air of submission, 'but I'll have that bath all 'e samee. Oh, it's you, is it?' he went on, as the commander of one of the new class of destroyers dropped into the cabin, and then added: 'Oh, go away; I can't look at you. I don't like you any more. I can't bear the sight of you.'

'What ho!' commented the New Class with a raised eyebrow that asked the necessary question.

'Your ship, your magnificent gilded palace, your luxurious excursion steamer - that's the reason,' answered the lieutenant. 'I've been some years in destroyers, but I never saw anything like these new craft - the wardroom, the size of it, the separate cabins, the pantry, the galley, the — the — the - boudoir, the morning-room, the drawing-room, the ball-room, the billiard-room. Oh, it's sickening! And look at us! Sorry I can't give you a drink at once; we've only got an egg-cup and one tumbler left.'

'We can't go so fast,' said the New Class apologetically.

SIDE - SHOWS

'Don't believe it, sir,' broke in the sub. 'You do your twenty-five knots, and we all know what our thirty knots mean. The ship's a skeleton for the trial, and the contractor polishes the engines with his pocket-handkerchief and kisses them to say "Good-bye," as he's got so fond of them; and then they touch thirty knots, and every one says, "Good for you!" And after that they weight up the ship and put us in her, and off we go to do twenty-five for the rest of our lives.'

'So long,' said the Marine. 'We'll all meet at dinner on board the depot.'

And so we did. There was a scare once in the dinner that some of the destroyers were swinging foul of one another and the beach. The young commanders with the bloodshot eyes rushed to the scuttles - 'Oh, don't tell me my beautiful *Gamecock* is in danger!' 'Surely, my lovely *Bird of Prey* is not on the beach!' and so on. You might have thought the rush to the scuttles was a humorous sally did you not know how deep the responsibility is in these rollicking young officers. It hurts them sometimes. Each one of them is a dictator in his own floating, dangerous, ugly, black little world. Generally he is a good dictator. In any case, he does not allow himself to be nursed by a warrant officer. He keeps his own soul.

One destroyer, as we saw through the scuttles, had touched a jetty and bent one of her propeller guards. That was all. 'But,' said a lieutenant, 'I expect we

IN LINE AHEAD

shall have to twiddle our engines a bit before morning.' The wind outside shouted its confirmation.

To see a flotilla dash into a tricky harbour without pilotage, go almost at full speed to the mooring-place, and there let go anchors in a body, is to see in one swift picture the changes and chances of their mortal life. The officer of a destroyer has to be careful enough to please the Treasury and audacious enough to please his commodore. How he manages by good luck to do the one and with the help of a stout heart to do the other is one of the standing miracles of the naval world.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Steam Trial

*

THE destroyer *Hedgehog* lay alongside the high walls of the parent ship. She had been sucking in distilled water. She had a full head of steam up. Hawsers were cast off, and then, drawn by the tide, she began to grind slowly, inch by inch, backwards past the platform of the depot. At the last moment a handful of engineers and artificers from the depot stepped on board, anxious to see how the pumps and gauges and sockets they had repaired in the last few days stood the test. 'And now, my boy,' said one assistant-engineer to another assistant-engineer, 'we'll find out what the prickly brute can do in the way of prickliness.'

Drifting clear of the depot ship's stern, the prickly brute gave a few turns of her propellers, and drew into the fairway. The *Hedgehog* is a member of the thin, light 30-knot class. She is prickly all over—prickly with funnels and ventilators and hatches. And in the internals of this uncomfortable creature the officers live in a cramped common cabin, lie in short narrow bunks, and when they stand move about with bowed heads and curved spines. The pantry is a few shelves and pegs, and a sink attached to one side of the ship. Everything that cannot be stuck on a wall is hung on the ceiling. The forecastle is the most impossible of all living places.

This ship belongs to another and more important passenger. She belongs to the demon Steam. He has

A STEAM TRIAL

room to rise to his full height, thrust and roar and expand and shear his way through the long cylinders, and if there be not room enough even then, he can shatter his bonds and hiss, white with fury, high into the air. No one dares dispute pride of place with him. This ship was built for him, and every one else takes a lower place with humility.

The chief engineer from the depot was still on the bridge talking to the lieutenant.

'Start her at ten is what I suggest,' said he, 'keep her at that as far as the buoy, and then we'll have a bit of a spin, and I'll see what I can work her up to.'

'All right,' agreed the lieutenant.

The 'chief rippled down the ladder, not as most men go, distinguishably step by step, but with a kind of continuous fluid motion of the feet, and in another breath he had disappeared beneath the deck. He was with his precious, wayward, boisterous machinery now, and immediately we should see the result. For one moment more the slight ship — blacked to the uttermost inch of brass of her, lest a ray of hostile light flash that night on a reflecting surface — for one moment more she cut silently, without a perceptible pulsation, through the waves. The water seemed neither to open in front of her nor to close behind her. She moved spectrally through it as a balloon through air.

'Ten,' said the lieutenant. Then a quiver came from the waist of the ship and thrilled to the stern.

SIDE-SHOWS

Wedges of water fell aside from the bows ; a ridge higher than our stern heaved up behind, and rushed along at an unaltering distance from the stern-rail. .

'Now we shall see,' observed the lieutenant. 'Yes,' he went on in answer to a question from me, 'the Japanese have been using the same class of ship as this. In spite of the low freeboard and the thinness of the ships, they seem to have done very well in the heavy weather. Five starboard.' This over his shoulder to the man at the wheel, three feet behind him. 'Ay, ay, sir.' 'As I was going to say, if they've really done so well, there seems to be no particular reason' — ('Five port.' 'Ay, ay, sir') — 'no particular reason why we should go to a lower speed, as we have in the new class, simply' — ('Starboard five.' 'Ay, ay, sir') - 'to get better sea qualities. Of course' — ('Fifteen.' This he said meaning the number of knots to go; the bridge began to shiver under our feet) - 'of course, it is a jolly sight better far-trie crew in the new class. You really ought to have a look at them. You'd be amazed' — ('Seventeen.' The shiver became a riotous tremble) — 'simply amazed at the difference.' ('Twenty.') A convulsive quaking and shaking made itself felt. 'Shake herself to pieces? Oh, you feel it more now than you do at any time. You'll feel it much more aft; but even there you won't feel any more than now, even when we get to the highest speed. You must have a look at the engines.' ('Twenty-three.') 'The "chief" 'll be delighted.'

A STEAM TRIAL

The charm and astonishment of these craft, to my mind, lie in the youth of their officers. This smooth-faced lieutenant, with the clean, thoughtful eye, the admirable manners, and the cool clear-headedness which made it possible for him to keep two or three threads of thought going at once, was a model specimen of the hardest school but one in the Navy. The flotillas ensure a perfect decentralization of authority, and the young officer who survives the test for a year is as good as a picked man.

As I reached the deck from the bridge a hatch flew open, and the 'chief (dressed in dungaree, face streaming with sweat and black with oil) projected himself through the opening from below, like a pantomime demon coming up from under the stage. On his toes he fled along the deck. Six yards further he fell lightly on his hands at his full length, touched a spring, and a hatch like the lid of a watch flew open. His head and shoulders disappeared. An order was bawled. Up he jumped again, and smashed the hatch down with the palm of his hand.

Aft he flew on his toes. Again he fell to the deck, like a Red Indian dropping ear to ground on the trail. Another watch-lid flew open, another order bawled. Up again. The smoke poured on deck and he dashed it from his eyes and fled on his toes to the stern. The ridge of water behind had risen till it looked like the South Downs as one sees them from the plain, and over

SIDE-SHOWS

the loftiest part of the ridge seethed the white track of whipped and tumultuous water. The flying wedges forward were hissing cataracts.

'Wonder what she's doing?' panted the chief engineer, his boyish eyes lighted with the excitement. He swung himself over the stern-rail, and hung head down till his hair touched the concave rush of water under the counter. For ten seconds he watched the whizz of the propellers; then he flung himself back. 'Twenty-nine — twenty-nine, as I live, and I didn't think she'd do it! Good, good, good'

A burning hot steel ladder dives perpendicularly to the engine-room. Put a wad of waste on the palm of each hand to hold on with, and down you go. The visitor draws in his chest and stands erect and narrow on the plates below, lest he blister himself against any part of the raging machinery which breathes hotly against him. Steam issues spitefully from tubes; the engines menace you, and clash and scream a few inches away; hot oil sends out a choking vapour; gauge-needles jerk giddily; you cannot hear yourself shout; the devilish burning arms seem to leap nearer to you as the plates move beneath your feet; black demoniacal faces with red eye-rims and white teeth show round corners. One of them tips the contents of a tin can down his throat, and more sweat seems to burst from his streaming face.

This, you think, is the very Pit. This is impossible,

A STEAM TRIAL

devilish, inhuman, shattering, scalding, full of brimstone and sulphur. As you turn to the ladder you notice with a sense of the improbability of it that one of the men wears a box of matches in his cap. So actually he is not a stoker of the nethermost. He is real, and times come when he emerges into daylight and smokes cigarettes. Yet it seems unlikely.

On deck the chief engineer is still fleeing on his toes and falling prone. The land reels past. The thirty-knotter has touched twenty-nine, and maintains it. The cool, slim lieutenant stands easily upon the bridge. 'Good, good, good!'

CHAPTER SIX

The Spirit of Spring

IT was late at night at a certain station of the Underground Railway. A few passengers waited for a train, some with smarting, all with blinking, eyes. A distant jarring and clanking, growing in volume, proclaimed its approach some seconds before the headlights jerked round the curve. But there were other premonitions. A cloud of dust, carrying the scourings of the infernal tunnel, was forced ahead of it; and the blight of exhausted air rolled forwards under the glass roof of the station.

Although nearly everything in that station was dim, the well-lighted recess of a refreshment-bar glowed through the pall like a magician's cave in the side of a dark hill. Its brilliance took on a deeper value from its circumstances. Indeed, Amadis, the young proprietor of one pair of smarting eyes, observed it for the first time, and, so far as he was concerned, my simile of the magician's cave was not inapt, for it seemed to him that the bar had grown up as though at the command of some genie in the obscurity.

The mechanical coming and going of his sentry-go walk was taking him at that moment towards the bar. He stopped opposite it. Two young men with excellent bar-side manners were leaning against it. The scene was a monochrome in yellow. The lights were yellow; the contents of bottles shone luminously yellow; the

THE SPIRIT OF SPRING

liquid in the glasses of the young men was yellow; the hair of the girl on the other side of the bar was yellow; the dust which seemed to trap and hold the yellow beams irradiating it was also yellow.

Amadis overheard the girl say, 'No. I haven't seen "The Colonial Girl." ' She answered with the air of one who had the opportunity of going to the theatre every night, and as though she thought the question put to her a natural one. There was no bitterness. She even drew out of her memory incidents from the last play she had seen long ago. She said, with an enthusiasm which stood in an heroic relation to the degree of her expectation, that she should like to see 'The Colonial Girl.' The young men agreed that it was worth seeing, but, although pursuing the subject, did not offer to remove her disabilities. Amadis stared at this familiar scene like a gaby. He wondered why the men should choose this place to drink in; why the girl should choose that occupation when presumably there were others in which she need not starve; and then he rebelled against himself for consenting to follow a profession which occasionally brought him home at this time of night and in this sickening way.

Suppose he retired to the country and lived like Thoreau and all the other practitioners of 'the simple life.' He could make three or four guineas a week by writing as easily as lighting a cigarette, and with such a sum he would be the very plutocrat of the agricultural

SIDE - SHOWS

population among whom he would live. But he had often propounded this question to himself before. It is enough to say that if he had ever had the courage to answer it he would not have been here now, or would have stood here without misgiving. Suddenly conscious of his abstraction, he turned in time to see the tail of the train he had waited for disappearing into the tunnel, its bloodshot eye showing through the gloomy tumult of following dust.

Perion's hand was on his shoulder — the hand of the wise and elderly Perion. 'I didn't know you were in that train,' said Perion.

'I wasn't,' said Amadis. 'I've just missed it.'

'Never mind,' said Perion. 'I'll run you home in my car.'

They ascended to the street. The motor-car was waiting. Perion took the steering-wheel. The clutch slipped into its place noiselessly, and the car leapt forward with a level, not unmusical, whine. Over asphalt and wood pavement they flew, swaying but never jerking; high houses unreeled their endless tale in the chilly white light of arc-lamps; the car seemed always to be about to stop the mouth of an empty gully, and reached it only to open out another vista. Amadis remembered a saying that there is always a way through the mountains. High houses gave way to low houses, white lights to the outlying yellow lights; the reviving

THE SPIRIT OF SPRING

wind was in the hair and ears and eyes and mouth of Amadis.

'You're nearly home,' said Perion.

'Worse luck,' said Amadis.

'I'll go on, if you like,' said Perion.

'Yes, go on.'

'How far?'

'Anywhere. As long as you like.'

They crossed the river at Putney. A long hill melted before them. A common surrounded them. Perion pressed his accelerator. Amadis felt the wind force his mouth open and bag out one side of his cheek. He put his hat under the seat, and his hair was brushed back by invisible hands; the white patch of road in front of their head-lights streamed continuously into the devouring maw of the bonnet, and flew past them in fragments.

Amadis lost count of time and distance; what reckoning he kept was by feeling and not by sight: a hill meant a pressure on his back, as the car flung itself at the gradient; a corner meant that he was pressed against the side of the car or swung against the left shoulder of Perion.

At last they were on a high, narrow ridge; they were supported, as it seemed, on a long table thrust up to the heavens, where the sharp winds gathered strength and took their course over the country, which fell away on both sides darkly. Perion stopped the car. The arch

SIDE - SHOWS

overhead was full of stars. The strips of cloud skimming past gave them the illusion that they were still travelling at a great speed. The road in front of them seemed to end abruptly in space.

'I feel,' said Perion, 'as though I were steering the whole world.'

'I know the feeling,' said Amadis; 'I have felt it on the roof of a house at night. You look as though you felt it. You are almost a monumental figure. But the most monumental figure of all is the master of a ship with his hands on the rail of his bridge.'

'Amadis,' said Perion, 'I'm delighted with myself. I thought I was getting old. I've just discovered that I'm not too old to be a little mad. We're fifty miles from London. We've neither of us got hats on. It's o'clock in the morning. Excellent!'

'Well, I'm quite different from you,' said Amadis. 'I'm younger, no doubt. I was mad; now I'm Sane.'

'You must have been very mad before,' said Perion.

'Yes,' answered Amadis, 'very mad — very mad to live in that brimstone city, when I could live like a god here. Why did I do it? I tell you why: because I was a coward. I'm not sure it wasn't wicked, too. I consented to everything instead of protesting against everything. An un-god-like life — that's the same, I suppose, as saying it was wicked.'

Perion plied his levers. They dropped like a bird with closed wings down from the razor-edged hill,

THE SPIRIT OF SPRING

down to the dark plain. Again Amadis lost his reckoning of time and place. He breathed in turn the scent of heather, the scent of pines, the scent of clay, the scent of sand, and sometimes the more subtle scent of woods filled with the plainest English trees. At last he tasted the winds borne up unsullied from the sea.

Perion stopped again. They could hear sounds which no one hears by day — the gurgle of dykes draining the meadows, the dripping of a mill-wheel, the flutter of tiny fugitive feet in the hedge.

They were before a small inn. A light shone through a red blind. Perion sounded his horn many times. A face appeared, and the door was opened. Perion said: 'I am mad and also hungry.' They ate and drank in the inn. It was two o'clock. The landlord was surprised, but not disagreeable.

They explored the old-fashioned garden in the dark. One tree of blossom looked as though it had entangled a snowdrift in its branches, and it had a luminosity of its own. Perion named the plants from their feel. There was arabis in a rockery. 'Quite right,' said he approvingly. There was yellow genista and the great family of primula, and a flat patch like a large bath-sponge, which, when Amadis had brought a lamp, turned out to be a blood-red anemone. '*Hortensisfulgens*' said Perion; 'this man is a gardener.' There were a magnolia and some early rhododendrons in bloom, and though the poplars were still stark and black, the

SIDE-SHOWS

horse-chestnuts waited only for the next rays of the sun to unfurl and stiffen their down-hanging, sticky, cuppy leaves.

'Home again, and work,' said Perion.

'I shall only go back to get my things,' said Amadis; 'then I leave London for ever.'

'We'll talk of that on the way,' said Perion.

The dawn came long before they reached London. The world was in possession of the birds. Perhaps Peithetairos conceived his plan of the bird-city between the rising of the sun and the rising of the human world. The starlings, chattering or shrilling, seemed to express their wonder at the deepening gold which spring was bringing to their bills, and at the deepening glossiness of their feathers. Blackbirds stopped their flutings and scurried low over the ground as the car rushed past. Yellow-hammers, still in flocks, dashed out of danger and dropped to the ground with flirtings of their tails. Tit-larks, with brief and erratic flight, seemed always to be racing the car, after the method of the hare with the tortoise. Larks rose in spirals against the wind. The chiff-chaffs showed alarm in the fits and starts of their agitated flight. Chaffinches crested their head-feathers in indignation. On the open places the wheatear darted its timid head from side to side as though it had never done so before the age of motor-cars. Only the hedge-sparrow held fast to his position, as though he would say: 'Come what may, I shall finish my song. All is

THE SPIRIT OF SPRING

well. The cuckoo took my nest last year, but I don't believe he will again.'

'I shall be in my office by ten,' said Perion.

'I shall be in mine for the last time,' said Amadis.

'Where shall you go to live?'

'In a labourer's cottage.'

'What shall you live on?'

'I shall make enough very easily.'

'You think your new life will be better?'

'Yes, it will be better because it will be real life.'

'You think it will be finer and simpler?'

'Yes. I am glad I went by the Underground last night. I have a picture of it in my mind. I shall always refer to it if ever I am in danger of going back to London. It will be a kind of standard for me to measure things by.'

'My dear boy,' said Perion, 'have you thought who is going to make the pots and pans with which you will furnish your humble kitchen? Who will make the cheap clothes you'll consent to wear? Who will sort the letters you'll be quite glad to receive? Who'll make the laws under which you will hold your plot of land? Who'll make the hoe with which you will hoe your potatoes? Who'll print the newspaper you may still want to read occasionally? I assume you won't do without all these things. If not, don't forget that there are many people doing unpleasant jobs quite simply - without making a song about it. Why should you look

SIDE-SHOWS

down on their lives because you think of mistaking escape for a greater simplicity? Even that girl you told me about in the Underground refreshment-bar —'

'I don't mistake anything,' retorted Amadis, 'I only protest.'

'Oh no, you don't,' replied the wise and elderly Perion. 'What you mean to do is to look on. There are lots like you. All I say is, "Make allowances for the feeling of spring in your veins." It takes us all in odd ways. I confess my own behaviour during the night has been — a little unusual.'

CHAPTER SEVEN

My Favourite Holiday Book

MY favourite holiday book is Butler's *Analogy*. I am conscious that the mention of a book of the admitted solemnity of this one for a holiday may seem a contradiction in terms; nay, more, an abominable piece of tactlessness. I must accept the risk of incurring this charge, merely remarking that it is no use setting out to tell you which is my favourite book for a holiday unless I tell you the truth.

Moreover, I might add that it is no use charging me with tactlessness. People who are tactless cannot help it. You can correct them, but you can never hope to prevent them. No one ever deliberately tried to be tactless. Anyhow, there is the bald truth without any palaver - Butler's *Analogy*. I confess that I should have preferred to break the news more gently, but that was out of the question in a paper of this length.

The first point, then, to be noted is this: No one with any sense wants for a holiday a book written in what you may call a 'holiday' spirit. Such books are written by people who have the wit to measure the taste of readers who have much less wit. My astute friend Blank produces a book of this kind every year. His titles are like this: 'My Native Heath,' 'Under the Stars,' 'All Along Down a Long Lane,' 'The Camper's Fire,' 'My Caravan,' and 'Hill and Dale.' Not having an idea for his next book, he contemplates a compila-

SIDE-SHOWS

tion: 'Half-Hours with George Borrow.' His readers do not really need such books, but unhappily they do not know that, and Blank knows that they do not know it.

Take Borrow, for instance. He is, of course, the best and most unfailing of friends. His magic takes you straight into a Romany camp or a Spanish inn before you know where you are. There is no companion quite like him. But when you are *in* the Romany camp or the Spanish inn — in other words, when you are away for a holiday — you can form your own opinion of it. Otherwise, you are like the sight-seer who walks through Henry VII's Chapel with his nose upon his guide-book, and omits to look at the roof. A holiday is experience or nothing. Borrow transports us from London when a holiday is not even in sight. That is his great value, and his only proper value. And if this limitation is true of Borrow, who is a wizard, it is obviously much more true of Blank, who is only a conjurer in the third class.

During a holiday, then, one does not want books about holidays, unless they are purely professional books, such as a manual on tying dry flies or the laws of yacht-racing. To try to rig up the holiday feeling artificially is a confession of bankrupt enthusiasm and intelligence. The homœopathic treatment for holidays is, in short, a vital mistake. I myself write as a convinced allopath, and am now about to tell the whole secret of allopathy in holiday reading.

MY FAVOURITE HOLIDAY BOOK

Holidays were invented largely for working off our arrears in reading. They are the time when every man who has escaped being caught by the Blank imposture says to himself: 'Now I am going to have a quiet month. I'm positively ashamed to think of all those immortal works I have been meaning to read all my life; but, thank goodness, here is the opportunity at last. By the time I get home again I shall be able to hear Gibbon, or Hallam, or Adam Smith, or Kinglake, or Napier' - as the case may be, if one's case does not cover them all — 'mentioned in conversation without getting nervous. Let's see, what shall I take?' . . . Hereupon every intelligent man draws up his list.

According to this scheme, your favourite book is, of course, the book with which you are most consciously in arrears.

It may be said that neither a book that has just been successfully got out of arrears nor a book that is in course of being overtaken can be defined as a favourite book. This objection makes no allowance for human weakness, and is therefore valueless. You must remember that the pile of books that is so carefully chosen for a holiday is never read.

In my own case, Butler's *Analogy* is my favourite book because it has been longest on my conscience. Certainly I have firmly made up my mind to read it; but, as a matter of fact, I never have read it. At least, I have never got beyond the first page of the Intro-

SIDE - SHOWS

duction, though, perhaps, I may be allowed to say that in my several attempts I have often read up to the end of the Preface, which in my favourite edition happens to be by Samuel Halifax, once Bishop of Gloucester.

How well I know the title-page, too!

The
ANALOGY OF RELIGION.
NATURAL AND REVEALED
to the
CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.
To which are added
TWO BRIEF DISSERTATIONS
I. — Of PERSONAL IDENTITY.
II. — Of the NATURE OF VIRTUE.

My edition was printed at the Clarendon Press, and, of course, there is a Latin quotation — from Quintilian's *De Institutiones Oratoria*, I think:

'Ejus haec vis est, ut id quod dubium est ad aliquid simile, de quo non quaeritur, referat; ut incerta certis probet.'

After that I come to the 'Advertisement Prefixed to the First Edition,' then to the Contents, and then to what I may call my favourite of favourites, the Introduction. Here are the first two sentences, which call up more memories than I could undertake to express. Besides, many of them are private. 'Probable evidence is essentially distinguished from demonstrative by this -

MY FAVOURITE HOLIDAY BOOK

that it admits of degrees; and of all variety of them, from the highest moral certainty to the very lowest presumption. We cannot, indeed, say a thing is probably true upon one very slight presumption for it; because, as there may be probabilities on both sides of a question, there may be some against it; and though there be not, yet a slight presumption does not beget that degree of conviction which is implied in saying a thing is probably true.'

By journalists and politicians this may be taken to heart as one of the most sobering statements ever written.

I remember the last time I read it I was on the coast of Brittany. I was in a small cutter swaying gently at anchor, fishing. The sea was wine-dark, yet dazzling. It was empty. I happened to raise my eyes from my book and fishing-line (as I often did) to the horizon, and as I looked I heard the romantic, deep, vibrating note of a great ship's fog-horn.

The fog rolled landwards, the abrupt wall of it advancing like Birnam Wood to Dunsinane. The ship was invisible, and the fog-horn bellowed again, louder. Wrapped in the pall, she advanced upon me. I hauled in my anchor and headed for the shore, noting the time and the position of the sun. I had no compass or chart. . . . The sequel is dull and unimportant. But I cannot read those lines again now without seeing the fog roll forward and hearing the majestic boom of the horn.

SIDE - SHOWS

On my next holiday I shall return to Butler's Introduction on the East Coast of England. There a small balance-lug boat is waiting for me. Do you know that a balance-lug sail sets flatter than any form of sail used in small boats? On the other hand, having only one halyard, it is an awkward sail to lower in a hurry. And that part of the coast where I am going to sail is subject to squalls. I shall have to keep a sharp look-out. Besides, the well-fitting sail is very pleasant to look upon. If, on the whole, I can give less attention than last year to Butler's *Analogy*, I may not get beyond the first page of the Introduction this year either. . . . Well, in that case it will become more than ever my favourite book.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Only Way with a Yacht

MOST rich men do not know how to enjoy yachting. How many of the owners of the almost unrivalled collection of shapely and expensive yachts gathered in the Solent at any Naval review have learned to understand their ships as a man understands his dog — to know the exact degree of responsiveness they may expect when their hand is on the tiller or wheel, to feel that a secret understanding has been declared between them and their ship, and that the one may rely upon the other in a crisis, to recognize the jump of gratitude which is the plainest possible 'Thank you' which a yacht gives when her topsail has been flattened out better than usual, or the steersman has contrived to force a settlement upon the endless disputes between jib and foresail? How many have felt the intensity of a yacht's frown when she 'shakes the luff of her sail at you to show that you are not giving her a decent chance with the wind?

For yachtsmen it is difficult to find what Kim's lama might call the Way, unless they be poor. The Way — that is, the true knowledge — has been discovered on board the ketch yacht *Hooligan*[^] in which I have the pleasure of being a guest and also a hand. There are three or four owners, and they belong to the club of which I have the honour to be a member — the Cambridge University Cruising Club.

SIDE - SHOWS

At Cambridge there is no river on which you can sail conveniently — except before the wind, or backwards in a head-wind - and therefore the existence of the club is in itself a sign that the members are earnest seekers of the Way. In the yachting list of the cruising dub the *Hooligan* looks like four yachts, because her name appears under that of each owner. A hired hand on board the *Hooligan* is like an infidel in a church, and he is never admitted there the whole year round, except when the spars are taken out of the *Hooligan* and she is laid on the mud - that most comfortable of beds - for the winter, and again when she is fitted out in the spring. For the rest of the year the *Hooligan* and her owners are given up to one another. It almost surprises you to be rowed out to her in a dinghy; you half expect her to come when she is called.

Of one of the owners, who is an engineer as well as sailor, it has been said that he could take charge of the engine-room of a first-class battleship, and work her out of Portsmouth Harbour; and two of the owners could pass for a master's certificate with a couple of days' work. They can rig a jury-mast or repair a spar in a gale of wind, while most amateurs, if left to themselves, would only prove that the Way is not to be learned by proxy.

If your relation to your yacht is of this sort, you cannot help taking a peculiar pride in displaying her

THE ONLY WAY WITH A YACHT

virtues, any more than a good landowner can refrain from showing you his improvements. Indeed, now that I come to think of it, there is a very simple truth embedded in this simile. Ashore you buy a house, and you may also buy land, but you must pay for both. When you buy a yacht, on the other hand, you also buy the sea — for nothing. The millionaire's modern yacht, built especially in order to be mistaken for an armoured cruiser, has no better view and surroundings than those which belong to a little squalid lugger, with a cabin like a hen-coop.

In this principle lies the explanation of the amiable pride which one of my hosts took in making me smoke a cigar in what he called 'the only way' after dinner. It was night on Southampton Water. A low ghostly arm of mist lay where the tide was leaving the banks, and gave a thought of vagueness to the great basin. The water was oily-smooth, and the moon, riding high, smote a path of hammered metal across the sea. A thousand riding lights made the best constellation of stars which this earth can provide. The horn of a liner boomed dully down at the mouth of the Water, and the beat of a paddle-wheel rose as though out of the sea at our feet in the faintest repetition. 'There's the cigar,' said my host; 'I think you'll like it. And now we lean like this across the boom and look at the moon.' He put his words into practice. 'There!' It certainly was heavenly.

SIDE-SHOWS

And the secret of the enjoyment was that there was a limit to it. For the laws of the *Hooligan* pinned on the cabin-wall must not be disobeyed. You may not turn in till you have washed the plates, knives, forks, etc., and until the log-book has been written up for the day, any more than you may have breakfast in the morning before you have made your bunk. Keep these rules, and many like them, and you will have more room than is to be found in some five-storeyed houses. Disregard them, and your comfort is gone.

One of the chief pleasures to be had out of a sailing yacht is the uncertainty, if you take the view of the *Hooligan's* owners, that an auxiliary is a taboo of their sport. The next morning, the day of the review, it seemed as though they might just as well have been preparing for the review in Japan for all the chance we had of seeing it. The tide set strongly against us; the merest catpaws rippled the placid water. We whistled through our teeth, talked about what we should do instead of seeing the review—which was profanity after whistling—and spread charts on the cabin roof.

The prayer of the doubting is sometimes answered, perhaps to make them pray better, and the wind came. First the catpaws turned into little corrugations, and then the water tinkled on the hollow bows of the *Hooligan*, and then the burgee of the Cambridge University

THE ONLY WAY WITH A YACHT

Cruising Club fluttered at the masthead, and we were off.

It would be too long a tale to tell how the breeze freshened, how the *Hooligan* shook her little nose at it like a dog enjoying the water, how saucily she beat her way in and out of the great floating mountains which slid with crushing weight slowly through the sea. Nor must I tell how one of the owners was ashamed because he sailed half a mile before he remembered to screw the binnacle (which was quite unnecessary) on the cabin roof; or how another looked ten years older when a yacht of similar build outpointed us, although that was not due to seamanship, which was all in our favour, but because the other yacht had recently been scraped and the *Hooligan* was foul.

Enough to say that we arrived at the review ground, and peeped up the broad, empty, watery streets between the lines before the royal yacht left Cowes. Our captain consulted a printed sheet of rules for the day which had been supplied to yachtsmen, and, finding that he was allowed to go no farther in the direction in which he was pointing, held on his course.

Then out darted a patrol-boat from between the lines, and bore down on the *Hooligan*, and the 'Hooligans' all looked the other way; and the master of the patrol-boat shouted through a megaphone, and all eyes were turned on the *Hooligan*, and our captain, sitting on the printed rules, asked if he might not go a little

SIDE - SHOWS

farther; and the patrol shouted through the megaphone what we might do and might not do, all of which information the 'Hooligans' received with great surprise and much deference. And then the *Hooligan* wore away to a fascinating little training-brig — which had more beauty than all the battleships put together - attracted, perhaps, by a feeling of kinship. For no doubt a shrimp has more family feeling for a lobster than for a submarine, but, there — it may be overcome with diffidence in the presence of both.

When the King came, the *Hooligan*, feeling very sorry for the passengers on board all the merchant steamships 'on the special list,' was near by. Climbing the hillocks of the Solent, she looked up at the bows of the *Victoria and Albert*, which swept forwards loftily like a man's head and shoulders reared up from the water. She saw the look-out officer stand there as though he were cut in marble, except when his 'coat flapped like a sparrow's tail. She saw the black and gold walls swing slowly by above her. She saw the same hillocks of water which tossed her fall away from the great yacht, as though a pail of water had been thrown against a house. She saw the King and Queen and the Prince of Wales.

Then a sudden embarrassment fell upon the greatly daring 'Hooligans.' What should they do to show their respect? To man the ship would be ironical; to dip the burgee would be improper; and so they simply stood up

THE ONLY WAY WITH A YACHT

where they were and in a very civilian way took off their caps, and before they had put them on again the royal yacht had melted into the fog and thunder of the saluting guns.

When the King's yacht anchored in the middle of the fleet the *Hooligan* joined the chaotic crowd of yachts that stood in for a nearer view. And how well she was handled! She blanketed this yacht, and made that give way, and gave way without hesitation to another, always doing what was right and yachtsmanlike.

Finally, we slipped through the thick tangle of yachts riding off Ryde, and anchored for the night. It was like resting among the herbaceous borders of an old English garden. Why do the myriads of flags on 'dressed' vessels look impressive and pleasing when the same flags would look conventional and comparatively dull in a street? Probably because at sea they have a meaning, and a very interesting one, whereas in a street they bear no earthly relation to the houses which they are supposed to adorn.

I have described one way of seeing the review, and for those who have learned how to do it for themselves this is the only way; while for those who can happily put themselves in the hands of such men as the owners of the *Hooligan* there are few ways better.

And so the night came with a racketing storm of rain which made the 'Hooligans' sit longer than usual

SIDE-SHOWS

over their dinner in the cabin and peer out intermittently at the illuminations, which for all their cunning devices were not comparable with the moon sailing high on a fine night and watched as you lean across a boom.

CHAPTER NINE

Another Opinion on Yachting

*

I HAVE described the only way for yachtsmen, but candour forces me to mention that a guest on board the *Hooligan* has been known to dissent from this philosophy. What he had to say he said at great length, and with much feeling; and I reproduce his reflections here as nearly as I can remember their substance.

There are two classes of people with technical knowledge (he said) who are, above all other classes, intolerant of ignorance in others. They are agriculturists and yachtsmen. I think, perhaps, agriculturists are the worst, though it is not easy to explain the intolerance of either. We have all noticed the scorn of the farmer who has detected some one in the awful mistake of confusing mangels with turnips, or rye with oats.

A* literary man would not be so contemptuous of one who confused Shelley and Byron — in fact, in my belief, he would often be glad to share his company - and yet the one mistake is as bad as the other. Doctors do not wither with a glance people who confound the stethoscope and the spectroscope. Engineers do not inspire a roomful of persons with pitying amusement by recounting how So-and-so didn't know the difference between a triple-expansion engine and a turbine.

A proof of the reality of the agriculturist's intolerance of ignorance is its intimidating effect on others. Men

SIDE-SHOWS

who dare to say, 'I don't care about books,' and who would not be ashamed to ask who wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit*, would not have the courage to stop before a tree and say, 'Is this an elm or a lime?' or 'Is that a partridge or a pheasant?' or 'Is that wheat or barley?' It is felt that it is disgraceful not to know. If this is a sign that we do not take our urbanization 'lying down,' it may have its good side.

The improper conjunction of nautical affairs and agriculture in the conversation of one of the cod-fishermen in *Captains Courageous* was a signal for the others to insist on having things 'kep' separate.' But the same standard of propriety is not required of me. On the contrary, I have shown that there is very good reason for the conjunction. The yachtsman's intolerance of ignorance generally takes the form of wantonly assuming that every stray passenger on board knows the names of all the spars, sails, and rigging. Then, when the event proves (as it always does) that the passenger knows nothing at all about them, a terrible contempt settles down on the yachtsman's mind for the person who has fallen so far short of what was naturally expected of him.

Our friend Sparson (one of the owners of the *Hooligan*) is a typical yachtsman. He is the most generous of men, and showers invitations on his friends to come for a sail. The *Hooligan* is too large for Sparson to take to sea single-handed, and his friends often perform free

ANOTHER OPINION ON YACHTING

the work which would otherwise be done by the hired yacht hands, with whom Sparson will have nothing to do. It is a humiliating experience for the amateur hands; and, as few, unlike me, repeat it, it happens that after some years Sparson has distributed particles of instruction in the principles of navigation over a wide area of the able-bodied youth of his own class.

I well remember my own first experience on board the *Hooligan*.

'Just do what I tell you quickly,' he said, 'and you'll be as right as rain.'

We were then lying at anchor, preparing to start. He hauled at a few ropes himself, and got one sail into position, and then he fixed his gaze on the bows of the vessel, which for some reason was swinging slowly round.

'Is she going now? Are we off?' I asked.

'Sparson's mouth was shut tight, and he looked straight through me, or over me, as though my right to existence obviously did not include the right to ask questions. Suddenly he roared: 'Haul in the anchor-chain half a fathom! Look sharp! We shall have to kedge down a bit to clear that smack.'

'Half a fathom' — 'kedge down a bit to clear that smack.' 'What is half a fathom? what is a kedge? and what had I got to do with it?' The questions surged through my mind, and my brain reeled.

'Look sharp!' yelled Sparson again.

SIDE-SHOWS

'Yes,' I said. 'I'll look sharp, but do explain-'

Crash! We were anchored without much room to swing in a narrow channel crowded with small yachts and fishing-boats. Now, the *Hooligan* had swung heavily over towards the smack of which Sparson had spoken — only a moment before we had been lying parallel to one another, with a comfortable strip of fast-flowing tide between us — and the sides of the two vessels ground together while a piece of our rigging (I do not attempt the name) caught on something on board the smack and was torn away.

'Man alive!' bellowed Sparson, 'you must be quicker than that, or we shall be getting into trouble. An awful mix-up in this creek, you know, and the tide runs like a sluice. Now, sharp again, directly we get clear. There she comes. . . .'

Heavens! what, after all, was I to do? Get clear of what?

I have forgotten the details, but no doubt we bungled and lumbered our way out to sea somehow. Since then I have been several times afloat with Sparson, and his intolerance of ignorance, his utter refusal to sympathize with it and correct it, remains incurable.

How much trouble he might save himself- and me! This is the kind of thing: 'Hold on,' he says, 'to the weather-sheet of the foresail, just while I let her head pay off.' 'Pay off'- I have heard of crews paying off; but Sparson never pays off his crews. No such luck!

ANOTHER OPINION ON YACHTING

What does it all mean? I don't know. But Sparson will abuse me iust the same. Or, again, he says: 'Here, take the helm half a moment, and just keep her shaking while I get the peak up a bit.' What a man!

One thing I have noticed about all amateur yachtsmen is that they always like to sail close to the wind. I suppose the proud consciousness that they are cheating the elements gives them such intense pleasure that, if there is no very special reason for sailing in any other way, they always go 'close hauled,' as they say. This phrase I do understand, as the meaning of it has been impressed on me by many humiliations. If there is not the sense of triumph which I have mentioned, I cannot explain the habit of yachtsmen. Why not run before the wind in preference to any other way of sailing? Then you go faster. To me, it seems that is better fun. Or, at all events, why not keep away enough to get a go6d speed up? I should not drive a motor-car eternally up the side of a mountain merely because it was able to climb up. 'Ah,' says the yachtsman, 'but I love to see my boat outpointing the others.' The motorist, I retort, likes his car to climb hills better than others, but he does not make straight for Snowdon or Ben Nevis.

But I was about to describe the kind of humiliation to which close-hauled sailing exposes me. Suppose Sparson has gone forward to haul on a rope or do some other unnecessary act; he says to me: 'Here, take the helm, will you, and keep her as close as you can.'

SIDE - SHOWS

Directly he has finished with his rope, or whatever it may be, he looks up at what he calls the luff of the main-sail, sees it shivering a little bit, as it generally does, and says in an awful voice of correction: 'My dear fellow, keep her full, keep her full !' .

The last day I was afloat with Sparson I noticed the luff of this sail trembling in precisely the same way when he was steering, and I said in a quite moderate and reasonable tone: 'Not quite full, is she, Sparson?' It was then I learned that though one is despicable if one is ignorant, one is only made offensive by knowledge.

'Nonsense!' said Sparson. 'You don't understand. There's always that little flutter. It's the draught from the foresail. . . .'

There is no need to accumulate examples of Sparson's intolerance. One resolution I have taken. When I am rich I shall buy a farm and a yacht, for by these means it is evident that one can obtain some exquisite joy of intellectual exclusiveness which I am not yet able wholly to explain.

CHAPTER TEN

Autumn on the Norfolk Coast

*

THERE is a curious fellow who has been staying here for a few days at the mouth of the Wash. He came from London, as he tells anyone who asks; but indeed it is easy for the inhabitants of this coast to see that he is not used to living here. If he were, he would not, as they think, make a practice of letting the wind which scours these flat sands blow through his uncovered thin locks, nor would he be always gazing in a rapt, doltish kind of way at these shining wastes as though they were beautiful scenery made up of woods and parkland, nor would he suppose a salt marsh to be a suitable place to sit in and watch and think.

The first day he arrived at Brancaster Staith and struck seawards at low tide across the oozing mud-flats an idle old fisherman followed him, thinking he must want a boat, and yet be unaware that no boat could float in the creeks for the next three hours. But the stranger wanted no boat — wanted nothing, in fact. It would have been unfair to say even that he did not know his way, for he did not seem to have a way, or to want one. He put on his cap as the fisherman came up with him, because this visitor from London is a sensitive person, and he is timid of being observed when he is doing something unusual — at least, when he recognizes that he is doing something unusual, but that is not always.

The idle fisherman noticed as he retired that the

SIDE-SHOWS

stranger again removed his cap, as though he did not know that a cold wind conveys all the chills and agues known to coastwise pathology. Happily the stranger was unobserved by the sensible inhabitants when he crossed the sandhills beyond the mud-flats, and wandered out to where the shallow Wash sent on to the sands long, straight rollers, which were scarcely more than tremors on the surface, and which, as they slid onwards, gradually faded into mere dampness, so that it was impossible to say where the edge of the sea was. Happily he was unobserved, for there he sat down on the edge of a pool — the pool being distinguished from the edge only by a higher power of dampness — and ate his luncheon of biscuits.

If he had ever thought of it, he might have amiably yielded a point to the common opinion that in hot weather it is natural to sit by the sea without a great-coat, and that in cold weather it is unnatural to be by the sea at all; but the fact is, he had never thought of it. The dunes were there, and the marshes, and the sea, significant though leaden; and the close-fitting sky, with its yellow, watery light that made the sands glitter no less in cold weather than in hot. So he would have argued, if he had argued at all.

Day after day he had wandered on these sands and in these marshes. He says that there is nothing in England like this strip between Hunstanton and Wells, over which sea and land continually fight for possession.

AUTUMN ON NORFOLK COAST

He has learned the signs of the wavering battle; he knows how the marram grass blows in security on the dry, sandy hills - the hills reclaimed ages back - as a flag floats above a fort, he knows how the sea-lavender decks the later-won portions of the land, and how the sea throws up its arm over them at high tide, grasps them, and says, 'I could take you back if I would.' And he knows how the samphire - it is glass-wort, quite different from that stuff Shakespeare must have seen gathered at Dover Cliff, but the people call it samphire — is the first living thing that forms on a new mud-bank, and proclaims the advance of the forces of the land. He prefers to speak of the advancing land, and not of the receding sea. It is a small point, but he insists that the shade of meaning is right in the one case and wrong in the other.

He thinks that Lord Leicester, who has reclaimed mileS of marshes and buttressed the sand-dunes with fir-plantations, is one of the worthiest landowners in England. For the family of Coke, the owners of Holkham, have long cared for their marshes, and yet have never allowed them to lose their singular wildness. The desolate Holkham Flats are the feeding-ground of the famous wild grey geese, and the lake inside Holkham Park is an unmatched sanctuary for every bird which cares to live there.

It was my fortune to fall in with this curious fellow one morning far out on the sands at a low spring-tide.

SIDE-SHOWS

Sometimes he poked about with his stick, more often he followed the flight of a bird with his field-glasses.

'I thought there was a motive about it,' he said—'about the small groups of birds I saw all moving in one direction. For days there have been these signs, and now the immigration has really begun. It may be slack for a few moments, but—there—look!'

He turned his glasses out at the opaque curtain of an autumn morning which hung over the North Sea, and made sky and water meet invisibly. I followed with my eyes. No one can judge distances under a hazy sky. It seemed as though we might have been looking as far as the sky familiar to the eyes of the fishers on the Dogger, or into the land-haze lying above the Scandinavian main, or we might only have been looking into a false horizon four hundred yards away.

'Look! look!'

I could see nothing but the dull, uniform, impalpable sheet which was hung before us. But in a moment that meaningless blank seemed to tremble in a certain spot, then to wink and twinkle, and then to burst and scatter in movement. In another moment they were overhead—the long stream of birds, not volleying across the sky in delirious flight, but flying with the measured, deliberate air of pilgrims, flopping, lolloping, yet never stopping and never deviating from the straight line. Thousands and thousands—they grew out of the sky as the conjurer's properties out of nothing. A fresh tail

AUTUMN ON NORFOLK COAST

was always there as the stream seemed to have ended. Clouds of starlings, battalions of rooks, jackdaws flying in friendly unison with the rooks (for the old spring, the time of hostility, is forgotten, and the new one is not foreseen), plovers, and on the edges of the column scattered larks, the vedettes of the invading army - onwards and inland they came.

Lucky birds to strike the coast of Norfolk! Do they know that if they look all over England they will find no better country than this, with its broads and streams and moist vegetation and flat shores? So the flight goes on. Occasionally there is a gap, but the head of a new column appears.

For four or five days this immigration will continue over a belt of country several miles broad. Some grey-backed crows came to earth, and fed tamely near us — 'Danes' the Norfolk people call them. My companion will probably abuse them later for the brigands and murderers that they are, but then he was so pleased to see them that I think he would have patted them on the head if they had come near enough, as they almost did.

All day we watched the flight, and the stranger from London intermittently explained his absorbing ambition — to see our export of birds quit England. The imports can be seen any year and by anyone, but to see the army leave us! Perhaps some day, between light and dark — or will it be in the night itself? - he will see, by the best accident of his life, the start of that romantic, hazardous

SIDE-SHOWS

journey. Who has ever seen it? Yet conceivably it might be seen. The sudden migratory instinct will fall upon all the birds in a district where they have been mustering for days, and - here my companion indulges an obsolete speculation to which he is oddly attached — rising in converging lines from their starting-point, will go up and up till they meet in that stratum of air where the rarefaction is suited for easy flight. A halt follows, then, perhaps, a note never yet heard by man and unknown even to a bird except when it is in the grip of the migratory instinct. And then that furious instinct will launch the pilgrim column forwards over the ocean.

The serpent does not move more closely to the ground than did we in our humility to observe the sights of the immigration. We lay face downwards in the sand, and pretended to be logs, in order that strange birds might not be discouraged from coming nearer. The low rollers, submerging a bank before us, seemed to be piled as high above our heads as a line of hills above the horizon. When the strange birds came within eye-shot their names and dates of arrival were recorded. Above one of the seven villages called Burnham — all steeped in the proud Nelsonian legend—a flock of starlings in smooth, curving flight were revolving in an ever-contracting circle to settle after their journey.

So the day passed. The wild, mournful cries of the curlews, the waders, the stints, the knots — and there

AUTUMN ON NORFOLK COAST

again is an ambition. Every one knows the knot, but who will first find a knot's egg? and will he find it far short of the North Pole? All these cries ended, the last of the amphibious carts creaked homewards from the mussel-beds, whose dark lines disappeared beneath the water, and the stealthy tide flowed in silence.

Only one thing remained to be seen — the grey geese of Holkham, which would visit the marshes inside the sandhills when the sun went down. The stillness in the marsh! The light went before the geese came, and no mortal sound had fallen on our ears but a shrill note far up in the growing blackness, like a boatswain's pipe in the clouds. That was the cry of some bird making a night journey. When the geese came there was a sudden rushing sound as of a squall, a whirr and indescribable beating of the dark air, which died away like the whispers of mystical tongues. Silence again, and it was" in silence that my companion gripped my arm. An expected thing sometimes finds you unprepared.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Road

*

WE did not start from the White Horse Cellar in Piccadilly, from which nearly every reputable coach used to start in the old days, but from a brand-new place innocent of associations. Never mind; everything about the style of our journey was wondrous old; our four-in-hand tootling among the motor-cars of the modern world had the attributes of a fly in amber, of old wine in a new bottle. And even for the brand-new courtyard, which, robbing the four-in-hand business of all appearance of admitted use, daily gives to its ceremonial an air of affectation, there is something to be said. It gave the coachman that day as good an opportunity of showing his style as any professional of the old days had who used to sweep in and out of a gate, *fervidis evitata rotis*.

When the coachman appeared I was already on the box. All eyes went to the coachman, and the coachman looked with all his eyes at the team he had to drive. If he had been dissected at that moment, 'Tantivy' might have been found written on his heart. What a mistake to think that hereditary aptitudes run down the generations only in blood! We have spiritual and artistic and professional ancestors. Our coachman had a long, long line of them; though, derived qualities being reckoned as they are, he never thinks of telling you more than that he received his liking for the road from his father, who also was a coachman.

THE ROAD

Yet his professional descent is clear; his roots strike deep; his English ancestors spread the gospel of Tantivy far and wide, and they had Norman French ancestors to whom *Taintavé* was no less dear a word, and those ancestors in their turn drew their spirit from the classic sportsmen to whom, perhaps, *Tentavi* (if it be not incredible that sportsmen really excited themselves with so severe a word) was as good as the sound of a horn by a covert to-day, or the voice which thrills and quakes out of the three feet of tin blown by a coach guard.

Our coachman walked across the courtyard, eyeing the horses, while the ostlers stood at their heads — not holding their heads, for the coachman would allow none of that nonsense. He buttoned his gloves as he came. He seemed to give particular attention to the gloves, and yet somehow we all knew that he was giving very little attention to them, and a great deal to the four horses. But that, after all, is an old story, for did not the passengers who made a famous coach journey in company with Tom Pinch observe that the coachman seemed to put on the horses with his gloves at the ends of the fingers?

Here is a slight picture of the man. His top-hat was white, and was drawn down rather on the back of his head, and also leaned perceptibly to the right; it had the air of having been put on from the back, and not from the front; his tie was a large white expanse, and across it a diamond fox scampered; his waistcoat was of stiff

SIDE - SHOWS

linen, checkered; his coat (with long tails) and his trousers were all of a piece, and very strong in checks; his gloves were brown dogskin; in his button-hole was a pink carnation.

Our coachman, in a word, was a professional, but he belonged to the class of professionals who have learned the dignity of the road from amateur coachmen. Eighty years ago he might have been called an artist. An artist he was, at all events. Observe him while he walks up and down, examining his team as the colonel walks up and down the lines of his battalion, pulling a belt straight here, pointing to spots on a tunic there, condemning the state of a third man's rifle. So our artist walks and speaks.

Tut Tom-Boy up to the cheek,' he says, as he saunters past the off-leader's nose, 'and drop the bit half an inch more in Nancy's mouth. . . . How many times have I told you to put the pole-chain slack on her? She can't pull an ounce when she's strung up like that. You'll spoil the mare for me, and she's been the best wheeler. . . . Ah! So you've given me that gummy old slug again in the near wheel, have you? Well, what's the odds? . . . Untwist that coupling-rein. . . . Have you got the Mohawk on Bounding Jim?' and so on.

By this time our artist was ready to take his place beside me on the box. Standing on the ground, he drew the well-fitting reins between the fingers of his right

THE ROAD

hand slowly, as though he were putting on another glove. He took the whip in the same hand. His left foot came up to the wheel-box, his right foot to the outside roller-bolt on the splinter-bar, then his left foot to the step, then his right to the footboard, and he was beside me.

The reins were in his left hand now. He shortened them with his right as he gave the word, 'Stand away!' The ostlers leapt aside; the hauling strain of a team perfectly put together came sweetly though swiftly. Without a jerk the coach sailed under the arch into the street. Involuntarily the passengers bowed their heads. Perhaps some of them remembered Mr. Jingle's warning on a similar occasion: 'Terrible place — dangerous work — other day — five children — mother — tall lady, eating sandwiches — forgot the arch — crash — knock — children look round — mother's head off — sandwich in her hand - no mouth to put it in - head of a family off-shocking, shocking!'

Mincingly, with a cat-like tread, the team picked their way through the crowded streets. The movement of a good coachman's driving hand is simply fascinating. His elbow is touching his side; the backs of his fingers touch his coat; his knuckles are to the front, but the springiness which responds so wonderfully to the tug and twitch of the horses is in his wrist. A rush bowing and recoiling in an eddy is neither more sensitive nor smoother in its action. And then there are the contin-

SIDE-SHOWS

uous ministrations of the right hand on the left; and when the right hand is not shortening rein for the left, it is making that inimitable circular motion of the whip in the air and 'catching the thong,' or else delivering the prettiest of flicks on the leaders by an upper cut under the bar.

Our artist would have none of that ill-versed, direct use of the whip on the leaders which startles the wheelers. The wheelers knew nothing of his cuts under the bar, which were dropped on the right place with the lightness and precision with which a first-rate fisherman makes a cast.

At last the crowded streets were left behind, and we reached the open road. There comes a moment to all travellers on the great roads which lead out of large towns when they understand in a flashing thought, which has the power of an emotion, that the nebulousness of the road they follow has disappeared like a morning mist. It is no longer possible to mistake a tributary for a main. The inferior rivals have fallen out of the competition, have branched off to places where triumphs are easier, or have been swallowed by the conqueror. There lies the great straight high-road, proclaimed by its telegraph-wires and milestones, and it will go on and on over down and plain, and fen and plateau, and hill and moor, till it arrives, as all insular roads must, at the sea. And the sea is no road because it is all roads. Life and all its fortunes, the world and all

THE ROAD

its issues, lie before you when the great high-road takes shape at last and opens clear before you out of the town.

The meaning of that open road is in the spritish voice of the coach-horn, which the guard blows till his cheeks are like those of Sir Joshua's cherubs. It is in the hands and heart of our artist, who sees the road winding in front of him over the far hill. It is in the ringing tramp and tossing heads of the horses.

Our artist's team, as I said, were well put together; the wheelers had an equal stride, and it was safe to do what hardly anyone does to-day — gallop. For a bare mile when there happened to be no tarred surface the artist 'made play.' The heavy coach, which had already bowled along behind the evenly stepping horses like a hand-cart, became like a feather before the wind. A swerve or a jerk, and the coach would have begun to sway, and when once it had begun to sway — but no matter; the "team were safe gallopers. The gallop ended at a rise, and, still drawing well, the coach swept up to the top like a thing possessed of its own motive power, with all the bars chattering. That chattering was true music to the coachman's ear, who knew that there was not an ounce of drag in all that ponderous vehicle.

The hill fell steeply away to the village at the end of the first stage, and the artist 'took the hill in time,' as coachmen say, and brought his team to a standstill at the bottom without once using his brakes — those instruments of slovenliness which have ruined thousands of

SIDE-SHOWS

good coach-horses. Incomparable artist, you are the last of your race!

Then the old posting-house! How important in the old days that it should be all that long and anxious expectation desired! But it does not matter in these days, when the displeased motorist can whirl on to better cheer five miles farther along the road in ten or twelve minutes. 'The haughty ritual,' as Disraeli called it when the coachman threw his reins to the ostler, was only the beginning of eventful ceremonies. Mr. Squeers called them all, compendiously, 'stretching his legs.' Others more frankly spoke of 'bottoms of brandy.' Tom Brown, for his part, was acquainted with 'the early purl.'

But Disraeli, with all his extravagance that seemed to ridicule itself, at all events did justice to the importance of the occasion in *Henrietta Temple*. ' "The coach waits here half an hour, gentlemen. Dinner all ready." 'Tis a delightful sound. And what a dinner! What a profusion of substantial delicacies! What mighty and iris-tinted rounds of beef! What vast and marble-veined ribs! What gelatinous veal-pies! What colossal hams! . . . Why should a man go to see the Pyramids and cross the desert when he has not beheld York Minster or travelled on the road?'

CHAPTER TWELVE

Bathyllus and His Art

*

JUST before Christmas there is a change in the appearance of shop-windows which we all know: more lights throw a fierce glare into the streets; delicious eatables are piled one upon another, with a gaiety of appearance which they are notoriously unable to impart to their consumers; and nearly everything invites judgment upon itself by its suitability for a Christmas present. This is a conspicuous change, to be sure, but there are other changes which, if not conspicuous, are more significant. Let me recommend a walk round about Covent Garden, in the upper part of Wellington Street, in Maiden Lane, and then on the Rialto, which is the southern slope from Waterloo Bridge.

Here you see the changes which announce the season of the pantomimes. Crowns, tiaras, breast-plates, cuirasses, Zouaves, helmets, cocked hats, masks, glass jewels for Aladdin, glass slippers for Cinderella, enormous beads for Man Friday, uniforms, muslin skirts, ballet-dancers' shoes, Moorish clothes for Dick Whittington, and I know not what, are shaken free of the dust which has lain on them all the summer, and are rearranged in shop-windows. No fierce light beats upon them. The jewels look like the dull glass they are, and the sequins cannot raise a glitter among them. No need to attract the eye of the passer-by. The manager of the country pantomime, who is going to cut a dash

SIDE - SHOWS

with the cast-off raiment of London pantomimes, knows exactly where to go. There is a sermon in every one of these shop-windows, but it is too trite to be mentioned. But I may remark upon the impressive juxtaposition of Bow Street and the fine collection of shepherdesses' crooks in one shop.

Not only the shops announce the season. Accomplished but unsuccessful practitioners of the dramatic art take heart again, and lift up tired eyes glowing with a new ambition. It is here that they throng the recognized meeting-places, where an agent may, at any moment, throw an engagement at them, and give them the opportunity of at last bringing a stupid town to their feet. Here you may mark hope springing eternal in the breast of an artist who has been of no particular importance since twelve months ago, when he was dressed in red, drew three pounds a week, and was nightly fired into popularity from a trap below the stage." Ah, those were great days, and they are upon him again!

Maiden Lane at this time of year is the only place where an enormous percentage of the men are heroes, and of the women heroines. There is a Roman Catholic Church at the corner, which was more used before the Irish colony was driven out of Clare Market, and to come into the lane at this end is perhaps the most suitable introduction. But there is a great deal to be said for coming at it from one of the alleys - cracks between houses - which lead up from the Strand.

BATHYLLUS AND HIS ART

The chief beauty of these alleys after dark is the way they are illuminated by concealed lights filtering out from windows which you cannot see till you come up to them. Going up one alley, I looked in at a lighted window, and beheld a bicycle repairer at work among such a litter of iron as one might expect to see in a village shop. He worked under a flare of gas. I was so astonished to see him and his shop — I felt as though I were looking in at the forge of a village blacksmith — that I stood and gazed. He came to me and said: 'If you go up to the top and turn to the left, you will get out.' I did not want to get out in the least, but I obeyed his instructions. I suppose the people who dwell in these cracks think that every stranger who comes there has got in by mistake, and that the true hospitality of the quarter is to show him out. But this only deepens the mystery of the bicycle repairer. Why does he repair bicycles in this spot, if, when a possible customer comes, he only runs out and says: 'Go up to the top and turn to the left'?

Maiden Lane, I said, is frequented by heroes and heroines. The heroines may also be heroes, as this happens in pantomime. Maiden Lane is also the only place where I ever heard of prosperous people in fur coats stopping their conversation when a policeman came in sight, politely whistling 'A Policeman's Life is not a Happy One,' and gravely continuing their conversation when the policeman had passed on. There

SIDE - SHOWS

is an excellent tea-shop in Maiden Lane, and here the principal boys, principal girls, star-trap jumpers (first grade - and there are not many left), high-class demons, and the most important fairies congregate. I think the waitresses brighten their occupation by temporary incursions into pantomime. You can hire rooms in this lane to drill a chorus. There are also rooms for fitting on pantomime clothes.

Here, too, is Rule's saloon, full of ancient prints, cartoons, and theatrical reminiscences. Round the walls are little shrines, where electric light illumines the busts of Charles Mathews and Dan Leno, and the figures of Hyperides and Phrynr. Hyperides, having failed to clear Phryne of a charge of impiety, is indicating to the judges the beauty of his client, for all the world like a French lawyer.

The York Hotel at the bottom of the Rialto is also full of old prints, old play-bills, and theatrical cartoo'ns. To be important here, you must be a star or an agent. You must have money to buy talents or talents to offer. You may hear a man offer to make the fortunes of a theatre in the unadorned words, 'I do fifteen minutes with twelve gags,' and you may hear the agent of the music-hall reply that the minutes are too many and the gags too few. The Rialto has perhaps a larger spirit than Maiden Lane. Here a man might say, with the easy confidence of perfect appropriateness: 'Well met on the Rialto, signor!' It would also be easier to broach

BATHYLLUS AND HIS ART

the subject of a loan in this free air. It encourages the large manner. But, on the whole, the vogue is with Maiden Lane, and it was there I met my friend Bathyllus, who has written pantomimes.

'Tell me, Bathyllus,' I said, 'do you like writing pantomimes?'

Bathyllus passed his hand over his brow. 'A terrible business!' he said. 'You can't be literary — you have to write down. I'm always saying to myself, "Don't be literary, Bathyllus, my boy, or this blooming show will be a frost." Think of the people I've got to deal with on the stage — superstitious, bad memories, no art! And then think of the public who want the same old subjects year after year. Why don't they let one write a bit? But they won't. What are you to do?'

'I know the subjects are limited, Bathyllus,' I said, 'but which do you think is the best?'

'Why, Whittington, of course,' he said. 'That's real good business. Just think of it. First scene: London — fifteenth century — costumes, and all that. There you have your picturesque touch. Next scene: Highgate Heath — rural — peasants — milkmaids, and all that. There you have your simple, good-old-England business. Next scene: The voyage to Morocco — nautical business. Next scene: Morocco - Oriental splendour - grand ballet-pile it on as much as you like-can't make a mistake. Besides, there's the cat.'

'Is a good cat difficult to get?' I asked.

SIDE-SHOWS

'Very,' said Bathyllus. 'I remember one year when there was a boom in Whittingtons. All the old retired men at the acrobatic business came back as cats. Then there weren't enough! One man had a wooden leg. He was a cat somewhere down in the country.'

'Why do you say pantomime people are superstitious?' I asked.

'Because they are,' said Bathyllus. 'Peacocks' feathers! They won't have 'em on the stage. What are you going to make of a Chinese scene without peacocks' feathers? Sickening! Then they won't say the last two lines of the book till the first night, and then, perhaps, they forget 'em. Suppose I write for the ending—

"Aladdin wishes you good luck and cheer,
A very happy and a bright New Year!"

Well, they want to keep that till the first night. "Out come the words, down goes the curtain, crash goes the band—all for the first time! That's going to bring them good luck. "Bluebeard's" unlucky, too.'

'And their stupidity?' I said.

Bathyllus became very gloomy. 'Add two lines to a part,' he said, 'and they're done for. Alter the cue, and they don't know where they are for days. I remember one year when I wrote the words for "Bo-peep," I made Bo-peep say she was going to advertise for her sheep. The Baron said: "Why are you going to do that?"

BATHYLLUS AND HIS ART

Bo-peep said: "To attract attention." The Baron answered: "To attract attention nowadays you ought to refrain from advertising." If you'll believe me, I couldn't get the Baron to say this bit. I kept saying: "Why do you leave those lines out?" "All right, old chap," he used to say, "I can't get the run of them all at once." Days passed, and at last I said: "Don't you think you might have learnt that little bit by now?" "Well, to tell you the truth, old chap," he said, "I don't quite see the point of saying it."

'But the managers,' said Bathyllus, 'are often the worst of the lot. One year I wrote "Bluebeard." The manager came to me and said: "I've got a fine thing - a full-size model of the Rocket, the first locomotive. It cost one hundred and sixty pounds." "Very good," I said. "You'll put it on in the Harlequinade, I suppose? You can make some good fun out of the Rocket." "HarlequinadeP'hesaid. "Harlequinadebeblowed! Do you think I'm going to put my best thing on when half the people have gone? No, sir, it must go on in the second act." "But that's the Boudoir Scene," I said. "You can't have the Rocket in the Boudoir Scene." "Can't I?" he said. "You see." Well, he did give way about that, but he'd made up his mind to have it on somewhere. I said I'd rather have it in the Palm Grove Scene than in the Boudoir; so every night the Rocket was shoved on in the Palm Grove.

'I didn't write any words about it; I hadn't got the

SIDE-SHOWS

heart. It just came on. What made it worse was, it used to stick nearly every night."

'At last I went to the manager, and I said: "Look here, I've thought of a real good thing. When the Rocket stops Bluebeard shall say: 'Well, you can't have a Rocket without a stick!' " Will you believe it, the manager said he didn't put the Rocket there to have it laughed at, and he should take it off altogether. And he did-he did!'

Bathyllus buried his face in his hands.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Out of Lynn

*

ALONG the two straight miles of the Cut which runs from Lynn to the sea the masts and sails of the smacks arrange and rearrange themselves entrancingly. The sails zigzag in and out, now gathering in bunches, now scattering asunder, like a cloud of gnats, while they beat to windward. From Denver to the sea the tide runs through its funnel like a sluice, and it has worn away the banks of the artificial cut till the water is nearly twice as broad as when the river was first corrected from its wandering course.

In the eyes of some people — of most people, perhaps — a cut with long parallel banks, and these almost treeless, is dull, monotonous, ugly. I do not wish to pretend to perverse discoveries of beauty, but few sights seem to me more truly romantic than a long street of water like this when a glimpse of the sea is framed at the end. It might be symbolical of life. There go the dwindling ships to the sea, swept along on the ebb-tide — for no fisherman willingly makes for the sea against the flood — in their cramped familiar course, and at the end the water opens out suddenly into the great shining spaces, the unknown conditions.

Is your eye caught and held by the curious aspect of a rushing tide? It eddies and swirls, so smoothly yet so inexorably; ships at anchor, and even mooring-buoys, seem to be forging ahead through it, so that your im-

SIDE-SHOWS

pression must be corrected by keeping your eye partly on fixed objects, and ships moving with it swoop on with the silent irresistibility of things belonging to a spectral world at a gait which is at once explicable and mysterious. The people of Lynn certainly are fascinated by the daily repetition of this miracle. They may not acknowledge it, and possibly do not know it; but an eye once accustomed to the dizzy march of a furious tide is satisfied by little else. When the people of Lynn gather together to sit in the air and talk they gravitate, inevitably if not expressly, to the riverside.

The other day I found myself on board a cutter with some other amateurs bound for the fishing-grounds which lie between Boston on the Lincolnshire coast and Hunstanton on the Norfolk coast. We slipped down the Cut among the friendly crowd of smacks, and passed the time of day to this crew and that, the voices carrying with bell-like articulation over the water.

We passed one smack dry and lying on her side on the mud several feet above the water. Her skipper had touched the ground on the ebb-tide the night before in making too long a tack, and in a few minutes the fugitive water had fallen away, and she was piled up beyond hope of movement before next high water. And high water that morning was already past, and he had failed to move her. Unhappy man — the tides were not making. Each high water was less high than the last, and he was in danger of being 'neaped,' which

OUT OF LYNN

means that he must stay there till the spring tides came round again. Disconsolate figure! Helpless and sprawling lay the smack.

Now that she was high and dry, and so far from the water —'for inches are miles in this case — it seemed incredible that anyone should have sailed so far out of the channel. It always seems so, when the water has fallen away, and the disastrous spot suggests comparisons with places as far inland as Worcester and Rugby. But there, putting your ship accidentally ashore on the highest spring tide is one of those nautical misfortunes which may be compared to a toothache in the province of physical suffering. It does not kill you, it does not command much sympathy for you, but it may easily make you ridiculous.

At the end of the Cut the shores of the shallow Wash fell away, low and dim, except where the high land lay between Sandringham and Hunstanton. Here and there the gleaming mirage decapitated a low headland, and the head seemed to be an island lying away from the trunk; in other places a black strip of land, detached from its connections, seemed to hang between sky and sea; and in other places, again, trees of supernatural height grew at intervals out of a shining strip of ether.

To the landsman's eye the sea is just the sea— an open, equal expanse which, once gained, can be sailed upon with impunity from shore to shore. To the sailor the greater part of the world seems quite different. He

SIDE-SHOWS

knows the formation of the ground over which he sails, its hills, valleys, undulations and ridges, as well as we know the rise and fall of the roads over which we walk daily. He sees a channel, though it be buried invisibly, as plainly as Regent Street exists for us; and he sees a bank, submerged a fathom and more though it be, as plainly as we see the kerbstone along the roads. He knows the depth of the water from the colour, the strength and direction of the tide from the break upon the surface, and the bobbing speck of a buoy a mile away gives as plain an indication to him as the hand of a policeman to me at Hyde Park Corner.

Yet the smacksman comes to grief through an inveterate inclination to accept risks, just as the cab-driver in London comes to grief through cutting corners and trying to steer through impossible openings. He would think himself an indifferent sailor, however, who did not know and employ the swatchways, or* minor uncharted channels, which twist through the submerged banks.

Half an hour after reaching the Wash the crowd of smacks which had been shot by the tide through the long barrel from Lynn were scattered far asunder. Two miles away one of them was careening over at an angle just different enough from that of the others to catch the quick eye of our skipper and make him say: 'The *Alice* is aground.' That meant the loss of a tide for the *Alice*, and a blank, profitless day for her crew.

OUT OF LYNN

There are three ways of working a trawl on ships which have no steam. You may drift broadside on with the tide, which is called a driving haul; or you may sail across the tide, which is a thwarting haul; or you may sail with the tide, which is a fying haul. What the origin of the word 'fying' is I do not know.

We began with a driving haul. The heavy trawl beam was lowered over the side. To the heads at either end of the beam the net is made fast. A buoy attached by a fairly long rope to the net was thrown overboard to mark the position of the net if it should be torn adrift. From the trawl-heads a rope is fastened to a block, and through this block passes the trawl-warp to the ship for towing the trawl. At the foot of the net, which is weighted so that it keeps to the ground, is the sign-rope. If that catches on a large rock or 'hill' on the bed of the sea, you on board know it at once. The ship comes to a standstill, perhaps half slewed round, while the trawl-rope shivers with the strain, the tholes against which the rope is passed crack and break off like brittle stalks, and the buoy, which has been fizzing through the water, lying down to its work, bobs up as though to say: 'What's up now? Let me have a look.' If the trawl-rope snaps, you perceive the uses of the buoy.

For an hour with scandalized mainsail we drove down the Wash on the tide. Only now and again did a fixed mark, such as a lightship at anchor or a beacon on a bank, show us at what speed we, who seemed to be

SIDE-SHOWS

motionless, were being swept along in this reeling world of water.

The skipper gave the signal. We tied oilskin aprons round us in preparation for the wet job to come, and set to work on the hand-winch over which the trawl-rope was passed. Four minutes' hard winding brought the beam alongside, and the net was lifted on board.

How clean the sign-rope had dragged the bed of the sea! It was as though a man had been below there scrupulously scraping the starfish and soldier-crabs and sea-mice off the bottom and shovelling them into the net. All the dead-weight of rubbish went back into the sea, also the under-sized fish, and the selected soles and thornbacks, with some shrimps, lay in a precious little gasping heap on the deck.

So little for so much! It seemed like some inestimable distillation which emerges from gigantic groaning machinery.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Home of Lost Causes

if

SOME one called the house in Rufford Street, where Mrs. Templedown lives, the 'Home of Lost Causes.' We all adore Mrs. Templedown; she is beautiful, charming, and original. She is right in the middle of the Celtic revival just now. She has a picture of Mr. W. B. Yeats over her drawing-room chimney-piece, and she subscribes to the *Irish Theatre*. She took lessons in 'speaking to the psaltery,' in order that she might be smuggled on to the stage in a Greek chorus at some theatre where they were acting one of Mr. Gilbert Murray's translations of Euripides. The chorus intoned the Greek, sweeping their hands over the psalteries. One critic said it was like 'the sougning of great winds in a forest.' Another said it was like 'the moaning of the sea.' Another said it was 'depressing.' Another said it was the 'most refined and exalted of accompaniments.' Another said it was a 'dreary droning business,' and another that the audience were 'thrilled and purified.' Mrs. Templedown cut out the criticisms and pasted them in a book.

Mrs. Templedown was a Christian Scientist for a short time, but she gave up the leaders long ago. She still goes to a Christian Science service occasionally, because she says 'all idealism is good for the world, and ought to be encouraged.' Her doctor is an ordinary allopath. Once, when some one asked her if she were

SIDE - SHOWS

allopathic or homoeopathic, her husband interrupted, and said: 'My wife is a good Churchwoman.' I don't know why, but for some reason this remark has always been remembered. I mentioned it to a competent critic of life the other day, and he said it was very penetrating, so I suppose there is something in it.

Mrs. Templedown has tried a great many different kinds of diet. She was a disciple of Mr. Eustace Miles at one time, but afterwards offended a great many people by trying the Salisbury treatment, which I think was *all* meat.

Some time ago she went in for spiritualism, but gave it up because the 'Psychic Parcels Post' by which she ought to have received some materialized ribbons broke down. The things never arrived, so she got nothing for the two guineas she had paid the medium. The medium said that 'psychic antipathies were at work,' and that, though he did not wish openly to blame Mrs. Templedown, he would rather lose money than have any more spiritual dealings with her.

Finally, Mrs. Templedown is a Jacobite. She wears black on January 30. She sends a great wreath for the decoration of Charles I's statue in Trafalgar Square, and once she made a pilgrimage to St. Germain, and laid a wreath on the monument of James II. She got up a petition in Belgravia against the removal of James II's statue from Whitehall, and she sings Jacobite songs most touchingly. There is one, full of hope, which was

THE HOME OF LOST CAUSES

written just before the Battle of the Boyne, and I remember that once, when the Archbishop of Canterbury was at her house, he would not be satisfied till she had sung it three times.

Another day, I remember, a Jacobite Princess was entertained at her house. The Princess sat on a kind of throne on a dais, and we all filed past, and the women curtsied and the men bowed. Whenever anyone of the name of Stewart or Stuart passed, Mrs. Templedown whispered in the Princess's ear, 'A cousin, I believe, ma'am.'

Mrs. Templedown once confided in one of her friends (who told everybody) that the Jacobites admitted that they had received two blows in recent times from which they could hardly hope to recover. One was when Queen Victoria sent a sum of money for the repair of the James II. monument at St. Germain, and the other when the Board of Works announced that they would receive flowers for Charles I.'s statue, and arrange them nicely themselves.

Last Hallowe'en was a great day at the Home of Lost Causes. There was a dinner-party, to which I went, and after dinner we had Revels. I met several people I had never seen before, and I suppose Mrs. Templedown asked them, not because they were particular friends of hers, but because they were likely to be good at Revels. There was a Scots professor, for instance, who is an authority on Burns. He wore a

SIDE-SHOWS

cricket shirt, which looked very striking with evening clothes, and before the Revels began he recited Burns's famous poem on Hallowe'en. I never knew before that there were so many *r*'s in Burns. It sounded like an alarum clock going off when he said, 'By Robert Burrns.'

But first of all there was a terrific dispute at dinner among the learned ones about the origin of Hallowe'en Revels. The Celts (several Celtic Revivalists were there) said they originated in the splendid Celtic festival of Beltane. I had never heard before that this was such a magnificent affair. No, I am wrong about the Celts—they didn't all argue for Beltane, because two of them said that the name Beltane only applied to the Celtic festival of May i, and that the other festival on November i was called Sam — something. I have forgotten the name, but I know it began with Sam.

The only other incident at dinner which wa? at all exciting was when, in a lull of the conversation, a stupid boy who was staying in the house said: 'Do you know, Mrs. Templedown, that your house is called "The Home for Lost Dogs"?'

'Really!' said Mrs. Templedown, looking quite mystified. 'I wonder why that can be?'

'I suppose,' said the boy, 'it's because people know you are so awfully kind to animals.'

That is quite true, at any rate, and Mrs. Templedown looked delighted.

THE HOME OF LOST CAUSES

Mrs. Templedown wore a beautiful gown of dark blue all in one piece, and a girdle round her waist. After the Burns recitation she turned some of the lights off and swung a censer. The Celts protested against this as incongruous, but she said she always did it, as she liked the smell and it was so picturesque.

When the lights were turned up again the butler brought in a cross of wood, which was hung from the ceiling. An apple was fixed at one end of the cross, and at the opposite end a lighted candle. Mrs. Templedown explained that when the cross was swung round we had to try to bite off the apple without putting out the candle or spilling any wax over ourselves.

'I'll show you the way,' she said. 'Now, very slowly, please,' she went on to the man who was going to spin the wood.

Just as the man put up his hand to the wood she jumped back and cried, 'Good heavens! the petrol!' Nobody could think what she meant, and some of the men looked quite agitated, being afraid she was ill, as nothing would induce her to go near the apparatus again. I imagine that her hair had been done with petrol.

Next we all trooped out into the little garden behind the house, and Mrs. Templedown lit a bonfire. The Celtic people were much pleased with this, but there was a dispute whether it should have been lighted at sunset. About half an hour after we had returned to

SIDE-SHOWS

the drawing-room a note was sent in by the man who lives next door to say that a great deal of smoke was blowing in at his windows, and that he 'would esteem it a kindness' if the bonfire were put out. Mr. Temple-down, who rather fancies his wit, said he should write that as the man would 'esteem it a kindness' if the fire were put out, he no doubt would not 'deem it an injustice' if it were *not*. I believe that, as a matter of fact, when Mr. Templedown went out of the room he simply told the butler to put the fire out.

Of course, we baked nuts on the hearth and speared apples in a tubful of water with forks. And Mrs. Templedown again swung the censer.

An Irishman explained the Irish custom by which a girl puts three nuts on the grate, names them after her lovers, and judges whether the lovers are faithful by the way the nuts jump or burn. This roused the authority on Burns, who protested against the 'impropriety' of talking of 'fidelity' in this case.

Mrs. Templedown ended this racial quarrel only by inviting the Scotsman to read an extract from 'The Monastery,' which he very readily did.

Last of all, at midnight, the unmarried people looked in a glass one after another to see what spectre would appear behind them. It seems that you have to marry the spectre. Imagine the feelings of those who looked and saw, as I suppose most of them did, the whole roomful of their fellow-guests.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Very Comforting Words

*

EVEN now I find it possible to tingle again with the glow of that committee meeting, when the well-chosen words of the bishop, the general, the consulting physician, and the banker, promised the solution of our difficulties.

For who would not easily retain the impression made by words uttered with such conviction and enthusiasm? We had been wanderers in the wilderness; we had not known how to render to our city the particular voluntary service which duty had suggested to us. But now! Everything was changed. This medicine for all our ills was intoxicating. We seemed to walk on air; I had at all events become unconscious of the hard seats of the Institute, where I had ached away many weary meetings. It was a great occasion.

We* were astonished that we had not thought of the solution before. It was the general who, unknowingly, I think, stumbled on it, and it was the consulting physician who pointed it out to him. Above all, it was the bishop who clothed it with round phrases that gave it dignity and finality, and left it quite undamaged by his judicious qualifications.

The general reached the unforeseen destination of his remarks in the course of an intimate and long digression on hill-fighting in India. In a certain campaign the columns which were supposed to converge on their

SIDE-SHOWS

objective became, it appeared, ignorant of one another's whereabouts. And though the local commander took some credit for knowing at the critical moment the position of two out of the five columns, the Commander-in-Chief—who, as we learned from a considerable inner parenthesis, was given to keeping too much in his own hands—knew the position of only the same two columns. What was needed in such circumstances—a need which, as we learned on his own assurances, the general had never failed to emphasize on the N.W. frontier as well as before the Military Member of the Viceroy's Council—was better Intelligence work. Some had disputed it, but he had never been in doubt.

The general was embarked upon a fruitful comparison between fighting on the plains and fighting in the hills when the physician swiftly intervened with, 'Surely what you've just told us about Intelligence work applies to us. Our Intelligence has broken down. We don't know what other people are doing. Probably they're all overlapping each other. Probably there's plenty of money if only we saved the expense of all the duplication of work that's going on. But we don't know the facts. We must find them out first. Intelligence! That's—'

'Ah!' exclaimed the general approvingly. 'You've taken my point. I've said enough to show—'

'Quite, quite,' said the bishop quickly, in that well-

VERY COMFORTING WORDS

known voice which is proverbial for its soothing qualities. 'Dr. Bartholomew has evidently diagnosed the situation correctly.'

This happy reference to the physician's profession was as pleasing to the rest of us as the bishop's impartial recognition of merit was to the general and the physician. What a chairman he was! *Was*, I say, for his best days in that line are over.

The word 'Intelligence' set a fashion that night which ran like a heath fire. From every quarter came corroboration of the need. The bishop opined that there was a close analogy — though no analogy should be pressed so far as to lose its value — between the Intelligence work of an army and the Co-ordination of the various spheres of religious and social effort in a city. Though Co-ordination was a great need, even — he hoped he did not exaggerate — the greatest need, we must be careful not to try to co-ordinate things which were not strictly capable of Co-ordination. He hoped that in time to come, when it would be easier to estimate values, it would be found that a long step forward had been taken that night. He did not hesitate to say that though there might be doubtful turnings later, and an insufficiency of sign-posts, we were at last on the right road. His final word should be that we wanted more than co-operation — we wanted Co-ordination.

The banker remarked that as the financial question

SIDE-SHOWS

had been broached, and as money was always the underlying difficulty, it might be thought not inappropriate if he mentioned how much he had been struck by the pleas for Intelligence work and Co-ordination. For he could easily illustrate the use of those things from the financial world. It must not be thought that they were confined to the Army and the Church. Bankers had a Clearing House. It would be impossible for the modern system of banking to continue for a day without the Clearing House. Yet what was a Clearing House but a means of saving labour, of bringing people into touch with each other, of preventing the duplication of work? It was a co-ordinating institution. It was also in the nature of things an Intelligence Department. Let us have our Clearing House! We should then save labour, and labour saved meant money saved. There would be enough money for our objects if only the societies engaged in the same or similar work would make use of the Clearing House.

Here the general intervened to suggest that what would be required of the members of the Clearing House—as he generously called it—was that they should be good Staff Officers. They must not only gather information, but distribute it. The various societies would undoubtedly look up to the Clearing House just as junior officers, as was well known, looked up to the Staff. The existing societies, some of

VERY COMFORTING WORDS

them unaware of each other's existence, would rally round the co-ordinating authority.

By acclamation the Northtown League of Social Service was founded. The applause had never been so loud or so prolonged. The members of the committee had never thought so well of one another. Brains had come to the help of enthusiasm. And as brains would be needed for co-ordinating, and for doing Intelligence and Staff work, and for conducting the Clearing House, it was right and natural that the members of our committee should all be elected to the committee of the Northtown League of Social Service.

The secretary was instructed to investigate the activities of all the discoverable societies whose affairs ought to come under our scrutiny, and to inform them of the creation of the League.

That happened several years ago.

The other day a lady bearing a letter of introduction came to see me. She had been told, she said, that I was interested in certain kinds of social work in our city. So was she — deeply interested. She and some of her friends had been making inquiries, and they were much disturbed at what they had discovered. There seemed to be an appalling amount of overlapping, a tremendous waste of energy and resources. She had actually come across a society, with a paid secretary and a staff, which was quite unaware of the existence

SIDE - SHOWS

of another society that was doing almost exactly the same work.

I looked at her, not without admiration. She was young, she was pleasing, and she was full of kindly enthusiasm and a noble impatience.

'You think,' I asked, 'that if all the societies were better informed of what is being done the overlapping would cease?'

'I'm sure it would,' she said.

'Perhaps you think that if the money now spent were better applied there would be enough without trying to raise any more?'

'I know there would,' she replied.

'Have you ever thought that the societies might object to being interfered with - that they might fight for their independence? Have you thought that they might be suspicious, or resentful, or might object to being, as they would say, absorbed?'

'Of course,' she said, 'they wouldn't object. The whole idea is to co-ordinate them. That would help them to do their work better.'

'Would superfluous secretaries like being dismissed?'

'That, of course, couldn't be helped.'

'What you want, then, as I understand it, is a sort of Intelligence Department — a kind of Clearing House — to collect information and tell people what is being done?'

'That's it exactly,' she assented joyfully.

VERY COMFORTING WORDS

'I wonder,' I asked, 'whether you have heard of the Northtown League of Social Service —'

'Oh, yes,' she replied. 'I've often heard of it. It's one of the bodies we want to bring in under our scheme.'

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Quite a Salon

*

MRS. PRENDERGAST had a strong sense of being up-to-date in literary affairs. She subscribed to a circulating library and every other day she walked there to change her books. This routine gave her the opportunity to exercise her dog and she thus had an agreeable consciousness of not wasting time on any purely unintellectual pursuit.

'Changing my books, you see!' she would say on meeting a friend in the street. 'We can't get on without them, can we? I always say books are our best friends.'

At the chemist's shop where the circulating library was, Mrs. Prendergast would cheerfully accept advice about the choice of books from the young man who combined the management of the library with occasional service at the chemist's counter.

'You are a great reader, madam,' the librarian ventured to say one day when he thought his long record of advice had justified this advance. Mrs. Prendergast was distinctly pleased, but preferred to speak as though she would have been shamed if she had provided the librarian with an excuse for saying anything else.

'Yes — and why not?' she answered. 'The things of the mind are the only things that matter, aren't they? It would be a dull world without books. I can't imagine

QUITE A SALON

how people get on without intellectual interests. I always say books are our best friends.'

'Certainly, madam,' said the librarian. 'What books would you like to-day? I fear we have none of the novels on your list in at present.'

'Then it must be a travel book or some sort of biography. I am never tired of biography. It tells one so much of the world — of men and women and their characters and why they succeeded or failed. Isn't it so?'

'It is indeed,' said the librarian.

'Have you got that book yet called *The Confessions of on Impresario*?'

'I am extremely sorry, but our copies have not yet arrived.'

'But I saw it reviewed a fortnight ago in the *Literary Supplement*'

'I c^n't explain the delay, madam, but you shall have it as soon as it arrives. I don't think you have had this book yet about Samuel Butler.'

'Is it biography?'

'Undoubtedly, madam.'

'Let me see, Samuel Butler was an explorer, I think? Sir Samuel Butler, I believe?'

'Oh, no, madam, I don't think he was an explorer.' And then he added daringly, 'Except perhaps of new intellectual lands. His book *Erewhon* is famous, madam.'

SIDE-SHOWS

'*Erewhon*? But that was by Kinglake, wasn't it?

'Oh, no, madam, I feel sure it was not.'

'But Butler is old, isn't he?'

'He is dead, I believe, madam.'

'I would rather have something quite fresh, you know. I like to be quite up-to-date.'

'I don't think you have any of Conrad's books on your list, madam, but his last is in now. He is up-to-date.'

'Is it about the sea?'

'I think it is, madam.'

'I hear people talking about Conrad a great deal, but I'm not fond of the sea. Of course Marryat wrote very well about the sea, and then there was Clark Russell,'

Mrs. Prendergast had a profound contempt for people who did not read. Yet she owed them much, for nothing gave her more satisfaction than to convict her neighbours in conversation of neglecting their reading. As for herself, when she was not reading she liked to talk about it. Perhaps the most deliberate condemnation of a friend which she had ever uttered was 'The woman never opens a book.'

'What advantage reading gives one!' she often said. 'It makes one much better able to judge of things. Besides, books are such companions — our best friends, in fact.'

Surrounded by those friends she was in a position to regard the unread world with pity as well as with

QUITE A SALON

disdain. Her father had been a B.A. and so was her husband; so she was fortified with intellectual connections. 'My dear mother,' she would say, 'was a great student of Shakespeare. She could give you an appropriate quotation for any subject you mentioned. I cannot express what it meant to her children - to my sister and I — to be brought up by her to read the best literature and to appreciate correct English.'

It had once been conveyed to Mrs. Prendergast that a certain person had spoken of her as a well-read woman and ever afterwards she had shown particular favour to that person.

When Mrs. Bretherton - the Mrs. Bretherton who wrote that austere and scholarly volume of verse and whose pamphlet on *The Sceptical Qualities* was praised by Lord Balfour - came to live in Mrs. Prendergast's neighbourhood, she was soon informed that Mrs. Prendergast was a great reader. And Mrs. Prendergast, having heard of the intellectual distinction of Mrs. Bretherton, called upon her.

'I hope you will come to tea with me next Friday,' said Mrs. Prendergast. 'Quite a small party, but all my greatest friends whom I want you to meet are, like myself, great readers. They come simply to talk about books. It's quite a salon.'

Mrs. Bretherton went to tea with Mrs. Prendergast.

SIDE - SHOWS

As she entered the room she heard her hostess saying, 'I'm intoxicated by reading - quite intoxicated.' Then, drawing Mrs. Bretherton into the middle of things, Mrs. Prendergast said, 'I want to introduce to you my friend Mrs. Latex. She's a tremendous reader. She has just been telling us about a wonderful book she has been reading.'

Mrs. Bretherton said to Mrs. Latex, 'Please tell me about it.'

'Oh! it's a charming story,' said Mrs. Latex. 'It's full of humour. I love a sense of humour, don't you? And so few people have it! And the descriptions of scenery are so vivid — such word-painting! You might think you were there. The character-drawing too is excellent. I do like well-drawn characters, don't you? You really must read it. It's quite charming.'

'What is the name of it?' asked Mrs. Bretherton.

'It's so stupid of me, but I can't remember the exact name.'

'Perhaps you could tell me the author's name?'

'I'm so sorry. I am afraid I have forgotten that too. But does it matter when a book is well written? Not all our well-known writers write well, do they? I always think it is best just to judge by the writing. This book is so well written. And it has a great deal about psychology which interests me intensely. I am sure we don't pay enough attention to psychology. Don't you think there is a great deal of truth in it?'

QUITE A SALON

When Mrs. Bretherton was taking her leave of the salon Mrs. Prendergast said, 'I'm afraid you haven't had time to talk to Mrs. Grant, who is mad about Rupert Brooke; or to Mrs. Ogilvy, who is a great Browningite; or to Mrs. Underwood, who has written a novel which some people think is quite as good as *Hail Caine*. But you must come again. Now that you know some of my friends, you will be able to make endless friends—book friends, I mean—through them.'

'Thank you very much,' said Mrs. Bretherton mildly. 'Such recommendations for new friendships will be invaluable.'

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Put Away

*

THERE was no doubt that when Joe Penshurst was certified as a lunatic his friend Robert Gillett suffered a bad shock. The news spread through the Essex village with mysterious swiftness, as village news does.

At the 'Half Moon' on the evening of the day when Joe Penshurst had been 'put away' (the village phrase) the whole subject of his affliction and his going was discussed.

' "Certified" 'im. That's what they've done to 'im,' said Sam Ridding, who was always a leader in exposition and debate.

'Whatever do that mean, now?' asked John Girling.

'Suthin doctors do to 'em,' explained Ridding. 'Wonnerful what the doctors *can* do. So 'e's been certified -'

'I don't reckon they've done narthen — not: what doctors do - to Joe,' said another. 'Seems they only wrote suthin to say he weren't right and then they put 'im away. I reckon they ain't a-goin' to do narthen to he.'

'Yes, yes,' said another voice, 'that's right. When they certify they answer a lot of questions on a paper and swear to it.'

'Poor chap!' said Girling.

'It's a rum 'un, any'ow,' said Ridding. 'Certify? Certify? Why, my governor the other day 'ad to certify

PUT AWAY

about a heifer, but that was same as to say that was sound. 'Ow can you certify both ways?'

'You can't — not properly,' said the voice that had been heard before. 'When you certify that's same as to say that's all right. I've never known it otherways. I do know, cos my girl was through a training class for suthin or other, and mighty well she did, so they say. Then they certified her. She didn't get no pay, you understand me. Not a penny — only that printed paper. It begins, "This is to certify." That means she was all right.'

'None the more for that,' interrupted Ridding, 'Joe ain't all right or they wouldn't 'a' put e' away.'

Robert Gillett listened in silence to this and much more like it. No one had known Joe half so well as he had. No one had liked him or understood him so well, and no one had had better cause to respect his accomplishments. How vividly he remembered the practical skill Joe had shown when they had done together that hedging and ditching job! There was nothing necessary to understand about the fall of the land which Joe did not take in at a glance. What a sure eye he had! How straight and clean his strokes with the bill-hook! His hook always seemed sharper than his mate's; yet an exchange of hooks had never proved it. And Joe had been put away.

It was very strange. If Joe was put away, why

SIDE - SHOWS

should the rest of them be free? But perhaps Joe was too clever for them all. Was that the reason? Was he the sane one, and were they all mad?

So Bob Gillett blundered on continually in his thoughts. The vision of Joe, capable, resourceful, energetic, never left him. What was madness? Did it really exist? How did it come on? Who could say for sure that a man was mad? Now, if the doctors who had certified Joe had seen him hedging and ditching, or building a stack, or thatching a roof, or ploughing a straight furrow — but then doctors did not come out in the fields. They wore black coats on week-days. And — and Joe had been put away.

Perhaps, though, a good man with his hands was not a good man with his brains. Bob Gillett remembered now many strange things Joe had said which had passed from his memory till this torment had brought them back. There was that day when they were leaning over the pigsty looking at the large whites. Joe had spoken silly like. But then that was his way; sometimes he talked nonsense and shouted with laughter, and at other times — quite suddenly, so that you looked at him astonished — he fell into a quiet, sad way, looking out into the distance as though he expected some one to come or something to happen.

'I reckon that's all wrong, that is,' Joe had said, 'to keep the pig court dreening with slush like that. Pigs don't fare to like dirt.'

PUT AWAY

'Go along!' exclaimed Bob. 'What do they roll theirselves in it for?'

'To cool theirselves and keep insex off,' said Joe, 'but they likes a house and a bed as clean as us likes 'em.'

That was odd; but it was odder still when Joe said, 'Don't they pigs look at you same as they wanted to ask yer suthin?'

'Askin' for food,' Bob suggested.

'No, no — kind er beseeching yer. Pleadin' for suthin. I don't know what. They don't know what. Look at their eyes. No, not food.'

No other man would have talked childishly like that. Joe had always had fancies running in his head. But what were fancies? He was clever all right. Good God, *wasn't* he clever at his work! And Joe had been put away.

Giltett had been given permission to visit his friend at the County Asylum. The day had arrived. Gillett's nerves felt as though they would snap. He was quivering. His long unanswered meditations had caused his brain to surge. The inside of his head was a whirlpool. He could feel the blood rushing round as he had seen water swing round in a pail. He was drawn to this visit to the asylum by pity for Joe, but also by the mystery of madness. What would Joe look like? What would he say? Would he be violent? What was madness?

A doctor received Bob kindly. Joe Penshurst was

SIDE - SHOWS

walking in the garden and Bob was to see him there. After the interview the doctor would be glad to talk to Gillett, who, he understood, had known Penshurst for many years.

The doctor regarded his duties earnestly; he never neglected a fresh source of information. Bob passed through into the garden.

Joe did not seem surprised to see him. He greeted him as though they had already met that day. He did not shake hands heartily. He did not thank Bob for coming. All he said was 'So you're here?' He looked straight and hard at Bob, and yet he did not seem to do so. His eyes might have been fixed on something or somebody else. Bob was not at all sure whether Joe was looking at him or not.

'Yes. I've come to see you.'

'They'll keep yer. They keeps everybody. This is the Asylum, this is. I'm not mad. Why don't they let me go? I'm always askin' 'em. They won't let you go neither. I'm not mad. They -'

The words came in a steady sequence. They were without passion. Surely only the truth could be stated in that level tone.

Panic seized Bob. The whirlpool in his head went faster than ever. He would escape while he could — if he could. He remembered the corridor in the officials' building through which he had entered the garden. He turned and fled. The door was still open. He ran

PUT AWAY

through the corridor. As he passed a room of which the door stood open he caught a glimpse of the doctor, who was waiting for him. He ran on.

He reached the front door, opened it, passed through and slammed it; ran down the drive to the main gateway; gained the open road.

The doctor walked to the front door and watched the flying figure. He slightly raised his eyebrows and gave a shrug of disappointment.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A College Literary Society

*

WE called ourselves the Tabards. A tabard, some one had discovered, figured in the college coat of arms; and the name had seemed doubly appropriate for a Literary Society when some one else had pointed out that Chaucer knew all about tabards.

The Society met once a week in the rooms of a member. Each member was host in turn. The only rules, which had been handed down orally, seemed to be that a man must read a paper when required to do so by the secretary, and that no one should ever read a paper in his own rooms. The motive for the second rule, I suggest, was delicacy; you could not 'rag' a man for his opinions when you were his guest. But it may be that I am attributing too much sensibility to undergraduates.

It would be an exaggeration to say that a knowledge of literature was the chief qualification for election to this select Society, which had only fourteen members. If that had been the qualification the Society would not have been so select. When a man was eminent in athletics it was often discovered that he was in some sense literary.

So much for the Society's history and character. I shall try to recall a typical evening.

Throgmorton had been informed by the secretary at the beginning of the term that he must read a paper,

A COLLEGE LITERARY SOCIETY

and thenceforward Throgmorton, whose half-back play at Rugby football was a miracle of easy improvisation, took life very hardly. What on earth was he to write about? There were no subjects. They had all been used up. If only Black had not read a paper on Keats he might have done that, indeed he felt sure of it now that he was in possession of the simple information which Black had imparted. And if James had not read a paper on the Bayeux Tapestry, he could have done that. Tapestry was easy to explain; and there were no snags such as appear when silly asses ask impossible questions at the end of a paper.

Throgmorton asked the secretary for advice. What subjects did *he* think there were left? In the early days of the Society it must have been easy to pick and choose, but now - ! Then, happy thought! Why not dig out an old subject that had been done but forgotten?

The secretary suggested that nothing had been read for a long time about the Renaissance, and after all the Renaissance was a very important period, and just the thing for a paper for the Tabards. On second thoughts, however, he said that the Renaissance was perhaps too large a subject for a paper of half-an-hour. Experience had proved to him that a paper should deal with a single personality or a very compact period. Why not one of the Renaissance painters? Incidentally, of course, Throgmorton could bring in the Renaissance generally.

'Who were they - the painters?' asked Throgmorton

SIDE-SHOWS

The secretary fished a couple of names out of his memory, and Throgmorton said, 'Well, I might do one of them. Thanks awfully.'

And so he might had not another friend told him that those painters had been done over and over again. This friend's tip was Benvenuto Cellini — 'a wonderful metal-worker, a great writer too, also a bully, a swashbuckler, a murderer, a most lurid genius, I can tell you, and I don't think he's been done.'

'It sounds good,' said Throgmorton. 'Thanks most awfully. I'll look him up. By the way, you're sure he pronounces his name "Chellini"? You're not pulling my leg, I suppose?'

'Honest Injun,' said the other. '"Chellini". It's quite all right.'

'Like "cello"?' asked Throgmorton.

'Quite.'

'I might bring that in.'

'You might, of course,' said his friend. 'But I don't think it is really necessary.'

Throgmorton read up his man and was fascinated. He was so much fascinated that he read more than one book — he read two — and amassed an embarrassing number of facts.

I need not summarize his paper. It was doubtless correct, as he had drawn on impeccable sources. After he had read it there was an interval while the Tabards consumed coffee and toasted buns. The Tabards are

A COLLEGE LITERARY SOCIETY

always of the age at which a man welcomes such refreshment an hour after his dinner.

After the buns and coffee, discussion and more tobacco. The President thanked Mr. Throgmorton in the name of the Tabards for his very interesting paper. He himself had listened to it with special pleasure, as he had always been greatly interested in the Renaissance. Although he had never seen the original of Perseus with the head of Medusa, he had seen a reproduction, and it was in his opinion most interesting. He must confess to having been rather surprised that although Mr. Throgmorton had said a good deal about the Renaissance, he had not mentioned Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo. He thought that a comparison between Cellini's work and that of those two masters would be most interesting. Perhaps Mr. Throgmorton could say something on that subject later. Meanwhile he thanked him again for his very interesting paper.

Mr. Richardson remarked that while he listened to the account of how Cellini had broken up the furniture and anything else that was handy to keep the furnace going for his great bronze, he had wondered if Cellini was consciously or unconsciously imitating the bonfire which Savonarola had made and into which he had persuaded his converts to cast their most valuable possessions. Possibly Mr. Throgmorton would throw some light upon this point.

Mr. Wainwright, who was an occasional student at

SIDE - SHOWS

the Art School, declared that Cellini had been greatly overrated. He was astonished that Throgmorton, who had evidently studied Cellini's work most closely, should have swelled the misguided chorus of praise. Cellini knew nothing whatever about anatomy. And anatomy was the basis of both portraiture and sculpture. Cellini had no doubt written a literary masterpiece in his autobiography, but that did not make him an artist in metal-work. Could Mr. Throgmorton possibly defend Cellini's anatomy? He should be glad to know, and he appealed to Mr. Throgmorton to be frank with the Tabards.

Mr. Anderton asked Mr. Throgmorton what kind of spices were used by Francis I of France. The ecstasy of Francis over the spice-box designed for him by Cellini was probably not caused solely by the artistic merits of the box.

Mr. Everard wanted an answer to two questions. First, if Cellini had had such a persistent rival as Leonardo had in Michelangelo, how would he have dealt with him? Secondly, how would Mr. Throgmorton compare Cellini with some of our moderns such as Watts and Rodin and Hamo Thornycroft and Epstein?

Mr. Throgmorton then rose to reply.

He greatly regretted that he had not mentioned Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. His sole reason for omitting them was that his paper would have been too long. He could have written much more if he had

A COLLEGE LITERARY SOCIETY

been allowed more time. He felt sure that the influence of both those masters on Cellini had been considerable but he was sorry he was unable to trace it exactly. He admitted that it had not occurred to him that Cellini had borrowed the idea of a bonfire from Savonarola. But there might be something in it, and he was sure the other Tabards had been as much interested by the suggestion as he had. He thought Cellini's anatomy was much more satisfactory than Mr. Wainwright had declared. But when he praised the bronzes he had not of course meant to imply that Cellini was greater as an artist than he was as an autobiographer. Finally, he regretted that he knew nothing about the taste of Francis I in spices and could not compare Cellini with Watts or Rodin or Hamo Thornycroft or Epstein. All had their points, and comparisons were odious. As for Cellini's rivals, he had no hesitation in saying that if Cellini had had to put up with Michelangelo he would have killed him.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Moseley Blogg: Clerk

*

MOSELEY was running it very fine, as usual, in his morning journey to his office. He was due at 9 a.m., and his drive on the top of the omnibus up the Fulham Road was a period of fluster and anxiety, during which he balanced desperate chance against chance. He was a clerk, and the opinion which the Firm held of him depended, in his judgment, entirely on his punctuality.

He believed this because his father had told him that it would be so. 'I shall have no money to leave you,' his father had said to him, when he was placed a few months before in his first office, 'and as we have no influence either, you must make your own way. My notion is that the best plan is for you to leave school early, and get a good start on young fellows who stay on for another year or two learning Greek and other things that will be of no manner of use to them in after-life. Of course, you must go through the mill — start at the bottom, and work your way up. That's what I've done myself, and now look at me —'

The father broke *off*. This eloquent aposiopesis was intended to mean that other men of his generation had been sent in their youth to one of the Universities; that that ambitious training had been provided for them at the price of the utter financial exhaustion of their self-sacrificing fathers; and that at the University they had

MOSELEY BLOGG: CLERK

learned to deserve the contempt for the rest of their lives of all prompt, business-like, and commercially minded persons. Therefore Moseley's father said: *Look at me.'

And Moseley beheld, with filial sentiments, the trusted cashier clothed in a black frock-coat, and sitting in a canvas chair in the back-garden of his little villa in Fulham, as he awaited the summons to his family dinner at seven o'clock.

It is no use 'argying agin a success,' as Artemus Ward said; and Moseley did not attempt to argue. Quite the reverse, indeed; he wanted to please his father and to get on; and he drank in reverently, as water from the fount of the eternal verities, a good draught of advice. He was always (so it was decreed once more) to be punctual; and when he had made himself trusted by his punctuality he would be appropriately placed in a position of trust. One day the Firm would discover that he was indispensable, and when he was quite sure that that discovery had been made he might (without, of course, taking any risk) speak darkly of some other appointment which had been offered to him. The Firm, in a panic (if the Fates willed it so), would then offer him an increase in salary; and if all went well he would be able to marry before he was middle-aged. That, in substance, had been the history of his father, and there was no reason why the success should not be repeated in the son.

SIDE - SHOWS

Moseley, I said, balanced desperate chance against chance. He could remember at least one occasion on which he had been no farther along the Fulham Road at exactly that time, and yet had reached his office by nine o'clock. True, that day he had rushed down the stairs of South Kensington Station, which was where he changed from an omnibus to a train, and had jumped into the train as it was moving off, and had nearly been trapped between the door-post and that grimly sliding door which had advanced upon him like the knife of a guillotine. True, too, that the train had made an unusually fast journey that day. And he could scarcely hope for the same good luck again. Then he proposed to himself the probability of the senior clerk being a few minutes late, knowing well that he was deceiving himself.

The thought of the senior clerk conjured up the ordeal he had to face. This potentate sat in a room with two other clerks, next to him in seniority, whereas Moseley sat in an inner room with four other clerks. The ordeal was passing through the one room to the other. If the senior clerk reproached him as he passed delicately through, Moseley did not mind so much; he regarded the episode as ended with the reproach. But if the senior clerk raised his eyes and glanced at him in silence, Moseley was terribly disconcerted. That glance seemed to say, 'I shan't say anything. It is of no use. But I note that you are seven minutes late, and natur-

MOSELEY BLOGG: CLERK

ally you are aware that the partners will hear of it in due course.'

Moseley cursed himself for suffering by his own act from this plague of suspense. Why on earth couldn't he start ten minutes earlier in the morning? Day after day for months he had taken a resolution to this effect, and as many times he had broken it. Even when he got up early it somehow took him longer to dress. 'Moseley,' his mother had said that morning, 'I do wish you would allow yourself a little more time in the morning. It's so bad for you to eat your breakfast in five minutes, and then hurry all the way to your office.'

As it was, Moseley was hurrying as much as ever, and was in a more than usually ruffled temper. He was not above the illogicality of girding at a misfortune he had done nothing to avert. He chafed at every stop of the omnibus, which had never moved so slowly in all his experience. He kept pulling out his watch and looking at it in silent protest, as though the driver were doing his utmost to annoy him personally, and were outrageously defying, on behalf of the company, the right of every male Briton to be conveyed to his work at a certain speed. He looked at all the clocks he could see in the shops, telling himself that they were fast, but without feeling any certainty that they were not slow.

Another thing that annoyed Moseley was a couple of books with slippery buckram covers which he carried under his arm. He was to change these for his mother

SIDE-SHOWS

at a library during his luncheon-hour. The night before he had told himself that the books must be wrapped in brown paper, or he would not be able to carry them comfortably; but unaccountably he had not left himself time in the morning. He had had to choose between looking for brown paper and string and having breakfast, and he had chosen breakfast.

When he had jumped on to the omnibus as it passed the end of his street the books had slipped and in saving them he had banged his knee on one of the steps. He had put the insubordinate books on his knees when he sat down, and now they were sliding about as he tried to open and refold his newspaper in the wind. Then his hat attempted to fly away, and the conductor arrived and demanded his fare at the moment when he was battling with hat, newspaper, and slippery books simultaneously. Moseley could not find his penny at once, and the conductor, with silent reproachfulness, moved on to another passenger. When he had found the penny he turned his attention to his newspaper, while he held the penny over his shoulder. He held it there for half a minute, but the conductor was engaged elsewhere. Then he lowered his hand as though to reproach the conductor with putting him to much unnecessary trouble. . . . The books gave a violent plunge for freedom as he dropped off the omnibus on to the road, and he discovered the crowning misfortune of a long queue at the booking-office as he panted into the station.

MOSELEY BLOGG: CLERK

Before his turn came a train arrived and departed - he could see it from where he stood — and an old gentleman in front of him took the opportunity to ask some questions of the booking-clerk, and to count his change with exasperating caution. ... As he passed through to his room in the office, hot, angry, and half-rebellious, the senior clerk eyed him silently. What kind of undiscovered transport was there in London that always brought the senior clerk cool and bland to his appointed place every morning on the tick of 8.55 a.m.?

Once in the haven of the inner room, Moseley could safely allow himself a breather. He entered upon a conversation with his fellow-clerk, Fred Upton, who called him 'Mo.' Moseley did not like this name, as he feared it might be supposed that his name was Moses; but it was a sign of Upton's friendship for him that he continued to call him Mo.

Upton had a hobby - agriculture. Why he had this hobby none could say - least of all himself. His father encouraged him in it, and even borrowed some of his enthusiasm. It was an odd taste for a City clerk, but there was no doubt of its genuineness. On Saturdays, when Moseley went to see a football match, and on Sundays, while he was reading illustrated magazines, Upton was bicycling in the country, studying crops. He hardly dared tell Moseley how interested he was in the issue of an undesigned contest he was watching between beanstalks used as a manure on one field and

SIDE - SHOWS

a certain artificial nitrate manure on another field. Occasionally he spoke of the crops tentatively and deprecatingly, as though he knew that the subject was out of place.

'I can't think why you're so interested in things which have nothing to do with you,' Moseley said once. 'My governor says I shan't get on unless I give my whole mind to business. He doesn't mind me amusing myself, but he'd be awfully sick if he thought I gave up much time to anything serious besides my work.'

'I don't know,' said Upton; 'perhaps he's right. But my father says it's just as well to be interested in as many things as possible, and you must be really awfully keen about some one thing besides your work. It doesn't matter what, he says, so long as you are really keen about it, and get to know more about it than nearly every one else. Nothing that you know is ever wasted, he says. It always comes in some time.'

Moseley reported this to his father, who thought Upton could not be a very serious young man. But on the morning on which Moseley made the painful journey to the office which I have described, Upton told him that a miraculous thing had happened. A few days before he had happened to put his knowledge on some agricultural points at the disposal of the Firm, which was interested in an agricultural syndicate. This had brought him in contact with the syndicate, and the syndicate, which wanted in its secretary the rare com-

MOSELEY BLOGG: CLERK

bination of commercial training and some knowledge of scientific farming, had discovered it in Upton.

Whoever could have foreseen such a fortunate accident? The partners announced officially that they 'regretted' his departure, but 'did not feel justified' in standing in his way.

Moseley returned home and told his father of the miracle. His father said: 'Of course, no one can foresee an accident of that sort. Your friend Upton is very lucky. But, depend upon it, the only safe plan is to concentrate your mind on your business, and think of nothing else. Always be punctual. Never give your superiors reason to complain of you, and one day — Well, look at me!'

And so it happens that Moseley may be seen any morning practising the gospel of punctuality, more or less, on the top of an omnibus in the Fulham Road. His filial mind excludes all those subjects which might possibly inform, illuminate, and sweeten his commercial business. His ambition is to move from the room with five clerks to the room with three clerks, and to marry on the profits about the time he is middle-aged.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Banquet

*

AT a public dinner the other night — there were about five hundred guests — some reflections occurred to me which I shall try to arrange, if only to find out if the ideas yielded by such extraordinary entertainments are capable of arrangement.

This dinner was the first, I think, at which I consciously tried to measure the gradual rise of the babel of voices. There was even a happy time in my life when I was unconscious of this babel, did not notice that there was more noise than usual, or that it was more than usually difficult to make oneself heard in conversation. As I implied, a large public dinner does not leave one with lucid ideas — I make no accusation against myself or anybody; I refer simply to the confusing din and clatter — and so I may be wrong in this assertion, but I think I am not.

The sherry did not introduce any instant or appreciable rise in the noise. Nor did the Madeira and the Chablis, which were offered instead of sherry to those who wished for them. The turtle soup produced a certain peculiar noise of its own — a kind of hissing, as though a residual reptilian instinct in man were asserting itself. But this did not count; the 'amateurs' of large public dinners drink turtle soup like this to assure themselves how much they are enjoying it. 'Turtle,' said Lord Beaconsfield, 'makes all men equal.' But it does

THE BANQUET

not make all men talk. 'Out of the abundance of the mouth the heart speaketh.' This inversion is no doubt true, but the abundance either in drink or meat is not reached so early in a dinner.

And, after all, one could not expect men to babble on sherry. It has heavy, business-like, even funereal associations. It might go with 'baked meats,' but not with a dinner at which the after-dinner speakers are excogitating wit. A very old gentleman said sadly to me the other day: 'No one under sixty likes sherry. Really to like it you had to be twenty years old before the Crimean War.'

I do not know how far to trust the charming precision of that remark, but at all events sherry is dethroned for the purposes of gaiety. We do not believe in it as Tennyson did when he wrote, (after the Crimean War, I think, but he had more than the proper number of years in hand before the war to give him the right to speak, and, anyhow, he wrote of the past):

'But, all his vast heart sherris-warmed,
He flashed his random speeches.'

Nowadays it warms us in an oppressive way, and does not make us flash at all.

What of the hock, then, that came with the fish? No, that helped very little further than the sherry. A pleasant, harmless interpolation it was, 'weak, but palatable,' as the wine-merchant in *Little Dorrit* it says,

SIDE-SHOWS

only put there because champagne does not go with fish.

It was with the arrival of the champagne that the storm burst. The Bollinger loosed all tongues. In five minutes you had to speak into your neighbour's ear if you wanted to be sure that he heard you. But the noise did not stop there. You are not to understand that the noise became greater because any one among all those five hundred respectable persons behaved with unbecoming excitability. Not at all. There was simply a general and inevitable pressing up of the average pitch of voice necessary for audibility.

Thus about the fourth course it happens at all banquets that a good many people, having conquered or thought better of that superior detachment from their fellows which marked them with such dignity before the warming turtle had done its work, have become engaged in intensely interesting discussions not only with their neighbours, but with others two or even three places off. They have to raise their voices to reach their mark, and at the same time they put on others the obligation of raising *theirs*. So the lung-wracking game of capping voices goes on quite unconsciously. The average pitch is worked up and up, and every one conforms to it as unconsciously as one tunes one's voice to a given note. If you fall out of the conversation and re-enter it, you must re-enter it on the right note, otherwise you are nowhere.

THE BANQUET

The ebb and flow of the one hundred and fifty waiters between the courses - what a beautifully drilled procession it is! - can be seen, but not heard. They might be phantoms. I have seen a waiter drop two plates, and they might have fallen on snow. At last it is like trying to talk in the worst of trains going through the worst of tunnels, with every one in a full carriage determined to make himself heard. Heavens, what determination!

The tempest is quelled at last, with a majestic rise and fall of his hand, by the Toast-Master. He seems to flatten out the storm with that gently undulating hand, spiriting away the last feeble insurrectionary murmurs. Then comes his own Titanic roar: 'My Lords and Gentlemen, pray, silence,' etc. As he says this — at least, if he be one of two London Toast-Masters whom I have in my mind — he is a great figure. The cords of his throat swell, the muscles on his brow stand out, his voice booms, his *r*'s roll like kettle-drums, his beard ripples. He is a figure that might have been painted by William Blake; he is good enough for the head of some mystic anthropomorphic hierarchy of spiritual powers.

I wonder if it would be possible for the Toast-Master to quell the storm several times in the evening? If so, he might discharge his functions throughout the dinner. As I have explained, we go on capping one another's noise, and however great the storm, it is continually becoming a little greater. It takes some time,

SIDE-SHOWS

though, to work up to its full fury. If we started our conversations afresh, say, with every course, we should continually be restored to the tones of ordinary conversation. At the end of the evening we should be comparatively strong to listen to the speeches.

This is no figure of speech. It is notorious that often all one's strength is required. Nor had I forgotten the speeches when I said that one came away from a banquet without lucid ideas. I have often wondered whether one would not listen with a juster appreciation to the speeches if one had not to work through so many courses before arriving at them.

But one with far more experience than I can profess tells me I am quite wrong. He says that nothing anchors him to his chair like dinner. Having seen him anchored, I could certainly bear him out. No, that sounds ambiguous. I mean I quite agree with him. He listens with exemplary patience. 'The only thing,' he said after a dinner like this, 'is to smoke. If I can smoke, I don't much mind where I am, and the speeches can go on or not as they please.'

One of the wisest remarks the Prince Consort ever made was that 'everything tasted better in a small house.' In the same way, I should say everything tastes better in a short dinner. But no doubt the experts are right again. At the dinner the other day I heard one man say to another: 'I call this on the whole a slightly better dinner than the one here last year.' The other man

THE BANQUET

said: 'I quite agree. But the one the year before last was appreciably better than either, I think.' The first man said: 'Yes, certainly it was.'

How well such men know their way through all the paths of the wilderness, as it seemed to me! I was astounded.

Would it not be just that those who make speeches should pay less for their dinner? There might be a kind of sliding scale. The man who proposes 'The King' should be let off very little of course, as that is a toast which requires no recommendation. The man who proposes 'The Toast of the Evening,' on the other hand, should have his dinner free. And yet I don't know — it depends upon who he is. There are wretches, I believe, who not only love making speeches when the time comes, but exult all through the dinner on their coming triumph. For those who are nervous, nothing is more shattering than the anticipation of making a speech, unless it is not being called upon for a speech that has been most carefully prepared. 'Suppressed speech' is a very painful disease.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The Lukewarm Sportsman

*

ANYONE who goes in for sport at all hesitates to make such an admission, but I feel it is time to confess — at least, to myself— that I am a lukewarm sportsman. A friend once told me that I ought to have been a fisherman, because I can put up with a very poor day better than anyone he knows. This is very likely true, subject to the trifling objection that I do not care for fishing. I might have retorted that the man who can tolerate a blank day at shooting has that within him which transcends the halting optimism of those sportsmen who cannot get on unless expectation is continually gratified.

Indeed, the true fisherman is called an ardent sportsman just because he can go on flogging his stream for days when nothing is happening. Because I am content to admire the view when there are no birds- I am, probably, the truest of sportsmen; and yet I am not aware that my friends have ever admitted that this is so. Surely there is some contradiction in the philosophy of sport. I look forward to the day when a man who goes out shooting and likes to watch the sky (like a fisherman), and day-dream and meditate (like a fisherman), and even go to sleep (like a fisherman), shall be reckoned the best sportsman. But that revolution has not yet been introduced, and so I can only fall in with the current looseness of thought, and reach the reader's

THE LUKEWARM SPORTSMAN

understanding by describing myself as a lukewarm sportsman.

The best day's sport (I use the word in my own sense) I have had for a long time was one in Scotland which drove the keeper wild. I can only do justice to his wildness by saying that he was as wild as the grouse which got up so far away that they were always on somebody else's moor.

The philosophy of keepers also needs adjustment. At present it is quite out of relation to facts. Take the Scots keepers and stalkers and gillies. To my mind, they ruin sport by their misplaced seriousness. Suppose that I miss a good many of my birds, as I confess I often do, the keeper is distressed, not secretly, but overtly. Another splendid day's sport I remember, when one end of the deep glen in which we were shooting was bathed all the morning in blinding sunlight, while the other was black as doom, and the heights above, where the ptarmigan live, were like glaciers in a white gauzy mist. That day was nearly spoilt by the reproachful discomfiture of the keeper because I missed most of the very few birds at which I got a shot.

'Dear!' I heard him say with as much piety and gloom of accent as when he says 'Amen' in kirk. After saying 'Dear!' several times, I suppose he had exhausted the resources of legitimate expletive, and he slapped his thigh instead. Only once, when I imagine his provoca-

SIDE - SHOWS

tion was, from his absurd point of view, too great to be borne, did he take a really unwarrantable course and say to some one in a voice loud enough for me to hear: 'Did you obsairve that, noo?'

Now, I contend that the keeper is wrong from every standpoint. I come down from London to the moor where that keeper reigns in order to have a holiday. Every moment of it is so delightful compared with the labours and worry of life in London, that though I may be temporarily annoyed at missing an easy shot, I cannot really pretend to be otherwise than happy. The keeper does not see why I should be happy. If I may judge by his bearing, he considers that I ought to be very unhappy, and he tries to make me so.

I can only say that if he wants a record bag for his moor, and thinks that I take a preoccupying interest in the realization of his wishes, he is vastly mistaken. I am not going to play into his hands. The more birds that are missed the greater will be the number for another day, and (as I never can help thinking, although I know that this is said to be quite untrue of grouse) the greater the credit he will gain the next year, if the process continues. He never thinks of that. He simply says 'Dear!' and slaps his thigh. What he wants to do is to intimidate me, and I refuse to let him do it.

If I had a moor of my own, I should not allow Macpherson to take things so appallingly to heart. I should say: 'Macpherson, let us discuss this matter.'

THE LUKEWARM SPORTSMAN

And Macpherson would respond eagerly, because I know he loves arguing.

'Is this moor rented for my pleasure or not?' I should ask next.

'It is rented for the shooting,' Macpherson would answer stoutly.

'Is shooting meant to be a pleasure or an annoyance to me?'

'A pleasure,' Macpherson would reply.

'Very well, then; let it be a pleasure; but it isn't a pleasure if you turn it into a business and go on in this ridiculous way. If I pay for the moor for my pleasure, I want to take my pleasure in my own way.'

And then Macpherson would be silent; at least, he ought to be.

The stalkers who take you out stalking are even worse than the keepers who go out with you grouse-shooting. Imagine the rich and comfortable magnate who rents a deer-forest. He innocently thinks that, as expense is a matter of indifference to him, he may as well have a deer-forest for the autumn as anything else. He arrives, and is led out to the slaughter.

He puffs and gasps as he ascends the rocky hill-side. The stalkers go up like goats. His rifle is carried for him. He is told what to do. He is under the word of command. The stalkers converse in whispers, while the magnate is told to keep his head down. Days of great dignity at company meetings in Cannon Street Hotel

SIDE - SHOWS

poignantly crowd his memory. He bumbles through rank heather, and wallows like a serpent through a peat-swamp. Eventually, after squirming and clambering for an aeon he knows not where or why, he is invited to raise himself gingerly up the face of a rock and peer over the edge of it. There is the stag a hundred yards away! His rifle is handed to him, and he aims as he has been told. He fires. . . .

Well, he has missed. Of course he has missed. What could you expect of the magnate after all that puffing and blowing up the granite and shale of the mountain? Perhaps he does not care much - he has had a thrilling moment, and he will have better luck next time, and a royal shall decorate the wall of his house. But the head-stalker, who was trembling with excitement when the rifle was being aimed, has thrown himself on the ground and sunk into blank despair. He moans and digs his fingers into the ground. He glances at his companions as though he expected them to perform the last rites for the dying over him.

The magnate has his humiliation brought home to him. What he has to understand now (and probably will understand before the next autumn) is that the stalking is not his 'show,' but his men's.

The best day's sport I have had for a long time, as I said, drove the keeper wild. There were no birds, or, rather, there were very few, for I exaggerated when I said they were all on other moors. But, oh, the day!

THE LUKEWARM SPORTSMAN

Light wreaths of mist crowned the mountains; the burns sang and tinkled in the bottoms, the thin waterfalls flashed like jewels on black velvet; sheep moved like ghosts on the face of the hills, and far below the heights a chain of lochs looked like metal touched here and there with snow where the tiny waves were crisped with foam.

A drive was improvised; there were no butts on that part of the moor, and the keeper said that anyhow you could not drive that part, although other experts differ hotly from him. The beaters walked along the face of the mile-long ridge, and the guns waited at the end where the birds would wheel round.

How long did we wait for the birds? I don't know, but it was not half long enough. They came downwind—what a pace! The air was shattered with the whirr of wings as a covey came over the rock behind which •! was. Only one came down. The keeper's face was glum and haggard when he arrived and asked how many birds there were to pick up. . . . Well, really, I believe the best plan would be for the keeper to do the shooting himself. I should be quite pleased, and he could do it as he liked.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

In Bisley Camp

*

IF anyone interested in rifle-shooting ever has a chance of joining the Inns of Court mess at Bisley Camp as an honorary member, he should not fail to seize it. He need not be shy of being an honorary member. He will find that most of his companions at dinner are also honorary members, so wide do the Inns of Court O.T.C. throw their net of hospitality. Everything is well done, even to calling you in the morning. This is done by putting your bed in the position which enables you to get out with as little trouble as possible to yourself if you should show signs of being so foolish as to inconvenience yourself by being late (which means too late) for breakfast. You are there, in fact, not to inconvenience yourself, and a good time you shall have. That is the principle.

My friend Brown is an Inns of Court Volunteer, and it was at his invitation that I became for a short time a member of the mess. Just as most members of the mess at Bisley are not real members, so most Inns of Court Volunteers are not barristers. I have this on the authority of Brown himself.

The chief fact about Brown is that, although he is not a barrister, he comes of a shooting family. His father shot before him. Who did not know the name of Brown in the old Wimbledon days, when it was a name to conjure with from Putney to Richmond? He can

IN BISLEY CAMP

tell you the winner of the King's Prize in any year you like to name, and on the chimney-piece of his smoking-room he has carved the words *Sic perpetuum*, which are the motto, not of the Brown family, but of the N.R.A.

Such exciting stories as there are in the curiously peaceful annals of rifle-shooting Brown *père* has embroidered upon till they are worthy to enter even the repertory of Brown *fils*. The latter admits it, and few sons will say so much for their fathers.

Brown *père* will tell you, for example, how it came about that the poor gravedigger (whose death was one of the most cogent reasons for choosing the new camp at Bisley) was shot by a stray bullet in Kingston Cemetery in the old Wimbledon days. He will tell you how he foresaw that Kingston Cemetery was the one place to which a stray bullet from Wimbledon could find its way; how he had 'warned the authorities'; and how he regrets to this day that he did not warn the gravedigger. It is not necessary to urge more in extenuation of Mr. Brown's story than that the dramatic proprieties are on his side when he goes on to say that the gravedigger was actually digging a grave when he was shot, and that he fell into it.

But the shooting days of the elder Brown are over. He renders to the State now the patriotic service of seeing that his son is a good shot, gives him a fortnight's holiday (which 'does not count') from their common business to go to Bisley, and pays his expenses. He has

SIDE - SHOWS

been heard to say that if his son could win the King's Prize he would die happy. Mrs. Brown says this is 'tempting Providence.'

The Inns of Court O.T.C. possess a building at Bisley which anywhere else would be used as a cricket-pavilion, and be called a remarkably good one. They dine in it; they sleep in tents outside. As you look round this charmingly neat encampment you see the great white city of Bisley camp stretched before you. On one side you see the large building which proclaims the prosperity of the N.R.A. You see a street of shops, you see a railway station, you see a thousand tents, oil-lamps on posts to light the grassy streets, bungalows which are clubs and bungalows which are rented as private houses for the meeting, many of them with little gardens of calceolaria, and marguerites, and petunias, and lupines, and larkspur, and geraniums, and nasturtiums.

On the other side you see woods and open heath and high land pressed up into the heavens, where the air is cool and fit for gods to breathe, and beyond that again is a horizon made of high-edged hills, looking for all the world as though Nature had circumvallated the camp to prevent bullets from killing gravediggers in other parts of England.

The morning after my arrival Brown said at breakfast: 'I'm not squadded for any big shoot to-day. I'm just going to have a whack all round at some of these

IN BISLEY CAMP

unlimited competitions, so I can show you a little of everything.'

Accordingly we started. Brown carrying his match-rifle slung on his shoulder and a large mahogany box filled with apparatus that for bulk would have done no discredit to a distinguished microscopist. We looked at the hundred yards range, where the shooting for the Greener prizes goes on from morning till night, and the targets are wound up and down the range on trolleys which are worked from the firing-point. 'Not enough room for me,' said Brown. A prone figure lay on every mat, and others — heaps of others — waited to take their places. Battered cardboard targets lay about the ground. Brown glanced at these. 'You must make a possible to have a chance of even a low prize here,' he said. 'Some men do nothing else. You can spend a lot on making very little. A bad system of finance. Besides,' he added, as he turned away, having made sure with a final glance that there was likely to be no room for him, 'it's a kind of pot-hunting.'

We looked at the revolver ranges.

'Do you shoot here ever?' I asked.

Brown slowly closed one eye while he looked very astutely out of the other. After this significant action was ended he said: 'I'm neither a conjurer nor a sailor. Look at this champion,' he added, as a grave Scotsman walked up and paid his money at the window of one of the little booking-offices. The grave, bearded Scotsman

SIDE-SHOWS

in civilian's clothes signed his name on the ticket, and announced to the range-officer, distinguished by the white band on his arm, that he wished to shoot for a certain one of the competitions open to all-comers. Then he drew a revolver in a case out of his right-hand pocket and another out of his left-hand pocket.

'This is all new to me,' I said. 'Who are these men who go in for revolver-shooting, and carry their weapons about the country as anyone else carries about golf-clubs or tennis-racquets?' 'Don't know,' said Brown, 'but it's no use anybody else going in.'

The Scotsman had a long line of medals sewn down the side of his left sleeve. He chose a target and began, after the range-officer had punched his ticket just as a ticket-collector punches railway-tickets. The sergeant who kept the register[^] pulled up his chair, and sat down under his umbrella to take the score. With the revolver at arm's length, bringing it slowly down at each shot from pointing into the sky, the man fired — snap, snap, snap, snap, snap — five times. Then he stopped. 'Not worth going on,' said Brown. 'A man like that must make a possible or nothing. He'll buy another ticket now, you'll see.'

And so he did. That is the meaning of 'unlimited' competitions. A Navy warrant-officer was just beginning as we came away.

We moved on to Stickledown range. 'Here I stop for a bit,' said Brown. He took a ticket for the 'Arm-

IN BISLEY CAMP

ourers,' so he said, and we faced the targets goo yards away. 'I want a few practice shots first,' said Brown to the range-officer. 'You can have forty-nine' was the answer, and opposite No. 49 target Brown lay down. No devout son of the Orient ought to be able to see so many mats as lie at the firing-points without falling in prayer, and no marksman so devout as Brown can delay falling on his face when a mat is empty before him.

'You ought to see me get into my sling; it's a family trick,' he said, as he stepped inside the ropes. It certainly was a wonderful thing to see. Brown ducked his head through the strap, gave a wriggle, another wrench of the head, and made a flinging motion with his arms, and there he was, lying on the mat, his legs drawn to the left, and his rifle snug and tight to his shoulder, with his cheek pressed knowingly against the stock.

But first of all there was much to be done with the mahrfgany box. Brown drew out his Zeiss glasses, and after a casual glance at the streaming flags along the range which make the long, empty avenue up which you shoot like a street prepared with Venetian masts for a royal procession, he looked long and earnestly at the mirage drifting across the bleak, staring line of white targets against the yellow sandbank. Then orthoptics came out of the box, and Brown, fitting these across his forehead, seemed to have a black eye. Then a Vernier came out, and Brown worked at the little nickel-plated slide and decided what elevation he would allow for, and

SIDE-SHOWS

what lateral lines for windage he would draw on his sliding-bar, and then he painted these with white paint.

'Are you standing by, forty-nine?' said the range-officer into his telephone. 'Standing easy? Well, stand by at once.' So Brown began to fire, crept nearer the bulls at each shot till he was satisfied, and then moved to another mat and another target.

'Brown, magpie, three. Brown, bull, five. Brown, bull, five,' I heard the scorer's voice coming in a kind of intermittent chant. At the end of it all Brown had not done badly. 'I ought to get a guinea for that score,' he said.

But, alas for Brown! he gave the wrong ticket up (he had so many in his pockets), and the wrong ticket was sent by the mounted orderly who collects such things to headquarters. 'I can be fined ten shillings,' he said, when he discovered the mistake. 'If I get a guinea prize, I shall make seven shillings on the deal, as the entrance-fee was four shillings.' Of such triumphs is the happiest part of Brown's life composed.

Bang! a very loud bang. 'Gun-fire,' said Brown. 'No more firing now till after luncheon.' The crowd of shooters bristled up from the ground — men in puggarees, white and yellow; men in uniform; men in old flannel trousers and Norfolk jackets; men in Panama hats or sombreros or forage-caps; men in knickerbockers and gaiters or puttees; men with leather patches sewed

IN BISLEY CAMP

on the elbows on which they lean when they fire. A curate went with them, his match-rifle treasured in its leather case.

After luncheon Brown took me to the exhibition tent. Secretly, I believe Brown makes a point of walking through that tent every day on his way to the hut of the 'English Twenty Club' in order to sharpen his ambitions. There, too, he sees the famous chair mounted on poles in which the winner of the King's Prize is chaired year after year, amid the generous if jealous cheers of his opponents. He walks meditatively past it; he sees, as in a vision, the annual procession, with the chair bobbing among the shouting throng, and he says to himself, perhaps: 'There, but for singular ill-luck, goes Private Brown.'

Brown nodded to his friends as we moved about the camp. 'What have you done?' said he. 'What have you done?'- said they in response.

'Well, what *have* they done?' said I. 'I don't know,' said he, 'and I don't want to know, any more than they want to know what *I've* done. When some one says "How d'ye do?" do you ever dream of giving an account of your ailments? No, you say "How d'ye do?" back again.'

But to one man Brown did make his compliments at some length. The man was an Oxford man. Brown was at Cambridge. In a snap-shooting competition the Oxford team, although they did not win, had been con-

SIDE-SHOWS

gratulated on the way in which they 'took cover' behind their boxes. That tickled Brown very much. *I hear even your noses couldn't be seen,' he kept saying. 'You must have done it splendidly. It's a great thing to be able to take cover well. Did you come out to fire at all?'

Brown's humour is a pillar of the mess, and he acquired great credit years ago by inventing a story about the Russian team, which was one of several from foreign countries. He said that the one Russian who arrived on the first day of the meeting thought he had come in time (as, indeed, he had, according to the Russian calendar) for a nice long quiet practice before the meeting began. The manager of the team, who did not need to come till the meeting began, might be expected the day after the meeting was over.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The Only Place for a Holiday

*

THE most aerial and entrancing form of mirage at sea is that which makes a low-lying piece of land in the distance seem to be suspended between heaven and earth, which shows you the tops of trees deprived of their trunks swimming in a glistening streak of light, which gives you shapes that are half-shapes, and yet are none the less hard and clear; which turns the substance into shadow and gives shadows substance.

I can recall three different occasions in Brittany when a mirage, swooning on the horizon, seemed to compel me towards its delights, and each time I was unable to get there. Those mirages are like hope shining through experience. Thank goodness-is it too prodigiously philosophical to say this? — we generally *are* deprived of the means of getting there, and the image remains in the memory an unexplored picture to be brought out and examined on suitable occasions, projected, if you will, on the screen of an opaque London gloom.

Some mirages that I have seen have been dispersed even as I looked; down came the cooling squall, the clarifying shower of rain, and the tops of the floating trees hooked themselves on to their roots, growing from above downwards; the crests of shivering rocks became firm-rooted on the earth, and the land disentangled itself from the sky and water. The magic was gone; the whole was much less beautiful. Well, the last time I

SIDE-SHOWS

was in Brittany there was another mirage. The cooling squall did swoop down; the relentless clarifying shower did wash away all the heavenly mockeries, but oh! there remained the vision, the radiance —

I had written to this point when a friend, secure in his knowledge that he cannot presume too far with me, as he knows my respect for his judgment, picked up the paper and read what was on it.

'You're pitching it a bit high,' he said. 'How are you going to keep up to all this about mirages and swooning horizons and visions and hope shining through experience?' And then he added: 'Let's have the name of the place plumb out.'

I explained in language which I thought my chastening friend would tolerate, that great occasions require special words, and to have discovered the only place in the world for a holiday was, as it seemed to me, the occasion of a lifetime.

'Well, where's the place?' he asked again. Again I explained (language suitably restrained) that if he insisted on my writing down the name at once I should spoil 'the great literary principle of Suspense.' In brief, it was necessary that my reader should be encouraged earnestly to desire to know the name of the place before it was presented to him.

'I don't mind being encouraged,' he said, 'if it don't take too long.'

THE ONLY PLACE FOR A HOLIDAY

The world is divided, I explained, into two classes - those to whom water in some form is essential in their holiday, and those to whom it is not essential. For those who want water a holiday out of sight of it is cramped, unsatisfying, impossible. Belonging to that class myself, I find the sea alone satisfactory; but if I were forced to remain inland I should gravitate towards a river; and if I were kept from a river I should walk by a canal; and if there were no canal I should look for a running ditch; and if there were no ditch I should think a horse-pond better than nothing.

This desire answers to some primal requirement - perhaps to freedom. For water is free. If you look on a road, you know that that road goes to a certain place and ends there, or, at all events, ends where the land ends. But when water flows to the sea it joins it, and becomes a stronger power, an expansion or glorification of itself. You sit on the edge of the sea, and in all its movements it seems to remind you that all the ways of the world are open to you. If you have a boat and enough hardihood, the wind, which is at your disposal, will take you to the Cape and Chile and China and Polynesia. You have only to start. Your thoughts, your emotions, are directed by water - they are hydro-dynamic. You are a disciple of the higher Thaliamism, because for you water means all.

So far all is clear; but then there are certain undoubted amenities of the interior of countries-luxuri-

SIDE - SHOWS

ance of vegetation and shelter - which are seldom found on the coast because of the parchings and the power of the sea-wind. How can these amenities be combined with the possession of the sea? No doubt there are places where the combination exists, but they are filled to overflowing, and quietness itself is an amenity. Hence for some people a long search, which becomes a dream after it has ceased seriously to be a search. I, too, had almost given up the search and fallen back on my mirages and the dream.

Now, this is what I used to see in my dream, and now know in reality. There is a harbour deep enough for all the shipping of the world, and large enough for all the shipping to lose itself in winding recesses. The harbour is without shoals or banks, and without strong tides. There is nothing to harm the small boats in which I sail. And this harbour is protected from the ocean by a long, narrow, towering isthmus. From the "placid harbour you can walk across this isthmus and instantly behold at your feet the white fury of the Atlantic rolling across unchecked from America, and battering the impregnable fortresses of a granite coast. Moreover, the isthmus shelters the harbour shores from the prevailing wind, and grapes and vegetables and rich wild flowers furnish the slopes. Finally, the daily spectacle of a simple, devout, and picturesque people engaged in an elemental struggle with the sea, not as the masters of seaside pleasure-boats, but as the authentic *travail-*

THE ONLY PLACE FOR A HOLIDAY

leurs de la mer. Having discovered that, I said fairly that the mirage had screened a radiant reality. The spot is in Brittany —

My friend had just admitted that my general and particular statements of the case had his approval, and was on the point of again demanding the name, when the postman arrived. He brought me an unexpected postcard from a great friend, who wrote: 'Have come across your tracks here. Congratulations on your choice. This is just a line to say for goodness' sake don't write about it. The secret is good enough to keep.'

That was a challenge to loyalty which I could not disregard. I apologized to my critic for my reticence, and he assured me that the claims of the reader, at all events, might be disposed of more readily than his. For it is always possible to plead the high authority of Sterne in *Tristram Shandy* for putting the reader off after all.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

A Cottage in the Country

if

SHE and I have been looking for 'a cottage in the country' for years. At first we went studiously through all the advertisements in the papers in which we judged that people of sense and taste would be likely to advertise. We felt warm gratitude to those who gave romantic descriptions of their cottages and mentioned the rent, for then we were able to see the whole thing in imagination, and we also knew whether we could afford it. We despised those who neither described their houses nor mentioned the rent — their advertisements were as uninteresting as the shop windows of curiosity-shops where the things are not priced — but our resentment and hatred and mistrust were reserved for those who gave romantic descriptions but did not mention the rent. In the end we came to the conclusion that people never advertise exactly the kind of cottage we want. •

As we go about the country in our searches we are coming to understand that this must be so. We have got long past the stage when we talked with reckless cheeriness of 'the simple life' and of 'roughing it.' Those phrases belonged to our first year. We know now that 'the simple life,' so far as it is not an evasion, is a pose; and 'roughing it' means, in one word, dirt.

The simple life would mean something if its practitioners went to an uninhabited island and lived like

A COTTAGE IN THE COUNTRY

Crusoe. Thoreau nearly lived the simple life so far as appearances went, but his self-consciousness made his life actually as sophisticated as that of the people who live simple lives in England. The test of the simple life is whether its simplicity makes the lives of other people any less complicated. If it does not your simple life is the life of simple humbug. You help to perpetuate difficulties, and flatter yourself on being superior to them. And though 'roughing it' is a less vainglorious form of humbug, it is no more useful and no more purifying. The people who do not rough it by preference can generally rough it best when there is need. Few of us believe in the general efficacy of hair shirts.

So she and I long ago renounced the simple life and 'roughing it.' We should like a cottage that looks rambling and attractively old outside - built of those very dark-red bricks which are not made nowadays — but has been improved inside by some capitalist. We should not mind if there were an artesian well in the garden and a windmill pump on long spindlelegs, and, of course, in that case the water would be laid on in pipes, and there would be bath-rooms. That the kind of house we want exists we know, because we see a continually increasing number of examples of it all over the country. But I have never seen an empty one. Empty ones are like dead donkeys. Probably they are not advertised, because the friends or the friends of the friends of the occupiers arrange to take them over long before they fall empty.

SIDE-SHOWS

There is no need to go inside these houses to know what they are like, how they have been transformed. Their character appears in the windows. Windows are the eyes of houses, and tell secrets.

The walls of these houses may be crumbling, but the window-sashes are painted a leaf-green or a creamy white - colours that first came and conquered London in the artists' houses of Chelsea and St. John's Wood. The windows are screened with flax curtains. The brass knocker on the door was fashioned by a craftsman who was also an artist. It was not put on by an architect who bought a gross to go the round of all his houses of the same kind. On the other hand, the Art Nouveau is shunned like the devil. So by just looking at the front of the house you have the clue to the people inside, as much as you have the clue when you see — to take the other extreme - a window covered with coffee-coloured lace curtains, and inside a shrub in a light-blue pot set upon a bamboo pedestal.

Having abandoned all method in our search, we wander about looking for the cottage as Peggotty looked for Little Em'ly. We have no process of elimination. We just act as though a miracle would happen. I know not how many counties we have scoured, like a couple of Vanderdeckens, never able to end our voyages. But lately the field of search has become somewhat restricted. Although this restriction has imported a definiteness into our investigations for the first time since

A COTTAGE IN THE COUNTRY

the present phase began, it has also curtailed the hope of a successful issue.

It happened in this way: She wanted a cottage with a sheltered garden inland, where she could grow herbaceous borders containing certain notoriously delicate plants. I wanted to be near the sea, to indulge a passion for sailing. For years, however, we acted on the principle that we should discover a cottage so ravishing, so unquestionable in its charms, that I would throw over the sea or she the inland climate. But no great sacrifice is required now on either side. For one day I said: 'Should you object to being near the sea if there was an enormous great barrier between your garden and it, so that you could never see the sea, and were completely sheltered from it?'

'No,' she said, 'I don't think I should object to that.'

'Then,' I said, 'we can find the right place for both of us. It shall be in a cup of the Sussex Downs, only two or three miles from the sea. Unless you climb up the mountain at the back of the house, and look over, you will never guess the sea is there! We will take on as servant some one from the nearest village who has not seen the sea for thirty years. I'm certain there are such people.'

So it was agreed. And lately, having time to spare, we ran down to Sussex.

'Let's begin,' I said, 'at the sea, and work inland.'

SIDE - SHOWS

I shouldn't like to feel afterwards that we had taken a house farther away from the sea than necessary.'

'All right,' she said.

We began at a coastguard-station, which was not to let. In accordance with our method, which is still based on an unexhausted belief in the miraculous, we asked a pleasant young coastguardsman if he could tell us where to find the kind of cottage we had been searching for for several years. He looked puzzled. Why a cottage here? It was very lonely. The Downs were very ugly and bleak. The winter was something awful. You might be in the tomb. Why not a nice little house in Brighton, or Eastbourne, or Hastings? If we had really made up our minds to come to the other end of nowhere he hoped we shouldn't go mad. At all events, let us beware of having a house on the cliff. One never knew whether houses on the cliff might not move off somewhere during the night. This was a warning he was anxious to emphasize.

'Why, only last week,' he said, 'there was a gentleman sitting under that chalk cliff with a lady. Sweethearting, I suppose they was. And I went up to 'em, and I said: "I shouldn't sit there, sir, if I was you." He seemed all took aback at me coming up to 'em, and he says: "Why, what's wrong?" And I says: "It ain't safe." Then he says: "Why ain't it safe? I ain't a fool, exactly." I says: "Very well, sir. You must choose for yourself. But / wouldn't sit there - not even *under your*

A COTTAGE IN THE COUNTRY

circumstances." "That will do," he says. But presently he got up to come along the beach after me, thinking, perhaps, he wasn't going to be too brave, after all. Well, 'e 'adn't 'ardly moved a few steps when down come the cliff—thousands of tons of it—on the very place where they'd been setting. He was white when he passed me, I can tell you. Chalk? Oh no. Not white with chalk; 'e was scared. Though part of the fall did 'it him on the boot, and nearly tore the 'eel off.'

The coastguardsman looked at his wife for confirmation, and she nodded as though to say that the story varied in no particular from the story as she had always heard it.

'The gentleman didn't even say "Thank you," ' went on the coastguardsman; 'and I wasn't going to say nothing more. Well, the next day he comes walking over from Seaford, and I says to my missus: " 'Is conscience 'as been pricking 'im." The gendeman says to me: "That was a bit of a fall yesterday. 'Ere's a drink for you." 'E gave me sixpence, and I says: "Perhaps you'll allow as those who live on the spot ought to know." '

The wife nodded again.

But houses a little farther inland? Say, beyond the first barrier of Downs, where they would be reasonably safe. The coastguardsman's face brightened. 'Why, yes, over there, as far as you can see, near the little

SIDE - SHOWS

church, a farm 'as been sold, and several cottages are empty. The farm belonged to a Duke.'

She and I exchanged glances. Ducal farm-cottages are invariably well built. Was the miracle at hand? Was Little Em'ly heaving in sight?

We started off. Oh, the Downs! The smoothness of them! These great sweeps and shoulders of grass, at once noble and forlorn, looking as though polished by the wind as sand is licked and polished into smoothness by the tides.

After walking two hours we had lost sight of our objective. We were in a deep cup, and looking upwards, we saw flying shreds of cloud converging from the rim of the cup like smoke making a canopy over a crater. And the sky was unquestionably darkening.

'We shall get lost soon,' I said. 'Let's look for the road. We'll come and see the cottages next week.'

'We shall find some one living in them — as 'usual,' she said.

'We've had a splendid day,' I answered.

'I sometimes wonder if you really want to find a cottage,' she retorted.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

In a Country House

*

I. THE ARRIVAL

MY drive of several miles through the dark from the country railway-station to Racket Hall reminded me of marching with an army through a desert to attack a fortified place. Certainly I had no army to support me; I went, lonely, like Napoleon in that one respect, at the head of my moral forces. It was my misfortune to be coming after the house-party at Racket Hall had already been assembled two days.

I knew from experience what this meant. I knew that the rapid personal cleavages and alliances which take place in a party would already be in existence, and that I should have to try to fit myself in with them, and perhaps be regarded like a European State which tries to disturb the clumsy but established arrangement of things:

After a considerable drive on a black night one has an intensified sense of the splendid comfort, remarkable refinement, and advanced civilization of Racket Hall. It seems odd as you drive up to the glowing pile which appears to be floating on a sable ocean, like a great liner at night in the Atlantic, that this cosmos should exist in this remote spot. Like the dim light in the cottage window which safely guides the labourer home across a mile or two of rough country, the lights of Racket Hall have their own proportionate value. You feel as though

SIDE-SHOWS

you had discovered an unsuspected civilization flourishing in the midst of the Masai or a Bantu tribe.

The people inside the house, you say to yourself, ought to be inaccessible. And perhaps they are. Afflicting doubt! Why was I so foolish as to come two days after every one else?

I found the house-party in the servants' hall, having tea. I do not know how it is, but whenever I come here the dining-room is empty of furniture, because we are to dance in it; the drawing-room is too full of furniture, because we are to sit out in it; the billiard-room is closed because the dining-room furniture is stored in it; the library and morning-room are forbidden because we are to have supper in them; and so we go to the servants' hall

Whether it has been carefully thought out by Mrs. Tophole Rackham, the hostess of Racket, I cannot say, but this, at all events, is certain, that the habitual retirement of her largest parties to the servants' hall strikes a note of informality which is possibly the secret of the success of every one of the long series of memorable entertainments which this most amiable of hostesses has given here.

It is related of Mrs. Tophole Rackham that once, being suddenly seized by a conviction that she had a heavy lot in hand for a dinner-party, she told the butler to put something in the doorway of the drawing-room, in order that the last guest to arrive (who happened to be

IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

a nervous young man) might trip over it. The nervous young man, being more nervous than usual because he was so late, did trip over it. Indeed, he fell over it, and entered the room on all fours. 'That,' said Mrs. Tophole Rackham to herself, as she led the good-humoured laughter, 'has broken the ice.'

That is the principle of life which prevails at Racket Hall — that the ice must always be broken, even, if necessary, by the breaking of somebody else's head. It is said by some that when the young man picked himself up he shook hands with his hostess, and then, walking round behind her, shook hands with her again, from the other side, under the confused impression that she was some one else. The butler gave notice, but the dinner-party went off far better than it could possibly have done in any other house, and Mrs. Rackham, in the circumstances, counted the butler well lost.

Young Tophole Rackham has inherited some and acquired some of the ways of his large-hearted and sagacious mother. I have known him stay in bed in the morning till he was positively assured that all his men guests had reached the breakfast-room. He explained to himself that he could not bear to think of any of his guests feeling at all ill at ease through being unduly late. By staying in bed himself he removed all danger of their suffering.

It will be seen that if the house-party at Racket has any appearance of inaccessibility to a late-comer, it is

SIDE-SHOWS

not the fault of the hostess; it is the result simply of those habits of repulsion and attraction among house-parties themselves which determine their grouping.

My investigations lead me to believe that the deciding factor in the success of a house-party is what may be called the 'house-party joke.' This is very important. It is often very foolish, but that does not diminish its importance. The joke is a test by which you are known as suitable or unsuitable for that particular party. It never becomes stale (in the opinion of those who survive the test), but it very often becomes cryptic; so that a mere suggestion of it is enough for the enlightened, and causes unbounded laughter, to the bewilderment of the stranger.

The joke need not, then, have any merit. The test is personal — of a person's willingness to be amused by something not invariably amusing. By the time the joke has become cryptic it has weeded out the intolerable persons whose humour is not equal to sustaining a continual appreciation of it. Fortunately for me, directly I entered the servants' hall the elusive character of the conversation aroused some responsive echoes in my mind, which I could not at once explain. Suddenly I remembered. The same joke was in existence when I was here last year! I was naturally overjoyed. I was able to enter the lists with as much zest as anyone there and then.

Of course, I cannot disguise from myself that, in

IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

spite of the hospitable efforts of my admirable hostess, I am still, in a certain degree, an interloper. To arrive late, like this, is like trying to storm a full railway-carriage. The hand of every man inside that carriage is against you, but when you have forced your way in you are, after a short period of chilliness, added, by unanimous agreement, to the garrison, and you yourself help to maintain the sanctity which you had previously assailed. Often, however, the intruder is helped by a little kindly treachery from inside the fort.

Quite apart from the joke which I was mercifully enabled to penetrate so easily, I may say that I am not unsuited to make my way here. I like children and boys and girls, and the house is generally half full of them. I do not shrink from throwing sponges or pillows when necessary; I am quite accustomed to black my face, and I can sing choruses as much out of tune as anyone.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

In a Country House (*continued**)

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II. ONE OF THE GUESTS

Miss EVERGREENE, I salute you! No one has ever described you or praised you or criticized you in print before. There is good reason for this omission. First, you are not a conspicuous person; and, secondly, your inconspicuous qualities invite neither praise nor censure.

Yet it is time some one did you justice. I feel that the duty is laid upon me, because I have had ample opportunities of studying you, and, if I may put it so, you are an institution. All institutions ought to be described. You have been a member of a larger number of house-parties, of which I also have been a member, than I care to count. Wherever I go, there are you. I do not mean that you follow me; it would be presumption to flatter myself with anything of that sort when hundreds of others could do the same. Wherever any of us goes there are you.

I remember that when I arrived at one house I asked some fellow-guests, 'Who's staying here?' The manner in which your name was mentioned and received was significant of your position as a guest in all houses, and that is why I refer to so trifling a passage. Somebody answered: 'There's So-and-so, and So-and-so, and So-and-so, and (a pause) - oh yes - Miss Evergreene.' Whereupon the voices of the new arrivals joined in a

IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

simultaneous 'Oh yes!' That 'Oh yes!' was confirmatory. It meant that we knew you must be there, and that consequently we were not surprised. We merely noted without comment an inevitable fact.

Now, *why* were you there? and *why* are you always everywhere? That is what I want to understand. Of course, you are equable and good-tempered. That would have been unfailingly acknowledged by anyone who was — if anyone ever was till this moment — incited to discuss your character. You might even be called serene, if your invariably unruffled demeanour conveyed to the onlooker any sense of a virtuous triumph over recognized annoyances. But probably you do not feel anything acutely enough for it to be said that self-control is in you a merit.

A large part of the explanation of you is that you are a 'safe' person for every party. You will not — because you are incapable of it - say or do anything startling. If no one is glad to have come to a house because you are there, certainly no one can possibly be annoyed because you are there. You are, then, excellent ballast. If 'one more woman' is wanted, yours is the name that jumps at once to the lips of host and hostess.

Your age, too, is in your favour. A hostess who invites you never feels the responsibility of having an unattached 'young girl' in her house; and yet you are not too old (theoretically) for the 'youngest gentleman in company,' as they used to say at Todgers's, to pair off

SIDE-SHOWS

with in these days, when all young men seriously compare the charms of an experienced age with those of an unsullied youth. You could go in to dinner as well with a subaltern as with a lieutenant-general. Another reason why you are always there is perhaps that you never refuse an invitation which you can possibly accept. Your life is composed of visits.

You are a phenomenon, my dear Miss Evergreene, which ought to be recorded in every adequate catalogue of social characters. You happen to have been born and reared among people who make it a practice to entertain frequently and generously; and as your time is at your disposal, you are only doing what might be expected of you. But I sometimes wonder whether the principles on which it is always judged worth while to include you in a house-party have been thought out from the beginning. Of course, you are well-bred, and your manners are all that that phrase suggests. But where the purpose of gathering people together under one roof is to secure that they shall amuse or inform one another, I ask whether good breeding is in itself enough. It appears to be assumed, on what ground of logic I know not, that it is.

Your method of conversation generally is never to venture on any remark which would suggest that you have observed anything independently, or ever come to any conclusion on your own authority. A high percentage of all that you said to me at dinner last night

IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

was a repetition of things that had been said immediately before by somebody else. But by what rule you select some remarks for repetition and leave others without that distinction *I* have never been able to discover. The mere act of repetition might have some corroborative value if only other things led one to suppose that your sanction was of value.

In my recollection, you have never seen the exact point of any humorous situation or story. You give a generous assent to all sallies with the politest of smiles that suits, or, it may be, misfits, the occasion. Many people must have been encouraged by that smile, before they knew you as well as I do, to think that you had recognized an opening, and that the next move in the game of conversation would prove that you had done so. But, alas! your next move invariably shows that you have quite a different line of thought in your mind — if, indeed, one may call that 'thought' which closes all channels and builds unscaleable barriers across what ought to be an easy thoroughfare.

To the more violent forms of humour, such as practical jokes and the combats of cushions and wet sponges, you extend what might be called a benevolent neutrality. You never join in the tumult heartily enough to displease your hostess, or to make it possible for one to say to which side you belong. You neither withdraw nor participate. You have been known to urge on others with words which were taken to mean less

SIDE-SHOWS

than their unusual bravado implied. As a rule, you beam a passive consent upon the whole business.

The reasons which cause invitations to be showered upon you are not, I know, to be dismissed with derision. For their purpose they are valid. But sometimes, as I have sat next you at dinner, I have reflected that if a woman who sews button-holes in shirts at sweated wages could suddenly take your place and tell me her history, the improvement in my situation would be not less than thrilling.

I should like to feel that you apply yourself to some simple but useful occupation which compounds for your insufficiency in what is ostensibly the chief purport of your life; but I cannot see where you would find the time to fit it in. No; you have probably decided — if you have discovered that any problem is involved at all - that your manifest destiny is to change your clothes three times a day, and preserve a constant good temper, and be waited upon, and repeat the remarks of others as good manners and an inherited instinct direct.

If you believe that these things are enough, you do them to admiration.

CHAPTER TWENTY - SEVEN

In a Country House (*continued*)

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III. THE CHILDREN'S PARTY

I AM at the opposite pole both in enthusiasm and a juvenile spirit to the young gentlemen who are almost growing out of Eton collars, and who have a thorough contempt for 'boshy games and a conjurer,' as 'Vice Versa' says. I suppose they come to children's parties only because they are sent with their little sisters. It has always seemed to me natural to think of children as the most interesting and amusing of little animals. I like dogs and I like kittens; I think a puppy biting its mother, or a kitten ambushing its tail, is near the perfection of attractiveness in animal life. But the gradual stages of a baby which is co-ordinating its senses, focusing its eyesight, learning the difference between a round object and an angular object by sliding its hand over them, are all so much slower, so much more deliberate, and so much more important, that they are in that degree the more interesting.

I must not digress, however, into the subject of babies, who are not asked to children's parties. All I want to do is to record my astonishment that young men who like puppies (and sometimes even cats) do not care a rap for the puppies and kittens of their own kind. Occasionally I meet a young man who does care. In every case, I have discovered that this unusual interest is the symptom of other rare and attractive attributes.

SIDE-SHOWS

I believe, though, there are some young men who disguise their liking for children. This dissimulation is excusable in Master Eton Collars, who has a tremendous ideal of severity and importance to live up to, and who can live up to it only on a certain recognized plan which for good or ill is unalterable. But when he becomes twenty years old and more he ought to distinguish between the necessary and unnecessary causes of embarrassment.

Perhaps he is intimidated by the modern hullabaloo about sentimentality. But the people who abjure and deride the best sentiments in the world, lest they should be thought capable of sentimentality by a few persons who confuse the metal and the alloy, and whose opinion is, in any case, valueless, are in danger of becoming a nuisance. They are like the man who always roars like a lion lest anyone should think him able to bleat like a lamb. It is much better to be a lamb till the great occasion discovers you to be a lion. And though it may be fashionable to pretend that you have not got a heart, it is no less idiotic.

These rambling but sincere reflections are prompted by the young men who were asked to help at the children's party. With one exception (and he was the best of the bunch in numerous other ways) they were as much use as a sick headache.

I should not have noticed it so much if there had not been a Frenchman there. Have you ever seen the

IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

average Frenchman playing with children? With all the conscious finesse of his life and his wits, he is the most splendidly unconscious creature with children that civilization has produced. He is a pig, a bear; he ruffles his hair, and keeps his end up at conversation with unflagging zest, while the Englishman is still wondering exactly how grotesque he would look if he pretended to be a pig, exactly how much his trousers would be bagged at the knees if he became a bear, and racking his brain about the subjects which are suitable for children without being derogatory to himself. Perhaps you have seen a bourgeois Parisian in the Bois on Sunday afternoon. He plays *cache-cache* in his city clothes. He is miserably uncomfortable, but he does not know it, and would not care if he did. The French, of course, are not exactly *amateurs* of comfort.

But here is an example of the English manner: Two very small children who had not seen each other before were put down side by side in the hope that they might amuse each other. They looked at each other appalled for a few seconds, and then simultaneously burst into howls. A young man who had been looking on in mute and helpless bewilderment at the approaching tragedy said: 'Now that's very odd. I should have thought they would have had a good deal in common.'

There was a member of Parliament there who played his part with great *bonhomie* and condescension, as though this were the kind of patronage which it was his

SIDE-SHOWS

duty to bestow in the recess. His plan was to ask the children riddles, all of which happened to turn upon his own occupation in life. Thus: Why is a member of Parliament like a shrimp? Because he has got M.P. at the end of his name. — Why is a corrupt member of Parliament like a bad steeplechase rider? Because he is generally unseated. — Why are the seats in the House of Commons like Niobe? Because they are in tiers. — Why cannot the Prime Minister insure his life? Because no one can make out his policy.

You can imagine that the children who were posed by this homogeneous series were not exactly CEDipuses at guessing. But he had the advantageous position of the Sphinx, which seemed to satisfy him.

The great success of the party was the game called 'Brother, I am bobbed!' Two chairs were put back to back, and two of the young men 'who had come to help' — I have some qualms at this point whether I have not been unjust to the class — sat on them. One of them, A, knew what was going to happen; the other, B, did not. A tablecloth was put over them, but A, unknown to B, quietly slipped his head from underneath. We then all started to march round them like savages, slashing the air with shoes, paper-knives, and such-like. A cried out, 'Brother, I am bobbed!' and B, according to his instructions, asked, 'Who bobbed you?' A named somebody, and we, according to our instructions, said 'Right!' A then tapped B on the head with a shoe. B, according

IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

to his instructions, said, 'Brother, I am bobbed,' and A asked, 'Who bobbed you?' B named somebody. 'Wrong!' we all shouted, and A bobbed him again harder.

This went on, the whacks becoming harder every time he guessed wrong, until I wondered when B would give in. It was a very curious spectacle, this young man under the cloth holding out because he thought that the whacks came from the crowd, and that by the whole crowd his endurance was being judged, and A whacking away spitefully, as though he had got his oldest enemy at his mercy.

At last B was invited to come out, which he did, looking very red, but justly feeling that his honour was saved. Later, a small boy innocently said to B: 'I wouldn't have stood being swiped over the head by A like that!' Then I saw B, after a moment of astonishment, march very upright across the room to A, and what he said I did not hear, but I could guess it from the look on his face. The game and the sequel were very British.

The Frenchman was astounded.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

In a Country House (*continued*)

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IV. MAN PROPOSES

MRS. RACKHAM asked me to stay longer than I had intended, and asked me so particularly and persuasively — for it seemed that I was to help to save the party from collapse — that I could not well refuse. It was a bore two of her guests suddenly bolting — Everard and Miss Toogood. They did not bolt with one another, by the way — quite the reverse. But that is what I have to explain.

My things were packed on Tuesday night ready to start early the next morning. Fuss, my dog, had suddenly become three years younger at the prospect of going home. I am not sure that I was not put out most of all at having to disappoint him.

And yet I can't say for certain whether he was not more confused than disappointed. It must be bewildering for a dog when a train of events to which he is perfectly accustomed and of which he understands the meaning is upset for the first time in his experience.

On Tuesday night Fuss was in a state of miserable uncertainty. He saw my portmanteau and bag brought and placed on the floor empty, and he put his nose into each of them. While they were being packed he became more and more agitated. He knew perfectly well that I was going away, but he could not make out whether he was coming too. It is hard enough for

IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

him to be in that state of suspense when he is at home, but here there was the added anxiety that if he was left behind he would be staying with the Rackhams, and he had not decided whether he liked them and their house.

After the packing had begun he was washed. It was late for that operation, but he was covered with mud. Perhaps it was cruel of me not to save him the suspense sooner; for when he is washed just before I start for a journey he knows he is coming. The conjunction of washing and of my things being packed makes him quite sure. As a rule, he loathes being washed, but when luggage is lying about he gives in as though he positively liked it.

But the next morning we did not start, after all. Everything was unpacked, and now Fuss seems to mistrust every one, and has quite come to the conclusion that he does not like the Rackhams or their house. It is enough to unhinge the mind of an elderly dog, puzzling him in this way. I have always been careful to explain everything to him, and it is annoying to have my method interfered with.

I know a man who told me that he has taught his dog to know when it is Christmas. For fifteen years he has given him a present of a Bath Oliver biscuit on Christmas Day, but on no other day. He hangs it on the Christmas-tree. The dog becomes rapturously excited when the tree is cut down and brought into the house a

SIDE - SHOWS

day or two before Christmas Day. But I must come to my explanation.

On Monday Everard proposed to Miss Toogood, and she refused him. There does not seem to be any sufficient reason why his proposal or her refusal should upset everybody else, but 'there it is!' as people say of things they cannot explain. There it is; here are we; and where are they?

Everard received a telegram the next morning 'calling him away,' and somehow the whole story leaked out. People are so talkative. If they can't keep their own secrets, they can hardly expect other people to do it for them. The result is that there is no other subject of conversation here. The house-party is divided into two camps — 'pro-Everard,' and 'pro-Toogood.'

No; I forgot to say that there is a third camp, occupied by Mrs. Rackham, who is 'ami them both.' She says it was all 'so thoughtless.' I am a pro-Everard, and the men and women are in opposite camps. I thought Everard a very good fellow, with an engaging simplicity.

It was rather simple of him, for instance, to have the telegram sent to him. What I liked particularly was that he asked Miss Toogood, as the only service she could do him in the circumstances, to send it herself. He did not ask this ironically, I am sure, but quite ingenuously. He explained that he did not think it fair to stay in the same house with her any longer, and that

IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

as she was motoring that afternoon to the nearest town, and no one else was going, perhaps she would kindly send him the telegram, to reach him the next morning. That was the only way he could invent of explaining his sudden departure to Mrs. Rackham.

He went off on Tuesday morning, and the same afternoon she went - I can't think why. I suppose she is upset; but, all the same, why could not she be upset here instead of upsetting us? One man ventured on the suggestion that she had gone after Everard, but that was not received in the spirit in which it was spoken.

It was not till my luggage was mostly packed that Mrs. Rackham made up her mind that it was necessary for me to stay.

The pro-Everards say that Everard is such a good fellow, and a thundering fine shot. The pro-Toogoods say that if he wanted to be accepted he ought to have thought less of his shooting and more of Miss Toogood. Neither of these arguments seems to cover the whole ground; but they are irreconcilable, and therefore unlikely to be dislodged.

If there is any other argument, it is that of the pro-Everards, that they 'cannot see what he saw in her,' or that of the pro-Toogoods, that they 'cannot see what she saw in turn.' This argument, by the way, has always seemed to me a singular impertinence in principle; and it is bare sense only if we grant the premiss that all men

SIDE - SHOWS

should want to marry the same woman or all women the same man.

The most interesting thing is that Miss Toogood gave the poor man a fine snubbing for his presumption. The pro-Toogoods are delighted about this, and I must say that at first I thought there was a good deal in what they said. Why should he propose if she had never encouraged him in any way?

But somebody else threw quite a different light on it. As a rule, said this man, women like to have compliments paid to them. What (this is his argument) is the greatest compliment a man can possibly pay to a woman? Surely to ask her to spend the rest of her life with him.

I told him that that was all very well up to a point, but that the man had no right to assume that the woman would like to do so unless he had had some evidence to go upon, and that a proposal without that evidence was, when you came to think of it, the very reverse of a compliment.

'An absolute mistake,' said he. 'I suppose you think that a man oughtn't to propose unless it's a dead certainty? How's he going to know if it's a certainty? No, the very fact of his even beginning to think that such a woman as he wants to marry will almost certainly marry a man like him is like dethroning her in his mind. Woman is the most uncertain, inaccessible, forbidding and, of course, charming -' He had an audience of some of the ladies by this time. 'Oh no,' he went on; 'the

IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

only fit state of mind for a man to propose in is absolute, downright, undiluted uncertainty. Then he's humble. That's the only state of mind which is complimentary to the woman. But for the woman to turn round and abuse him just because he's made a bad shot — why, it's as bad as abusing a man out shooting immediately after wiping his eye.'

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

In Paris

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I. THE BOULEVARDS

THE boulevards were once to Paris what long hair was to Samson - its secret and strength. Paris, in telling its secret to the whole world, lost a large part of its intellectual *camaraderie*. The life of the boulevards was a kind of social intimacy carried on in public; the cafes were clubs, and privilege was firmly established in them, even though every seat seemed to be public. But a generation has changed that. The intimacy, which was a strange mixture of Bohemianism, artistic fellowship, civic and professional *rapprochement*, and the need for a political debating-ground, has been swallowed by the publicity (become trebly public) which once protected it. It is as though an old-fashioned English inn had been turned into a brand-new, gaudy hotel, with all the 'latest improvements' for doing away with the zest and flavour of life.

When a Parisian talks of walking up or down the boulevards he does not mean any boulevard; he means those which lie in a continuous line from the Madeleine (or, perhaps, only from the Café de la Paix at the Place de l'Opéra) to, say, the Taverne Brébant - that is, less than a mile and a half through the heart of Paris, past the *terrasses* of countless cafes and the gleaming windows of shops.

It must not be supposed because the boulevards have

IN PARIS

changed, because the true boulevardier to whom they were as necessary as Fleet Street to Dr. Johnson no longer exists, that therefore they mean nothing to Paris. Verylikely they mean more; for certainly they are more crowded than ever, only they mean something different. Bradlaugh said: 'Religions do not die; they change'; and in the same way the cultivation of the boulevards has so far changed that one is tempted to say that it is dead. Let me recall the past and compare it with the present.

The cafes, I have said, were clubs, although club life exactly as we understand it was unknown in France, and, I might add, is still very little known. A man nearly always went to the same cafe, where he was sure of meeting his friends; he might leave his pipe there, and it was hung on the wall like a private billiard-cue; he would have his letters sent there, and in time he would procure a prescriptive right to a particular seat.

Naturally, people of common interests foregathered at the same cafe, and thus it came about that there was a cafe for men of letters, another for politicians, another for theatrical people, another for soldiers, another for sailors.

The only cafe left, so far as I know, which still draws people of a comparatively uniform character is the Napolitain, where men of letters and journalists congregate. But a boulevard which no longer knows

SIDE-SHOWS

Tortoni has indeed ceased to be a club in order to be an international highway. It was at Tortoni that that type of the *boulevardier*, Aurelian Scholl — his reputation went little farther than the boulevard, though it was dominant there — used to invent the *mots* which the next day would be all over Paris. Offenbach, Meilhac, Alfred Stevens the painter, who will have an even greater name some day than he has yet got, were of the company; men like Gounod and Dumas *fils*, if they did not take a turn up and down the boulevards at least once in a day, felt like an Englishman who has missed his bath. The Cafe de Suede was used by actors and actresses, and in arranging themselves according to their interests they arrived at an amusing refinement in having a *cotè comique* and a *cott tragique*.

In Balzac's time the theatrical life of the boulevards revolved round the Palais Royal, but that solar system has been long dispersed, and the satellites move about a host of new magnetic powers. In the old days supper — a seriously chosen supper — was unknown after the theatre at night, and only chocolate was drunk at the cafés before people went to bed. No one went to the theatre in evening clothes except to the *Opéra* and the *Frangals* on *abonnement* nights. There are two reasons, probably, for the change in all these practices. One is the increase in wealth, and, therefore, in the outward and visible expression of it, and the other is the higher power of mobilization in life — the improvement in the

IN PARIS

means and speed of transport - which has stimulated all the centrifugal forces of great cities.

Out of the 'passages,' too, which join one boulevard with another, the old intimate life has ebbed. It was worth while for the best shops to have branches in the passages; above all, it was worth while for the sellers of bon-bons, because guests in boxes at the theatres made it a habit to bring bon-bons to their hostesses, and they came to the passages to buy them. The passages, too, were just the place for gossip — back eddies lying off the main stream of movement and noise — and they became, as it were, annexes to the *foyers* of the theatres. Except, perhaps, the Passage des Princes, I do not know that there is any of them which has shops so much better than those of its surroundings as to suggest the importance it once enjoyed.

The spirits which gravitated into these unofficial *foyers* were the same that made possible in Montmartre such peculiarly Parisian successes as the Chat Noir and the Quatz Arts (in their first state), where the passport to an evening's amusement was not much money, but a certain ability to appreciate what was both witty and topical.

The Chat Noir was perhaps the best of those *cabarets artistiques* where young performers and composers of talent were glad to be allowed to appear merely for the sake of getting a hearing. Rollinat, the poet, sang there, and so did Yvette Guilbert, and Caran d'Ache showed

SIDE-SHOWS

his shadow-pictures of *L'Épopée* (the Napoleonic legend), which were described in verses by M. Maurice Donnay.

Informality was the soul of a place of which the only permanent apparatus was a platform and a piano. It was the habit to play jokes upon the stranger. Thus Alphonse Allais happened one night to sit next a provincial who confessed that he had come to Paris to seek his fortune as a man of letters. Then followed a deception like that which enchanted Gilead P. Beck. 'I am Sarcey,' said Allais. 'I will help you, and you must come to see me. But when you come don't be put off by my secretary, an excitable man' (here followed a description of Sarcey), 'who believes that it is his duty to send every one away. Insist on seeing me. If he refuses, push him aside.' Accordingly the provincial went to M. Sarcey's house, saw M. Sarcey, was repulsed by him, and was soon engaged in a tussle, in which legend says that the impetuous Sarcey cast the aspirant down the steps into the garden.

At last there came a day when the Chat Noir, having become fashionable, also grew proud, and charged five francs for a seat. That made way for the Quatz Arts, where Mr. Harry Fragson first faced a French audience with his perfect accent only a few months old.

Sketches by students, and even by well-known men, decorated the walls. You had to be very much in the swim to understand the allusions, nimble-minded to

IN PARIS

catch the fine shades of wit, and less than an Englishman to enjoy them, for there were anti-English giants in those days.

When the simple old traditions were nearly killed by their own success they saved themselves by retreating underground, like primitive Christians. They survived in the *caveaux*, in the great cellars which were the home of the most famous *cabarets artistiques*. Aristide Bruant was the minstrel of poor people — wicked people, too, provided they were poor-and squandered admirable and sometimes lofty sentiments in the language of thieves. He interpreted jail-birds to Paris as Mr. Albert Chevalier interpreted costermongers to London. The 'Cabaret Bruant' was decorated with trophies from the demolished Mazas prison, and *apaches*, or hooligans, were let in free in order that the place should have the right 'atmosphere.' The stranger was gently insulted on his arrival, but not less so when he had the good grace to depart.

The imitators of Bruant continued in Montmartre and on the boulevards, until the tradition was lost.

I have said so much of the *cabarets* only because it is through them that the old type of boulevard may be traced, gradually descending the slope from where simpler and cleverer men appreciated unaided talent to the dull lowlands where stage effects and portentous clap-trap beguile a richer and stupider public to-day.

It is the lights, above all, that have changed on the

SIDE - SHOWS

boulevards. The boulevards used to be a moderately but sufficiently lighted thoroughfare, in which the cafes threw a genial illumination on to the avenue of trees and touched to pleasing radiance the greens and golds and reds in the glasses on the *terrasses*.

Now this is the picture of the present - the boulevards are one ghastly, exhausting flame of light from end to end. White lights, yellow lights, mauve lights prick you in the eyes and reach high above the houses and towards the skies, which burn with a sullen red. In the windows of the sham-diamond palaces the myriad pieces of paste catch the electric flashes on their facets as sheaves of lamps are swung round giddily by mechanical apparatus and throw the light about in showers of spray. Above your head illuminated advertisements flicker and blink; occultations are succeeded by frenzies of brilliance; Catherine-wheels, made of lamps, and illuminated windmill sails slash the red darkness aloft; cinematograph pictures tease the eyes like water with sunlight dancing on it.

You can turn into a bar and see people drawing sandwiches, liqueurs, coffee, beer, wine and tea out of the walls in return for the money they put in the slots - O! shades of all the accomplished and discreet waiters who ever made a Parisian cafe famous! Or you can step inside one of those screens of shrubs which protect a cafe* from the jostling crowd on the pavement; you see the passing crowd outside stop, and their heads appear

IN PARIS

over the screen as a cinematograph display begins on the cafe wall high above your head; you see the livid light of a large electric lamp fall on pallid, upturned faces; you see the cords of the people's necks stretched taut; you see their attention waver as the amusing pictures are succeeded by advertisements, and you see it concentrate itself again as the operator (profoundly experienced in the extent of human patience) sweeps off the advertisements and brings on more pictures.

As the night grows late, the crowd becomes more dense. A municipality, greedy for fees, has allowed cafes, kiosques and flower-stalls to occupy more and more of the pavement. You can hardly move. Yet you arrive somehow at last at the end of 'the boulevards,' and you look into those side streets where no stranger can walk with tolerable safety in the small hours of the morning, and where prudent Parisians carry revolvers, and occasionally use them.

It is all a frieze of some of the most wonderful types in the world, and if you are in the mood to observe them you cannot complain that your movements are compulsorily a lesson in the art of leisure. We all ask of Paris that it retain its erratic way, its atmosphere of pleasure, which makes some people unable to think of it except as a place in which holidays are spent. And so the show goes on night after night all the year round, for this part of Paris — French, English, American and generally cosmopolitan — is never empty.

SIDE - SHOWS

I have sometimes tried to imagine what would be the sensations of Manet's 'Absinthe Drinker' if he could be back in modern Paris, pick himself up from the *terrasse* of his cafe and return home along the boulevards at night. What would he make of the illuminated firmament which staggers before his gaze, is shattered and disappears, only to burst out again and whirl and re-compose itself, and again repeat the process, before his numbed senses have steadied themselves enough to take their bearings and tell him where he is and what has happened?

CHAPTER THIRTY

In Paris (*continued*)

*

II. ELECTION TIME

IF you half shut your eyes and look along certain streets and boulevards of Paris at election time, you see a city as radiant and delightful as Iris. Open your eyes wide, and the rectangular 'colour spots' dissociate themselves even more violently than those of the wildest picture by the wildest young painter of the Latin Quarter. They are not, after all, beautiful, these colour spots; they are the *affiches* of the candidates for Parliament, raw colours seem to shout at you from every wall and colonnade, and the magnificent jumble of inspiring sentiments and satisfying promises baffles comprehension.

Nothing is so much like an election as another election. The form and place vary, but the principles of the political candidate are as old as the ashes of Pompeii, where the candidate Proclinius left on the wall a universal model of the election poster in the words, 'O passer-by, vote for Proclinius to-day, and he will vote for you to-morrow.' Round that model revolves in France all the Gallic ingenuity. There are many examples of its brilliant application. Fifty years ago *le citoyen* Mure polled nearly ten thousand votes in favour of his comfortable policy that workmen should be replaced in factories by well-trained dogs; and a little later Adolphe Bertron, whose title, 'The Human Can-

SIDE-SHOWS

didate,' might have pleased Chadband, explained that his sub-tide of 'Radical-Intransigent-Legitimist' (not a badly invented title even for France) implied a policy of planting fruit-trees for public use along the high-roads. His passionate election address ended, 'Lightning and lightning conductor! France is saved! Long live happiness!'

Well, long live happiness, even the happiness of electioneering — the pure delights of obliteration enjoyed by the simple-minded bill-sticker, the ample frenzy of the paste-pot! The bill-sticker, as I see him swoop down the street, does not stop to think, to meditate on the great principles he disseminates, to reverence the great name he unfolds. His job is to paste.

Was the last bill-sticker who rollicked down the street Buff (as they would have said at Eatanswill)? Well, this man is Blue. His brush slashes; the complexion of the wall is changed by a ruthless superimposition of bills. 'Blue ran the flash across, posters were born' - if I may make an irreverent adaptation. I heard of a man who peeled off the posters in one place, and found forty-six, one on the top of the other.

That is the humour of electioneering in France, where humour is only beginning to express itself in pictures and jokes and tricky phrases. Rarely is a political joke so good as when, in the contest between M. Jacques and General Boulanger, some one added to the Jacques poster 'Pas de Sedan,' which happened to

IN PARIS

be outside the Opera, the words 'Danse par Mile. Subra.'

But this humour of superimposition has its variations too: it varies with the different kinds of poster. First, there is the vast spread of the huge *affiche*, which bears the election address; secondly, there is the *papillon*, or small rectangular strip of paper, bearing little more than the name of the candidate; and, lastly, there is the *puce*, or tiny square bill. The great *affiche* is a bull, powerful and dignified; and the *pavillons* and *puces* are gadflies and gnats which make him ridiculous. You may walk many streets of Paris without being able to get at what a candidate thinks, because his opinions are always in partial eclipse. The *papillon* is good for its purpose, but for sheer effectiveness and maddening impertinence give me the *puce*.

It is an old question in France whether it is worth while to have decent architecture and valuable monuments bleared with coloured paper, and whether it is the best form of electioneering to let the game of superimposition go on and on, till the longest purse and the tallest ladder have the last word. Many years ago the Chamber of Deputies decided that frames ought to be provided in large towns for election posters, and that the posters might not be put outside them; but the Senate rejected the Bill.

The welter of paper is all the greater because there is no tax on election posters, though there is a heavy one

SIDE-SHOWS

on all others. If ingenuity goes only a little further, we shall have cunning tradesmen nominally becoming candidates, and bringing out their election addresses somewhat in this manner:

'JEAN GUERIN,
THE CELEBRATED INVENTOR AND SOLE VENDOR
OF THE
GUERIN DIGESTIVE TABLETS
WHICH CURE ALL ILLS;
CONFIDENT THAT THE
GREAT SERVICES
HE HAS ALREADY RENDERED TO HIS
SUFFERING COUNTRYMEN
CANNOT BUT COMMAND THEIR
INSTANT RECOGNITION,
AND ANXIOUS THAT HE MAY HAVE STILL FURTHER
OPPORTUNITIES OF CONTINUING THAT
NOBLE CURATIVE WORK
WHICH HAS ALREADY MADE HIS NAME BLESSED
AND REVERED IN INNUMERABLE FRENCH FAMILIES,
PATRIOTICALLY OFFERS HIMSELF, ETC.'

In recent times we have had the diverting and endearing announcement of Doctor -, which appeared on the walls like this:

'Doctor - hopes to see at his meetings schoolmasters, policemen, *fonctionnaires*[^] priests, and all those who under a Democratic Republic ought to have the right

IN PARIS

to express their opinions freely without incurring the chastisement of the State. A bottle of wine will be offered free to all workmen to drink to the honour and prosperous future of the Democratic and Social Republic. N.B. — All the workmen present will have a right to a litre of wine. Fathers will receive an extra litre for every two children. Widows, and men or women more than sixty years old, will receive two litres. All should come during the meeting, and bring empty bottles.'

This is Eatanswill all over; and if the workmen voted for Doctor —, it was not a more curious coincidence than when Sam Weller's father, after receiving £20, upset the coach of voters just at the place which the election agent had remarked was very dangerous.

This scheme of sliding-scale drinks according to the number of children reappeared in a different form in the address of a Socialist candidate. He advocated the *vote familial* under which a man's votes would increase in proportion to the number of his children. This would be, in effect, a method of giving votes to minors, if we may assume that the father would be sufficiently docile to accept their instructions.

No one has yet put women's suffrage in the front of his programme, which is quite explicable on the immortal principle of the exchange of votes laid down by Proclinius. The Frenchwoman accepts her position. If she is clever, she wears cleverness like a hat or a

SIDE-SHOWS

gown. It is measured and valued in terms of her sex; she is admired, obeyed, and spoiled, on condition that she does not challenge respect on any other ground than that of her sex.

If you watch a well-dressed woman in the streets of Paris, everything about her—her clothes, beautifully put on, as though they had grown there in perfect suitability by the extension of some higher power of Nature, the fit of these clothes, which only began seriously to be 'tried on' at the point where an Englishwoman would have ended the process, and the woman's full knowledge that she compels attention—everything about her shows that she has accepted the conditions. They are pleasant and save trouble, seeming eternally to remove worries and substitute pleasures, but to intellectual independence they are a high barrier.

The mysterious power which the Government is supposed to exercise over electors, through the Minister of the Interior, who 'runs the elections' (*fait les elections*), and makes his prefects and sub-prefects try to secure the return of 'official' candidates, is not so mysterious, after all. It was beautifully explained and exposed by M. de Fortou, who wrote: 'It is not merely the right, Monsieur le Préfet, it is also the duty, of the Government to make known to the electors what candidates rebut and what candidates support the Government policy.' Marshal MacMahon was less mysterious still. Like Thackeray's Sir John Ring-

IN PARIS

wood, who dictated to 'the independent voters' that had so long supported his family at the polls, Marshal Mac-Mahon wrote: 'Frenchmen, you will vote for the candidates whom I recommend to your free suffrages.'

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

In Paris (*continued*)

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III. PARIS EXPLAINED

NEAR the Opéra between nine and ten in the morning an enormous char-à-banc is being invaded by English and American tourists. A Master of the Ceremonies, with a heavy gold watch-chain spread on an ample front, and with his hat on the back of his head (symbol of combined good-fellowship and reckless industry), is putting the people into their places. His assurance proves him to be conscious of his unfailing instinct in arranging the company so as to produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number. His life has known few mistakes.

M.C. (*to a lady in white cotton gloves*). English lady, I think? Just room for one more in this row. Would you, madam (*indicating a lady who is already seated*), mind moving a few inches that way? You sit firmer when the seats are full. I know - result of experience. (*Raises his hat in acknowledgment of the general desire to be accommodating.*) American lady, I think? This English lady would like to sit next you. (*American lady smiles pleasantly at the tribute to her companionable qualities, which she is gratified to see were observed at a glance.*)

ENGLISH LADY (*ascending*). Good-morning.

AMERICAN LADY. Mrs. - Mrs. -

ENGLISH LADY. Short.

IN PARIS

AMERICAN LADY. Mrs. Short, I'm very happy to make your acquaintance.

The driver gets into his seat. He raises his cap to ladies in the front seat, who have been waiting there one hour. The ladies smile first at him, and then at one another, speechless. A crowd of camelots draws nearer. 'Engleesh papers!' 'Plan de Paris!' 'Tost-carts!' 'Lahdee, one pennee!' 'One pennee!'

ENGLISH LADY. Oh, go away-cheats!

A YOUNG ENGLISH GENTLEMAN. *AlleZ-VOUS en!*

THE DRIVER. *Filez!*

The char-à-banc rolls magnificently down the Rue de la Paix. Presently there is a crash as it converges on a taxi-cab and rips off part of the cab's running-board.

Before the tourists have grasped what has happened, they find themselves in the middle of a highly developed storm of invective. The crowd takes sides, supporting the two principals, who stand up and wave their arms. The traffic is blocked. A gendarme in a blue cloak, with hood hanging on his back, joins in and turns the contest into a three-cornered duel. He makes notes in a book, the notes seeming to give him back what he loses in argument. At the end of five minutes the char-à-banc jerks forward, and the tourists, who alone have been dumb, find their tongues.

AN AMERICAN GENTLEMAN. Gee! Didn't they get at it quick!

SIDE-SHOWS

The char-à-banc stops at the Colonne Vendôme. The M.C. stands up and begins his first explanation.

M.C. This place is called the Place Vendôme. You will notice that the houses are all very much alike—all built in the same style. It's difficult, you might say, to tell which is which and if there are any gentlemen living here who have a habit of coming home late at night—well, we don't have latchkeys to the street-doors in Paris; but still- (*The audience takes the point with discreet titters.*) This uniform style of the houses was designed on purpose by the architect. Mansard. Suppose you lived here, and wanted to add a bit to your house—well, you couldn't do it. You wouldn't be allowed, because you would be spoiling the work of the famous architect.

A LONDON VISITOR. The London County Council isn't in it.

M.C. The column in the middle, which was copied from the famous column of Trajan, commemorates the Austrian victories of Napoleon. It was thrown down in the Commune, but I need hardly tell you it was put up again. (A VOICE. He can talk a bit, this chap.) At one time the public were allowed to go up the inside of the column, but as it became a popular amusement to jump off the top-and I needn't remind you that the birth-rate of France is falling - the Government decided to put a stop to it. (*The audience exchange questioning glances, and eventually laugh in a body.*) In a

IN PARIS

far corner over there is the Hotel Bristol, where King Edward used to stay when he was Prince of Wales. (*Intense interest. Mansard completely forgotten.*) They do say that there wasn't a cafe in Paris that wasn't known to His Royal Highness, and I needn't tell you that the Parisians were very fond of him. (AN ENGLISH VOICE. Hear, hear! This seems to express the general feeling.)

The char-à-banc rolls on.

M.C. Here on the right you have the Tuileries Gardens, where the Tuileries Palace used to stand; and on the left the Louvre, where we shall look in on our way back. At present I just ask you to have a glance at it. The Arc de Carrousel on the left, which was copied from that of Septimius Severus (*Severus is a dactyl*) at Rome, used to mark the entrance to the Tuileries (*suddenly breaks off as a troop of the Republican Guard clatters past, and an English visitor asks what these mounted troops are.*)

What are they? Cavalry.

The word is passed round to the company, who are craning their necks in order to catch the explanation. Everybody looks at the troop with enlightened eyes. The char-à-banc rolls on.

M.C. This building is the Institute of France. The Academy meets here every Thursday. There are forty

SIDE-SHOWS

members, and all are immortal. This is where they are making the famous dictionary. They have been at it now for nearly two hundred years, and they have got as far as the letter E. Let's see-what is to-day? Thursday! Well (*with dramatic effect*), they will be meeting this afternoon. (*Everyone looks with renewed Interest at the walls of the Institute, and pictures the forty immortals making desperate efforts that very afternoon to reach the letter F.*) We shall next cross the Pont Neuf-the New Bridge — which is the oldest in Paris. (*Titters^ at the end of which the M.C. throws in an extra remark as a reward for the responsiveness of his audience.*) Well, it was the new bridge once. You can't be young always, you know. They say you can never cross it without seeing a red-haired girl, a white horse, and a soldier. Don't forget to look out for them. But before we get there we shall pass the house where Napoleon lived when he was a poor young man. We shall drive -slowly, so that you can have a good look. You will remember the time when he was poor - Madame Sans-Gêne, and all that.

AN ENGLISH LADY. Of course. How interesting! I remember Ellen Terry!

The char-à-banc rolls on.

M.C. Get out and follow me please. You see this beautiful building of Sainte-Chapelle is made in two storeys - the upper one for the Court, and the lower one

IN PARIS

for the servants. In those days there were no lifts — no elevators (*a response from the American section*) - and so King Louis had the upper storey made so that he could walk into church from the palace without going up or down stairs. Now, just look at this bas-relief over the chief door. It's the next life. The good people are on the right, and the bad on the left. Some of them are being pitchforked back into the fire, as they had jumped out. I don't mind telling you, I've booked my place for the right. (*A doubtful murmur of amusement.*) All those who treat the guide well this evening will be sure of going to the right. (*At this point the company is startled by an English lady, who audibly exclaims, as though an eternal problem had at last been satisfactorily settled, and an enormous weight lifted from her mind, 'There! I told you he wasn't too respectable to be tipped!'*)

The visitors regain the street, and the char-à-banc rolls on.

M.C. I hoped we should have forty minutes for the Louvre, but I see I can only give you thirty-five. In your own interests, I ask you to keep together, so that we can get through as quickly as possible without wasting time.

AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN. Hear, hear! Just what I was going to say. That's only reasonable.

ANOTHER ENGLISH GENTLEMAN. Thirty-five minutes! Phew! A bottle of beer won't go down so bad.

SIDE-SHOWS

AN ENGLISH LADY. I don't think we have chosen a very good day. So crowded. Just look at all those people going in!

ANOTHER ENGLISH LADY. Yes — **tourists**. The place is full of them.

And here let us leave them at the portals of the glorious Louvre, with most of their day still before them, and with the certainty that they will lose nothing (certainly not their tempers) while they are in charge of their untiring and urbane leader.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

In Paris (*continued*)

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IV. THE DRUM

FOR two generations the French Ministry of War has intermittently threatened the drum—the pride, the symbol of glory, the solace, and the epitome of the French Army. Threatened lives live long, and the drum is not yet dead.

The latest threat was ominous, because it was indirect. The Minister for War explained that short service made it more than ever necessary that the whole term should be given to military training proper; and consequently young drummers would not be placed in the hands of the drum-majors till a year after they had joined the Army, and then their practice must be outside the hours of ordinary drill and training. 'If,' concluded the order, 'this arrangement interferes with the normal recruiting of drummers, the heads of corps will gradually replace their drummers, as it becomes necessary, by buglers.' The insidiousness was in that sentence. The French *ptou-piou* would no longer be able to cry death to a French Minister who tried to abolish the drum, for the Minister could retort that it was the soldier's own lethargy which was abolishing it.

The Ministry of War has become shrewder since 1879. Then General Farre abolished drums by a direct attack—by a stroke of the pen—and provided for his successor the opportunity of becoming enormously

SIDE-SHOWS

popular by the simple act of restoring them. He also provided a small fortune for an astute speculator who bought up most of the abolished drums, and resold them to the Army when the time came, as he knew it would. Probably there are speculators to-day who would think it worth while to take the same risk.

Whether the visible or economic disadvantages of retaining the drum are greater than the hidden or moral advantages has yet to be proved. Napoleon called the drum the king of instruments. It alone ensures the brisk, cadenced step in marching.

What percentage of soldiers can profitably be excused from carrying rifles and bayonets in order that they may inspire others to carry them with a deeper endurance and a better spirit? That is the problem. When Lord Raglan broke up the British bands in the Crimea in order that the bandsmen might serve in the ranks, some observers doubted whether he did not lose in *moral* what he gained in numbers. The British soldiers, standing chilled and disconsolate in the snow, cast jealous eyes on the French, who, equally chilled, but less disconsolate, could be seen gathering round their bands.

One of the most popular poems in the French language is Frederic Mistrals' 'Le Tambour d'Arcole':

*'Battant, battant la charge,
Ensemble, il les fait bondir?*

It is the tale of the drummer who used his drum to

IN PARIS

strike terror into the enemy. *Rataplan, rataplan, rataplan*; no more; but the circumstances were those of surprise, and the buoyant reiterations of the drum, invisibly coming nearer, turned the Austrians to rout.

André Estienne was the drummer's name; he crossed the Adige on a sergeant's back at the Battle of Arcola, beating the charge. The Austrians could not see what was happening for the smoke, and, hearing the drum, they thought the French had crossed the river in force, and were on their flank. They paused, and in the interval of doubt the gunners deserted the batteries commanding the bridge. Napoleon seized it, and Arcola was won.

Afterwards Napoleon gave Estienne drumsticks of ivory and gold. At Marengo this same drummer was wounded by a shell, and Napoleon, recognizing him after the battle, took the Cross from his own breast, and pinned it on his. Visitors to Paris may see a memorial to Estienne, where David carved the episode of Arcola on the frieze of the Pantheon; and legend says that when Estienne was an old man he saw it for the first time, and fell dead of emotion in front of the building.

Masséna is said once to have seized a drum from a dying drummer, and rallied his men at a crisis by beating the charge with his Marshal's baton. But there is little need to pick out incidents, for the drum has long since become the abstract of the French Army. No military monument in France which has not a drum in its com-

SIDE-SHOWS

position (if there is such a monument) is truly soldier-like or truly French.

Thackeray seized that point when he wrote his ballad, 'The Chronicle of the Drum.' The same throbbing rhythms which consoled the French as they fell away before Marlborough helped them to advance again triumphantly under Napoleon; and the same sounds throbbed again to a different purpose when Louis XVI, on the scaffold, tried to raise his voice above the crowd:

' "Ho, drummer! quick, silence yon Capet,"
Says Santerre, "with a beat of your drum."
Lustily then did I tap it,
And the son of Saint Louis was dumb.'

Again the scene changes, and the drummer speaks:

'I loathed to assist at such deeds,
And my drum beat its loudest of tunes
As we offered to justice offended the blood of the
bloody tribunes.'

The strong beat of the drum quickens the pulses of humanity to fever. There was once a thirsty Professor of Poetry at Oxford, Tom Warton — afterwards Poet-Laureate — who would come rushing out from whatever tavern he was in when he heard the sound of drums and fifes, and the tears would stand in his eyes. Much less can plainer souls resist the fierce challenge to their

IN PARIS

sensibilities. The 'elastic thunder' of the drum is more compelling than the lute of Orpheus. It is a generous, vivifying note - a note, as Mr. Meredith has said, of 'vast internal satisfaction'; and 'if monotonous, the one note of the drum is very correct.'

The repetitions of the drum are not ineffective; under their influence half-civilized men have been known to return to their primal state - the awakened senses of civilization numbed, and put once more to sleep. In such states men may become unconscious of pain. They are in an ecstasy.

No wonder that the drum is the best recruiting-sergeant in the world. Reason may be powerful, but a drum-tap can shatter it, as Bret Harte understood:

'Let me of my heart take counsel:

War is not of life the sum:

Who shall stay and reap the harvest,

' When the autumn days shall come?

But the drum

Echoed Come:

"Death shall reap a braver harvest," said the
Solemn-sounding drum.'

Gibbon, in his account of the capture of Constantinople, remarks that the mechanical operation of sounds in quickening the circulation of the blood and the spirits has more effect on the human machine than all the eloquence of reason and of honour. The side-drum is

SIDE-SHOWS

not an instrument of music, but a marker of rhythm. But the kettle-drum is a subtle thing, which has been more and more studied and employed since Beethoven promoted it to be a solo instrument, and Berlioz wrote of it with enthusiasm.

One of the inimitable sights of a military procession in London is the traditional flourish of a Life Guards drummer, as he plays the drums at the head of the regiment. The very action of the horse makes it seem that he, too, understands the dignity and the potent use of the instruments he bears.

But here I speak not of kettle-drums, but of the plain, banging foot-soldier's drum, which has been associated with his triumphs and agonies through generations. It is easy for an official to say that bugle-calls are much easier to distinguish than drum-calls, that learning to play the drum properly is an unconscionable waste of time; and that the French Army drums are a Moloch who requires the sacrifice of 25,000 good fighting men. Two divisions of infantry — it is a tremendous official argument!

On the other hand, there are the exhilarating drum-taps which, as they come down the street, make the citizen forget argument, and remember only that the skin of the French drum passed everywhere over the plains of Europe; that it was parched in Spain, and shrunk in the rains of Pomerania, and was covered with snow in Russia; that it was the furious encourager of

IN PARIS

gallantry, and the muffled mourner for the dead; that it was the table for sparse meals in bivouacs, and the place of judgment at drum-head courts. The intellectual may say with Bordereau that the drum blisters his ears; or the satirist, with General Gallifet, that drums, at all events, do not make so much noise as retired Generals. But will the French people and the French *fantassins* part with their venerated symbol, with

'The story of two hundred years
Writ on the parchment of a drum'?

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

In Madrid

*

I. THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

WE happened to be looking at that marvel of plastic balance, the equestrian statue of Philip IV, in the Plaza de Oriente, when a drum rattled in the Palace yard near by, and my friend M. Gaston Routier — who had made a second home of Spain, and knew more about the country than any other Frenchman — seized me by the arm. 'You mustn't miss the parade,' he said.

'Parades!' said I. 'I know them by heart.'

'Not this parade,' said he; 'no one ever knows it by heart.' He spoke of the spectators, obviously, not of the soldiers; and I yielded on the spot to the lyrical tug at my arm and the curiosity excited by his elliptical praise.

But we walked the longer way round the small circular garden in the middle of the plaza to have another look at the statue. There is no doubt it has the value of a picture rather than of a statue, and when Pietro Tacca turned Velasquez's picture of Philip IV into bronze he compounded for his mistake in identifying the plastic and the pictorial only by the high technical skill with which he achieved the balance of the rearing horse. Philip IV is jumping Madrid with perfect assurance, and the nurses who sit with their babies on the edge of the fountain twenty feet below do not look in the least danger.

IN MADRID

This plaza was created by poor Joseph Napoleon, who is spoken of by Spaniards without bitterness as the 'Rey plazuéas' - 'The Plaza King' (let us say) - who brought to Spain the family appreciation of large space, and during his short reign levelled as many convents and houses as he could.

Stepping out of the garden, we picked a way through the peasants, who gaze all day when the King is there at the white, unresponsive face of the Palace, past men, some wearing sombreros, characteristic of their country, and others caps which are as characteristic of Stepney as of Madrid; past men who were arguing, and men who were asleep in a patch of hot shade under the acacias; past young women with coloured shawls on their heads, and old women with colourless clothes, who waited without moving, as though there were nothing to do in the world but wait, wait, eternally in silence; past a team of six jingling mules driven in a disintegrating farm-cart (designed three hundred years ago) by a poor wretch with a 'je ne sais quoi de bohème et de grand seigneur,' as my friend said; past a couple of oxen, symbols of labour, with their patient heads and liquid, melancholy eyes, bowed under the oppression of the yoke, preceded by a savage with a primitive, inscrutable face, goad in hand; past a racing motor-car; past one of the familiar groups of blind street musicians, playing guitars; past all the types of the old giving place daily to the new, which, in their

SIDE - SHOWS

piquant transition, offer you a picture of Madrid as it is.

The Plaza de Armas, inside the grille of the Palace, was filled with the continuous roll of drums. Every morning, between ten and eleven, the 'parade' is performed under the Palace windows, and if the King is there he steps out, perhaps, on the balcony; for he, like his subjects, never knows this beautiful ceremony by heart. Strange that the unconsidered Spanish Army should produce, day after day, in the capital a scene which for impressiveness has not been matched in France since the days of the Second Empire. It is really the ceremony of changing the guard done with as much elaboration as that of trooping the colour in London. Every evening the newspapers tell you what officers and regiments will perform the duty the next morning.

The outgoing guard is drawn up in the square behind its colour, and the incoming guard, also behind its colour, marches in through the grille, to the grave and slow 'Royal March,' with a rhythmic movement of their bodies and legs. Very solemnly, with infinite premeditation, does the new guard, with its clockwork motions, urge itself, foot by foot, towards the colour of the old guard, as though coming to the burning mountain, too sacred to be approached. All the time, from the thunderstorm of the drums, the whispering melody of the 'Royal March' - not great music but very good for this purpose - disentangles itself, like an angelic

IN MADRID

voice speaking from a rampart of storm-clouds. Then silence.

The bearers of the colours salute, the officers salute, the men salute one another, as though ordinary beings had been raised to an awful dignity by their office; the countersign is exchanged, and a slow march in silence gives various opportunities for refining the ritual of the salute. The bands split asunder to opposite sides of the square, and the rest is a free concert for Madrid. After the concert, again the thunderstorm and the whispering melody, during which the troops salute one another for the last time, and then the outgoing guard marches away to its barracks through the streets, behind drums and trumpets.

'You are surprised at the perfection of that?' said M. Routier. 'Too good for the Army, you think? Perhaps. But mind you, the Spanish character is still capable of heroism and sacrifice not unworthy of what you have just seen. That parade was not an expression of nothing at all. Get a Spaniard to talk about the 2nd of May, if you think that fine abstract ideas like independence do not mean a great deal to him. Ah! a good idea - I shall take you to see the 2nd of May monument.'

We stood before it — a yellowish monument robbed of what ought to be its best effect by being almost hidden in trees. 'The 2nd of May,' said M. Routier, 'is to Spain what the 14th of July is to us Frenchmen and the

SIDE-SHOWS

4th of July is to Americans. It is their Independence Day. I have seen the celebrations, and I shall not forget them. Every 2nd of May a guard of honour surrounds this monument. Tents are pitched in the park for the troops; an altar is built before the monument; a huge procession marches through Madrid; and from about seven o'clock in the morning till midday Mass is said every half-hour for the souls of the martyrs to independence. At ten o'clock Mass is said also in all the churches of Madrid.'

'But,' said I, 'the people who were slaughtered by Murat did not by any means make Spain independent of France. I always thought it was England and Wellington who did that?'

'True,' said he; 'but it was the death of men like Daoi'z and Velarde, whose names you see here, that revolted all humane feelings, and so caused the War of Liberation, which turned into what you call the Peninsular War. Yes, the revolt of Daoi'z and Velarde against Murat might even have been ridiculous - it was so hopeless, and was crushed with such ease - if Murat's brutality had not caused the very war which Daoi'z and Velarde tried to declare. The massacre of hundreds' of innocent people in Madrid roused all Spain. To spread the news was to form an army. Every one knows the rest. That tragic, impossible revolt of Daoi'z and Velarde was really the Independence Day of Spain.'

IN MADRID

We wandered on to the Prado Museum, and went straight to Goya's picture, 'The Second of May,' which shows the death of these very martyrs. Heavens! what unmerciful narrative!- the huddled heap of reeking corpses, the inarticulate demonic frenzy of the miserable innocent with the bayonets at his breast; the dull horror expressed in the bowed heads of the executioners; and the crushing, inexorable weight of their rounded shoulders, which thrust forward the hedge of bayonets. Could this be by the same painter, I asked myself, who fixed his satirical humour in so many pictures of Spanish gaiety?

We passed to the Velasquez room, a treasure-cave infested by brigands who call themselves copyists and demand ransom from the genius of their master. In no gallery in the world but his are the pictures so obscured by the easels of the unrestrained copyists, who jockey one another for good places, and in the end succeed in transferring to their canvases profundity of colour in the form of violence, character as grimace, and serenity as a simper. You can buy such reproductions in the museum in a room sanctioned by the Government.

But when you have found a place where you can see the picture in spite of the easels, what a memorable occasion is your first visit to this treasure-cave! You see Velasquez in nearly all his manners, in nearly all his moods. He may have been at first the disciple of

SIDE-SHOWS

Ribera (and apparently he was), but he was never the obedient Christian rhapsodist; the Magi were to him well-known people in Seville; the Madonna was a peasant whom he had seen working in the fields. He had not the power because he had not the wish to idealize out of his imagination; he refused to paint what he did not see, and if it was from Italy that he learned the new lesson of laying the phenomena of life under contribution to symbolical ideas, he learned it, like Shakespeare, infinitely better than his teachers ever knew it.

Here is the best of all historical pictures — 'The Surrender of Breda.' Half an hour spent before the regal blue depths of that receding landscape, the incomparable grace and generosity of the gesture with which the conqueror receives the conquered, as though hinting that eighty years of savage warfare had raged only to bring two gentlemen together; the satisfying arrangement of the hard thicket of lances against the sky — that half-hour made me nearly forget poor Dao'iz and Velarde as beings who belonged to a much clumsier order of heroism. But that was the fault of Goya.

'You remarked,' said M. Routier, 'that Velasquez was always incapable of being a Christian painter like the Italians. That is quite true. Spaniards — or Portuguese, if you like, for he was by origin a Portuguese — are a peculiar kind of Christians. They are what I call

IN MADRID

pagan-Christians. Their soul is complex, *farouche*, and primitive. All the extraordinary changes of their history have not altered them one jot in essence. Like Shadrach, Mesech, and Abednego, they have come unsinged out of the fiery furnace, and the smell of burning is not on them. They are still untamed Celts; still simple, generous, and fierce Iberians, with proud and reticent characters - sweet and savage at the same time. The Carthagenians conquered them, but left no mark on them. The Romans conquered them, and left nothing but a few buildings and the splendid sound of their language. The Vandals, Goths, and Visigoths lost their own characteristics instead of imposing them on Spain.

'When Spain accepted Christianity she remained slightly pagan, because she could not alter too much, even at the bidding of the greatest producer of change the world has ever seen. Then the Moors came, and left nothing but their architecture, some fanaticism, and a good deal of their apathy. All the subsequent vicissitudes of arrogance and humiliation have left the Spaniards just where they were. At the end of it all they are the old, untamed Celts, simple Iberians, and I love them.

'An example of what I mean?' went on M. Routier. 'I will give you an example, then - a trifle, but instructive and amusing. You know that the patron saint of Madrid is San Isidro. The image of San Isidro works

SIDE - SHOWS

miracles, and the water from the spring near his church cures diseases. All Madrid makes a pilgrimage in May out to San Isidro Church to drink the water, and there is a fete - a pagan fete - to which the guide-books say ladies had better not go.

Well, in 1898 the peasants round Madrid wanted rain for their crops, and, making a procession, they went to San Isidro and prayed him to send rain. He granted their prayer. Rain came almost at once. They brought presents of vegetables, chickens, and flowers to him. But the rain went on. It lasted a week, ten days, a fortnight. They had asked for rain, not for a deluge.

"They formed another procession, and prayed that the rain might stop. But it still went on. Then they swore vengeance on San Isidro. They would remove his figure from the church, for he had disgraced himself. The Clergy heard of their intention, and the church was protected by the Civil Guard. There was a fight; the Guard formed round San Isidro. But though the peasants could not carry off San Isidro, they threw huge stones, and broke off one of his arms.

"Don't suppose that San Isidro has suffered permanently from this affair. Not at all. His reputation is greater than ever. The day after his arm was "broken the rain stopped, and all the peasants went to thank their patron saint. "He wanted a lesson," they said.

IN MADRID

"Now he has had it, and we love him more than ever."

'Make no mistake. If to-morrow the Government threatened to remove the statue of San Isidro from the church, the peasants would protect him with their lives.'

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

In Madrid (*continued*)

*

II. THE BULL-FIGHT

ALL the world was walking in the sanded ring, like a crowd between the innings at a Spanish Eton and Harrow match. Presently some police officers rode into the ring, in old Spanish dress, and began to cajole and threaten the people into their seats. The ring became empty; the yellow sand waited for the next move. The people waited too. They had taken their seats in the great circular building, open to the sky, and most were on the shady side. Those who were in the cheaper seats, under the blinding sun, screened their faces with paper fans, coloured like Chinese lanterns. That side was a spectrum of colour.

Round the ring there was an unbroken wooden wall, now that all the outlets had been closed, about five feet high. All round the outer side of this wall was a narrow passage, in which the bull-fighters and attendants moved when they were not in the ring. Beyond this passage, again, there was a rail to protect the spectators from that exceptional bull which jumps the wall; and above the rail were stone seats, and then balconies, and then private boxes, and again balconies, until, with a final flourish of Moorish wood decoration, the top of the building made a hard, circular line against the profound blue of the sky.

Some of the fashionable women in the boxes wore

IN MADRID

hats, which might have been, and very likely were, made in Paris ; but most women observe the fashion of wearing mantillas at bull-fights and on holy days, however little they may be worn at other times.

Trumpets sounded. Drums rolled. A gorgeous procession entered the ring, stepping it to a swinging march - first the *espadas*, the chiefs of their profession, followed by their understudies; then the *landerillos*-, then the *picador es*,) mounted on stumbling hacks, and pulling down the average of splendour considerably; then the *chulos*, or *monosy* who are the 'supers'; and, finally, the teams of mules which draw out the carcasses of dead horses and bulls.

The procession stopped before the chief box, and saluted the occupants. A key was thrown down - the key of the bull-stable - the superfluous part of the procession vanished over the five-foot wall; only a few *chulos*, spangled like harlequins, and the stout, heavily armoured *picadores*, on their spavined hacks, were left in the ring. Everything was ready for the bull.

The door of the pen, or stable, was thrown open, and we saw the bull, which had been kept in the dark for several hours, and prodded to make him suitably angry, blink uncertainly at the light. In a moment he trotted out — a magnificent Andalusian, his head and neck with the power of steam, his eye in a fury, his hindquarters with something of the lean strength of a lion, his horns held high in lofty, confident, unthinking rage. A

SIDE-SHOWS

second he glanced round; then his slowly roving eye caught a brandished cloak, and, with a thrust forward of his head as much as to say, 'That is the cause of the trouble,' his superb body lengthened out, and he made for it at a canter.

The *chulo* fled, and would have looked ridiculously like Hodge being run by his own bull in his own field had it not been for the consummate coolness with which he glanced over his shoulder as he ran, measured his speed, and finally (with the help of a ledge which runs round the inside) vaulted the five-foot wall a few inches in front of the bull's horns. He did not grin; it was not worth while. He does this a hundred times in every bull-fight. As for the bull, with that amazing power of changing the subject with equal enthusiasm and futility which distinguishes his kind, he charged off at another cloak.

The *chulos* waved him about from one cloak to another, vaulting out of his universe when in too much danger, or guiding his horns safely past their bodies with the magnetic cloak. In a couple of minutes it was time for the *picadores*.

Every bull-fight is divided into three acts. Having disposed of what was only a trifling prelude, we were now at the first act — the *pic adores* act. The two *picadores* whose horses looked remarkably as though they were leaning against the wall, were prodded into the open to face the bull. The *picadores* were stout, heavy

IN MADRID

men dressed in yellow; they wore round hats with flat brims, rather like Sancho Panza's saucepan, and in their hands they carried pikes. The cloaks drew the bull, who never fails to answer a decent invitation to expend his wrath on nothing, up to one of the horses. Then a pause. The *picador* slowly thrust the pike into the bull's neck, and the bull, looking up and seeing no cloaks, but only the horse as the apparent cause of the trouble, charged it. The horse was blindfolded; otherwise even his poor jaded old legs might have tried flight.

There was no conflict, no possibility of the horse saving itself; nothing but a sickening thud as the bull, with lowered horns, laid open the horse's side. Lifting them with the thrust of a steam-piston, the bull overturned horse and rider.

The rider fell away from the bull; his legs, sheathed in armour, were not hurt, and the *chulos* picked up the heavy; padded body of this Tweedledum and helped to mount him again — but not on the same horse.

Sometimes the *picador's* horse is dead before the scavengers come running in; sometimes he is given the *coup de grâce* where he lies; sometimes he is walked out of the ring, to be killed or cured elsewhere.

Meanwhile the bull had been enticed *off* on another wild-cloak chase, which brought him into position to receive another slow, premeditated prod with a pike, and to rip open another blindfolded horse in return. This went on till the bull was sufficiently tired, or

SIDE - SHOWS

enough horses had been disembowelled - it would be difficult to say which was the deciding point. I suppose there are honest citizens, tax-payers, and irreproachable fathers of families who spend a certain number of days of their lives padding themselves, and being tipped over and rolled under horses and picked up, without often coming to much harm; but when all allowances have been made the Englishman finds it impossible to respect the source of his livelihood.

The *banderilleros* came forward. It was the second act, in which darts decorated with coloured paper are stuck in the bull's neck. To 'plant' these darts requires extraordinary skill, and the risk to the man is quite as great as it looks. A *banderillero* held a dart in each hand, and, throwing his arms wide apart, and moving them up and down like a sailor signalling, invited the bull to come on.

The bull came. No cloak was within fifteen-yards to save the man if he made a mistake; there was no profiting this time by the bull's incomparable irrelevance. The bull came on, I say, and as he charged, head down, the *banderillero*, with the quickness of thought, whisked himself aside, and, with a flash of the wrist, planted the two darts deep in the passing bull's neck. The first attempt was a brilliant success; the man had brought off his 'right and left,' and difficult shots they were, too. The bull, having overrun his man, forgot all about him, and leaped in a frenzy to shake out

IN MADRID

the darts, they flapped up and down, but held fast, and blood trickled down the bull's neck. It was soon to be a stream.

More and more coloured darts were planted, till the bull, reaching the moment of his greatest agony, never looked more frivolously bedecked. No doubt, for savage nerves the undefined sense that great strength is being led to blunder down from nobility to ridiculousness is inexpressibly piquant.

In all the accessories of the bull-fight there is this same insensible elaboration of trifles — the frivolity of the clothes, the pretty bow of ribbon worn by the bull, the flags and merry jingling bells on the mules which drag away the carcasses, and the coloured streamers which hang from the darts.

When the bull had his quiverful of arrows - if necessary, crackers may be tied on the arrows to make the bull jump — the time had come for the last act.

The *espada*, the only man who carries a red cloth, made his impressive entrance. He walked to a spot underneath the chief box, and, raising his sword aloft, dedicated the death of the bull to the President. With an inimitable gesture, he tossed his cap to an attendant, and his pig-tail swung free as he wheeled round.

The bull's obedient following of a gaudy colour now reached its climax of futility. The *espada* held his red cloth this way and that, turned it, looped it over the sword, waved it, and I do not know what else; and

SIDE - SHOWS

every time that the bull charged into it the *espada* was not there, but a few inches to the left or the right. Yet the man's accuracy of judgment, his quickness of eye, and his confidence were amazing; a slip, a mistake of three inches, and he would have been as good as dead.

Whenever the bull made too many rushes in succession, and seemed to be gaining a little in quickness on the man at each of them, the *chulos* intervened with their cloaks. The *espada* was not pleased; he waved them away with his sword; the discriminating applause was to be all his.

At last the bull charged with his head in the right position for the *estocada*, or death-blow, given down through the neck into the heart. The dripping bull stood still after the thrust; his body rocked, his legs swayed, he floundered as though in a bog, and sank.

The *espada* was still bowing to the President when the scavengers looped a rope over the bull's horns, and the body skidded away over the sand like a sledge behind the jingling mules. A man with a whip gave the mules a sounding whack as they galloped into the stable, as though to make sure that no animal should come out of that ring unhurt.

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- ¶ Walter Pater was at the same time a scholar of wide sympathies and a master of the English language. In this, his best known work, he describes with rare delicacy of feeling and insight the religious and philosophic tendencies of the Roman Empire at the time of Antoninus Pius as they affected the mind and life of the story's hero.

24. THE WHITE SHIP Stories

by Aino Kallas

With an Introduction by JOHN GALSWORTHY

¶ 'The writer has an extraordinary sense of atmosphere.'

Times Literary Supplement

'Stories told convincingly and well, with a keen perception for natural beauty.' *Nation*

25. MULTITUDE AND SOLITUDE A Novel

by John Masefield

¶ 'As well conceived and done, as rich in observation of the world, as profound where it needs to be profound, as any novel of recent writing.' *Outlook*

'This is no common book. It is a book which not merely touches vital things. It is vital.' *Daily News*

26. SPRING SOWING Stories

by Liam O'Flaherty

¶ 'Nothing seems to escape Mr. O'Flaherty's eye; his brain turns all things to drama; and his vocabulary is like a river in spate. *Spring Sowing* is a book to buy, or to borrow, or, yes, to steal.' *Bookman*

27. WILLIAM A Novel

by E. H. Young

¶ 'An extraordinary good book, penetrating and beautiful.' *Allan Monkhouse*

'All its characters are very real and alive, and William himself is a masterpiece.' *May Sinclair*

28. THE COUNTRY OF THE POINTED FIRS

by Sarah Orne Jewett

¶ 'The young student of American literature in the far distant future will take up this book and say "a masterpiece!" as proudly as if he had made it. It will be a message in a universal language—the one message that even the scythe of Time spares.'

From the Preface by WILLA GATHER

29. GRECIAN ITALY

by Henry James Forman

- ¶ 'It has been said that if you were shown Taormina in a vision you would not believe it. If the reader has been in Grecian Italy before he reads this book, the magic of its pages will revive old memories and induce a severe attack of nostalgia.' *From the Preface* by H. TESTING JONES

30. WUTHERING HEIGHTS

by Emily Bronte

- ¶ 'It is a very great book. You may read this grim story of lost and thwarted human creatures on a moor at any age and come under its sway.' *From the Introduction* by ROSE MACAULAY

31. ON A CHINESE SCREEN

by W. Somerset Maugham

- ¶ A collection of sketches of life in China. Mr. Somerset Maugham writes with equal certainty and vigour whether his characters are Chinese or European. There is a tenderness and humour about the whole book which makes the reader turn eagerly to the next page for more.

32. A FARMER'S LIFE

by George Bourne

The life story of a tenant-farmer of fifty years ago in which the author of *The Bettesworth Book* and *The Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer* draws on his memory for a picture of the every-day life of his immediate forebears, the Smiths, farmers and handicraft men, who lived and died on the border of Surrey and Hampshire.

33. TWO PLAYS. *The Cherry Orchard* T *The Sea Gull*

by Anton Tchekoff. Translated by George Calderon

- ¶ Tchekoff had that fine comedic spirit which relishes the incongruity between the actual disorder of the world with the underlying order. He habitually mingled tragedy (which is life seen close at hand) with comedy (which is life seen at a distance). His plays are tragedies with the texture of comedy.

34. THE MONK AND THE HANGMAN'S DAUGHTER

by Ambrose Bierce

- ¶ ' They are stories which the discerning are certain to welcome. They are evidence of very unusual powers, and when once they have been read the reader will feel himself impelled to dig out more from the same pen.' *Westminster Gazette*

35. CAPTAIN MARGARET A Novel

by John Masefield

- ¶ His style is crisp, curt and vigorous. He has the Stevensonian sea-swagger, the Stevensonian sense of beauty and poetic spirit. Mr. Masefield's descriptions ring true and his characters carry conviction.' *The Observer*

36. BLUE WATER

by Arthur Sturges Hildebrand

- ¶ This book gives the real feeling of life on a small cruising yacht; the nights on deck with the sails against the sky, long rights with head winds by mountainous coasts to safety in forlorn little island ports, and constant adventure free from care.

37. STORIES FROM DE MAUPASSANT

Translated by Elizabeth Martindale

- ¶ His " story " engrosses the non-critical, it holds the critical too at the first reading. . . . That is the real test of art, and it is because of the inobtrusiveness of this workmanship, that for once the critic and the reader may join hands without awaiting the verdict of posterity.' *From the Introduction by FORD MADOX FORD*

38. WHILE THE BILLY BOILS First Series

by Henry Lawson

- ¶ These stories are written by the O. Henry of Australia. They tell of men and dogs, of cities and plains, of gullies and ridges, of sorrow and happiness, and of the fundamental goodness that is hidden in the most unpromising of human soil.

39. WHILE THE BILLY BOILS Second Series
by Henry Lawson

- ¶ Mr. Lawson has the uncanny knack of making the people he writes about almost violently alive. Whether he tells of jackeroos, bush children or drovers' wives, each one lingers in the memory long after we have closed the book.

41. IN MOROCCO
by Edith Wharton

- ¶ 'Morocco is a land of mists and mysteries, of trailing silver veils through which minarets, mighty towers, hot palm groves and Atlas snows peer and disappear at the will of the Atlantic cloud-drifts.

42. GLEANINGS IN BUDDHA-FIELDS
by Lafcadio Hearn

- ¶ A book which is readable from first page to last, and is full of suggestive thought, the essays on Japanese religious belief calling for special praise for the earnest spirit in which the subject is approached.

43. OUT OF THE EAST
by Lafcadio Hearn

- ¶ Mr. Hearn has written many books about Japan ; he is saturated with the essence of its beauty, and in this book the light and colour and movement of that land drips from his pen in every delicately conceived and finely written sentence.

44. KWAIDAN
by Lafcadio Hearn

- ¶ The marvellous tales which Mr. Hearn has told in this volume illustrate the wonder-living tendency of the Japanese. The stories are of goblins, fairies and sprites, with here and there an adventure into the field of unveiled supernaturalism.

45. THE CONQUERED
by Naomi Mitchison

A story of the Gauls under Caesar

- ¶ ' With *The Conquered* Mrs. Mitchison establishes herself as the best, if not the only, English historical novelist now writing. It seems to me in many respects the most attractive and poignant historical novel I have ever read.' *New Statesman*

46. WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS

by Naomi Mitchison

Stories of the time when Rome was crumbling to ruin

- ¶ 'Interesting, delightful, and fresh as morning dew. The connoisseur in short stories will turn to some pages in this volume again and again with renewed relish.' *Times Literary Supplement*

47. THE FLYING BO'SUN

by Arthur Mason

- ¶ 'What makes the book remarkable is the imaginative power which has re-created these events so vividly that even the supernatural ones come with the shock and the conviction with which actual supernatural events might come.' *From the Introduction by EDWIN MUIR*

48. LATER DAYS

by W. H. Davies

A pendant to *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*

- ¶ 'The self-portrait is given with disarming, mysterious, and baffling directness, and the writing has the same disarmingness and simpleness.' *Observer*

49. THE EYES OF THE PANTHER Stories

by Ambrose Bierce

- ¶ It is said that these tales were originally rejected by virtually every publisher in the country. Bierce was a strange man: in 1914 at the age of seventy-one he set out for Mexico and has never been heard of since. His stories are as strange as his life, but this volume shows him as a master of his art.

50. IN DEFENCE OF WOMEN

by H. L. Mencken

- ¶ 'All I design by the book is to set down in more or less plain form certain ideas that practically every civilized man and woman holds *in petto*, but that have been concealed hitherto by the vast mass of sentimentalities swathing the whole woman question.' *From the Author's Introduction*

51. VIENNESE MEDLEY A Novel

by Edith O'Shaughnessy

¶ 'It is told with infinite tenderness, with many touches of grave or poignant humour, in a very beautiful book, which no lover of fiction should allow to pass unread. A book which sets its writer definitely in the first rank of living English novelists.'

Sunday Times

52. PRECIOUS BANE A Novel

by Mary Webb

¶ 'She has a style of exquisite beauty; which yet has both force and restraint, simplicity and subtlety; she has fancy and wit, delicious humour and pathos. She sees and knows men aright as no other novelist does. She has, in short, genius.' *Mr.*

Edwin Pugh

53. THE INFAMOUS JOHN FRIEND

by Mrs. R. S. Garnett

¶ 'This book, though in form an historical novel, claims to rank as a psychological study. It is an attempt to depict a character which, though destitute of the common virtues of every-day life, is gifted with qualities that compel love and admiration.'

54. HORSES AND MEN

by Sherwood Anderson

¶ 'Horses and Men confirms our indebtedness to the publishers who are introducing his work here. It has a unity beyond that of its constant Middle-west setting. A man of poetic vision, with an intimate knowledge of particular conditions of life, here looks out upon a world that seems singularly material only because he unflinchingly accepts its actualities.' *Morning Post*

55. SELECTED ESSAYS

by Samuel Butler

¶ 'This volume contains the following essays:

The Humour of Homer

How to Make the Best of Life

Quis Desiderio . . . ?

The Sanctuary of Montrigone

Ramblings in Cheapside

A Medieval Girls' School

The Aunt, the Nieces, and
the Dog

Art in the Valley of Saas
Thought and Language

56. A POET'S PILGRIMAGE

by W. H. Davies

- ¶ 'A *Poets Pilgrimage* recounts the author's impressions of his native Wales on his return after many years' absence. He tells of a walking tour during which he stayed in cheap rooms and ate in the small wayside inns. The result is a vivid picture of the Welsh people, the towns and countryside.

57. GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN. **First Series**

by Lafcadio Hearn

- ¶ 'Most books written about Japan have been superficial sketches of a passing traveller. Of the inner life of the Japanese we know practically nothing, their religion, superstitions, ways of thought. Lafcadio Hearn reveals something of the people and their customs as they are.

58. GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN. **Second Series**

by Lafcadio **Hearn**

- ¶ 'Sketches by an acute observer and a master of English prose, of a Nation in transition—of the lingering remains of Old Japan, to-day only a memory, of its gardens, its beliefs, customs, gods and devils, of its wonderful kindness and charm—and of the New Japan, struggling against odds towards new ideals.

59. THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO

Edited by Manuel Komroff

- ¶ 'When Marco Polo arrived at the court of the Great Khan, Peking had just been rebuilt. Kublai Khan was at the height of his glory. Polo rose rapidly in favour and became governor of an important district. In this way he gained first-hand knowledge of a great civilization and described it with astounding accuracy and detail.

60. SELECTED PREJUDICES. **Second Series**

by H. L. Mencken

- ¶ 'What a master of the straight left in appreciation! Everybody who wishes to see how common sense about books and authors can be made exhilarating should acquire this delightful book.'
- Morning Post*

61. THE WORLD'S BACK DOORS

by Max Murray

With an introduction by HECTOR BOLITHO

- ¶ ' This book is not an account so much of places as of people. The journey round the world was begun with about enough money to buy one meal, and continued for 66,000 miles. There are periods as a longshore man and as a sailor, and a Chinese guard and a night watchman, and as a hobo.

62. THE EVOLUTION OF AN INTELLECTUAL

by J. Middleton Murry

- ¶ ' These essays were written during and immediately after the Great War. The author says that they record the painful stages by which he passed from the so-called intellectual state to the state of being what he now considers to be a reasonable man.

63. THE RENAISSANCE

by Walter Pater

- ¶ ' This English classic contains studies of those *supreme artists,' Michelangelo and Da Vinci, and of Botticelli, Delia Robia, Mirandola, and others, who 'have a distinct faculty of their own by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere. 'There is no romance or subtlety in the work of these masters too fine for Pater to distinguish in superb English.

64. THE ADVENTURES OF A WANDERER

by Sydney Walter Powell

- 5 Throwing up a position in the Civil Service in Natal because he preferred movement and freedom to monotony and security, the author started his wanderings by enlisting in an Indian Ambulance Corps in the South African War. Afterwards he wandered all over the world.

65. 'RACUNDRA'S' FIRST CRUISE

by Arthur Ransome

- ¶ ' This is the story of the building of an ideal yacht which would be a cruising boat that one man could manage if need be, but on which three people could live comfortably. The adventures of the cruise are skilfully and vividly told.

66. THE MARTYRDOM OF MAN

by Winwood Reade

¶ ' Few sketches of universal history by one single author have been written. One book that has influenced me very strongly is *The Martyrdom of Man*. This " dates," as people say, nowadays, and it has a fine gloom of its own ; but it is still an extraordinarily inspiring presentation of human history as one consistent process.' H. G. Wells in *The Outline of History*.

67. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK RUTHERFORD

With an introduction by H. w. MASSINGHAM

¶ ' Because of its honesty, delicacy and simplicity of portraiture, this book has always had a curious grip upon the affections of its readers. An English Amiel, inheriting to his comfort an English Old Crome landscape, he freed and strengthened his own spirit as he will his reader's.

68. THE DELIVERANCE

by Mark Rutherford

3 Once read, Hale White [Mark Rutherford] is never forgotten. But he is not yet approached through the highways of English letters. To the lover of his work, nothing can be more attractive than the pure and serene atmosphere of thought in which his art moves.

69. THE REVOLUTION IN TANNER'S LANE

by Mark Rutherford

¶ ' Since Bunyan, English Puritanism has produced one imaginative genius of the highest order. To my mind, our fiction contains no more perfectly drawn pictures of English life in its recurring emotional contrast of excitement and repose more valuable to the historian, or more stimulating to the imaginative reader.' H. W. Massingham

70. ASPECTS OF SCIENCE. First Series

by J. W. N. Sullivan

¶ ' Although they deal with different aspects of various scientific ideas, the papers which make up this volume do illustrate, more or less, one point of view. This book tries to show one or two of the many reasons why science may be interesting for people who are not specialists as well as for those who are.

71. MASTRO-DON GESUALDO

Giovanni Verga. Translated by D. H. Lawrence

- ¶ ' Verga, who died in 1922, is recognized as one of the greatest of Italian writers of fiction. He can claim a place beside Hardy and the Russians. ' It is a fine full tale, a fine, full picture of life, with a bold beauty of its own which Mr. Lawrence must have relished greatly as he translated it.' *Observer*

72. THE MISSES MALLET

by E. H. Young

- 5 The virtue of this quiet and accomplished piece of writing lies in its quality and in its character-drawing; to summarize it would be to give no idea of its charm. Neither realism nor romance, it is a book by a writer of insight and sensibility.

73. SELECTED ESSAYS. First Series

by Sir Edmund Gosse, **C.B.**

- ¶ ' The prose of Sir Edmund Gosse is as rich in the colour of young imagination as in the mellow harmony of judgment. Sir Edmund Gosse's literary kit-kats will continue to be read with avidity long after the greater part of the academic criticism of the century is swept away upon the lumber-heap.' *Daily Telegraph*

74. WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS

by Christopher Morley

- 3 A delicious satirical fantasy, in which humanity wears a dog-collar.
- ' Mr. Morley is a master of consequent inconsequence. His humour and irony are excellent, and his satire is only the more salient for the delicate and ingenuous fantasy in which it is set.' *Manchester Guardian*

75. JAVA HEAD

by Joseph Hergesheimer

- ¶ ' The author has created a connoisseur's world of his own; a world of colourful bric-a-brac—of ships and rustling silks and old New England houses—a world in which the rarest and most perplexing of emotions are caught and expressed for the perceptible moment as in austere delicate porcelain. *Java Head* is a novel of grave and lasting beauty.

76. CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN

by George Moore

- ¶ ' Mr. Moore, true to his period and to his genius, stripped himself of everything that might stand between him and the achievement of his artistic object. He does not ask you to admire this George Moore. He merely asks you to observe him beyond good and evil as a constant plucked from the bewildering flow of eternity.' *Humbert Wolfe*

77. THE BAZAAR. Stories

by Martin Armstrong

- ¶ ' These stories have considerable range of subject, but in general they are stay-at-home tales, depicting cloistered lives and delicate finely fibred minds. . . . Mr. Armstrong writes beautifully.' *Nation and Athenæum*

78. SIDE SHOWS. Essays

by J. B. Atkins

With an Introduction by JAMES BONE

- 3 Mr. J. B. Atkins was war correspondent in four wars, the London editor of a great English paper, then Paris correspondent of another, and latterly the editor of the *Spectator*. His subjects in *Side Shows* are briefly London and the sea.

79. SHORT TALKS WITH THE DEAD

by Hilaire Belloc

- ¶ ' In these essays Mr. Belloc attains his usual high level of pungent and witty writing. The subjects vary widely and include an imaginary talk with the spirits of Charles I, the barber of Louis XIV, and Napoleon, Venice, fakes, eclipses, Byron and the famous dissertation on the Nordic Man.

80. ORIENT EXPRESS

by John dos Passos

- ¶ ' This book will be read because, as well as being the temperature chart of an unfortunate sufferer from the travelling disease, it deals with places shaken by the heavy footsteps of History, manifesting itself as usual by plague, famine, murder, sudden death and depreciated currency. Underneath the book is an ode to railroad travel.

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by Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.

¶ ' A second volume of essays personally chosen by Sir Edmund Gosse from the wide field of his literary work. One is delighted with the width of his appreciation which enables him. to write with equal charm on *Wycherley* and on *How to Read the Bible*.

82. ON THE EVE

by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ ' In his characters is something of the width and depth which so astounds us in the creations of Shakespeare. *On the Eve* is a quiet work, yet over which the growing consciousness of coming events casts its heavy shadow. Turgenev, even as he sketched the ripening love of a young girl, has made us feel the dawning aspirations of a nation.

83. FATHERS AND CHILDREN

by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ ' As a piece of art *Fathers and Children* is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's impotence and insignificance is realized in scenes of a most ironical human drama.' *Edward Garnett*.

84. SMOKE

by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ ' In this novel Turgenev sees and reflects, even in the shifting phases of political life, that which is universal in human nature. His work is compassionate, beautiful, unique; in the sight of his fellow-craftsmen always marvellous and often perfect.

85. PORGY. A Tale

by du Bose Heyward

¶ ' This fascinating book gives a vivid and intimate insight into the lives of a group of American negroes, from whom Porgy stands out, rich in humour and tragedy. The author's description of a hurricane is reminiscent in its power.

86. FRANCE AND THE FRENCH

by Sisley Huddleston

- ¶ ' There has been nothing of its kind published since the War. His book is a repository of facts marshalled with judgment; as such it should assist in clearing away a whole maze of misconceptions and prejudices, and serve as a sort of pocket encyclopaedia of modern France.' *Times Literary Supplement*

88. CLOUD CUCKOO LAND. A Novel of Sparta

by Naomi Mitchison

- ¶ ' Rich and frank in passions, and rich, too, in the detail which helps to make feigned life seem real.' *Times Literary Supplement*

89. A PRIVATE IN THE GUARDS

by Stephen Graham

- ¶ ' In his own experiences as a soldier Stephen Graham has conserved the half-forgotten emotions of a nation in arms. Above all he makes us feel the stark brutality and horror of actual war, the valour which is more than valour, and the disciplined endurance which is human and therefore the more terrifying.

90. THUNDER ON THE LEFT

by Christopher Morley

- ¶ ' It is personal to every reader, it will become for every one a reflection of himself. I fancy that here, as always where work is fine and true, the author has created something not as he would but as he must, and is here an interpreter of a world more wonderful than he himself knows.' *Hugh Walpole*

91. THE MOON AND SIXPENCE

by Somerset Maugham

- 3 A remarkable picture of a genius.
' Mr. Maugham has given us a ruthless and penetrating study in personality with a savage truthfulness of delineation and an icy contempt for the heroic and the sentimental.' *The Times*

92. THE CASUARINA TREE

by W. Somerset Maugham

- ¶ ' Intensely dramatic stories in which the stain of the East falls deeply on the lives of English men and women. Mr. Maugham remains cruelly aloof from his characters. On passion and its culminating tragedy he looks with unmoved detachment, ringing the changes without comment and yet with little cynicism.

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by Arthur Symons

- 5 When Blake spoke the first word of the nineteenth century there was none to hear it; and now that his message has penetrated the world, and is slowly re-making it, few are conscious of the man who first voiced it. This lack of knowledge is remedied in Mr. Symons' work.

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by Christopher Morley

'With an Introduction by H. M. TOMLINSON

- ¶ ' Very many readers will be glad of the opportunity to meet Mr. Morley in the role of the gentle essayist. He is an author who is content to move among his fellows, to note, to reflect, and to write genially and urbanely; to love words for their sound as well as for their value in expression of thought

99. THE BLACK SOUL : A Novel

by Liam O'Flaherty

- ¶ ' *The Black Soul* overwhelms one like a storm. . . . Nothing like it has been written by any Irish writer.' " Æ " in *The Irish Statesman*

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A Novel

by H. G. Wells

- ¶ ' At first reading the book is utterly beyond criticism; all the characters are delightfully genuine.' *Spectator*
' Brimming over with Wellsian insight, humour and invention. No one but Mr. Wells could have written the whole book and given it such verve and sparkle.' *Westminster Gazette*

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¶ ' Stories of literary life, told with a breath of fantasy and gaily ironic humour. Each character lives, and is the more lively for its touch of caricature. From *The Man Who Kept a Diary* to *The Man Who Wrote Free Vene*, these tales constitute Mr. Squire's most delightful ventures in fiction; and the conception of the book itself is unique.

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by Marmaduke Pickthall

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Mary Guillemard

¶ ' Certain characters there are in life and literature who achieve our undying regard; and in this noble company of Sancho Panzas and D'Artagnans, Cyrano is ever eminent. The play itself is Rostand's masterpiece, and is indeed the *chef-tfceuwe* of the French Romantic Movement.

' Rumour has in no way exaggerated its extraordinary brilliance. The translation is a remarkably able piece of work.' *William Archer.*

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With an introduction by D. H. LAWRENCE

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by Felix Riesenberg

¶ ' A collection of intimate character portraits of men with whom the author has sailed on many voyages. The sequence of studies blends into a fascinating panorama of living characters. The essays have the feeling of the sea in them; they also have something of its romance.



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