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A WRITERS NOTEBOOK

The Tantivy Press

exists for the purpose of publishing in limited editions works of modern literature that may have permanent value; and the policy of the directors is if necessary to confine their production to a very few books to fulfil this purpose, for which works are chosen privately and no general submission of manuscripts is desired.

WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

ANotf

THE TANTIVY PRESS
MALVERN
1946

*Dedicated to that Most Noble of All
Patrons—the Cash Purchaser of this Book-*

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Author s Explanation

My notebook is published solely in the hope that it may provide some entertainment for readers of a similar mind to myself, common-sensical people who like curious facts and pragmatistical theories, who don't like windy, Bloomsbury stuff, and who stretch contentedly when they get back to the more expansive and the nobler days. No other kind of claim is made for it, and nothing in such a bagwash of personal inclination will, thank God, establish me either as a major prophet or as a minor exponent of the latest, Frenchified foppery. As for the holding back of my name, I have unfortunately been bred in an age of clothes, and the nakedness of this present, artless appearance leaves me no option but to adopt the decent cloak.

A Writer's Notebook

Thought for Lent

Lambs' tongues are lovely, but a boiled baby
is an abomination unto the Lord.

Taking the Plunge

Sometimes I recommend the classics to friends who are not great readers, and then the first chapter difficulty arises. For instance, it is all very well to assure the timid that they will enjoy "The Heart of Midlothian" if only they start at Chapter IV.; but the very fact that 46 early pages consist of dry and seemingly irrek-

vant matter is bound to create a dangerous prejudice. Not that I, for one, would be without these pages, but in deterring the timid and sending them back to the gaudy best-seller they are a great nuisance.

Now the modern novelist avowedly favours the straight plunge, because in that way only, he considers, can he found the proper illusion in the mind of the reader. But the classical writers as resolutely pursued this illusion and with few exceptions they favoured the suspended opening. If they invented a story they could not tell it without taking elaborate precautions to prove that it had been given to them by a friend, or had been discovered in some musty old chest, or had been dictated, word for word, by the withered retainer of an ancient house. Everyone is familiar with the habit. Scott was a particularly bad offender. Thackeray had to write a long preface of the "old manuscript" variety and a dry first chapter before he could decently open the history of Henry Esmond. That masterpiece of a psychological study, "The Scarlet Letter," rests upon 13,000 words of semi-irrelevant matter. The reader of "Tom Brown's Schooldays," a boys' book if ever there was one, must struggle with a turgid first chapter before his interest is caught and held,

Rigmarole

George Eliot wrote a 10-page prosy " proem " before she began " Romola." Charles Reade, a master of swift action, made a fumbling chronicler's beginning of " The Cloister and the Hearth." The account could be continued indefinitely. One thing, however, is obvious. These writers would never have taken such pains over their prelude if they were not aware that the public expected it. The reading public, then, was of tougher fibre in those days. Or perhaps it was more romantically inclined and positively enjoyed being told that the outline of this story had been found written in blood upon the walls of a dungeon beneath the Castle of Otranto, and that the author intended giving them a full account of the ancient, modern, and natural history of the district where the story was set before he began the story itself. Indeed, it will be found that rigmarole proper came in with the romantic revival at the end of the eighteenth century, and then lasted about one hundred years.

The earliest novelists were content to begin their stories at the beginning. " Gulliver's Travels " starts: " My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the third of five sons" " Robinson Crusoe " commences Similarly: " I was born in the year 1632, in the

city of York, of a good family . , . ." But Scott firmly established the new fashion; and with few exceptions the early nineteenth century and Victorian novelists were shackled by it. Naturally, the exceptions were in the individualistic and plain-thinking writers. Jane Austen was particularly averse to beating about the bush. The first paragraph of "Emma" is a model:

"Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her."

George Borrow could not resist a preface to "Lavengro," but began his first chapter plainly enough: "On an evening of July, in the year 18—, at East D——, a beautiful little town in a certain district of East Anglia, I first saw the light." Similarly, when Charles Kingsley commenced "Alton Locke" his first sentence was a sound, plain, opening: "I am a Cockney among Cockneys." And as the century wore on, rigmarole fell out of fashion, and all types of writers essayed the simple plunge. Disraeli was florid enough; but it is hard to better the introductory sentences of "Vivian Grey";

"We are not aware that the infancy of Vivian Grey was distinguished by any extraordinary incident. The solicitude of the most affectionate of mothers, and the care of the most attentive of nurses, did their best to injure an excellent constitution."

The Moderns

It is unnecessary to trace in detail the change-over from the old fashion to the new. To-day only a very daring writer would devote the early chapters of his book to description and moralising. At the same time there is no absolute standard. A dilettante critic could spend an amusing afternoon, studying method after method of "taking-off." Aldous Huxley, for example, he would find summed up in the first paragraph of "Antic Hay":

"Gumbril, Theodore Gumbril Junior, B.A., Oxon., sat in his oaken stall on the north side of the School Chapel and wondered, as he listened through the uneasy silence of half a thousand schoolboys to the First Lesson, pondered, as he looked up at the vast window opposite, all blue and jaundiced and bloody with nineteenth-century glass, speculated in his rapid and rambling way about the existence and the nature of God."

similarly he would need go no further than

the opening sentence of "The Sacred Fount" for the quintessence of Henry James: "It was an occasion, I felt—the prospect of a large party—to look out at the station for others, possible friends and even possible enemies, who might be going." As for James Joyce, the commencement of "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" would be quite sufficient.

"Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo"

"Elmer Gantry was drunk," the first sentence of a Sinclair Lewis novel, is, of course, an arresting tap of the baton; and Mr. Herbert's "The Water Gipsies" slides easily into movement with: "Jane Bell did not have a very happy birthday, and it was like nothing that she had seen on the pictures." The first paragraph of Virginia Woolf's "To the Lighthouse," on the other hand, is not worth a great deal to the reader: "'Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow, said Mrs. Ramsay. 'But you'll have to be up with the lark,' she added." While the beginning of Jean-Richard Bloch's "... & Co." indicates the modern realistic mood better than anything else that can be called *tq mipid*;

"Three men emerged from the deserted building and took a final turn round it. A big man, wearing a bowler hat and trinkets upon his watch-chain which rattled against his stomach, stopped at one of the corners. He indicated in succession the four cardinal points. His black finger-nails connected the factory with the national traffic system: ten minutes to the wharf, twelve to the railway, seven to the post office, a quarter of an hour to the Chamber of Commerce."

Perhaps the most graceful of modern beginnings, however, is that of "The Edwardians," where Miss Sackville-West actually discusses our subject:

"Among the many problems which beset the novelist, not the least weighty is the choice of the moment at which to begin his novel. It is necessary, it is indeed unavoidable, that he should intersect the lives of his dramatis personae at a given hour; all that remains is to decide which hour it shall be, and in what situation they shall be discovered . . . ,"

But as Miss Sackville-West, of all the moderns, seems to be most prone to fall back into rigmarole, perhaps it would be better to let the matter rest at that.

Wanted: Writers in these Categories

(1) A poet with at least the power of a Spenser, Dryden or Tennyson to translate his and our emotion into intelligible and lovely verse. We cannot expect a Shakespeare every generation, but we should, on our performance in nearly every preceding generation to this one, be capable of producing something better than, say, a Mr. X or a Mr. Y.

(2) A novelist in the class of at least a Trollope, or even a Galsworthy. Perhaps a Defoe, Scott or Dickens is too much to demand, but where is the novelist being published to-day who can approach even the tepid Galsworthy in story-telling, characterisation, taste, evocation of atmosphere and prose style?

(3) A satirist, capable of making us ashamed of our follies through laughter, who could be compared with, say, a Fielding, Butler or Shaw. No, we do not ask for another Chaucer, Swift or Pope, but surely the manifold nonsense of modern life should evoke something more substantial than a Mr. Blank, with his cheaply humorous adulation of night club doxies, weekend cads and bar-parlour gangsters?

(4) We could do with a dramatist at least as good in the literary sense as a Jonson, a Sheridan or a Shaw; an essayist at least in the class of a

Steele, a Stephen or a Birrell; an historical novelist comparable at least with a Harrison Ainsworth—a biographer as good as Forster or Strachey—a travel writer in the class of Mandeville, Doughty—

But each category of literature reveals the same melancholy truth. We *have not* at the present time any considerable writers. We are passing through the most arid single period in the entire history of English letters. Can we study the publishers' lists and refuse to admit the grim validity of this statement? A Shaw totters over from a preceding generation, and perhaps a Wells is still with us; but the middle-aged writers of to-day, even the elderly writers—is there the remotest scrap of real genius among them? As for brilliant youngsters, who can name any contemporary Chattertons, Keates, Popes, Beerbohms, Wildes, Lawrences, Huxleys?

It is strange, because usually at fine periods in their history nations do produce great bards and chroniclers. When nations repel the bloody onslaughts of frenzied neighbours, or cast away in turn the flower of their manhood in bloody onslaughts on their neighbours, they usually feel emotion and someone has to express it.

But to-day we have not even a Napoleonic

war Wordsworth, a Crimean Tennyson, a South African Kipling, or a Great War Brooke. The Spanish Civil War inspired more real literature than the late conflict, which evoked only (1) the monthly best-seller of his Majesty's Stationery Office; (2) the weekly R.A.F. novel of Mr. A. ; (3) the unintelligible and unmoving verse of Mr. B. and his friends; (4) the too-intelligible and loosening verse of Mrs. C. and her friends; (5) the weekly Army novel of Mr. D.; and (6) so many ruined reams of badly printed and bound paper by Messrs. E.F.G.H.I J.K.L.M.N.O.R on the themes of war correspondence, able seamanship, Soviet Russia, phony farming and the post-war public convenience that the very advertisement of a new one acted on a sensitive man like an imminent danger warning.

Perhaps Mr. Churchill's printed speeches occasionally seemed literature to some people, but printed speeches are not always classed as original literary work. Besides, they were not so good as all that.

What we lack to-day, and what we must supply, is not the highest kind of heaven-sent genius, but just the ordinary run of "great" writer which we find in all save a very few periods of literary history. Let us, accordingly, examine the causes of the contemporary pheno-

menon, with a view to finding some hope for the future.

The causes of the present dearth are twofold, first, the war, and second, the war.

The war in a large sense failed to evoke literature because it was not a grand and stirring event. Nobody wanted it, and it became too grim in form for poets and novelists of integrity to get wonderfully inspired.

In a narrower sense, the war prevented the emergence of great writing by imposing unique regulations on the book trade. Paper rationing, Government patronage of publishers, and cheap Forces and educational demands on booksellers prevented *original* books, *long* books, *daring* books and *dull* books from having a chance.

And throughout literary history the great works of emerging genius have usually seemed to fall into those classes at first (until we have got used to them). They have puzzled us by their originality, kept us reading for inordinate lengths of time (not always but often), have shocked us by their daring—and have even bored us at first if we have been used only to trash.

It can be seen that if an author wrote a work of genius during the late war, he had little chance of getting it published. Publishers

lacked paper or binding time to risk on the speculative: while a special kind of wartime public roared only for reading that would lull them in bed or instruct them in the barrack-room.

Now the war is over both these causes at least are removed. We should recover slowly from our spiritual malaise, and publishers and booksellers should gradually regain their sense of literary responsibility.

Then the great books may emerge. Perhaps they have been waiting in cupboards all the time.

Latest Edition

A world-famous bass happened to be passing through, and he was asked to sing at a local charity concert. Much to the surprise of the organisers, he consented, and was put down to sing "The Village Blacksmith." Just before the great artist was due to be called for his item, he was accosted by the biggest man he had ever seen. Not only did the interloper have broad and sinewy hands, but the muscles of his brawny arms were strong as iron bands. "I understand that you are goin' to sing a song called 'The Village Blacksmith V' he uttered fiercely; "well, I'm telling you now that I *am* the village blacksmith, and I want to say that if by any

chance you get an encore, will you shove in an extra verse to say that I also lets out bikes on 'ire at sixpence an hour?"

On Collecting

It can be maintained with a fair show of reason that the collecting instinct is at the root of all human activity. That, probably, is the reason why true socialism must always remain a dream. Capitalism is at the base of all progress. Primitive man was only able to improve his condition when he hoarded some of his spoils against a rainy day; in other words, when he became a capitalist. Even under the present State-aided scheme of things it is only possible to advance on the shoulders of foresight. But the modern collecting instinct, the one that makes millionaires haggle in old bookshops, and small boys quarrel over the possession of dirty pieces of cardboard, is a mere offshoot of the root instinct. No doubt it is actually what an up-to-date psychologist would call the manifestation of the repression of the root-collecting instinct. For it will usually be found that the true collector is a man who lacks an absorbing occupation in life. Frequently, of course, he is a millionaire, but seldom is. he a working millionaire. I remember reading in a book by an American psycho-analyst recently that

among his clients had been many retired business men, whose lives had been devoted to fighting for the possession of more and more wealth, but whose inactive years of retirement had brought only boredom and nervous troubles. It was the psycho-analyst's invariable custom to advise these sufferers from the complaint of "balked disposition" to find them a hobby—concentrate on it! The scientist usually noted after a few months that his patients were throwing as much energy into their hobby—whether it was collecting old china, prints, Polynesian headgear, or building "antique" furniture—as they had previously devoted to their work, and were, nine out of ten of them, their old selves again.

It will generally be found that when collectors are not millionaires they are individuals whom we designate generically as "square pegs in round holes," or "misfits." I think it is the exception rather than the rule for a business man whose hands are full with his job to take a keen interest in collecting. And small boys, of course, with their passion for weird collections of cigarette cards, marbles, stamps, and to be up to date, match box labels, are merely responding to the innate urge, which later will be allowed to manifest itself in more productive channels.

This is not to forget the professional collector—the bibliophile who buys first editions to sell them at a profit later, or the true "Quineys" who makes a living out of "the antique"—but in most cases they are actuated by a purely economic motive, and so are beside the point. I seem to recollect that gentle Elia was something of a collector. Does he not say somewhere: "I have an almost feminine partiality for old china"? Now Elia was the classic "misfit." Of course, the true "acquisitive" instinct, as the economist Tawney calls it, is inherent in animals of all species, if more marked in some than others. We have all, at one time or other, come across the disturbing heaps in the corner of the garden where the next door neighbour's dog has been preserving his bones! And there was the classical "Jackdaw of Rheims," who caused such a pothor when he stole the Abbot's ring. Undoubtedly the true collector is often a bit of a nuisance. But it cannot be denied that his passion is only an exaggerated form of one of the mainsprings of human existence.

Robert Lynd

It is significant that whereas we all start our literary careers by writing essays at school, very few of us bother about essays in later life. The

story, the article, the play and the paragraph absorb all our attention, and the most personal and difficult of literary forms, the essay as written by Addison, Steele, Lamb and Hazlitt, has almost been relegated to the academic dustheap. Only one or two writers in our time have undertaken the thankless task of trying to keep the traditional essay-form alive, men like E. V. Lucas, Max Beerbohm and—Robert Lynd.

I think that Robert Lynd was the first modern literary man to stand out for me among a sea of faces in "John O'London's Weekly" when I was introduced to that paper years ago at school. Why, we had actually been studying one of his essays in a text-book on English prose only that afternoon. Later I began to read those little masterpieces for real, private pleasure, and then a man asked me: "Would you like an introduction to Robert Lynd?" Of course, I was so much older, and had met so many people. But—Robert Lynd!

Well, I walked down the roaring canyon that is Fleet Street and turned with anticipation into the narrow Bouverie Street tributary. The offices of the "News Chronicle," that Liberal amalgamation of the old "Daily News" and "Daily Chronicle," stretched down beside great rolls of newsprint and yellow evening paper

vans, Robert Lynd had been literary editor of the "Daily News" and its amalgamated offspring for countless years, they had said; and I followed the perky page boy up those ancient stairs with reverent tread.

Mind, I had a fairly good idea of what I might find. I'd heard the usual stories about Lynd's prodigious height, pallid mien, cigarettes and elusive, taciturn manner. I'd already looked up the facts about his life, that he'd been born in Belfast in 1879, son of a Doctor of Divinity, that he'd taken his degree at Queen's College, Belfast, then come to London and published no fewer than 26 books of essays, marrying the novelist Sylvia Lynd and rejoicing in two daughters.

But the actual meeting had all the elements of fictional surprise. I waited in a tiny room at the remote top of that involved "News Chronicle" office. The room was plastered with new books sent in for review; they lined the walls, smothered the floor, and mounted in miniature skyscrapers on what I understood to be Lynd's swivel chair and writing desk. The faded Turkey carpet had a large and jagged hole.

The door opened after revealing through its glass panels the silhouette of what might have

been a tremendous, hawklike bird, and Robert Lynd entered. He was still very tall, but walked with a pronounced stoop, as if the years of reading and writing had bent him over. He seated himself at once in the swivel chair—after brushing the books hastily aside—and with a sigh of relief he elevated his gigantic legs and stretched them comfortably across the desk and books before him. He lit another cigarette from the stump hanging in his mouth, and offered me one. He muttered something—didn't speak—but the sound somehow conveyed to me a kindly greeting, a polite interrogation, a comment on the weather. I spoke in reply and explanation; he nodded; I spoke again; he nodded, whispered something quite inaudible: I spoke again and had the extraordinary feeling that never before had I met such a brilliant conversationalist and listener.

When Robert Lynd was a young man I should say he was about the shyest thing in Fleet Street. He still retains that faun-like quality, and doesn't begin to talk until something really interests him or he knows you well. During that first interview he was undoubtedly sizing me up and leaving me to reveal myself. When I met him subsequently with another mutual acquaintance, he did say quite a lot,

although even then his conversation was so illusive that I cannot remember a word of it.

I have the greatest admiration for Robert Lynd. He is one of the last surviving examples of the literary newspaperman in Fleet Street. One day—I hope not for a long time yet—he will join the shades of Addison, Goldsmith, Johnson, Lamb, Hazlitt and such great journalists of our own time as Chesterton and T. P. O'Connor. Throughout all his prolific work—a weekly essay for the "New Statesman and Nation" as well as the "News Chronicle"—reviews and articles—he is always the careful literary artist; and his philosophy of gentle tolerance and humanism is a constant solace to the weary in a world of bigotry and spite.

He is justly the most lovable figure in modern Fleet Street, a man whose kindness to literary beginners is proverbial; and as a writer he is akin to the Montaigne who wrote: "I desire therein to be delineated in mine own genuine, simple and ordinary fashion, without contention, art or study; for it is myself that I portray."

An Editor

An Aberdeen journalist arriving in London asked a friend if he could recommend a good tailor. "Oh, yes," replied his friend. "Isaac

Ikestein is a good man, but you will have to offer him half whatever he quotes, and you will get a bargain." The Aberdonian went to Isaac. "How much for a good suit?" he asked. "Four pounds," said Isaac. "That's ower much," replied the Aberdonian, "I'll gie ye £2." "Two pounds!—that is not enough," said Isaac, "but seeing you are a new customer, I vill let you haf it for £3." "Thirty shillings, or the deal's off!" said the Aberdonian. "Veil, now, that is too little, but as I don't want to lose a customer, I vill say £2—vat you say to that?" "I'll gie ye £1, but nae mair," replied the Aberdonian. "Oh, come, now," replied Isaac, "you are too hard!—let us say 30/-; I don't vant to lose your pizness." "Fifteen shillings or naething," was the reply. "Veil, veil, this is awful," groaned Isaac; "you are the hardest customer I haf ever had; there now!—I vill give you the suit for nodings." "In that case," replied the Aberdonian, "I'll tak twa!" Needless to say, that Aberdonian is now a successful editor.

Art of the Club-maker

Golf-club making, now sadly standardised, was once the prerogative of a few artists, whose right to the title was undisputed up and down the length and breadth of Scotland. In those days a book of popular instruction could

describe " Golf or Goff " as a " pastime almost peculiar to Scotland." But if golf a century ago was played on a small scale the spirit of the game then was even more intensely individualistic than it is now. Old-time players certainly did not stagger on to the links under the weight of a veritable armoury of clubs, like Jones next door, who has just decided to " take up the game "; but they were connoisseurs none the less, and keenly devoted to their misshapen (to modern eyes) weapons, which were specially made by rare craftsmen.

The ancient centres of the club-making industry were Musselburgh and St. Andrews. Actually Musselburgh was the most important though now its once-famous championship links are buried beneath a racecourse. One hundred years ago it was regarded as a school of club-making, and the names of McEwan, Mungo Park and Dunn, its chief masters, were household words* On the other hand, St. Andrews could boast of Alan Robertson—a great player as well as club-maker—Tom Morris, Jamie Wilson and the incomparable Hugh Philp, of whom it was said that he only produced a hundred clubs in his lifetime, but never an ill-balanced one.

H. N. Wethered somewhere describes a unique collection of old clubs he was privileged

to inspect. There were a driver, made by William Dunn the Elder; a brassie of Tom Morris⁵, one of the first ever made; a long spoon of McEwan's; a short spoon of Jamie Dunn's; and a driving putter by Alan Robertson. These clubs, he observes, despite their curious names, were all of the same "approaching" family; and the tool to-day called mashie was then anything from a bap to a driving putter, or baffling spoon, or, still more simply, a baffy. The gem of that collection, however, was a wooden putter made by Hugh Philp, "a thing to be coveted on the green by any natural expert," with the shaft bent into precisely the correct curve, and a substantial grip that "removed the besetting sin of straining after unnecessary effort."

They are misshapen things to modern eyes, these ancient drivers and putters and spoons, with their "swan-neck" shafts and massive concave heads; but no doubt if Philp were alive to-day he would shake his head dubiously over our glittering, graded, stainless steel clubs, and ask however we managed it with them. His generation believed in the concave-faced head, because it was thought the ball would get a straight push from the socket; and they used such assorted woods as ash, lancewood, greenheart, purpleheart and lemon tree in their search

after perfection. And though experts assert that the speedier, more deadly modern game demands the modern club, they agree that the ancient golf must have been smoother, and, perhaps, more satisfying. The wooden putter, for instance, once such a popular club, can be recommended to anybody who wants safety before fireworks. It seldom takes the ball far above the ground, but equally seldom does it miss, and—it never allows you to hurry.

Practically every modern professional tries his hand at club-making, and some rare ones have the expert touch. But the modern demand is so great that it can only be met by mass production, and the genuine artistry that is the prerogative of the individual is a thing of the past. The ancient clubs, though so queer-shaped, were made like violins, with each a personality of its own, and each its own beauty. Their day is past, but their memory can be respected.

Thy Brother's Keeper

We learnt with respect from a recent report of the Committee of Public Accounts that it now requires a staff of 16,688 in the nursery service throughout this grand land to care for 45,244 children while their mothers are at work—38,829 mothers in all—and that the average

cost per child is only 25/- a week, of which the parent pays 5/-. And the whole scheme, *excluding* such unimportant charges as rents and capital expenditure, costs the nation a mere £2,250,000 a year. Who could cavil at such a splendid method of transferring money from one set of pockets to another (least of all the people so gallantly running the scheme)? The only objection that we can see is that some other sections of the community will be getting jealous. They will be asking, for instance, why the omnipotent State cannot similarly arrange for retired colonels to have three or four valets per head at the public expense, or charladies in Lambeth and the Gorbals to have each of them a staff of personal maids (from Government funds); while it can well be imagined that some people, going even further, will suggest a scheme to solve unemployment once and for all—every person in the community to have at least six others looking after him, or her (paid from taxes, of course). The only trouble is, who will do the looking after of those who do the looking after?

A Book for a Rainy Day

John Thomas Smith, the Georgian artist-gossip, neither as author nor as artist showed special skill, and as an individual he attracted no

great attention; but he left behind him two works, his autobiography, "A Book for a Rainy Day," and a biography, "Nollekens and his Times," which, as a kind of old-fashioned running commentary on his age, are precious and apart. Prefacing "A Book for a Rainy Day," Smith apologised as follows: "It is, I own, what ought to be called a salmagundi, or it may be likened to various suits of clothes, made up of remnants of all colours." After a hundred years the mixed dish is still palatable.

Baldly described, Smith's life was that of the average Londoner of his time. He hardly moved from the metropolitan area, and died in 1833 in University Street, a stone's throw from the home of his infancy, in Great Portland Street. From his father, Nathaniel Smith, chief assistant to the popular sculptor, Joseph Nollekens, the boy inherited some artistic talent, and when he was 12 years of age entered the studio. Though apprenticed to sculpture, he developed a marked preference for draughtsmanship, and in due course was sent to study under the engraver, John Keyse Sherwin. He became a passable engraver, and did pencil-portraits well enough to set up as master of his own studio, with a sufficiency of patrons.

In 1816 he was appointed Keeper of the

Prints at the British Museum, where he stayed until his death. "A Book for a Rainy Day"—which had several predecessors—was published posthumously.

On the face of it, Smith's life was uninteresting enough; but he extracted the uttermost from it. He loved anecdote, "Sit down, and I'll tell ye the whole story," was a familiar opening of his; and his autobiography is in that vein. Somewhere he wrote of his life:

"I can boast of seven events, some of which great men would be proud of: I received a kiss when a boy from the beautiful Mrs. Robinson; was patted on the head by Dr. Johnson; have frequently held Sir Joshua Reynolds's spectacles; partook of a pint of porter with an elephant; saved Lady Hamilton from falling when the melancholy news arrived of Lord Nelson's death; three times conversed with King George the Third; and was shut up in a room with Mr. Kean's lion."

It was during his pupil days at Sherwin's that he had the lucky encounter with "Perdita" Robinson. The artist was out one day when she called to see a drawing that had been made of her:

"When I assured her that Mr. Sherwin was not at home,^c Do try to find the drawing of me,

and I will reward you, my little fellow/ said she. I, who had seen Rosetta, in * Love in a Village,' the preceding evening, hummed to myself, as I went upstairs, * With a kiss, a kiss, and I'll reward you with a kiss.' I had no sooner entered the room with the drawing in my hand, than she imprinted a kiss on my cheek, and said, There, you little rogue'."

A Portrait of Johnson

The meeting with Johnson was quite as accidental and unimportant; but Smith describes it at length and, besides, contributes some interesting details about the great man's appearance and idiosyncrasies. Smith was in Nollekens' studio at the time, drawing. Johnson was sitting for his bust: " The Doctor, after looking at my drawing, then at the bust I was copying, put his hand heavily on my head, pronouncing * Very well, very well.' " Smith sketches Johnson candidly:

" He was tall, and must have been, when young, a powerful man; he stooped, with his head inclined to the right shoulder; heavy brows, sleepy eyes, nose very narrow between the eye-brows, but broad at the bottom; lips enormously thick; chin wide and double His gait was wide and awkwardly sprawling; latterly he used a *hooked* walking stick, in con-

sequence of his having saved the life of a young man as he was crossing from Queenhithe to Bankside."

Then Smith goes off inconsequently to tell how he once possessed one of Dr. Johnson's hooked walking sticks but lost it, and hoped that whoever had it, on reading these words, would return it to its rightful owner. From this optimistic irrelevance he returns to his high theme:

" I once saw him follow a sturdy thief, who had stolen his handkerchief in Grosvenor Square, seize him by the collar with both hands, and shake him violently, after which he quickly let him loose; and then, with his open hand, gave him so powerful a smack on the face, that sent him off the pavement staggering."

But Smith actually made very few contacts with the literary world of his day. There is a solitary reference in the book to Charles Lamb, and a remarkable prediction about William Blake:

" At Mrs. Mathew's most agreeable conversations I first met the late William Blake, the artist, to whom she and Mrs. Flaxman had been truly kind. There I have often heard him read and sing several of his poems. He was listened to by the company with profound silence, and

allowed by most of the visitors to possess original and extraordinary merit, A time will come when the numerous, though now very rare, works of Blake (in consequence of his taking very few impressions from the plates before they were rubbed out to enable him to use them for other subjects) will be sought after with the most intense avidity."

Elephants and Kings

But " A Book for a Rainy Day " is not read for such references as these alone, or even mainly. The substance of the autobiography is in its racy stories and almost childish enthusiasms. For example, there is the incident put down as one of the seven great events: " Partook of a pint of Porter with an elephant." This was the original "Jumbo," immortalised in Thomas Hood's lament.

" I had the honour of partaking of a pot of Barclay's Entire with this same elephant . . * being assured by the elephant's keeper that if he would offer the beast a shilling, he would see the noble animal nod his head and drink a pot of porter."

Smith, of course, was ready with his shilling, and watched with bated breath the performance of the act. Afterwards he happily noted, " The keeper observed, 'You will hardly believe,

gentlemen, but the little he has left is quite warm'; upon which we were tempted to taste it, and it really was so."

Then there were the three famous "meetings" with George III.:

"I remember to have been spoken to three times by his Majesty; once on a very foggy morning at a stile near Clewer, when I stepped back to give a gentleman, who had nearly approached it in the adjoining field, the preference of his coming over first; but upon his saying, 'Come over, come over,' I knew the voice to be the King's, consequently I took off my hat and obeyed. His Majesty observed in his quick manner, when getting over, 'A thick fog, thick fog'."

The second encounter occurred one day when Smith was drawing in Windsor Park. The King and Queen passed by in a chaise and one of the horses shied at Smith's paper—"upon which the King called out to me, 'Shut your book, sir, shut the book!' " And the third meeting was as casual and as unremarkable, for the King was walking alone in a chapel at Windsor and finding Smith drawing behind a pillar there, was moved to say: "Who are you, sir? Oh, you startled my horse in the park the other day. What are you about?"

Smith darts from subject to subject. He describes how as a boy he begged his father to allow him to attend Garrick's funeral, then drops the subject like a stone to say:

" This year the Grotto Garden, Rosamond Row, near the London Spa, was kept by Jackson, a man famous for grottoes and fireworks. He had made great additions to it, viz., a new Mounted Fountain, etc. The admittance was sixpence."

He pauses to remark that, " to the honour of our climate, which is often abused, perhaps no country can produce instances of longevity equal to those of England of this year"; describes Arne, the composer of " Rule Britannia"; Belzoni, " the Patagonian Sampson "; argues about the survival of certain types of clothing in England; and discourses largely on door-knockers.

A Revengeful Biography

His life of NoUekens Gosse once described as " perhaps the most candid biography ever published in the English language." The sculptor was an old friend of Smith's family, and befriended his biographer as a boy. Smith knew the NoUekens household well, a rather squalid one; for though NoUekens received thousands a year as the most fashionable portrait

sculptor of his times, he was mean and a miser. This turned Smith against him, in the end, and inspired the cruel candour of the biography. Having been led to believe all his life that the sculptor would benefit him in his will, he received at last only two hundred pounds out of an estate worth £300,000. Smith set out to console his disappointment. He resolved to describe Nollekens's life exactly as it had appeared to him. The result is strangely modern in flavour. With a kind of Zolaesque realism Smith puts down detail after detail, amusing one moment, disgusting the next, until the complete picture is built up. But the biography has not the sweet and random charm of "A Book for a Rainy Day." That is a perfect book for the odd half-hour. It is a bedside book. And it has a share of the old magic, of ancient things.

Relative

How horrible is the belching of my neighbour : how lovely mine own!

Stammering and Genius

Charles Lamb, for all his sweet expansiveness on paper, was almost speechless in the company of his fellow men, as also was C. L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), who, with his pen, could be so

persuading. Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of the evolutionist, and himself a great naturalist, a poet of repute, and an eminent physician, was a hopeless stammerer; so was Richard Boyle, "the Great Earl of Cork," John Philpot Curran, the defender of Wolfe Tone, John Wilson Croker, founder of "The Quarterly Review," Mrs. Inchbald, Maginn, Joseph Priestley, Richard Lalor Sheil, Henry Sidgwick, Charles Kingsley and Walter Bagehot. In our own day is the case of Arnold Bennett, who, as his journals reveal, searched until the end of his life for an effectual cure for the malady. Bennett was by no means a shy or nervous man, but he was always handicapped by his inability to pronounce clearly more than three consecutive words. This subject would surely repay scientific investigation. I have referred to some standard psychological works, but have found no positive support for my tentative theory. It certainly is stated by one authority that stammering may be directly associated with rapid brain growth, and that similar nervous disorders, in the case of genius, proceed from the very mental energy of the individual concerned. It is noteworthy that many persons of genius have been clumsy and awkward in their personal habits, Macaulay could never shave

himself properly; Shelley was always tumbling downstairs; Joseph Priestley could not handle scientific apparatus without breaking it. The inference is that the nervous system of genius is unbalanced—just because it is the nervous system of genius. But that is only begging the question. Freedom—Fiddlesticks

Why is it that the catch-phrases of politicians and publicists in the late war about our national ideals such as "freedom," "liberty," "democracy " and the rest, so utterly failed to inspire the people? Why is it that we saw no crowds marching through the streets with loud invocations to such ideals on their lips, read no fervent poems addressed to the most sacred rights of man, even observed no popular agitation of any kind against such unprecedented interferences with the liberty of the British individual as the internal censorship of correspondence in certain areas or the absolution of United States military visitors from all checks of our ancient Common Law?

It cannot be replied that we are nationally averse to demonstrations of that kind, because our history has been gloriously urgent with them, and seldom has a generation failed to produce a Hampden, a Milton or a Bradlaugh, who, until recently, were the foremost heroes of our

schoolbooks and pride of our public prators. Why, John Bull himself was pre-eminently an embodiment of the spirit which will brook no interference with personal liberty. Scotland's saints were always sturdy exponents of the doctrine that Scotsmen, at least, must live and worship as they please. Ireland had no other heroes. It is that quality, more than any other, which enabled our people for such a long period to lead the world in so many departments of life. We were free—and free to experiment, always to start new enterprises, to evolve noble ideas and institutions, to acquire a wonderful self-respect.

Yet we did not, as said, observe a single instance in this war of the old temper aflame: despite that we had seldom in our history been presented with greater provocations. Admittedly there were strikes for more pay, and well-behaved agitations against other economic developments. But *personal liberty*, as a burning necessity of the traditional Briton, was allowed to pass from his hands without a solitary characteristic word of protest.

Perhaps it might be argued that we merely displayed our good sense in this matter, submitting to the temporary loss of our rights because of patriotism and the realisation of the supreme

Nazi danger to our very lives, let alone our liberties. But that does not ring altogether true. Vast numbers of people in this country *never* appreciated to the full our extreme peril at certain periods of the war; and—no kinds of danger, no personal fears of any kind in the past prevented the expression of at least some kind of revulsion against personal enslavement in causes however essential and good.

No, the explanation runs deeper than that, is profoundly disquieting, and should be appreciated at once by observers of middle-age and over. It is contained in the old aphorism about liberty's being a habit acquired with difficulty and lost with ease. Generations if not centuries of struggle and precept are required to make a people regard personal freedom as their birth-right: in a single generation the very concept of liberty itself can become an object of derision, even revulsion, *if* that new generation is accustomed from childhood to the insidious strait-jacket of an unspectacular tyranny.

Thus we can trace how in the last thirty years ourselves and our children have become slowly habituated to a different, less free kind of life by gradual application of almost-invisible bonds to our persons, by a relentless but almost imperceptible tightening of such restraints. Thirty years ago—

Then a young man could freely choose for his life-work practically any calling, and see before him an infinite vista of opportunity, beset with absolutely no barriers of a rigid, legalistic or bureaucratic kind. He could go to sea without being a registered member of the appropriate union or go to the devil without first undergoing an elaborate course of reformatory training. He could start a small business hopefully and without any kind of control, or enter a large business without assuming the habits and chains of an official. Meanwhile he could travel without passport or grant asylum in his own country to any kind of foreigner. Once past his front-door he was immune from all official interference unless he had committed a real crime. But most of all, he was a free man in a free country, unused to queues, unused to restrictions, unused to the bridle and bit which produces the willing neck: and so, thirty years ago a young man had an entirely different outlook from his son or grandson of to-day. If anyone attempted to interfere with him or his traditional liberties, he was immediately up in arms, or at least provoked to loud verbal remonstrance.

The tragedy is that thirty years have dulled that response: so that how can they protest now who have never learnt how to protest, indeed,

who have only learnt obedience and a kind of dull, cynical lethargy? You know, my middle-aged reader, the glazed look that comes into the eyes of the young when you tell them about the different world of your own youth. Of course, they don't believe you: they *cannot* believe you.

Worse still, the process of devitalizing our children promises to intensify. The new educational schemes, the plans for health and insurance services, the retention of Labour Ministry and Board of Trade controls, above all, the insistence upon youth *organisations* of one kind and another, will give a youngster no chance of looking after himself unless he is fortunate enough to possess some physical disability or a steamer ticket to South America. We shall slide inevitably towards a condition of national affairs where no one will have the courage or desire to resist authority, and where, however much the words may bore us, there will indeed be no freedom, no liberty, and certainly no democracy. Like Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia before us, we will be easy game for authoritarian leaders.

Surely the British tradition and temperament are too deep-seated for such a total declension to take place? Are we not by nature rebels and

individualists, unable to change any more than the lion can lose his roar?

But those questions are not valid. To begin with, the lion can lose his roar, as any visitor to a cheap menagerie can confirm, and there have been occasions, even in our proud history, when the British people have lived and behaved like slaves, not on the scale of the shame which is threatened at present, because Britain has never had such a considerable population and such efficient devices for enslavement as to-day, but on a sufficiently frightening scale. Does not England remember certain periods of her fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, and Scotland remember the aftermath to the '45?

The lesson is plain. Our chief national concern to-day should be the complete restoration of civil liberties and the encouragement of the young to taste the savour of such an unwonted freedom. Then our late agonies may not entirely have been in vain.

Reflection

Every child is older than its father. How I hate that thought! Both as father and son, I am made by it to feel so old.

The Value of Games

" There is a manliness ki the athletic exercise*

of public schools, which is as seductive to the imagination as it is utterly unimportant in itself. Of what importance is it in after-life, whether a boy can play well or ill at cricket; or row a boat with the skill and precision of a water-man?"

These are curious words for the robust age of Dr. Arnold and "Tom Brown's Schooldays." Yet, coming from the pen of that versatile and popular essayist, Sydney Smith, and occupying a prominent position in the pages of the august and far from irresponsible "Edinburgh Review," they were representative of a certain body of educated opinion in England at that time. Much has been made of the "playing fields of Eton" fetish, which apparently dominated the minds of educationists in the first half of the 19th century: accordingly it is interesting to find a serious break in the tradition.

"Parson" Sydney Smith was one of the most voluminous and widely read publicists of his day. His reputation was a hybrid variety of that earned in modern times by, say, Dean Inge and Mr. H. G. Wells. His journalistic output—if the term may be used of the weighty, philosophical discourses that filled the pages of the "Edinburgh Review" and other "gentle-

men's magazines"—was prodigious. That today most of it is deep in oblivion is no indication of its quality, but only evidence of the time-honoured dictum, "sufficient to the day is the propaganda thereof." The essay from which the above extract about the "games fallacy" was taken originally appeared as a review of a book by an anonymous writer, called "Remarks on the System of Education in Public Schools." The heresy singled out for quotation is, however, by no means an isolated one. In matters educational Sydney Smith was, apparently, an iconoclast of no mean order.

As a good Benthamite, Smith's objection to the important part played by games in the scholastic curricula of his day was naturally based on utilitarian grounds. If only, he says, some useful object were involved, he would not mind—"If our young lords and esquires were hereafter to wrestle together in public, or the gentlemen of the Bar to exhibit Olympic games in Hilary Term, the glory attached to these exercises at public schools would be rational and important." This sounds rather like a prophecy. In Sydney Smith's time, however, lawyers came of age early, and it was necessary for a man of sense to ask: "But of what use is the body of an athlete, when we have good laws over our

heads, or when a pistol, a post-chaise, or a porter can be hired for a few shillings?"

Nor was the essayist less perturbed about the public school system as a whole. In those fair institutions "to which the sons of gentlemen" resorted "in considerable numbers," and where they continued to reside, "from eight or nine, to 18 years of age," every boy was "alternatively tyrant and slave." It was in the very spirit of the system that the younger boys should be submissive to the older; and this led to such manifold abuses that it would be better to do away with the schools altogether than to allow a regime to continue where the law of the jungle favoured the bullies and crushed the more sensitive natures:

"Submission to tyranny lays the foundation of hatred,, suspicion, cunning, and a variety of odious passions. We are convinced that those young people will turn out to be the best men who have been guarded most effectually, in their childhood, from every species of useless vexation; and experienced, in the greatest degree, the blessings of a wise and rational indulgence."

The words might be those of any latter-day reformer!

Loss of Individuality

Smith found particular cause for uneasiness

in the size of the average public school, and the congestion in class and dormitory that prevented a boy from developing as an individual. What words would he use after surveying some of the classes in modern state schools? But in the days when education was still a luxury for the few he was able to state categorically that " a close inspection of the master into the studies and conduct of each individual is quite impossible." Not only did the system prevent " the tedious cultivation of those middling talents, of which only the great mass of human beings are possessed," but after favouring the few gifted with exceptional talents it commonly left " the idle almost as idle, and the dull almost as dull, as it found them." The difficulties were apparently the same as those facing harassed educationalists at the present day. In the long run boys were left entirely to themselves, to pick up what they could and leave the other three-quarters unlearnt; and to choose the line of least resistance in both conduct and intellectual output*

" A few boys are incorrigibly idle," states the would-be reformer, "and a few incorrigibly eager for knowledge; but the great mass are in a state of doubt and fluctuation; and they come to school for the express purpose, not of being

left to themselves—for that could be done anywhere—but that their wavering tastes and propensities should be decided by the intervention of a master." The best kind of education, in Sydney Smith's opinion, would be that which combined the finest features of home and school life. And the best school would be that " which is best accommodated to the greatest variety of characters, and which embraces the greatest number of cases."

The Example of Famous Men

The essayist clinches his argument with a long list of famous men who were *not* educated at public schools. After observing that there was no greater illusion than that which held that "the most eminent men in every art and science " were so trained, he points out that of the poets at least Spenser, Pope, Shakespeare, Butler, Rochester, Spratt, Parnell, Garth, Congreve, Gay, Swift, Thomson, Shenstone, Aken-side, Goldsmith, Samuel Johnson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, Sir Philip Sidney, Savage, Arbuthnot, and Burns were not " educated in the system of English public schools "; and that the advantage was denied the men of science—Sir Isaac Newton, Maclaurin, Wallis, Flamsteed, Saunderson, Simpson and Napier; the

historians Clarendon, Hume and Robertson; the artists Inigo Jones, Vanbrugh, Reynolds, Gainsborough and Garrick; the philosophers Bacon, Shaftesbury, Hobbes, Berkeley, Butler, Hume, Hartley and Dugald Stewart, and a host of chemists, warriors, lawyers, miscellaneous scholars, and "conspicuous writers upon political economy."

The Truth about Publishers

The first publisher I encountered was Sir John Murray, and this was as it should be. Founded in 1768, Murrays is the oldest publishing house in the world that has never changed its name in any way, nor become a company, while the head of the firm has always been a John Murray in the direct line of succession. Well, the fifth Murray is a delightful man, tall, with ready smile and soldierly bearing, a composite personality indeed, because after a distinguished Oxford career he commanded the 12th Battalion the Royal Scots during the first German war. I found him among relics of the past in that famous Queen Anne house of Albemarle Street. He inhabited an eighteenth century salon that was chockful of letters, MSS, and curios relating to everyone from Burns to Munthe, Byron to Vare, Jane Austen to Freya Stark.

But Murray himself does not live in the past. He was eloquent about modern problems, and his chief bugbear was mass-production. " There are far too many books to-day,"⁵ he said, " and the market is glutted, so that many deserving authors are passed over by the public and the trade."

My next encounter, Stanley Unwin, was a very different proposition. It could be said that Unwin has made himself entirely. A sparely-built man, with pointed beard and quizzical expression, he told me how he had first entered into business on his own account in 1914, and his firm had actually been incorporated as a limited company on the fatal August 4th of that year, " The declaration of war depreciated my assets about 30 per cent, on the day I started."

But Unwin is a Quaker, the calm personification of one of the soundest facets of the British character. Some might call him uncomfortably cold, but you feel in his presence that few publishers could have such a profound and reliable knowledge of their trade. I remember asking him what he would do if he were appointed book trade dictator. He replied that he wouldn't accept the job, because he didn't believe in dictators, but if he did, well, he would insist that " nobody be allowed to publish books

without proper qualifications to do so." That was Stanley Unwin.

And now for yet another type, Jonathan Cape, perhaps the most highly-regarded publisher of modern times. Actually, I had doubted the existence of a man with that perfect publisher's name. It might have been invented by some syndicate of exceedingly shrewd business men. But Cape existed all right, a tall, strongly-built man with the head of a prosperous farmer, and the clothes of a diplomatist. Was I just slightly disappointed by his self-assured manner? I shall not develop the theme, for Cape talked to me very kindly and lengthily about the difficulty of getting people to buy books—and didn't he hate "Penguins"!

This was interesting, for very soon after I travelled to the fields of Harmondsworth and the bright factory where Allen Lane, nephew of the Bodley Head Lane, concocts his remarkable series. He impressed me most of all my publishers. He has what the novelists call a dynamic personality, and it is not difficult to understand his success.

A few years ago he escaped from the wreck of the old Bodley Head with £100 and started publishing "Penguins" from the crypt of a London church. A youngster of twenty-one

designed the famous cover; Lane's typist suggested the name "Penguin." Since then over tens of millions have been sold.

Lane is sturdy, dark-haired and constantly smiling. I asked him if he had any reply to the criticisms of "orthodox" publishers. "There is a definite purpose behind our enterprise," he said. "We have a very clear idea in our minds of what the public wants, and we won't allow ourselves to be sidetracked."

Pickwick Redivivus

I think the next publisher of my acquaintance was dear old Arthur Waugh, father of Alec and Evelyn, and head for many years of Chapman and Hall. These were Dickens's publishers, and, strangely enough, Waugh might himself have been a reincarnation of Mr. Pickwick. He had twinkling eyes, rosy cheeks, silky white hair, and a pleasantly rotund figure. He had retired from active business then, but I shan't forget his indictment of modern conditions: —

"It seems to me that dog habitually eats dog in the publishing world of to-day. You risk your money on an author, nurse him for several books and years, smooth the way to his fame, and then, as soon as he begins to return a profit, it is

whisked away to another firm that has offered a too-substantial cash inducement."

But this view was not held by another veteran of publishing whom I met, Sir Humphrey Milford, whose name used to appear at the bottom of all the Oxford University Press books. A delicate, silvery old man with slender finger-tips, he received me in the renowned Publisher's Room of Amen House, complete with Grinling Gibbons fireplace. He thought that the six-pennies were a good idea, and, referring to modern conditions, pointed out that "most of the famous old publishing firms are still healthy and independent. It is so easy to make much ado about nothing."

I could continue this note with detailed impressions of Geoffrey Faber, surprisingly a huntin', shootin' type of man; Harold Raymond, of Chattos, scholar and delightful fellow; work-worn W. G. Taylor, of Dents, and G. S. Evans, of Heinemanns; business-like Robert Hale, one of the newer publishers; and slow, heavy aesthetic Desmond Flower, of Cassells. But I have probably written enough to demonstrate that publishers are an exceedingly diverse, although by no means forbidding race of ordinary men. Oh, and I *didnot see Gollance*. He was far too busy with polit.

When the Dean Became Really Gloomy

E. V. Lucas, speaking once at a literary gathering in Edinburgh, told the following story about Dean Inge:

Stories of or about Mr. A. P. Herbert are numerous, but there is a recent one that you may not have heard. Once, on a public occasion, when proposing the health of Dean Inge, he described that divine as "a pillar of the Church and two columns in the 'Evening Standard.'"

The Dean, dispensing for a moment with his alleged gloom, was delighted, and added this anecdote to his repertory; for although too deaf to hear what soup his neighbour is consuming, he is an after-dinner speaker much in request.

Not so long ago he wound up one of these addresses by relating this epigrammatic description of himself—"a pillar of the Church and two columns of the 'Evening Standard'"—and was overjoyed by the warmth of its reception. "I have often told that story," he said to the chairman, at his side, as he sat down, "but it never went so well as this evening." "That," the chairman replied, "may be because it was also told by the previous speaker,"

Virtues of Transplanting

Genius profits from an early stay in a foreign country: cf. the necessary transplanting of some prize vegetables.

Beatitude

Blessed are the dark in hair for they need never dye.

Tobacco Smoking: Unfairly Taxed

Tobacco smoking is one of the most innocent pleasures vouchsafed mankind; and yet in proportion to its intrinsic value tobacco, of all commodities chosen by Governments for taxation during the last three hundred years, has been the most heavily penalised. The man in the street has, admittedly, become quite indifferent to this wretched state of affairs. Long experience of taxes and tax gatherers has, indeed, produced a kind of smoker's fatalism. But the time has now come, in at least one smoker's opinion, for the unmasking of that great fiscal conspiracy, which, taking advantage of a popular misconception, inculcated by the conspirators, that smoking is a vice, has for so long made so much money out of an innocent joy. Here then, in the name of our Lady Nicotine, is the argument.

King James' Calumny

To understand the great tobacco conspiracy it is necessary to remember those brave days when the weed first captivated man. That was during the glorious reign of Elizabeth, a queen who thought highly of the new fashion, and had the good sense to glean useful revenue by imposing on tobacco a modest import duty of 2d. a pound. But the Elizabethan heyday was all too short. The next monarch, James I., was a sour individual who possibly possessed a weak stomach, for his first Royal business was to commence a dastardly agitation against the smoking habit. In 1603 he published a treatise entitled "Misocapnos, a Counterblaste against Tobacco," in which he said many hard things against what he was pleased to entitle a "vice." Then, a short time later, he published a so-called "Collection of Witty Apothegms," from which the following is a significant extract:

"Tobacco is the lively image and pattern of hell; for that it has, by allusion, in it all the parts and vices of the world whereby hell may be gained; to wit: First it is a smoke; so are the vanities of this world. Secondly, it delighteth them who take it; so do the pleasures of the world delight the men of the world. Thirdly, it maketh men drunken, and light in the head; so

do the vanities of the world, men are drunken therewith. Fourthly, he that taketh tobacco saith he cannot leave it, it doth bewitch him; even so the pleasures of the world make men loath to leave them, they are for the most part so enchanted with them, and further, besides all this, it is like hell in the very substance of it, for it is a stinking, loathsome thing; and so is hell.⁵⁵

And, acting upon these delightful sentiments, His Majesty promptly increased the import duty on tobacco from 2d. to 6/10 a pound!

Wicked Persecutions

It was not only in England, however, that tobacco smoking was early branded and charged as a vice. In the early 17th century the Sultan of Turkey, enraged at his subjects⁵ preoccupation with a pastime that for some reason or other he could not appreciate himself, declared smoking a crime, and ordered that all Turks who ventured to smoke in a public place should be seized by his bodyguard and have their pipes thrust through their noses. About the same time as this a writer describes what was happening in old-fashioned Russia:

"Consequently in 1634 the sovereign, at the instigation of the Patriarch issued an order

strictly forbidding the use or sale of tobacco, as well as all private traffic in brandy or beer. Offenders are usually sentenced to slitting of the nostrils, the bastinado, or the knout; those convicted of taking snuff have their noses torn away. We ourselves have met with many a victim of each of these forms of torture, which were inflicted alike on men and women."

In 1624 the Roman Pontiff, Urban VIII., and in 1690 Pope Innocent XII., issued Bulls against smokers. In the Swiss canton of Beme a prohibition against tobacco smoking was placed among the Ten Commandments immediately after the commandment against adultery; and, as late as the middle of the 18th century, a court regularly sat in Berne for trying tobacco delinquents.

In England the famous excise upon tobacco was so jealously regarded by successive Governments that Englishmen were forced to evolve the fine art of smuggling, that they might retain a shadow of their old freedom. An excise, according to good definition, is "a method of extracting money for national purposes from personal expenditure on luxuries, and is especially serviceable when fed from those luxuries the use of which in excess becomes a vice." You see the point. First tobacco smoking

was preached against; then smokers **had their** nostrils slit for smoking; finally when the habit had been successfully established and encouraged as a vice, a special form of vice taxation was invented to absorb the profits.

The Triumph of Right

The marvel is, of course, that in spite of the continual halter round its neck, tobacco's popularity has never diminished. On the contrary it has increased by great leaps and bounds. The revenue of Great Britain from tobacco duties in 1872 was £6,797,018; in 1913-14 it was £18,000,000; lately it was £67,000,000. It has been estimated that the world's consumption of tobacco has doubled since 1914. In the year 1928 the United States of America smoked 160 milliards of cigarettes. Well did Barten Holyday write three hundred years ago: "Earth ne'er did breed such a joviall weed, whereof to boast so proudly."

But it is also demonstrated by the statistics above quoted how devilishly has the great fiscal conspiracy against tobacco succeeded in its aims. No Government, nor, for that matter, any intelligent citizen, would advocate the complete fiscal emancipation of tobacco nowadays, for **the** simple reason that that would instantly **throw**

the finances of the country concerned into hopeless confusion. So we have the Gilbertian spectacle of the foremost nations of the modern world treating as one of the greatest sources of their revenue a comparatively unimportant and completely innocuous social custom. Thousands of other habits besides tobacco smoking are equally injurious when indulged in excessively. The more foolish and vain-glorious of these should be brought under the eye of the tax-gatherer. If our "joviall weed" must be squeezed, then why not cosmetics, reports of murder trials, slim volumes of verse, night-echoing motor cycles, racecourse bets, perfumery and Test cricketers? If tobacco breeds vice, then, by the shade of Raleigh, so do they!

In Praise of Tobacco

Tobacco and literature are old friends. Many masterpieces have been evolved out of a quiet half-hour with a pipe; and a great number of authors have found time to acknowledge their debt to the habit. A browse among the old books will disclose sufficient tributes. For instance, as long ago as 1612, when tobacco was a comparative newcomer to England, Ben Jonson wrote the following "Ode to an Honest Tobacconist":

This is my friend, Abel, an honest fellow;
 He lets me have good tobacco, and he does
 not
 Sophisticate it with sack-lees or oil,
 Nor washes it in muscadel and grains,
 Nor buries it in gravel, under ground,
 Wrapp'd up in greasy leather, or old clouts;
 But keeps it in fine lilly pots that, open'd,
 Smell like conserve of roses, or French beans.
 He has his maple block, his silver tongs,
 Winchester pipes, and fire of Jupiter;
 A neat, spruce, honest fellow . . .

Which indicates that some of the tobacconists of that time were evidently not so honest. As appears in the verse, a frequent practice was to adulterate the tobacco leaf; but Act of Parliament later put a stop to this.

Then there is extant a letter written by one James Howell (1650) to a friend, Henry Hopkins, Esq., which begins: " Sir,—To usher in again old Janus I send you a parcel of Indian perfume, which the Spaniards call a Holy Herb in regard to the various virtues it hath, but we call it Tobacco; I will not say it grew under the King of Spain's window, but I am told it was gather'd neer his Gold Mines of Potosi (where they report that in some places there is more of that ore than earth) . . . If moderately and

seasonably taken 'tis food for many things; it helps digestion taken a while after meat, it makes one void rheum, breaks wind, and it keeps the body open; a leaf or two being steep'd o'er night in a little white wine is a vomit that never fails in its operation."

Then, fifteen years later, Pepys has the following entry in his diary: " 7th June, 1665. . . . The hottest day that ever I felt in my life. This day, much against my will, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and ' Lord have mercy upon us ' writ there; which was a sad sight to me, being the first of the kind that, to my remembrance, I ever saw. It put me into an ill conception of myself and my smell, so that I was forced to buy some roll-tobacco to smell and to chew, which took away the apprehension."

"A Joviall Weed"

And, contemporaneous with the great diarist, was a minor poet, Barten Holyday, who dedicated this queer verse to his greatest love:

Tobacco's a Musician
And in a Pipe delighteth;
It descends in a close,
Through the Organs of the nose,

With a relish that inviteth.

This makes me sing, So ho, ho, So ho, ho
boyes,

Ho boyes,, sound I loudly :

Earth ne'er did breed

Such a joviall weed,

Whereof to boast so proudly.

Then a quaint writer in the " Gentleman's Magazine" for 1788 had the following: "I must beg leave to dissent from somebody who has written very unfavourably of smoking tobacco as bad for the lungs." And, after stating a good argument in favour of the weed, he concluded: " I must clearly assent to the truth of the fact asserted by that critic who found its name to be derived from three Hebrew words which, if I recollect aright, were Tob bonus, Ach fumus, A ejus: ' Good is the smoke thereof.'"

Charles Lamb and his circle were all puffing billies, so it was natural the essayist, when forced to relinquish smoking for his health's sake, should break out like this:

May the Babylonish curse

Straight confound my stammering verse,

If I can a passage see

In this word complexity,

Or a fit expression find,
Or a language to my mind
(Still the phrase is wide or scant)
To take leave of thee, Great Plant!
Or in any terms relate
Half my love or half my hate . . .
The plain truth will seem to be
A constrained hyperbole,
And the passion to proceed
More from a mistress than a weed.

One of the most sincere tributes of all may be found in Thomas Chandler Haliburton's "The Clockmaker" (1836): "The fact is, squire, the moment a man takes to a pipe he becomes a philosopher; it's the poor man's friend; it calms the mind, soothes the temper, and makes a man patient under troubles. It has made more good men, good husbands, kind masters, indulgent fathers and honest fellows, than any other blessed thing on this universal world."

Byron's famous tribute "Sublime Tobacco" is possibly the best known of all, but deserves resurrection:

Sublime tobacco, which, from east to west,
Cheers the tar's labour or the Turkman's rest,
Which on the Moslem's ottoman divides
His hours, and rivals opium and his brides;

Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,
 Though not less loved, in Wapping on the
 Strand;
 Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe,
 When tipp'd with amber, mellow, rich and
 ripe ;
 Like other charmers, wooing the caress
 More dazzlingly when daring in full dress.
 Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
 Thy naked beauties—give me a cigar!

" Tobacco smoke," said Carlyle, " is the one element in which, by our European manners, men can sit silent together without embarrassment, and where no man is bound to speak one word more than he has actually and veritably got to say." Quoth Lord Lytton: "He who doth not smoke hath either known no great griefs, or refuseth himself the softest consolation next to that which comes from heaven."

Thackeray, of course, invented a famous blend in " The Virginians," and throughout his novels and essays will be found tributes to the smoking habit. In one place he declares: " The pipe draws wisdom from the lips of philosophers, and shuts up the mouth of the foolish; it generates a kind of conversation, contemplative, thoughtful, benevolent and unaffected." And

later on he says: " I vow and believe that the cigar has been one of the greatest creature-comforts of my life—a kind companion, a gentle stimulant, an amiable anodyne, a cementer of friendship."

"With Pipe and Book"

One of the finest things of its kind ever done is Richard Le Gallienne's " With Pipe and Book":

With Pipe and Book, at close of day,
Oh, what is sweeter, mortal, say?
It matters not what book on knee,
Old Izaak or the Odyssey,
It matters not meerschaum or clay.

And though one's eyes will dream astray,
And Mps forget to sue or sway,
It is " enough to merely be "

With Pipe and Book.

What though our modern skies be gray,
As bards aver, I will not pray
For " soothing Death " to succour me.
But ask this much, O Fate, of thee,
A little longer yet to stay
With Pipe and Book.

And perhaps the best end is a quotation from
the "Cigarette Papers" of Joseph Hatton

(1892): " In joy or sorrow, for all seasons, in every clime, under all circumstances, a quiet pipe is a most true and sweet companion."

Some Lilliputian Literature

Very small and very large things have always fascinated middle-sized man. When Swift invented his Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians he recognised this trait, and made good use of it; when showmen produce their dwarfs and giants they also cater for a taste that is as common in civilisation as it is in savagery. Numerous miniature books have been produced throughout the ages, some marvels of manual dexterity; and there was once a craze for them that caused their production in large quantities. The fragility of these masterpieces of the printer's, engraver's and calligraphist's art has made them an easier prey to time than larger books; and those that exist at the present day are valuable rarities.

There are three distinct classes of miniature books, those in manuscript, those printed in type and as such combining the skill of the type designer, cutter, printer and binder; and those produced by a photographic process from an ordinary-sized book. Printed miniature books are undoubtedly the most interesting. Accord-

ing to Mr. Cyril Davenport, a former official of the British Museum, they should not exceed three by two inches, measured on the printed page, to be of bibliographic value.

The oldest-known miniature book printed in the English language was the Hours of the Blessed Virgin, printed and published in 1500 by a Julian Notary, at the Sign of the Three Kings, Westminster. This rarity, printed in black-letter, was an inch and a half long and one inch wide. Seventy-four years later there was published by a W. Seres, of London, a Tablet for Gentlewomen, as interesting for its quaint contents as for its size, which was two inches by one and a half inches; and in 1616 a copy of the Bible called Verbum Sempiternum, measuring one and a quarter inches square, was published by a London printer named J. Beale. Thenceforward many miniature books were printed in England. Religious works were a popular subject for the miniaturist, and many Thumb Bibles, as they were called, were produced. Most of these were square in shape, bound in plain calf, and printed in black letter; and the type used was generally the old Long Primer, similar to modern 10 point. A very famous small Bible was that published by Wt Harris, of London, in 1774. It measured

two and a half inches by two inches, and had an engraved title page.

In the 18th century miniature book production was brought to a fine art by two famous Scotsmen, Robert and Andrew Foulis, of Glasgow. Robert Foulis was for many years printer to the University of Glasgow, where he invented some beautiful types, including a small one very similar to Nonpareil or 6 point, as it is called in modern methodical times. Collaborating with his brother he also produced an extremely fine Greek type; and it was this that was used in the well-known Foulis miniature Greek series. Many volumes, including Anacreon, Pindar, Epictetus and other of the classical authors were published, none of which exceeded two and three-quarter inches by one and three-quarter inches in size. They were neatly bound in blue morocco, gold tooled, and the few copies existing to-day are eagerly sought by collectors. The Foulis brothers also designed a famous 7 point Latin type.

Between 1770 and 1860 in England there was a craze for almanacks of all kinds, shapes and sizes. The most popular of these quaint books were the miniature productions. An idea of the contents can be obtained by the title-page of an almanack published in 1799, which measured

one and onereighth inches square, and was bound in black morocco:

"The Almanack explained. Note. Under the title of every month is the change of the Moon, and every moath contains three columns. 1. Days of the month. 2. Saints' Days, Etc. 3. Time of high water at London Bridge. Printed for the Company of Stationers."

Most of the almanacks were published by the Company of Stationers. Some were bound in silk, others in coloured paper, while not a few were equipped with a miniature flap and silver catch, so that they could be fastened and unfastened like a purse. The most famous of these miniature books was the English Bijou Almanack, which was first issued in 1836, and continued yearly until 1854. The Bijou—aptly named, because it measured only three-quarters by half an inch—was bound in coloured paper, and was "Poetically Illustrated by L.E.L."—well known to delvers into the queer by-ways of the early Victorian era as the much over-rated Letitia Landon.

The smallest and one of the oldest miniature books extant, is a foreign production, printed by an Italian in 1615, and called Galileo a Madame Cristina di Lorena. It measures only 15 by 10 millimetres—approximately one half

by a quarter of an inch, and can be read fairly easily with the naked eye.

This is the acid test of the miniature printed book. Those quite indecipherable to the average eyesight are printed by the photographic process, and from the point of view of the bibliographer are comparatively worthless.

There are several collectors who specialise in miniature books solely. For anybody fortunate in the possession of the taste, time and money it is doubtful whether there could be a more congenial hobby, as the small volumes take up little space, and generally are of pleasing appearance. Some bibliophiles have miniature bookcases constructed to accommodate their finds. In the British Museum there is one of these bookcases, a replica Chippendale, which contains a fine collection gleaned from all parts of the world.

Tennyson

A shy young girl admirer was introduced to Tennyson at a garden party, and was just beginning to make some headway with him when his manner underwent a change. She timidly expressed a fear that she had offended him, and was horrified by his abrupt rejoinder: "Your stays are creaking." Off he went, and the poor **girl was overwhelmed with confusion. She was**

on the point of slipping away home when Tennyson suddenly reappeared, smiling, and he whispered: " I'm sorry! —it was only my braces."

The Golden Bough

Sir James Frazer is renowned among scientists for his twelve-volume study of primitive customs, beliefs, superstitions and religious practices ; he is familiar to bookmen as the author of " a noble piece of literature, a spacious chapter of history," which is thought of " as one thinks of the work of Gibbon"; but to most people " The Golden Bough" means the mistletoe bough, and Frazer is the philosopher of Christmas. The massive book which contains the harvest of years of research into pagan mythologies and present-day survivals, garnished by the most encyclopaedic mind of our generation, is in reality a long variation on the most ancient theme in the world. The bough, according to Frazer, which is still given an honourable place at the Christmas party, was worshipped by our remote ancestors and represented then the embodied spirit of fertility; and somehow or other its ancient cult can be traced in most religions and many social customs since. The full story, if the reader has the time and ~~sanipw~~

to wade through the twelve volumes, is of great interest and is told in impeccable prose. Fortunately there is an abridged version, which retains the most interesting parts of the original.

It commences at that famous little Lake Nemi, in Italy, the subject of Turner's picture. "Who does not know Turner's picture of the 'Golden Bough'?" begins Frazer, and he proceeds to tell how "in this sacred grove there grew a certain tree round which at any time of the day, and probably far into the night, a grim figure might be seen to prowl. . . . He was a priest and a murderer; and the man for whom he looked was sooner or later to murder him and hold the priesthood in his stead." He goes on to explain that Diana, the goddess of fertility, was the guardian of this sanctuary, and so, cunningly describing the relation of the dark old customs to the sacred tree, in itself the symbol of Diana's deity, he engages the fixed interest of his reader, and prepares him for an excursion across the entire history of the world. On the way it is pointed out that the mistletoe is also Virgil's Golden Bough, which Aeneas carried with him on his descent into the subterranean world; that the name may be derived from "the rich golden yellow which a bough of mistletoe assumes when it has been cut and kept for some

months"; and that "the mistletoe has been sometimes supposed to possess the property of disclosing treasures in the earth." Moreover, that in Sweden the old people make divining rods of mistletoe to discover gold; that in ancient days the very sun's fire was regarded as "an emanation of the mistletoe"; that in some places the plant is believed to serve as a master key to all locks; that when mistletoe was scarce Welsh farmers used to say, "No mistletoe, no luck"; and a thousand other curious facts, which are not only of great anthropological interest, but make highly-attractive reading to the layman.

"The Golden Bough" is a great scientific work and a classic. It can be compared safely with "The Origin of Species" as a book which is both a milestone on the road of truth and a literary joy for ever.

Defects in General Education

We have often thought and sometimes said in recent years that young professional men tend to suffer from a defective general education, the possible cause being over-concentration on specialized studies during a rushed period of training. It is interesting to observe that a similar criticism of medical apprenticeship has been expressed by a Planning Committee *of* the

Royal College of Physicians of London in a report on "Medical Education."⁵⁵ This is succinctly stated:

" (The average medical graduate) tends to lack curiosity and initiative; his powers of observation are relatively undeveloped; his ability to arrange and interpret facts is poor; he lacks precision in the use of words. In short, his training, however satisfactory it may have been in the technical sense, has been unsatisfactory as an education.⁵⁵

Thereafter the problem is carefully analyzed, and, as said, the root cause is found in that somewhat vague theory of our own about overspecialization and hustle at the most vital period of a young man's life. He starts concentrating too early at school on science; entering the University or the medical training school, he is faced with such a complicated array of technical subjects that he has no time to open a non-professional book and almost none to *live*. And the authors of the report might have added that when he eventually does obtain freedom to pursue cultural studies, the doctor at the age of 23 or thereabouts is already too old for his mind to receive an effective moulding from them, it being widely established that a man builds himself

in adolescence and is usually unable to alter his basic culture afterwards.

The chief recommendations of the Physicians for producing a better educated candidate are that school education should be continued at least till the age of 18, and specialization, whether in arts or science, should be more limited than at present; that the higher schools certificate or whatever examination is substituted for it should be on a broader basis than at present; that the practice of awarding University scholarships on a specialized examination should be discontinued—and so on, with the emphasis always on the period roughly between sixteen and twenty, as if the desired reform can be entirely effected by more general education then.

Although we suggested ourselves that overspecialization and rush were the culprits, we have since admitted a certain vagueness in the theory, and must admit now, after trying mentally to apply the College of Physicians reforms to the other professions, that there might be something inherently wrong both in the diagnosis and the treatment. This modern insistence on long years of schooling, and acquirement of the higher kinds of general education when the youth reaches his late teens

—is it not both at variance with the experience of the past and likely to be increasingly impracticable in a hard-driven, competitive world?

When we speak of general education we must return to the old days, perhaps right back to the eighteenth century, to find a society where educated men had a really high level of culture. And we know that they had often finished their formal education by the time they had entered their teens, having been rigorously schooled in the classics, if in the classics alone, from a very tender age. The professional man a hundred years ago would often be serving his working apprenticeship at an age when modern youngsters are still in a low form at school, yet he would, by comparison with the modern young accountant or lawyer of 25, be a most learned and culturally sophisticated man.

When we speak, moreover, of raising the school-leaving age and of cramming general knowledge into youths just prior to their starting professional training, or while they are starting that training, we must remember that time has never been so short and professional training so complicated as for young men to-day, while there will probably be still more rush and involvement in the hard, competitive world of tomorrow. With the urgent necessity of earning

an income which, after deduction of Income Tax, will enable them to live according to the high standards of a professional class, the student and apprentice has too much on his shoulders as it is: primarily he must learn his profession quickly and effectively, which will absorb nearly all his energies if he has ambition, the residue being devoted to an equally mad whirl of learning to love, and to be a man generally.

The force of these remarks is directed towards the discovery of an alternative cause of our present defects in general education, perhaps the true cause this time—which is the inadequacy of the schooling of *young* boys and girls.

This explanation is very plausible. From five to fourteen is nine years, a long time, and if a child is not thoroughly grounded in the elements of general education during that time, if he is not imbued with "curiosity and initiative," provided with "powers of observation," able to "arrange and interpret facts," has "precision in the use of words,"⁵⁵ then something has been very wrong with his teachers and their methods.

And it is arguable that something of that kind is wrong, a something which was not so much as mentioned in the debates on the latest Education Bill. Is it not possible that two outstanding

features of modern schooling in the early stages are responsible, first, the extent of the curriculum, which is ever absorbing new subjects, from Civics to Physics, and from Eurythmics to Typewriting, and second, the worthlessness from the true educational or cultural viewpoint of most of those subjects?

That is why it might be suggested that a return to the old system of classical education might be preferable to any other kind of reform. Both the Greek and Latin languages are pure by comparison with English and French, and a stiff grounding in them evokes a precision in the use of words and an infallible good taste in the later choice of reading. Within the Latin and Greek books are still to be found most of the cultural ideas that count; the boy who knows them is already a philosopher, an aesthete, a mathematician, a natural historian and a political scientist and economist. Here is the source from which nearly all our western culture has sprung, and the rest, our modern history and geography, our latest improvements in arithmetical and mathematical method, are not only meretricious by comparison, but easily assimilable if given in short, complementary lessons.

That is the argument, and it is open for debate. It should be noted that we are not

directly advocating a complete return to the classics: only suggesting one possible method of improving the undoubtedly defective general education of our young men—by schooling them soundly in childhood so that later they can indeed concentrate upon their professions wholeheartedly without fear of eventually being found deficient in culture.

Veni, Vidi, Vici

How proud to be the letter " V "
In these brave days of victory,
When other letters once prevailed,
And Mr. " X " was safely gaoled,
Or " O " and " K " would fill the news,
While youngsters minded " Fs " and " Q's,"
And " M's " and " N's " in printer's shop
Competed with the bold full-stop
In frequent usage, until " A "
Combined with " one " enjoyed its day;
And I could tell you tales of " B "
That might invite your calumny
—Though much the same applies to " D "
From which we move to " E—and O.E "
Or sombre dwell on " R.I.P.":
If writer who disdains to die
Can scorn the virgin use of " I."

But now the letter once so free
 —If always known for gallantry—
 Turns half the world to thoughts of " V ":
 Well, that's a famous victory!

Community Singing

One explanation of the popularity of community singing is that people who have never been allowed by their fellows to sing on their own can warble to their heart's content when hundreds around them are doing the same. But there are better explanations. For instance, the American preacher, Ward Beecher, said a long time ago: " Singing is that natural method by which thoughts are reduced to feeling, more easily, more surely, and more universally, than by any other . . . in singing you come into sympathy with the truth as you perhaps never do under the preaching of a discourse."

Undoubtedly there is good in community singing. But is it a force for good in the true ethical sense of the term? This curious question was answered in a book entitled " Music and Morals," written by a Church of England clergyman in the middle of last century. The quaint title of the book in no way belies its contents. Those who are interested in the psychological aspect of community singing

should certainly read it; for the author, traversing the entire history of music in four weighty sections—Philosophical, Biographical, Instrumental, and Critical—proves very well to his own satisfaction, if not to a modern critic's, that music and morals are inseparably related.

The book would be boring to-day if it were not so ingenious. For instance, the author begins: "In all times men and women have shown a strong disposition to express their praises and lamentations by what for some better term may be called a kind of howling or wailing." In another place he explores "the realms of abstract emotion," emotional atmosphere; and he is broad-minded enough to exclaim:

"For what troops of pleasurable, stimulating, or enervating ideas and fancies is good dance music responsible, by providing all these with the emotional atmospheres which invite their presence, and by intensifying the situation!"

And, following this up, he goes on to analyse music's power "of determining the level of emotion, or what may be termed the moral atmosphere of feeling." Italian music, he points out wisely, is languid and erotic, conducive to sentimentalism; while, on the other hand, "you cannot sentimentalise Beethoven's

music; you cannot make a vehicle for permanently morbid trains of emotion.⁵⁵ French music, he discovers, is "frivolous, graceful, noisy, and at times, blustering.⁵⁵ And this demonstrates, he says, that music moulds character, whether good or bad. Community songsters take note!

But there is even greater consolation. Our author now sets out to prove that "the notion that the pursuit of music owing to its exciting character, is prejudicial to health and longevity, gathers small weight from the facts.⁵⁵ And these are: "Scarlatti was 66 when he died; Lalande, 76; Palestrina, 70; Handel, 74; Bach, 65; Marcello, 53; Gluck, 73; Puccini, 72; Haydn, 77; Paisiello, 75; Cherubini, 82; Beethoven, 57; Spohr, 75; Meyerbeer, 70; Rossini, 78.⁵⁵ A real cynic, indeed, might be tempted to quote further the author's conviction that "the acknowledged influence of music over the insane might be far more extensively used. . . .⁵⁵

What's Wrong with the Australians?

The above question can be discussed now because the good name of Australia is improving in Britain, and the prejudice here is being transferred to other "outsiders⁵⁵ (e.g., the Americans and the Russians). Nevertheless, what *is* wrong

with Australians that they inspire (or inspired) the English prejudice against them, or what's wrong with Englishmen that they have been so prejudiced against Australians?

The matter is at once utterly trivial and extremely important. On the one hand my Australian-born wife has in her time grown so tired of watching people raise their eyebrows when her nationality is mentioned that she won't admit she is an Australian any longer.

On the other hand, we have noticed that British shopkeepers who proudly sell "New Zealand lamb" and "New Zealand butter" are frequently loth to describe Australian produce as anything else but "Empire"; and, it is very difficult to get the English reading public interested in Australian books and papers.

"In this country," declared an English politician once, "there are many people who talk about the Australians as if they were people of a different race" (*sic*). And indeed, although not everyone says it aloud, the general opinion in England does (or did) seem to be that the Aussie is a rough-neck and something of a bounder, whereas New Zealanders are perfect and South Africans and Canadians are at any rate tolerable.

I've discussed this question with many

Australians, Englishmen and lesser breeds without the law, and have heard many explanations. After analysing these carefully, I've compiled the following list of possible answers.

First, the circumstances of Australia's initial settlement have never been forgotten by England. It's always difficult to forgive the man you've wronged; and England still can't get over the fact that she established Australia primarily as a convenient dump for her social misfits. Intelligent people know that those first convicts were soon swallowed up by waves of free immigrants, but old prejudices take a lot of uprooting—especially in England.

Second, it must be remembered that Australia has spoken very bluntly to the mother country in recent years on such subjects as tariffs, debt service and Pacific defence, and has done it in such a way that the Englishman in the street has heard about it and been impressed thereby. Lancashire workers once wanted to boycott Australian produce in retaliation for duties on cotton goods down-under* Mr. Lang, of New South Wales, gave England a famous shock. The small investor never forgets.

Third, the Australian soldiers who in both wars were sometimes billeted in quiet English towns often found it necessary to relieve their

pent-up high spirits by indulging in a little wild whoopee; and many inhabitants of those sleepy places can't help remembering their guests with a certain amount of pious horror.

Fourth, Australia has hitherto been such a long way from Britain, and normally only moneyed Australians and Englishmen can afford to visit each other's countries. The Australian moneyed type is not always the best.

Fifth, the Australian climate and environment might or might not be producing certain modifications in the section of the British people quartered there, so that residents of the homeland may have found it difficult to understand aspects of the behaviour of their overseas cousins. The Australian in England seems more excitable and highly-strung than the Englishmen around him, though he may be quicker in the uptake and far more energetic.

Sixth, there is that old saying about giving a dog a bad name. The Englishman once acquired a prejudice against the Australian for some reason, and thereafter the Australian could do nothing right. That often happens in private life.

And the very consciousness of his bad name tends to spoil the Australian in England. Often he becomes unnecessarily loud-spoken and self-

assertive, trying to | compensate for the inferiority complex that as been engendered him. I must confess myself that althoutht I have a very great admiration for the Australian at home, I am not so sure about the representatives I meet in England. Gone is that natural simplicity, and gone are that plain directness of speech and quiet self-assurance. They are replaced by an ugly, aggressive quality that can only be the product of extreme self-consciousness.

Much the same applies to people from the North of Britain when they come to the South. Perhaps it is the effect of encountering conditions of life hitherto unknown; perhaps it is just plain excitement, such as makes some high-strung children obstreperous at social functions • . . . In which case, it is equally the fault of the English themselves, who should make allowances for their visitors, and try above all things to put them at their ease. As I have jsaid, it is easy to give a dog a bad name and then proceed to make him justify it.

In fact, the best advice I can give my Australian friends for the future is that they cease to undertake trips to England with the hope of mixing in high society and making a social splash. Perhaps they would do better for

their country if they travelled on a less ambitious scale, or tried to create their own "high" society at home. English snobs only get jealous of the visitors' money, annoyed at their free-and-easy manners, and anxious to "show them up."

Certainly there are signs that the war has done Australia a lot of good, and that when the more repulsive type of Briton wants to be hasty nowadays he directs the venom of his prejudice against other game. But the old trouble has not been entirely eradicated. It must be.

Bank Holiday

Most of us—men in the street, bookworms, philosophers, scientists, educationists — have heard at some time or other of John Lubbock, Lord Avebury, but how many retain any clear memory of a man who was at once the most versatile, humane, and typical of eminent Victorians, "the Leonardo da Vinci and English Goethe," as one contemporary called him?

Of course, this comparison was an exaggeration. These men were great original geniuses, and Lubbock was not. But Lubbock was the most precocious and comprehensive man of his age. The barest biographical facts about him

illustrate this. As philosopher, literary man, anthropologist, economist, botanist, politician, entomologist, humanist, geologist, educationist, and the most respected banker of his day he swept the boards of Victorian fame. His life was a fable.

It began at Eaton Place, London, on April 30th, 1834, where he was born the son of Sir John William Lubbock, F.R.S., the banker, mathematician, astronomer and author of "The Law of Probabilities."⁵⁵ Thus the child had great hereditary advantages. These, however, he soon outstripped. At nine years of age he knew as much as the modern boy of 16; at 15 he was so intelligent and learned that his father, a tolerant, broad-minded man, did not hesitate to take him from school and place him in the family banking house of Lubbock, Forster and Co. A few months later he was elected a member of the Royal Institution.

Next year he gave a public lecture on Wireworms, he collaborated with Darwin in a scientific work, and on the days when he did not have to attend the bank, he "rose early and read hard before breakfast; gave his morning to natural science; his early afternoon to exercise; came back for political economy, followed by the relief of more science; and during an

apparently dinnerless evening, broken by a game of whist, found time for patches of history, for mathematics, and, when his eyes were heavy with sleep, for German—which kept him awake." In 1851 he joined the Kent County Militia, in 1853 attended his first meeting of the British Association and published a monograph on a Darwinian collection; and in 1856 married and introduced a novel banking system now known as Country Clearing.

Within the next ten years young Lubbock published his first book, "Pre-historic Times,"⁵⁵ stood as a Liberal candidate for Parliament, was elected a member of the Council of the Royal Society, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, president of the Ethnological Society, hon. secretary of the London Bankers, president of the Entomological Society, and he succeeded his father in the baronetcy and was appointed his father's successor on the Senate of London University!

Admirable Crichton

To describe in detail the subsequent career of this Victorian Admirable Crichton would be tiresome, for the account would necessarily degenerate into a list of dates and achievements. Even in brief summary Lubbock's career is too

formidable. In 1868 he served on Royal Commissions on Public Schools and on International Coinage; in 1869 he was first president of the Metaphysical Society, members of which were Huxley, Gladstone, Morley, Ruskin, Tennyson, Browning, Bagehot, Harrison, Stephen and Cardinal Manning; he published his second book, "The Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man" in 1870; the same year he was elected M.P. for Maidstone; in 1871 he secured the passage of the Bank Holidays Act; in 1873 he published "The Origin and Metamorphosis of Insects"; in 1879 was first president of the Institute of Bankers; and the account could continue as well-packed for columns. In the last ten years of his long life, from 1903 till 1913, he published "Essays and Addresses," "Free Trade," "Notes on Life History of British Flowering Plants," "On Municipal and National Trading," "Peace and Happiness," and "Marriage, Totemism and Religion"; he was appointed president of the Society of Antiquaries, Foreign Secretary of the Royal Academy of Arts, president of the Sociological Society, president of the Royal Microscopical Society, and Rector of St. Andrew's University. If you want something done, go to a busy man.

Darwin once wrote to Lubbock: "How on earth you find time for all you do is a mystery to me," and it is doubly a mystery to-day, when specialization seems to be the only path to eminence. But even to the biographical historian Lubbock's formidable career tends to obscure his actual achievements. What he could have done had he concentrated on one or two subjects can only be conjectured; he was typically Victorian in the breadth of his interests. He was Victorian, too, in his liberalism and his belief in progress. Part of the hostility felt for the Victorians to-day springs from envy. We feel that they had beliefs, that they were more secure than ourselves, and therefore happier.

Not only was Lubbock a man of versatile talent, but he was a very good man. Not only did he make lasting contributions to many departments of science and to banking theory and practice—which are assessable by the expert only—but he influenced the conduct of society in his time to a remarkable extent. He started the Bank Holiday as an institution, thereby giving more leisure to millions. He limited the hours of women and children in shops, and he acted as peacemaker in the London dock strike. His intimates benefited from tenderly bestowed

precepts and irresistible examples; and the outside world eagerly learnt from his books.

"Put together what he wrote about education," says Sir Michael Sadler, "trace the threads of his influence, and you find, perhaps a little to your surprise, that on self-culture and on early preparation for the self-culture of later years no English writer of his time is more typical of the progressive and cultivated thought of the Victorian age." And, again: "His service to English education was many-sided, stimulating and fruitful, because his view of the subject was wide, practical, humane."

Even to-day, with didacticism at such a severe discount, Lubbock's two books of advice, encouragement and appreciation, "The Pleasures of Life" and "The Use of Life," are most satisfactory to read and form the sharpest possible contrast to the pessimism of the time. The little sermons running through them are never too long, and the philosophy expounded is at once sturdy and tender. Moreover, Lubbock's prose style is simplicity itself; and his literary taste abnormally impeccable. His famous choice of "The Hundred Best Books" has often been ridiculed, but never superseded.

Perhaps, however, he will live chiefly by his Bank Holiday. The crowds of holiday-makers

at Hampstead Heath, Blackpool and Margate are monumental to his humanitarianism.

Smith's

The story of Smith's libraries had always fascinated a mere scribbler. To distribute reading-matter in this gargantuan fashion was quite beyond his timid comprehension: here must be one of the most formidable machines for disseminating the printed word ever devised by man. It was a magnetic attraction—and, it must be insisted, no kind of financial inducement—that led tired feet one sun-baked morning up and down stairs and passages, through vast departments and to the heart of a monster building wherein sat a very modest man.

The man in question, though he shall not be named, will probably jib even at his mention in a note of this kind. It was a long time since the writer had met such a loyal servant and bold executive in the one person. The man made it plain that he owed everything to the firm for which he worked, and must be regarded as no more than a small part of its great structure. The interview, indeed, must not be with him, but with Smiths. This fine spirit of self-immolation was rare, but failed to influence the interviewer entirely. His interest in the subject was immediately heightened.

The man was middle-aged, genial, with a grey moustache, and the breezy manner of the typical Londoner. Therefore it was not difficult to persuade him to talk, although it was resolved at once that his confidence should not be proportionately abused. But a few words uttered by the man might illuminate more than himself.

" You see," he said, " I am merely a news-boy. Yes, we all started like that, and we owe everything to the firm that has enabled us to make good. It is a case of going through the ranks here, and as a result there is a spirit of corporate loyalty among us which you don't always find in big businesses. Oh! yes, I have no right to be here at all really. I never thought I would be the head of the library when I started with newspapers on the streets.

" Therefore, you see, I don't want you to talk about me much. Write about the firm. No single one of us can claim actually to have *created* anything here: it is a joint work, in which all have shared."

So he began to tell the interviewer about Smith's remarkable libraries.

"Well, they began," he said, "about 1820, when the firm acquired branch premises at 192, Strand. Here they opened a reading room, where for a subscription of a guinea and a half

yearly, no fewer than 150 papers could be inspected every week, as well as magazines and reviews. But it was not until 1858 or thereabouts that a real subscription library was developed as an integral part of the business.

" We often wish that its far-seeing founder could be shown the library department as it exists to-day, with its hundreds of staff, its electrical conveyors, its miles of laden shelving. It is no wonder everything about it is on a big scale; it *must* be big, if it is to do its work. Over 700 of the firm's branches are depots of the library, and over and above this are the hundreds of customers who draw their supplies of library books direct from head office without going through a branch at all—some supplied in person, some by van, some by post, some by rail.

" And there is another thing I must tell you," said the man, speaking with the earnest tone of one who believes intensely in what he is propounding. " The library must pay its way and make a profit absolutely on its own account. It is no mere adjunct to the book and newspaper business. Mind you, it is not always easy to make profits."

The talk naturally turned to current conditions. The opinion was expressed that under

present circumstances library subscriptions were too cheap. Their very cheapness tended to give people a wrong idea of the value of books. Conversely, however, books were too dear to the libraries, especially those which had to meet their customers' every demand.

Then the man was asked how he found current trends in popular reading.

" Well," he said, " I can't really point to any violent changes, but there has certainly been a falling-off lately in books about the international affairs. People are going in more for escapist reading. At the same time, I wouldn't say that the popular taste is so low as it was after the last war. Ephemeral and trashy books don't go very far.

"You know, Mr. Author," he continued, " contrary to some beliefs we take no pleasure here in buying large numbers of books that are cheap in the literary sense. Still, as economic tendencies are at present, it hardly seems possible for the average publisher to risk money on questionable stuff. The old-established authors are the only sound propositions. Yes, it's hard on the unknown geniuses among us. I'm afraid they won't get a look in for some time. No, **up till** now we have found no lack of books at all. **The**

future? Well, perhaps it will be decided, for the trade, by the economic condition of the people. We can only continue with our jobs and hope for the best."

At this juncture the man was called away, and the interviewer was handed over to his second-in-command, for an inspection of the great department. The huge book-racks enveloped him remorselessly. One alone would have provided a large library for the most voracious reader. The books themselves, it was interesting to note, were arranged alphabetically, fiction by titles, other works by authors. Especially impressive was the section where records were kept of subscribers, so arranged that expired subscriptions could instantly be followed up. The second-in-command gave some interesting facts about distribution. The library existed to supply its thousands of subscribers as far as possible with the books they wanted—which might be books published, perhaps, any time in the last fifty years or so.

For the new and popular works there would be a large demand, and 1,500 or 2,000 of many of these might be bought at a time for the library shelves. Others would appeal only to a small number, and therefore a few copies would be enough. But when these facts were

realised it was not surprising that the total stock amounted to over a million separate volumes.

The books destroyed, through being too worn for either re-issue, re-binding or sale, numbered many thousands in a single year. They must, however, be in a very bad state indeed to be consigned to this fate, for the library had in its branches many outlets for the books no longer required on its shelves. As soon as the main demand for a new book had subsided, there would be a large number of surplus copies still in clean condition. With a fresh jacket they were practically as good as new, and were very readily sold at reduced prices. Some need not even be re-bound; a trim of the edges made them to all appearances as fresh as ever.

These were, indeed, the business men of books. Their organisation had an efficiency that was as bewildering as it was impressive. Some cynics might cavil just at that; but they would forget their previous complaints about the indifference of the reading public. It was enterprise like this that had created the great book market of our time, and without it most authors would still be in Grub Street.

O.H.M.S.

"I say, O.G., what about a W. in the C?

Right, I'll consult A.B.R.A.T.A. at once. My, what a W.S. it will be!⁵⁵

Let me translate. It is, of course, as any really wideawake person could see: "I say, old girl, what about a week-end in the country? Right, I'll consult the Association of British Railway and Tourist Advisers at once. My, what a wizard show it will be!"

And there you have a perfect example of how private conversation will be improved if we adopt the suggestion I am going to make, namely that we extend the current use of initial letters for words and phrases into our ordinary everyday language.

The way I look at it is this. The wartime custom of using initial letters *must* be conducive to greater efficiency. All wartime customs are adopted to that end. And, as our splendid reformers say apropos of so many other things, if we can effect such improvements in war surely we can have them in peace also, provided we rid ourselves of reactionary ideas.

Have you ever considered how social intercourse would be brightened by greeting a guest with the words "Oh, H.D.Y.D., Mrs. B.-A. S.G.Y.C.C., T.O.N.A., hasn't it?" instead of with the clumsy and inefficient words spelled out in full: "Oh, how do you do, Mrs, Blenkin-

sop-Allways? So glad you could come turned out nice again, hasn't it?"

Or imagine how much easier it would be to refer to " a Q.H.H.I.T.G." instead of " a quiet half-hour in the garden," " a B.W. at the C," instead of " a bob's worth at the cinema," and " a T.D. with O.B. at the B.O." instead of " a tiring day with old Bindweed at the Birmingham office."

Yes, I cannot think that the I.G.S.O.T.P. will this time permit the F.O.H.R. to prevent this E.S.H. from being C.F.I.T.P.

I mean I cannot think that the innate good sense of the people will this time permit the forces of hidebound reaction to prevent this eminently sensible habit from being carried forward in the peace.

I have the absolute authority of my friend Cacklebury at the M.O.W.L. (Ministry of Words and Letters) for the statement that there can be no difficulty in adapting the language to the proposed end.

As he put it succinctly when describing how his Ministry worked out the new combinations of letters: " You just take a common name, such as bread, and think of its correct definition, e.g., 'flour, moistened, kneaded and baked, usually with leaven,' from which you collect the initial

letters, and, O.K., there is your 100 p.c. modern word F.M.K.B.U.W.L.—Q.E.D.!"

Cacklebury also made the interesting suggestion (on the Q.T.) that once the new habit became really established there would be no need to teach children how to read: a knowledge of the alphabet would be sufficient for all practical purposes (and, after all, what other purposes could there be in a completely rationalised society?).

Yet it should not be thought that the new mode of expression would necessarily preclude art; and Cacklebury greatly impressed me by suddenly uttering the noble lines: " F.R.C., lend me your E. I come to B.C., not to P.H." It is almost as unnecessary to compare those with the original as it is to translate them: " Friends, Romans, countrymen. Lend me your ears. I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him." There would obviously, as my friend pointed out, be scope for poets in the new order, and especially poets of the metaphysical school.

I am now sending a copy of this note to the E. of the T. with the hope that, E. & O.E., he will regard it as likely to appeal somewhat more than an E.N.S.A. half-hour or even a N.A.A.F.I. bun to the R.N., the B.A., the R.A.F., the WXN,S., the AXS, and the WAA.F., not to

mention all those working throughout the country under the M.O.S., the M.O.L., the M.A.P., the M.O.I, and the M.O.W. Good old U.K., I shout (G.B. for my friends in N.B.) and may she move on to even greater achievements with the help of the O.E.D. and the B.B.C. After which, as she will surely deserve, may she long R.I.P.

Music Hall Aphorism

All women are beautiful when they smile.
Yes, but it depends who made the gag.

Elizabethan Aphorism

" There goes more to matrimony than four bare legs in bed."—Ben Jonson.

For the Earnest Consideration of Gen. de Gaulle
and Lord Vansittart, not to mention
my Old Friend J.L.

" The Franks, or French, are the only people of Europe who can deduce a perpetual succession from the conquerors of the Western Empire."—Gibbon, Vol. IV., Bury ed., p. 21.

" A Lucifer to Light Your Fag "

Try and visualise the condition of things when there was not a single match in the world. There were always flints and tinder; and a year or two before the Lucifer first bloomed men bowed

before the miraculous Instantaneous-Light Box. These contrivances, however, though containing within them the seed of greater things, were hopelessly impracticable. Readers of historical novels are quite familiar with the tinder-box, how the hero would take one from his doublet-pocket and with it light the great lamp under the beam; but how the hero managed the operation the best historical novelists never say; and the layman, when faced with the facts of the situation, is perforce equally silent. It is known indeed that the ordinary tinder-box consisted of a piece of flint, a steel, a piece of charred linen, and a stick that had been dipped in molten sulphur. Apparently when a light was desired, the steel was struck in the flint so that a spark fell on the tinder, which in turn ignited the end of the sulphur-stick. The quickness of the hand in those days must verily have deceived the eye.

Nevertheless the tinder-box was endured by Englishmen for several centuries; and it was not until the end of the eighteenth, when new inventions were succeeding each other everyday with unprecedented rapidity, that an effort was made to improve upon the ancient method. Suddenly the Instantaneous - Light Box Staggered a gloomy work}. This was a remark-

able contraption. It consisted of a tin box containing a bottle of sulphuric acid and a number of splints of wood, the tips of which had been impregnated with chlorate of potash, powdered loaf-sugar, powdered gum-arabic, and some vermilion colouring matter. Instantaneous fire was obtained by dipping one of the sticks in the sulphuric acid. Naturally the contraption was hailed at first as a wonder of the new age. It was equally natural to discover very soon after that it had several serious disadvantages. The light was certainly instantaneous but very often was attended by serious consequences to the user.

Therefore the world awaited eagerly the appearance of a genius who would devise a means of dispensing with the fatal sulphur bottle. And thus the year 1834 saw the inception of the Lucifer, that first real match, that forerunner of a mighty industry, and coiner of a household-word that was to endure long after its natural day. The basic idea was incongruously simple. A wooden spill was dipped in melted brimstone. It was thrust in a mixture of potash, sulphuret of antimony, and powdered gum. It was ready for use. All the user had to do was draw the match sharply through a piece of sandpaper,

Perhaps it was the very simplicity of the Lucifer that made it so popular. Many millions of these first matches were manufactured and sold within a short time; and, though they were in due course superseded by improved models, such as the little-known Congreve, yet their name was retained popularly for every kind of subsequent match up to the modern "safety," which was invented by a Swede named Lundsturm, in 1856, and introduced into England by Messrs. Bryant and May some time later. Admittedly the Lucifer, save for its fortuitous occurrence in a well-known marching song, is already quite forgotten. Wax vestas, waterproof matches, petrol lighters, electric lighters have shouldered it far into oblivion. It is as well to remember, however, that, but for the Lucifer's glorious day, there might be a great deal more darkness now.

" I Dedicate "

The average writer to-day, if he dedicates a book to his wife, say, or to his greatest critical enemy, regards the device as a pleasant but unimportant conceit, and disposes of it in a couple of lines. Once upon a time, before the curious art of book publishing was properly understood, and when an author occupied the same social

position as the door-to-door canvasser to-day, the dedication of a book was often more important than the book itself.

The trouble was that the unfortunate author was completely under the thumb of the book-sellers, and consequently had to dedicate his work to some prominent and wealthy nobleman, in the hope that the courtesy would be returned in hard cash. Prefixed to "The Faerie Queen" are fifteen sets of adulatory verses, addressed to individuals whose illustrious names are now completely forgotten, and written so badly that it is easy to see Spenser was not in his sweetest mood at the time. Similarly there are sixteen dedicatory sonnets attached to Chapman's Homer.

The tone of some of these old-style dedications is so artificial, self-effacing and servile that it leaves the modern reader mentally sick. Dryden, the unctuous hypocrite, was a particularly bad offender. On several occasions he compared the subject of his dedications to the Deity. The worst flatterers, however, were the small fry, whose sole object in making a book was to squeeze a few pounds out of some unwilling but neatly-cornered patron. One ingenious bard attached a different dedication to each copy of his book, and was enabled there-

by to retire in ease and comfort for a few months.

Things became so bad eventually, it is said, that the price for the dedication of a play was by general consent fixed at from five to ten guineas, approximately the price of an introduction to-day, only to-day the author has to pay it. In the time of George I. the maximum was raised to twenty guineas.

During the eighteenth century the growth of subscription book-selling gradually pushed the venal dedication into the background of literature. "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was inscribed "To the Right Honourable Charles, Earl of Dalkeith, by the Author," but the act was one of courtesy alone; and on occasion Scott actually pilloried the device, as in the inscription, "To the Best of Patrons, A Pleased and Indulgent Reader, Jedediah Cleishbotham wishes Health, and Increase, and Contentment," prefixed to "The Heart of Midlothian." Similarly the author of "Henry Esmond" left the dedication less servile and wretched than he found it; and successive Victorians completed the emancipation of the prefatory epistle.

When a Victorian signed a dedication he was serious about it. Tennyson, dedicating his verse

to his Queen, and Darwin, acknowledging at the beginning of "The Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle" his geological debt to "Charles Lyell, Esq., F.R.S.," were far from the sycophantic tradition. When William Morris dedicated his "Early Romances" to his friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti, painter, he was so sincere that he confirmed in the act all that has since been said about his early discipleship.

Verse was the favourite medium of the old venal dedications, and it ceased to be used widely when its occasion had disappeared. During last century, however, a poet here and there did avail himself of the method, and, being a member of a serious generation, often produced a tolerable inscription. Keats thus addressed his poems to Leigh Hunt, Esq.

Glory and loveliness have passed away;
 For if we wander out in early morn,
 No wreathed incense do we see upborne
 Into the east, to meet the smiling day.
 No crowd of nymphs soft-voiced and young,
 and gay,
 In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
 Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
 The shrine of Flora in her early May.
 But there are left delights as high as these,

And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

The Rossettis and Stevenson

The Rossettis, it may be hazarded from their dedications, were a united and mutually admiring family. Dante inscribed his verse to his brother thus: "To William Michael Rossetti, These Poems, to Many of Which, so Many Years Back, he gave the First Brotherly Hearing, are Dedicated." And there is true feeling in the dedicatory sonnet that Christina prefixed to her collected verse:

Sonnets are full of love, and this my tome
Has many sonnets; so here now shall be
One sonnet more, a love sonnet, from me
To her whose heart is my heart's quiet home.
To my first love, my Mother, on whose knee
I learnt love-lore that is not troublesome,
Whose service is my special dignity,
And she my lodestar while I go and come.
And so because you love me, and because
I love you, Mother, I have woven a wreath
Of rhymes wherewith to crown your
honoured name;

In you not fourscore years can dim the flame
 Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the
 laws
 Of time and change and mortal life and
 death.

Stevenson was the last of the Victorians and first of the moderns, queer man, to turn habitually a floral dedication. "An Inland Voyage" is addressed in a long epistle to "Sir Walter Grindlay Simpson, Bart.," the original of "Cigarette"; and "Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes" is heaped lavishly upon Sidney Colvin. In this last dedication, indeed, is a little dissertation that bears closely upon the matter in hand.

*Some of us might find it difficult to appreciate Stevenson and Henley in the same breath; but few will disapprove of the dedication to Henley's collected verse:

To My Wife

Take, dear, my little sheaf of songs,
 For, old or new,
 All that is good in them belongs
 Only to you;

And, singing as when all was young,
They will recall
Those others, lived but left unsung—
The best of all.

Some of the Moderns

To-day, the habit is as aeep-rooted as it ever was; but, characteristically, the modern author prefers to be witty, or, if not witty, at least brief. Contemporary novelists are always saying curtly, "To B.," or "To My Wife," or "To Those Who Have No Intention of Reading This Book." Nevertheless, it is good fun studying them.

H. G. Wells inscribes a book "To the Immortal Memory of Candide." William Gerhardi inscribes one book to Katherine Mansfield and another to H. G. Wells. W. W. Jacobs honours Jerome K. Jerome and Jerome K. Jerome eulogises his pipe. Edith Sitwell owes her "Bucolic Comedies" to Arnold Bennett, "Q" his "Oxford Book of English Verse" to the President, Fellows, and Scholars of Trinity College. Rose Macaulay foists "Crewe Train" upon "The Philistines, The Barbarians, The Unsociables, and Those Who Do Not Care To Take Any Trouble."

As long as authors are authors, I suppose the

dedication will survive. Indeed, if my friends who bemoan the state of contemporary literature know what they are talking about—and I am sure they don't—the dedication might before long return to its ancient exalted state. Such an event, of course, would involve endless possibilities.

When Victory Means Defeat

Never is a nation or group of nations in such peril as at the moment of martial victory. That has been demonstrated by nearly all the post-war periods that history has known. The record is one—with a few lonely exceptions—of prizes cast aside, of opportunities lost. It is as if the victor, no less than the vanquished, cannot escape the consequences of his fantastic wartime exertions; he throws himself on the grass panting like an athlete at race-end and no longer does he see the taut tape, the shining cup, but can only relax dreadfully, a dulled beast.

That physical explanation is probably quite valid. How to outwit the wicked cycle is another matter. . . . One way at least may be to understand it, to know what to expect when war is over, to be prepared and perhaps to escape because of the preparation. Or, so to bind oneself with treaties and resolutions and

charters that right action follows automatically. Or, of course, to listen to the word of the spirit.

Consider again the history of wars. We can see from our bookish eminence how most military conflicts of the past were miserable failures, their results so much dust and ashes on the heads of the unfortunate warriors who participated. We are not referring to the immediate martial results but to those of long-term, political effect. For we must surely agree that wars have always a twofold objective: to defeat an unpleasant enemy, and to arrange the international relations of the warring country in such a way that a further resort to arms will be unnecessary, during several generations at least. The most bellicose nations require long periods of peace, in order to preserve and prolifically increase their manhood for future conflicts. Each war has been a war to end war (for a reasonable period). One nation after another, one combination of nations after another, has endeavoured by war to procure temporary peace. And how they have failed!

Looking back over modern history it is possible to see only one war which achieved the second and most important objective. That was the war against the Emperor Napoleon. Europe certainly enjoyed freedom from great Europe-

wide conflicts during a century after that victory. Yet even the Congress of Vienna did not make a total peace, witness the many isolated European wars of the nineteenth century, and it perpetrated certain injustices, particularly in Eastern Europe, the indirect consequence of which was to be, one day, the greatest total war of all.

Obviously if warring nations of the past had really succeeded in their political as well as military aims we would now be ourselves at perfect peace.

Let us, then, examine the present European situation, and ascertain whether the military defeat of Germany need in fact be followed this time by the same old Allied failure to win the peace.

As usual we fought the late war for two reasons, to subdue a physical menace in the shape of the military enemy, and to re-arrange the European map in such a way that a condition of permanent political equilibrium could be established. But we should never forget the immediate *raison d'etre* of the conflict, which was an unprovoked attack by that Germany on a Poland to which Britain had extended a guarantee of help against an aggressor. However we may talk of Nazidom as the essential

"evil thing" that we fought, yet the fact remains that we declared war not for Austria, not for Czecho-Slovakia, not for France but for *Poland*. Nor was this accidental.

British guarantees were extended to Poland, Rumania and Greece not merely as a means of warning Germany "so far and no farther," but also because British statesmen (and French, and American) realised that once those countries had been bereft of their independence by a single European power, then the continental balance would be tilted in favour of that power. Rumania was, and is, very important on account of her oil and her position between Russia and the Balkans. Greece in the hands of a great power would be, as she became, a base for the aerial control of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Bosphorus. But the integrity of Poland as an independent nation was, as it will ever be, of surpassing interest to the western democracies.

It should be unnecessary to recapitulate why. That it is necessary is one of the danger signs of the present day. Every elementary student in international affairs, every intelligent reader of good newspapers and books on politics should know axiomatically that an independent Poland is necessary to Europe as a keystone is essential

to an arch. Remove this stone and the others tumble upon each other, Russia lurching forward from the east, Germany bulging dangerously eastwards from the west. One of four effects is inevitable: that Russia should obtain a commanding position in Eastern Europe and be able to advance further westwards advantageously along interior lines; that Germany should similarly be in a position to strike eastwards and obtain the raw materials necessary for the most ambitious designs; that Russia and Germany should fight and involve the rest of the world in their brawl; that Russia and Germany should form an alliance, and, as a single immense power, be capable of dividing Europe, Asia and eventually the world between them.

The truth of this conception has been demonstrated by recent events. Our late war began when Germany and Russia signed their pact and divided Poland. When Germany had entirely absorbed Poland she was in a position nearly to achieve her most grandiose plans. And, to-day?

To-day Russia has reversed the position and is in virtual occupation of Poland herself.

Now it should be obvious that on moral grounds alone we have thus won the war to lose the peace- The Poland of our original

guarantee has been betrayed in spite of it and in spite of our most prodigious exertions. The long-term political effects of such a departure from our original war-aims may be serious.

It might be argued that a mutilated Poland can still be independent and capable of acting as a keystone again. This is not so. Always a gravely handicapped country in the economic sense, Poland will be another post-1918 Austria if Russia indefinitely dominates her eastern lands. And, like another Austria, she will need constant artificial stimulus to remain "independent," will constantly threaten the peace of Europe as a broken stone threatens an arch.

Since, therefore, the European equilibrium will remain disturbed so long as Poland is broken, and since Russia is determined to dominate Poland, it follows that the only way to restore the European equilibrium is to prevent Russia from continuing to do so.

Heaven forbid! A war against Russia by the western democracies would be as impossible on popular and material grounds as it would be morally criminal after the late conflict. If one war does not make a satisfactory peace, then two wars certainly will not.

The solution of the problem so obviously lies in statemanship, or the persuasion of Russia by

means other than force, that we can but pray for the early enlightenment of those who represent us—even if the name be Bevin.

Farming Terms that Teach History

Agriculture is the oldest but one of man's occupations, and it stands to reason that the language of farming is closely linked with the past. For instance, the word "farm" itself immediately takes us back to the early days of England's history. It came originally from the Anglo-Saxon "feorm," that meant, strangely enough, "feast." In those times land was often let on the conditions that the tenant provided his lord every year with a good night's entertainment. An old chronicle relates that the Abbot of Peterborough hired out certain lands annually in consideration of £50 and "anes nightes feorem," or "one night's entertainment." The word for the entertainment came in due course to be used for the farm itself. But we still speak of "farming out" this or that property.

Again, the word "field" comes to us from the Anglo-Saxon "feld," that signified a place where the land had been cleared and the trees felled. The original meaning was similar to that of the colonial term "clearing," and suggests

the day when England was covered by forests. " Paddock " is also a very old word, and from early times has meant a small field. In Old English there was the word " pearroc "; and in German there is the word " pferch," that means " fold "; while in Dutch there is the same word, " perk," meaning " pen."

The word " acre " meant any field, whatever its size, and was in commoner use. than either "field" or "paddock." It came from the Anglo-Saxon " aecer," signifying land, or anything sown, and was related to a very old word, the Latin " ager," from which we get " agriculture." It was about the time of Edward I. that the word " acre " came to mean a definite size of land, but not until the 18th century that it was given its modern legal definition.

The oldest farm word of all is oxen. This is to be found in practically every language of the world, from " uxi " in Icelandic, to " ukshan " in Sanskrit or Indian. But oxen in the ancient times were so valuable that they were used for money. On Egyptian papyrus rolls may be seen pictures of oxen treading out corn, and in India the ox is worshipped as a god. Oxen is one of the few words that retain the Anglo-Saxon suffix " en " to form the plural.

" Cattle " also has a curious history. There

is the Middle English and Old Norman word "catel"; but this, it is believed, came from the Latin "capitale," meaning "chief property," that was also the original of the much-debated modern word "capital," and the legal term "chattel." The word "pig," on the other hand, only dates back to the Middle English "pigge." In ancient times "swine" was the term used and this may be found in most languages, for instance Old English "swin," Dutch "zwijn," German "schwein," and, long before these, the Latin "suinus," from which the word "sow" is also derived.

From Sheep to Beer

Similarly "sheep" is a word that appears in many forms in many tongues. In Old English it was "sceap," in Dutch it is "schaap," and in German it is "schaf." And it may be noted that "merino" comes from the Spanish, and originally meant "an inspector of sheep walks." "Wheat" is a word that has a curious etymology. In all Scandinavian languages it meant "white," which shows that from time immemorial white bread has been made from wheaten flour. The word was probably used to distinguish white-flour corn from rye, and from the black oats and black barley of Northern Asia. "Barley," on the other hand,

comes from a word that originally meant "bread."⁵⁵ This was the Ancient British "bara"; and the suffix "llys," a "plant," was added later. Moreover, this word was joined in Saxon times to another word "ern,"⁵⁵ meaning "house," and so "bara-ern," or "bread-house," became "ber-ern," then "bern,"⁵⁵ and finally "barn."⁵⁵ It is also believed that the first syllable of "ber-ern," prolonged to "beor," became in due course "beer."⁵⁵

The list could be much longer. For instance, the word "gig" came originally from a similar word meaning "fiddle" that Chaucer often used, and the word that Chaucer used came from the Icelandic "giega," meaning "to vibrate."⁵⁵ No doubt some wag first conceived the idea of applying the term to the horse vehicle.

A Book is Published

The idea for this note took shape in my mind when I received the following letter from an unknown correspondent: "Dear Sir, Since you have written a book which is in our Public Library I wonder whether you would be interested In a scheme I have been working on in connection with a proposed Channel Tunnel. If you were prepared to put up £5,000 I think

I could guarantee to raise the rest by **public** subscription. Of course, you might find it possible to subscribe double that sum, in which case" But I think I have quoted enough. The point is that most people entertain dangerous fallacies about the joys and advantages to be obtained from the writing and publishing of books.

These fallacies are concerned variously with the excitement, the money, and the fame to be obtained from ordinary rank-and-file authorship. Now I must say that until quite recently I was a fallacious thinker on this topic. As a child I looked forward to becoming an author in very much the same way as other young hopefuls pictured themselves as engine-drivers, insurance agents and policemen. When I eventually had an idea for a book—after years of vain trying to find one—I worked night and day to turn that original notion into readable words. Excitement jabbed me on, for I could already see my name on the title-page, my words universally quoted, my cheque resting snugly in my pocket. I abandoned all other work that this might not be stinted. The book absorbed me for six hectic months, at the end of which time my wife greeted me as a long lost friend and the new cook, meeting me **for**

the first time, directed me to the tradesmen's entrance.

Nor was the task accomplished then. A typist had to be found who could convert my misplaced tappings into a shining, spotless manuscript. (I think she charged seven pounds tp do the job, and then she had to do it all over again, for she turned all my commas into semi-colons, and vice-versa). A title had to be found (hair-raising task), and photographs had to be obtained for illustration purposes. A special folder had to be manufactured to bind the loose leaves of the manuscript together like a book. And, lastly, I had to pay a visit to the British Museum Library one morning and discover, quite by accident, that a work with an identical theme to mine had been published in London only eighteen months before!

But these initial worries were soon forgotten in the thrill of choosing one's first publisher and dispatching the manuscript to him by carefully registered post. Of course, we would have none but the best publisher in the country for our purposes, and then we made discreet enquiries about his financial standing before sending the precious masterpiece away. By return of post came a printed acknowledgment, very business-like and reassuring. We sat down to wait.

We took a long time to get over that first rejection. It came six weeks later, when we were finally certain that the book had been accepted. A battered parcel arrived one morning, and inside was a battered manuscript. Within that lurked a small printed slip, expressing the publisher's very chilly regrets. No more.

To say that we were indignant would be putting it wildly. That publisher was mad. Also he was cock-eyed, insolent, inefficient, scrofulous and intellectually unclean. Thus we consoled ourselves; and eventually we descended to reasoned explanation. Probably the fellow hadn't so much as read the book, or he'd already published one of a similar type. Perhaps he was going bankrupt and didn't want to risk any more money. Or he just didn't like to publish anything that was so very much out of the ordinary. Ah, yes, that was it—so very much out of the ordinary.

After more of this blah we set about cleaning the manuscript, providing it with a new and expensive cover, and sending it off to the next tradesman on our list. Another six weeks passed . . . Well, perhaps it would only be decent to deal obscurely with the rest. That book went to seven publishers in all before it found one who was mug enough to take pity on

its orphan condition, and by that time the spotless manuscript looked like a papyrus from the excavations at Kut. I had lost all interest in it, and my wife referred to it cheerfully as "Old Faithful"

In my callow days I had pictured the moment when my first book would be accepted. I had visualised a long and enthusiastic letter from the publisher, followed by an invitation to confer with him in some fine old book-lined sanctum. Then perhaps an invitation to dinner to meet fame and beauty combined. At least I had expected that I would make early personal contact with the man in whose hands I was going to place my destiny.

But not so. For some weeks I had to be content with a very official-sounding letter that gave me my scanty terms, and an agreement that I would have given the world to have challenged if only I hadn't been desperately fearful of losing what might be a first and last chance of seeing my unfortunate creation in print. Then came a summons to visit my publisher and discuss such matters as the title and the format of the proposed volume. I went forth joyfully and found a very distant gentleman who was insistent on substituting a banal, ordinary tide for my dashing original one, and

who imposed his ideas for the format of the book on me coldly and heavily, and without giving me a chance to express mine. Then I was dismissed.

Needless to say I didn't hear, nor did I want to hear anything more about that book for some considerable time. But there *was* a certain thrill when the parcel post brought one sunny morning a strange package that contained a bundle of loose printed sheets—the proofs! So we had attained the dignity of print at last! I sat down and forced trembling fingers to turn the sheets over negligently while my wife breathed heavily over my shoulder and uttered sharp squeals of excitement. "Now, listen to this," I said with portly intonation, as I read out a particularly rhetorical passage; and as the print leaped about before my eyes I felt pretty much like a father when he gazes for the first time upon the face of his infant son. Then neighbours and friends had to be called in to share the thrill. It was a wonderful day—until the end when I settled down to begin the long task of correcting those proofs. Now they didn't seem to read quite so well. Surely I hadn't said that? No, it must a printer's error. And another. And another. This was going to be a big job! Towards the end an accumulation

of instances had produced such a mighty wroth in me that my wife had to use physical force to drag me to bed, and then I didn't sleep. It was in the middle of the night that I remembered a passage I had been reading which referred to a living person, and which seemed in retrospect to be definitely libellous. I leapt out of bed and descended to the study again; rummaged among the proof-sheets desperately; found the passage. Yes, by Jove, that must be cut out at all costs! I deleted the passage with a blue pencil; then attempted to join up the disconnected ends. The solution of this problem eluded me for exactly two hours. I suffered from a violent headache all the following day, and my wife had a bilious attack.

Well, eventually the proofs were returned, and another depressing lapse of time followed, punctuated every week or so by a letter from the publishers requiring me to give them some information, or to rectify another last-minute discovery of error. I computed then that the time spent on correspondence in connexion with the book, and the money spent on postage would only be recompensed if I received several hundred pounds in royalties when royalties were eventually paid. The date of publication still seemed an event of the remote future, and once

more I told myself that I was heartily sick of the whole business and wished I had never written the beastly thing.

Then the postman staggered up the path one day with a tremendous parcel, which, furiously opened, contained six presentation copies of the finest volume the book trade had produced to date! Oh, yes, there was no doubt about that. The dust cover was a work of art. The binding was superb. Inside the fine arrangement of the title-page and the text, the bold, clear print and the excellent paper were only equalled by the lucidity of the language and the magnificence of the sentiments expressed therein. To think that one's own feeble burlblings had undergone such a transformation! It was too good to be true. And for another whole day our experience with the proof sheets was exactly repeated. Friends came in, gazed, and were conquered. They made tentative enquiries as to the price of the book and the names of bookshops where the marvel could be obtained. They boldly demanded that I should autograph slips of paper so that these could be pasted into their copies when they were delivered. The telephone rang several times, and once it was the local paper, asking for full details and a free review copy. Old Thingamybob, from the

Bank, dropped in for a few moments' inspection and chat, and then asked me to address a meeting of his Paralytic Boys' Guild the following Saturday night. Eventually the wife flung her arms about my neck and planted a large kiss painfully on the bridge of my nose. "My author!" she said.

So we had some tea and began to talk it over. Obviously our first duty was to make a list of those relatives and very dear friends to whom we must send presentation copies. Our six free copies were immediately disposed of to members of our family. The names gradually accumulated. We went through them again, to see if we could weed any out. No, it was quite impossible. I began to feel uneasy. "Oh, and don't forget Aunt so-and-so," my wife interjected; and I just remembered that it would be necessary to keep at least half-a-dozen copies for our own use, so that meant, in all, about twenty-five. And I would have to pay for these. That moment the door-bell rang and it was Miss Whatsername, who runs the local Literary Society. She began in a roundabout way, but it was soon obvious that she intended to obtain a presentation copy of the book for the Society's library at all costs. "You know, I think it would pay you to make the gesture," she said

at last with veiled menace in her voice, and I capitulated hastily, for I had read somewhere that the basis of an author's public is his local connection, and Miss Whatshername is a power in our little land. No sooner had the woman gone than our neighbour's small daughter ran in. Mummy had tried the local bookshop, but they hadn't got my book yet, so would I lend Mummy a copy in the meantime? Mummy would take great care of it, and she did want to read it so. "I say, old man, I'll take one of of these away with me if you don't mind. Let you have it back in a couple of days," said young X half-an-hour later, when he'd finished mauling the confounded things about; and I'm not exaggerating when I state that I had exactly one copy of my own book left at the end of the day of publication, and this was a specimen that boasted enough finger-prints to send a C.I.D. man into a convulsion of professional enthusiasm.

But I won't labour the point. If you have had a book published yourself, well, you know what it is; and if you haven't, well, I think I've said enough to kindle your imagination. I'll proceed to the reviews. According to my own previous thoughts on the matter these should have appeared at least during the first week

after publication and they did—in the local weekly (I won't dignify it by the name of "paper") and in a two-page publication run by a friend of mine as a kind of house organ for a firm of ships' chandlers. The few big London papers and journals whose opinions I really respected continued to appear day in and day out without any mention of my masterpiece. This was most mystifying, because we had calculated that I had said so many outspoken things in the book that it was bound to create a sensation on publication. I must admit that eventually I was given far more space than I deserved, and I received a full measure of the generous encouragement that London literary editors do actually extend to most beginners; but all this came in dribbles; and my experience has been that you simply can't get a kick out of anything that occurs some time after it has been expected. At first I had actually cherished a dim illusion that during the first month after publication, at least, everyone who mattered in the country would be reading my book and talking about it. This fantasy was quickly knocked on the head by a few discreet visits to important book-shops. "Have you got so and so?" my wife would ask bashfully. Sometimes a polite distant Would offer to procure the mysteries

volume, but more often the reply was short and pithy: " Never heard of it!"

And so the time went on. We realised this when a friend in the book trade called some two months later and told us, in the course of conversation, that nowadays a book seldom lived longer than a fortnight, and was definitely a " gone-er " if it did not make an international sensation during that time. Moreover, I'd heard a lot about fan-mail received by modem authors. When a letter was re-directed to me from the publishers some six weeks after the date of publication, I must confess I had the beginning of a thrill. But the delicate impulse was soon stifled when I opened the heavily-scented envelope and found the communication that I quoted at the beginning of this note. Thereupon I made a careful assessment of all the expenses I had incurred during the writing and marketing of my book. I stood this up against the insignificant advance on royalties that I had already received, and against an under-nourished figure that represented what would be my eventual final payment, calculated on sales to date. The disparity was so great that I seriously considered calling in an alienist to pronounce an opinion on my sanity. If I had put the same amount of time and energy *into*

the composition of free-lance contributions for the press as I had devoted to that blank-blank book, I should now be holidaying in Vienna. So I resolved to compose an address to the nation that would once and for all dispose of the popular fallacy that all authors are either over-fed social lions or hard-hearted millionaires.

Personally I can't understand the motives that lead people to adopt such a precarious and thankless profession. They've only got themselves to blame. And I'd jolly well go in for street-cleaning, or some similar comfortable occupation if it weren't for a rather remarkable fact. You see, I've got a really tip-top idea for my next book!

Poor Port

The collector of curious epitaphs is recommended to pay a visit to the picturesque churchyard of St. Mary's, Harrow on the Hill, where he will find the grave of one Thomas Port, who, just over one hundred years ago, died as a result of injuries received in a railway accident, believed to be the first fatality of its kind.

Poor Port! The inscription on his tombstone informs us that the unfortunate fellow, son of John Port of Burton-on-Trent, hat manufacturer ? " near this town had both legs severed

from his body by the *railway train* " (italicized just like that).

" With the greatest fortitude," the inscription continues, " he bore a second amputation by the surgeons, and died from loss of blood, August, 1838, aged 33 years."

But there is worse to come. The inscription ends with the following verse, that I had better leave to speak for itself:

" Bright rose the morn and vig'rous rose poor
Port;

" Gay on the *Train*, he used his wonted sport:

" Ere noon arrived his mangled form they
bore,

" With pain distorted and o'erwhelmed with
gore;

" When evening came, to close the fatal day,

" A mutilated corpse the sufferer lay."

Harrow Church has been standing for nearly one thousand years. Byron used to meditate under the churchyard trees and Hogarth sketched amid the tombs. My son was christened there. But the fame of Port might outlive all.

A Memory of Hugh Walpole

I entered the door of Walpole's Piccadilly flat, coaducted by a midget manservants

Another door opened to reveal a tremendous fellow with shoulders braced, a welcoming smile and large outstretched hand. The midget man-servant dodged between us to escape.

Then Walpole led me into a room that seemed to be a stray department from some art gallery or museum, packed with fine old paintings, period furniture, books and ornaments. (The collection, since Walpole's death, has been sold for a princely sum).

Which, I asked, were his favourite novels, the " Cathedral," or the " Herries" series, and which had been most successful from the viewpoint of sales and critical esteem?

" Well, my heart is in Cumberland," Walpole answered at once. " Moreover, the sales of the ' Herries ' sequence have exceeded those of any other books of mine. But I grant you that the ' Cathedral' series might have been artistically the more successful. Still, the ' Herries ' novels have only just begun. Er—" he paused apologetically—" if I am spared I intend to write at least four more ' Herries ' books, providing a complete conspectus of English history from the Elizabethan period onwards."

Then Walpole told me that for a long time he had been planning an Elizabethan Herries, with Mary Queen of Scots, James and the

Babington Plot. Perhaps he might start writing this year (1938), after he had thoroughly steeped himself in the facts of the period. Often he took as long as two years working out the theme of a book in his head, but he never began to write until he was perfectly certain of what he wanted to say. As he spoke, the novelist became increasingly enthusiastic. I could see that he was taking the opportunity to clarify his own ideas, and I just happened to be the fortunate listener.

But while he spoke I was studying Walpole carefully, once again receiving a wholly favourable, somewhat surprising impression. I had expected to find him jovial and friendly, but had gathered from photographs in literary papers that he had a smooth, rather clerical expression. But the man had a weather-beaten, rugged face, with quite a lot of greyish hair over the ears; he had blue eyes; and he was essentially the open-air type, big and brawny, with a kindly mouth and deep, judicious voice.

The room in which we sat was the most amazing abode of all kinds of priceless and unusual *objets-d'arts*. I could even recognize articles that had played a part in Walpole's books, sculptures like Lampiron's in *The Inquisitor*, vases like Roger's in *The Cathedral*, the piege

of amber from *The Old Ladies*. Pictures of the French Impressionists and others diversified the walls, and a grand piano and fine Chinese cabinet in black and gold lacquer-work dominated the floor. Leather-bound original manuscripts of his works filled one of Walpole's many bookcases.

I asked him for an opinion of the colonial novel. He replied promptly that his experience as Chairman of the Book Society had taught him to expect a high level of competence but little exceptional brilliance in works from overseas. "Henry Handel Richardson is undoubtedly the most considerable writer Australia has given us, but most of the big South African novels seem to have been written by Englishmen. Katherine Mansfield still has no peer in New Zealand."

Walpole then told me that before the 1914-1918 War he had worked with Katherine Mansfield, Middleton Murry, D. H. Lawrence and Gaudier-Breszka on the obscure periodical "Rhythm." "We were all very hard-up and unknown, and quite ignorant of the so-called fame awaiting us. Now, young man, you can take heart from that!"

And I did leave Sir Hugh Walpole with the feeling that whereas I had come, a nonentity, to

interview him, he had actually taken the initiative for my delight. Nor shall I forget that meeting and subsequent encounters. It is the fashion now to denigrate "easy" novelists like Walpole, but don't forget how criticism treated Trollope immediately after his death. And Walpole wrote a foreword most charmingly for one of my own prentice books—without demanding the fee others in a corrupt age have asked.

Photographs in the Boardroom

The other day we were waiting for a meeting to begin in the boardroom of an old firm, and suddenly realised the presence of old photographs on the wall. How often had our eyes passed over them unseeingly, the staid groups of bewhiskered Victorian directors, the noble portraits of the firm's first founders, the yellowed gatherings of management, staff and "friends" at long-forgotten annual picnics! It was as if now, in these uglier days when the past was already a golden age, we could appreciate at last what had hitherto been little more than a bore and a joke. And we began to perceive the value in a custom, the taking of corporate or institutional photographs, which was so quickly falling into disuse.

It is always astonishing to the busy man how

a few moments' uninterrupted contemplation, especially in the presence of relics, can open a world of new ideas. The old boardroom portraits and groups on this occasion evoked conspicuously the thought that our ancestors *knew what they were doing* when they arranged to have the pictures taken.

Partly, of course, they were moved by the fashion of the moment, when the social employment of photography thanks to M. Daguerre's development of the iodised silver plate (whose productions compare favourably with the best modern work) was like the present craze for, say, flying or crosswords. Not only was it an event to visit the professional's ornate, propertied parlour, but to exhibit the stiff masterpiece afterwards to friends and enemies alike (particularly the latter) was a veritable triumph. It is impossible to hold a corporate gathering to-day without first ensuring that the B.B.C.'s recording van comes along; in those days the languid young men with the maze of dark apparatus came from the Court photographer's.

But even if they were partly responding to a convention, the sturdy directorates of Victorian Britain were largely moved by a nobler sentiment when they arranged those frequent appointments with the various dignified Studios.

Did they not feel, quite genuinely, that they were having inscribed in indelible lineaments for posterity a record of their corporate selves? Was not their motive nearer to that of the Roman emperors and senators and praetors who had their personal likenesses and their laws engraved forever on brass or stone, than to that of the modern party of aircraftmen, who, amid raucous cries, have their united photograph taken at the "Developed While You Wait" booth on the pier?

This must be so, or our eyes deceive us, and those faded groups are in reality a subject for genuine laughter. But no: scarcely a smile can be discerned upon the hirsute faces—in any case, never a shamefaced or self-conscious smile—and everyone of the old photographs has an air of dignity and a somewhat forbidding poise about it which precludes the possibility of "a lark." It is like imagining some cheap intent in a group photograph of modern merchant navy captains.

We can rather imagine the Chairman of Directors referring gravely to the value of possessing a permanent record of the Staff, "Future generations, gentlemen, may be grateful indeed for the opportunity we can thus

afford them of studying the history of the Firm."

Now it is when we consider our attitude to such matters to-day, and when we try to visualise a modern Managing Director speaking in the same manner, that we may at last reach an appreciation of what has been lost.

Where it has been lost it might be difficult to say. Possibly in the trenches of one war and the air-raid shelters of another, perhaps in the increase of population and consequent cheapening of values, maybe in the extravagances of those Victorians themselves, who forced us to become humorous and bashful in reaction. But the fact remains that even if we have staff and corporation photographs taken—and of course we still do, though not in the same number—we fail miserably to achieve the same effect as those stiffer grandsires so superbly attained.

It may be agreed that modern clothes are most unsuitable for effective pictorial groupings. Transferred to hard paper in uncompromising black and white our shapeless trilbies and pimply bowlers could never compare with those square-cut toppers, our floppy neckwear with those high, stiff collars and be-pearled cravats, **our** lounge jackets with those severe frock-coats, **or** our indeterminate trousers with those impos-

ing, ankle-tight cylinders. But even so it is the man who makes the clothes and surely the power in those faded pictures proceeds as much from the stance and spirit of the represented figures as from their sartorial equipment. The Chairman stands like a monument of old with one hand carefully inserted within the left breast of his frock-coat and with head held higher than a modern king: even the office boy strikes a Casabianca-like attitude as he reclines gracefully in the foreground. Now just consider how Smith and Macintosh and Jones comport themselves in their equivalent photographs of to-day, lounging, squinting, glaring sheepishly, even caught in the act of shuffling!

So we perhaps come to the root of the matter, a spiritual one as ever. Our ancestors not only knew what they were doing, in clear-cut terms down to the last bawbee, the last bill of lading and the last punitive expedition to the haunt of Sudanese Mahdi, but they had the supreme courage of their convictions, expressed visibly in the rather pathetic grandeur of these photographs.

Whereas we are a confused, starchless generation. Our position in the world is insecure and we might be a beaten people to-day but for the physical assistance of other, greater powers. In

business we are little more than milch-kine of the Revenue, when we are not obedient slaves of Bureaucracy. Relationships between employers and staffs are no longer paternal but those of the Labour Exchange. For us God is not in his Heaven and all Right with the World but the President and Prime Minister are in Washington and all is wrong with the rest. These changes may be to the good; we hope that in any case they will ultimately be to the good and we know, for one thing, that it is better to be a miner to-day than one hundred years ago. But they don't make for good group photography.

Perhaps, then, we are wise to admire our ancestors on the wall and not be too upset that we cannot present our own descendants with as dignified and admirable a collection of stained memorials. Creatures of a transition period, we might advisedly remain obscure, lest the Annual General Meeting of 1994 be too shocked at the poor figures cut by the famous victors of the " greatest " European war.

History in Silk Stockings

The silk stocking, according to a famous American, is the sartorial symbol of the present age, and will be regarded as such by the men and women of the future. But he should have

said the *artificial* silk stocking. To-day this article of clothing is available to all the feminine world, rich and poor alike—thanks primarily to potatoes, electric-light bulbs and certain inventive Englishmen!

The curious story begins three hundred years ago, when an Englishman named Dr. Robert Hooke wrote that he had discovered "a pretty kind of artificial stuff which might make a glutinous composition better than silk." But textile manufacturers were fully occupied in succeeding centuries with British inventions—the new machines for spinning and weaving of cotton and wool, the fabrication of blankets named after a Thomas Blanket of Bristol, of worsted material named after the village of Worsted in Norfolk, and of tweed from the Scottish district of that name. Artificial silk had to wait—for the electric-light bulbs.

These were first made by Joseph Swan, but not until he had endured many disappointments. The difficulty was to find a material that could be used as filaments in the electric-light bulbs. Eventually he tried collodion, a sticky substance made from gun-cotton, and it was instantly successful. He made the filaments by forcing the collodion through small holes and producing threads. In 1885 Swan exhibited

these in London as the first strands of artificial silk.

But still a way had not been found of making fabric from the threads, and women had still to be content with stockings and clothes made of wool and cotton, all save the few who could afford real silk. Collodion was expensive and could only be spun and woven after infinite trouble.

One day two more Englishmen, C. F. Cross and E. J. Bevan, while following up Swan's discoveries, began to consider the properties of the potato. They considered in particular the cellulose that formed the solid framework of the plant. Could not that be used instead of collodion? The two inventors experimented for a long time, and produced an excellent yarn. As a result the manufacture of artificial silk on a commercial basis now interested several financiers, and money was subscribed for further experiment.

It was found that the yarn could be produced in large quantities not only from potatoes, but also from woodpulp and many waste materials. But there was still one great difficulty. The machines used for spinning cotton and wood fibres into durable thread were too clumsy for the delicate cellulose yarn, and an entirely new

instrument would be needed, unlike anything that had been devised before.

So another two Englishmen, C. H. Stearn and C. F. Topham, worked long hours in a small laboratory to construct the key-tool of the modern artificial silk industry, a mechanical spinner that twists the hanging filaments of cellulose by centrifugal force. The new clothing era had begun.

It was interrupted by the first German war, during which the first artificial silk factory was engaged in making "dope" for aeroplane wings. But immediately after that war, the factory started to supply women all over the world with the glittering fabrics that they had previously been unable to afford. Licenses to manufacture the material were taken by industrialists in other lands. America, Germany, France—they all used the British invention, the greatest in the textile industry since Arkwright had devised the cotton-spinning machine.

Laureate of Pessimism

James Thomson, the second English poet of his name, was a pessimist who wrote some of the most gloomy poetry in the language, and that is possibly why his fame is small and his true worth rarely acknowledged.

James Thomson's life was the inspiration of his verse; it was, indeed, the hampered and unhappy life of the traditional poet. He was born, 1834, in Glasgow, where his parents lived in poor circumstances. His father was a seaman of morose temperament, who some years after suffered a paralytic fit that left him half-imbecile; his mother was a dour Irvingite, whose stern religion blighted her natural affections. At the age of eight Thomson was sent to the Royal Caledonian Asylum, in London, and at sixteen was admitted to a military school at Chelsea. There he learnt to be an army schoolmaster, and became noted for a fine memory and quick brain.

A year later Thomson was sent to Ireland to help in a regimental school, where he made two acquaintances that had moulding effects upon his character. One, with Charles Bradlaugh, the free-thinker, confirmed Thomson's constitutional scepticism; the other, with a beautiful young girl, involved love at first sight and a short period of great happiness, to be followed, on the girl's premature death, by corresponding gloom and distress, exceptionally hard for an idealistic youth of 19 to bear. Twenty-five years later he speculated on what might have been:

You would have kept me from the desert
sands

Bestrewn with bleaching bones,
And led me through the friendly fertile lands,
And changed my weary moans
To hymns of triumph and enraptured love,
And made our earth as rich as Heaven above.

The following year Thomson became a qualified army schoolmaster, and obtained his first official position with a regiment at Plymouth. For eight years now he followed his profession. One who knew him at the time said he was then "strong in brain and of well-knit frame, a hard thinker and good endurer." During his little leisure he taught himself German, French, Italian and some Spanish, Latin, and Greek, and he commenced serious verse writing, although most of these early efforts he subsequently destroyed. One piece, however, is worth quoting, because it displays both his precocious genius and his state of mind at that time:

As one who in the morning-shine
Reels homeward, shameful, wan, adust,
From orgies wild with fiery wine
And reckless sin and brutish lust;

And sees a doorway open wide,
And then the grand Cathedral space;
And hurries in to crouch and hide
His trembling frame, his branded face.

He sees the world-wide morning flame
Through windows where in glory shine
The saints who fought and overcame,
The martyrs who made death divine;
He sees pure women bent in prayer,
Communing low with God above:
Too pure! What right has he to share
Their silent feast of sacred love?

The saddest significance of these lines, however, is their reference to the vice that was ultimately Thomson's bane, and that mastered him soon after the sorrow of his sweetheart's death. His life in the rough military camps and barracks encouraged the drink-habit; and eventually, although indirectly, his intemperance secured him his dismissal.

Amongst the soldiers Thomson had been unhappy; boundless opportunities of studying human nature at first hand and witnessing strange scenes and visiting many countrysides did not make up for lack of congenial companionship and intellectual appreciation. But

when he finally reached the London of his ambition he was no happier and no more successful. Charles Bradlaugh, now editing "The National Reformer," found him various employments, but Thomson retained none of these for long. Between 1862 and 1874 he contributed, under the signature of "B.V."—"Bysshe Vanolis," from his favourite masters Shelley and Novalis—much verse and prose to Bradlaugh's paper, but even this, stigmatising him as an associate of the free thought party, did him little financial and social good.

Nevertheless, Thomson's long and dreary years of London poverty and hack work finally made him the poet we know and respect. His first long poem, "Vane's Story" (1864), is almost wholly autobiographical, and his masterpiece, "The City of Dreadful Night" (1874), is the tale of all his misery. First conceived, as he admitted himself, in "sleepless hypochondria," the poem contains passage after passage like this:

The City is of Night, but not of Sleep;

There sweet sleep is not for the weary
brain.

The pitiless hours like years and ages creep,
A night seems termless hell. , . *

From 1862 to 1869 there is little record of Thomson's doings. In 1865 he wrote the Cockney idylls, " Sunday at Hampstead " and " Sunday up the River," two delightful trifles, which in 1869 were published in " Fraser's Magazine." Many who do not know his " City of Dreadful Night" are familiar—largely because they have been set to music—with his " Give a man a horse he can ride. . . . Give a man a pipe he can smoke. . . . Give a man a girl he can love," and

Let my voice swell out through the great
abyss,
To the azure dome above,
With a chord of faith in the harp of bliss;
Thank God for Love.

In 1872, after completing his third masterpiece, the long narrative poem " Weddah and Om-el-Bonain," he sent a copy of it to W. M. Rossetti, who subsequently gave him much helpful criticism and stimulating appreciation. At the end of that year, however, he was engaged by a gold-mining company to pay a visit on their behalf to Colorado, in America. He greatly enjoyed this trip, and returned from it

in comparatively high spirits, but from the business point of view it was a complete failure.

And so was a mission he undertook in the following year to Spain, at the time of a Carlist insurrection, to act there as correspondent for a New York paper. After a few months he was summarily recalled, informed that his reports had been quite inadequate, and refused the handsome remuneration he had been promised. Thereafter Thomson seemed to abandon all hope of advancement. As if in a last protest, he wrote "The City of Dreadful Night," which, after long and disgruntled delays, was published in book form and at once attracted the attention of such giants of the day as Swinburne, Meredith, George Eliot, Emerson, and Longfellow; and for "seven songless years," as he himself described them, he neither wrote any verse nor contrived to improve his material position. During this time, however, he became more and more the slave of his consuming vice, so that when, in the year 1881, some charitable friends took him into the country for a holiday, and, in a kind of "Indian summer,"⁵⁵ he actually commenced to write poetry again, he was fatally unable to hold the happiness firm. After several humiliating scenes with the besotted poet the friends were forced to turn him adrift again;

and Thomson vanished from the sight of those who knew him until one day in 1882, when the blind poet Philip Marston picked him out of the gutter in the Euston Road, penniless, half-crazy, and nigh to death. An attempt was made to save him, but on June 3rd of that year James Thomson died a drunkard's death in the University College Hospital.

It is claiming much to call Thomson one of the strongest poetical characters of the nineteenth century, but this he was, and his poetry, as Meredith has said, was a pure well. Marston predicted at the time of Thomson's death that the critic of the future would "look back wonderingly upon the figure of the somewhat solitary poet who belonged to no special community or brotherhood in art." Thomson does indeed stand out from all other poets of his age as one who had his own message to communicate and then was done; and, though it is easy to trace his indebtedness to Shelley, Heine, Dante, Leopardi, and Novalis, he is, in the final summing up, entirely his own master. His work is gloomy, it is morose, sceptical, and pessimistic; but for all that it is great, and Thomson, like his own figure of Melancholy, will long survive;

The moving moon and stars from east to west
 Circle before her in the sea of air ;
 Shadows and gleams glide round her solemn
 rest.

Her subjects often gaze up to her there;
 The strong to drink new strength of iron
 endurance,
 The weak new terrors; all, renewed assurance
 And confirmation of the old despair.

Gentlemen, the Press!

Having taken the poet to a public dinner, where he was to propose the toast of " The Press," Dr. George Bird records how he was horrified to see Swinburne rise to his feet and shriek out the words: " The Press is a damnable institution, a horrible institution, a beastly institution!" and then sink back into his seat and close his eyes.

Taxpayer's Retrospect

With the approach of another Budget, rumours about which have already shaken the body politic, it is interesting if not consoling to survey some of the curious taxes that have been imposed by ingenious Chancellors of the past. The study does at least convince one that there is nothing new under the fiscal sun.

For instance, much has been made lately of the suggestion that the Exchequer should penalise users of cosmetics. Yet so long ago as 1786 it is recorded that "perfumes, tooth powder, pomatum, and hair powder " were subjects of an Exchequer tax.

Nowadays we groan about the various impositions placed upon us by the Government, but our ancestors were not much better off. In 1696 a Window Tax was first levied. Every house with less than 10 windows had to pay 2/-; houses with from 10 to 20 windows had to pay 6/-; and a house with more than 20 cost its owner 10/- a year.

People tried to get out of it by having their windows boarded up, but this was promptly made illegal. By decision of Court one man " was rightly charged for a hole through which his coals were shot." The yield from Window Tax in 1815 was about £2,000,000, and the folly was not repealed until 1851.

Moreover, it is hard to believe that until 1854 a tax of 3/6 had to be paid on every advertisement inserted in a newspaper or magazine!

The first recorded advertisement appeared in a publication called " Several Proceedings in Parliament," on November 28th, 1650, but by 1712 a paper named " The Daily Courant " was

printing on the average ten advertisements a day. That year the tax was imposed, and "The Daily Courant" lost all its advertisers within a few months.

This measure undoubtedly delayed the legitimate growth of periodical journalism in this country. Till 1855 a similarly severe tax was levied on newspapers themselves. Press prosperity properly dates from the removal of these burdens.

The great but greedy Pitt was responsible for much early fiscal experimentation, and it was he who thought of taxing gold and silver plate. Many articles were later exempted from this impost, but wedding rings—demand for which was probably regarded as inelastic—remained taxable for several years.

The Tax That Failed

But sometimes the Exchequer experts miscalculate. In 1767 a tax of 6/- a dozen was imposed on chip hats, a feminine style made extremely popular by the paintings of Watteau. High expectations were built on this measure, but no sooner had the tax been introduced than the hats went out of fashion!

We claim a monopoly of democratic principles in these days, but we forget that as

long ago as 1698 a tax of £1 a quarter was levied on "all reputed gentlemen." Furthermore, that a similar charge was imposed that year on "all clergymen, preachers, and teachers of any kind enjoying £80 per annum."

It was left, however, to the great Pitt to enact that every kind of "sportsman" should be taxed, and in return should be provided with a Government certificate, for production on demand!

In 1747 coaches and carriages were taxed at a rate of £1 per wheel; "sophisticators of tea" were put down by a tax in 1777; and in 1861 "a class of persons termed 'duffers/' packmen,' or 'Scotchmen'" were made the subjects of an annual levy.

No, the British taxpayer has no reason to raise his eyebrows in this year of grace 1946. He should be hardened by his own pathetic history.

Hymn for Husbands

" Here may ye see that women be
In love meek, kind and stable;
Let never man reprove them than,
Or call them variable;
But rather pray God that we may
To them be comfortable."
—" The Nut Brown Maid " (15th cent.).

The Priestley in his Pride

I arrived at Highgate, quarter of an hour's tube journey from Tottenham Court Road, and it was a place of fish-and-chip shops, clanging tramcars, beery smells. But then I entered a quiet thoroughfare of mighty trees, none other than the famous Highgate Grove, where Coleridge had lived, and lo, Priestley actually inhabited what had once been the magic poet's house.

I was conducted up wide oak stairs carpeted in pale tomato-red to my second great surprise in a little room at the top. When Priestley came forward to meet me with a broad grin and outstretched hand he was the living image of Jess Oakroyd himself.

He was short and sturdy, with big head, wide cheekbones, and a strong, humorous mouth. He wore a well-tailored blue suit of a flannel material and a shirt of similar cloth and colour. He was smoking a fragrant cigar with that aggressive thrust of his lips. I have the aroma of it in my nostrils yet.

I started at once with the remark that Priestley's books were appreciated mainly for their characterisation; and I said straight out: "When are you going to write another 'Good Companions'?"

He laughed aloud. "Now that's what they all keep asking," he replied, "but it's like this. I mean, how can I write another ⁶ 'Good Companions' when the times are so unpropitious? Books are the products of their age, and I simply haven't the nerve to write another book like that at the present troubled period.

"Besides, laad,"—and he leant over confidentially—"I've worked very hard to reach my present position, and I don't see why I shouldn't please myself as to what I write now. To tell you the truth, I'm more interested in plays at the present. Before I made my name as a novelist I kept out of the theatre. It was too risky. But now I can afford the risk. Besides, I feel there's nothing much left to say in the novel, and plays are much more interesting and difficult to write."

He stubbed out the cigar and offered me some tobacco for my pipe, producing a short, stubby one himself. "Now, listen," he continued, talking easily and without constraint. "they all say that I deliberately write books for the times. That's not true, laad. Here's a case in point.

"Do you know that when I first took * 'The Good Companions' along to my publisher he was exceedingly dubious about its prospects. Said there never had been a successful novel

about the theatre yet. Besides, it was far too long for popularity—remember, the vogue for big books like 'Gone With the Wind' hadn't started then. D'you know that publisher printed a preliminary edition only 5,000 and the book-sellers gave advance orders on the proofs for only two-thirds of that amount. Within a week, laad, that book was selling 3,000 copies a day!"

For some time we chatted about books and publishers, and then the sturdy little Yorkshireman told me something of his own early struggles and gave some advice about literary success.

He said that after serving in the first world war he had worked his way through Cambridge. His father had been a poor schoolmaster, never earning more than £300 a year, and naturally had been unable to give him any help. Priestley came to London eventually with his wife and only £50 in the bank. He had worked to establish himself as a book reviewer, and if he had succeeded it had mainly been because editors could always rely on getting his reviews promptly and to the required length.

"There are hundreds of so-called 'struggling geniuses' in London," he said, "but the trouble with most of them is that they don't strooglc hard enough. If you want my advice, laad>

stick at the typewriter, and don't bother with these cocktail parties and such-like fads."

Before I left that little attic room he showed me the bookshelves that had been built by Coleridge himself, and the distant view down Highgate Hill to London mist and smoke.

Atomic energy and the Machines

That atomic energy in its peaceful aspect will revolutionize the technique of industry, engineering and communications is vaguely realised by most people. But how many appreciate what may be the full extent of the change? It is not too much to say that we may see within the next generation a technical upheaval as far-reaching in its effects as that of the original Industrial Revolution, and much more fundamental than that brought about by the invention of the internal combustion engine. This is because the new energy will be able to do so much more than petroleum, and may be so much cheaper. It will be to the power-machines of to-day as the steam engine was to handicrafts.

Conservative scientists allow that the conversion of the discovery to peaceful needs should not take more than ten years, though they

qualify this prediction by saying that uranium is scarce and the technique may be prohibitive in cost. But others already grant that if the energy could be extracted from a common mineral such as silica or silicon dioxide, obtainable in vast quantities everywhere, then the world would be presented with limitless, free power at last. And hitherto science has rarely been balked by such secondary problems. Uranium was used at first because it contained the largest atom. A way will be found of applying not the same but a simplified technique to common substances with smaller atoms.

The object of this note is not to discuss the methods that science will employ to harness the new source of power. Let us consider instead how it may affect our daily lives and methods. To begin with, it may enable us so to increase production that markets will become rapidly saturated, and competition, if not between firms in each country, certainly between countries, will assume a new fierceness. Many processes now laborious and expensive will become easy and cheap when motivated by an inexhaustible infinitely powerful new engine. The refractories industries will no longer consume vast quantities of coal and their products will thereby be cheapened and more readily available. The

moment, will be the limitation of the explosion in the atomic field set up in any engine. Yet the same authorities agree that we are already nearer the solution of this problem than we have ever been to the similar—though basically different—solution of how to control the operations of ordinary high explosives. Therefore it seems very likely that the small atomic power unit will be practicable in our time.

With such a unit aircraft could reach the moon, road and rail vehicles could forget about weight, climate could be controlled, deserts irrigated and seas drained, work as such could be abolished. Only a few people would be required to labour, the technicians in charge of the machines, and they might well develop into a small, ruling class.

Admittedly this is mainly speculation. But so was similar writing about an atomic bomb last year. The scientists should be listened to when the subject is merely technical application. Such application has ever been comparatively simple for man as against original scientific discovery.

The industrialist may consider what changes would be effected in his manufacturing methods by the introduction of a source of power which is to present sources as they are to the strength

of the human hand; the engineer may also rewrite his text-books; and—the politician may beware.

Railways in Books

One hundred years ago, when railways were coming into their own and the era of the mail coach was nearly at an end, De Quincey wrote his famous essay on the passing of an integral feature of the life of his day. Travelling by train at forty or fifty miles an hour, he said, he did not realise the speed; but, on a coach, "the sensibility of the horse uttering itself in the maniac light in his eyes, we heard our speed; we saw it; we felt it as a thrilling, and this speed was not the product of blind insensate agencies."

That was generally the reaction of the old romantic writers to the new-fangled railway travelling. Most of the early-Victorian novelists, poets and essayists had hard words to say about the revolution in means of transport that was taking place at their time. Even broadminded Charles Dickens could not resist the temptation to poke fun at the novelty. It was Mr. Weller, you remember, who expressed his considered opinion "that the rail is unconstitootionai and W inwader o' privileges,"

" Going by railroad I do not consider as travelling at all, it is merely being 'sent' to a place, and very little different from becoming a parcel," declared that great Victorian arbiter of good taste, John Ruskin. And again, " Your railroad, when you come to understand it, is only a device for making the world smaller." Then, in " The Seven Lamps of Architecture," he inveighs against a railway station: " It is the very temple of discomfort, and the only charity that the builder can extend to us is to show us, plainly as may be, how soonest to escape from it."

However, as the nineteenth century wore on, the prejudice of writers against railways as railways gradually wore off. To-day it can truthfully be said that there are sufficient trains in fiction—and romantic trains at that—to provide material for an extensive monograph on the subject. Time has revealed to many authors the possibilities of a railway carriage or a long train journey as the setting for fictional incident and description. Why, a book has been written, and a play around it, in which a train is the hero!

There are, indeed, few modern novels that do not include a railway journey somewhere in the story. Even poor old Henry James—the man who tried to say so much about his characters

that he ended by saying nothing—opens one of his novels, "The Sacred Fount," with a railway journey: "We had, the three of us, the carriage to ourselves, and we journeyed together for more than an hour, during which, in my corner, I had my companions opposite. We began at first by talking a little, and then as the train—a fast one—ran straight and proportionately bellowed, we gave up the effort to compete with its music. . . ."

Obviously, though he had to admit them into his fictional scheme, Henry James did not like railway trains. Not so Arnold Bennett, of all modern writers the one who took the greatest sensuous delight in modern luxuries. Readers acquainted with Bennett's Five Towns novels will recall frequent mentions of the old L.N.W.R. lines between the Potteries and Manchester to the north and Birmingham and London to the south, and perhaps will remember the passage in the Clayhanger trilogy where Hilda Lessways and George Cannons set out for London: "The smooth, irresistible gliding of the train became apparent, establishing a sudden aloof calm." And again, "The little interior in which they were swept steadily and smoothly across the central sunlit plain of England. , , ,"

Savage Delights

There is scarcely need to mention, when referring to the literature of railways, the "Life in a Railway Factory" of Alfred Williams. Then, in "The House with the Green Shutters," that grim and realistic story of lowly Scots life by George Douglas Brown, there is the passage where the feckless young Gourlay goes to Edinburgh:

He took the slow train to Skeigham, where he boarded the express. Few sensational experiences were unknown to his too-impressionable mind, and he knew the animation of railway travelling. Coming back from Skeigham in an empty compartment on nights of the past, he had sometimes shouted and stamped and banged the cushions till the dust flew, in mere joy of his rush through the air; the constant rattle, the quick-repeated noise getting at his nerves, as they get at the nerves of savages and Englishmen on Bank Holidays.

Admirers of H. G. Wells and his remarkable short stories will appreciate a reference to one of the cleverest yarns of its kind ever told, "The Apple," the greater part of which takes place in a railway carriage, where a young schoolmaster meets a dark stranger who presents him with

the original apple that Eve plucked from the Forbidden Tree. Toward the end of the story the young schoolmaster realises that he is at his destination, and has to jump out of the train while it is in motion. How many heroes of fiction have been placed in the same predicament? It is becoming quite an old dodge now, and is another testimony to the literary value of trains. You know: the hero glances out of the carriage window suddenly and observes the signboard of his station swimming past; he makes a frantic dive, leaving the mystery, or the lady of his heart, or the murder, behind him.

And, speaking of murders, without the railways nine-tenths of our mystery story writers would be gravely handicapped. The famous Blue Train to the Riviera has featured in hundreds of thrillers of the type with which the name of E. Phillips Oppenheim has become associated. With its seasonal cargo of crooks, countesses, spies, sleuths and mysterious young women, it is surely the most-written-about train on earth. Then there are the more coldly scientific detective stories in which trains play a part, and of which, surely, "The Viaduct Murder," by Ronnie Knox, is the supreme example. Oh, yes, and that priceless story, "A

V. Laidler," by Max Beerbohm, must not be forgotten. It tells how a fortune-teller in a railway carriage reads the palms of his fellow travellers, and discovers they are all to die in a few seconds. He should pull the communication cord, but something stops him. Then there is the accident, in which all his fellow travellers are killed, and A. V. Laidler is left with his conscience.

A railway that occupies a prominent place in literature is that which traverses the steppes of central Siberia; it crops up in practically every great Russian novel, and has an unenviable reputation for inefficiency. But if I start to go abroad there will be no end to the tale.

I conclude then with a reference to an essay "On Catching Trains," by Alpha of the Plough (A. G. Gardiner), surely one of the most delightful things of its kind that has ever been written. If I could I would quote the entire essay, as final proof that the railway train in literature has arrived on time.

The Impotence of Poe

Poe once pronounced that a long poem was a series of short, genuine poems, united by long stretches of stuff that was not poetry at all. The desire of a moth for the star soured by impotence into calumny?

The Will to Work

There are many disquieting features of life as we struggle with it to-day, but none more dangerous to our fundamental well-being than the lack of incentive to work. This may be plausibly ascribed to tiredness after the war, but the majority of people did not work hard during that comparatively short period, and those who did labour mightily then appear to be among the minority who continue to exert themselves now. Mr. Churchill is as busy as ever, and so are some other middle-aged and elderly men who have been running essential businesses almost single-handed for the last six years. The Russians continue to exert themselves, it appears, and the Americans are as dynamic as ever.

Only the mass of the British people and lesser breeds within their law throughout the world display the lethargy and lack of incentive, nay, the positive decline in social conscience which has been observed. Everybody knows about this who conducts a business or reads the newspapers or follows the antics of our "Statesmen,"⁵⁵ but factual proof can easily be given, as by the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce at Leith, who pointed out the other day :

Our production of goods is **not yet more**

than two-thirds that of 1939, and output per hour, due to lack of materials, labour, and other causes making for inefficient production is about three-quarters.

Across the Empire, like a knife on throat, runs the recurrent strike evil—at a time, and in circumstances usually when unprecedented efforts are being made to improve the well-being of all. In their intervals of striking, workers go slow, scrimshank, and refuse to exert themselves. The fields have never known so many weeds nor the order-books so many time-cancelled contracts. Mr. Attlee comes back from Washington with the sad statement that only the outlawry of war can remove the menace of the atomic bomb and there is no way that he can see of outlawing war. Young men demobilised from the Forces display a marked tendency to seek only secure departmental jobs in large corporations and openly eschew individual enterprise on their own account. Housewives refuse even to operate can-openers, and bearers in the most remote tropical jungle down their burdens to demand holidays - with - pay and elected assemblies.

Nor is this somewhat bizarre catalogue given with facetious intent. Does not the cross-section as revealed therein contribute to an understand-

ing of the problem itself? Does it not depict something very like a state of anarchy, such as develops in an organisation when the directorate absconds and the compelling-power of that directorate is removed? Everywhere we see the spectacle of *men off the leash*, who appear suddenly to lack the will to work but in reality lack any real *incentive* to do so.

It may not be the opinion of academic idealists and of sentimentalists, but it is the knowledge of men engaged in business and practical affairs generally that the majority of us do not care to work unless we are compelled to do so, and work hard only when goaded with proportionate sharpness. Thus a man will exert himself when he realises that his daily bread depends on it. The professional man, running his own business, must work or be adjudged bankrupt. The artist works if there is no other way in which he can display his talent and secure recognition. But the great mass of ordinary individuals in the modern industrial community have formerly been constrained to work by the threat of unemployment and destitution if they refuse to do so.

We see at present twin factors that counteract the old compulsion. First there is a short supply of labour. What working man is

going to strain himself when a hundred employers compete desperately to obtain his single services? Second, we have socialism in practice at last.

Socialism is a sentimentalist's creed which aims at improving the condition of the people by sheltering them artificially from natural laws. It aims to protect the worm from the bird by providing it with an extra overcoat. Employers are no longer permitted to dismiss workers. Generous doles, insurance benefits and pensions are extended to those who cannot or don't want to work. The masses are taught how to blackmail the society in which they live by strike action. Roseate promises are extended to the masses of a millenium just round the corner. The idea is inculcated that Tom, Dick and Harry can live in ease for years on the proceeds of a liquidated aristocracy. And intellectuals of reckless habit are encouraged to undermine age-tested institutions by jest and contumely until the common man ceases to respect not only those institutions but also his own conscience.

The effect of which is just the condition which we now deplore. The *sanctions* having been removed, workers relax and (quite naturally) decline to extend themselves. It is probable that less output per head of population is being

recorded in the British Empire at the moment than at any time in its history. And this at a perilous juncture when the British Empire requires energetic production as never before!

That men acquire the will to work only by compulsion is an unfortunate truism. This socialism which has been allowed at last to enter our practical politics will discover that in due course, if it has not discovered it already. And the fools will find soon enough that temperate exhortation and appeals to social conscience cannot replace the old, cruel but kind sanctions. Let them consider the similar course of events in their great exemplar, Soviet Russia, where the commissars were eventually forced to adopt very drastic means to replace the capitalist method of compelling workers to work.

If, then, our Labour Government is not overthrown completely by its own folly, it will very soon be compelled to flabbergast its supporters by the severity of its ordinances requiring the masses to work properly. Certain work in this country and Empire must be done with reasonable efficiency, be it merely the work necessary to provide Ministers of the Crown with their own creature comforts. Force, as ever, must be applied to the intractable donkey, man, if he is to bear his birthright burden. But not a few

of the donkeys may soon prefer to return to a state of political and economic organisation where they could at least choose for themselves the brand of stick to be used for their own belabouring.

And a Note for Cripps

A great friend of mine, McTavish, was the proud owner of a new cash register. One day an old friend entered his shop and made a six-penny purchase. To his surprise he noticed that the shopkeeper placed the sixpence in his pocket instead of the register. "Why don't you ring it up?" he asked. "Aren't you afraid of forgetting it?"

"I'll nae forget it," said McTavish; "ye ken. I keep track of it in my head until I get five shillings, and then I ring it up—it saves the wear-r and tear-r of the machine."

Must Genius Starve?

The greatest writers—which is to say, the writers whose works have exercised the greatest universal appeal and endured the longest—have invariably made money.

Literary enthusiasts who themselves have failed to produce the best work have naturally encouraged the art for art's sake theory; and

their ire has been aroused by the knowledge that writers of mediocre best-sellers have amassed fortunes whereas some unfortunate master workers such as Chatterton, George Douglas Brown, and Mary Webb, have died disgruntled and penniless. But a study of literary history shows that most eminent authors have not lacked tangible recognition, and, provided they have lived sensibly, have ended their days in comparative affluence.

The greatest literary genius our race has yet produced, William Shakespeare, may be adduced first in a list of the most eminent and comfortable British authors. He fled from Stratford a penniless lad, but returned in the prime of life a wealthy man. His gains in the triple capacity of actor, author and sharer of the general profits of the Globe Theatre had been so substantial that he was enabled to throw down his pen, purchase the habit of a country gentleman, and die.

Blind Milton died worth no less than £1,500 after he had been infirm and out of the public favour for years. Since this poet is often cited as an example by the art for art's sake coterie, it may be as well to examine the exact facts of his misfortune. I find that Milton made money as a young man and as Latin Secretary to

Cromwell's Council of State, but lost it with the Restoration. Then he was paid £5 for "Paradise Lost," and promised another £5 if 1,300 copies were sold. Now that is not bad at all. I doubt if many publishers, offered "Paradise Lost" to-day, would be so generous. They would probably make the poet pay the expenses of publication himself.

I have not been able to discover how much money Daniel Defoe left behind him, but I know his earnings as a political journalist were considerable, and that he made £1,000 out of "Robinson Crusoe." Perhaps that does not seem a great deal of money, but it was the equivalent of about £3,000 in modern currency, which, possibly, is more than "Robinson Crusoe" would make its author if published in London to-day.

John Dryden, I understand, received 50 guineas from Jacob Tonson for 1,446 lines of his translation of Ovid, which might not be adequate pay from the trades union viewpoint, but, converted into modern currency, is reasonably good. Overlooking Goldsmith's spendthrift habits, the pundits make much of the fact that he had to write "The Vicar of Wakefield" to discharge an urgent debt, but generally omit to mention that he received £250 for his

" History of Greece " and 800 guineas for his " Animated Nature." These works were hastily executed, and it is very doubtful if they were worth so much.

For " Tom Jones " Henry Fielding received £700, and Smollett, Richardson, and Sterne were equally well rewarded for their literary pains. Hannah More is said to have made £30,000 by her pen. The popular opinion of Burns is that he was driven by lack of financial recognition into an early grave, but perhaps it is not generally realised that 2,800 copies of the second edition of his Kilmarnock poems were subscribed for in Edinburgh within a comparatively short time, and that if the poet had been a more typical Scot he could have lived quite comfortably upon the proceeds of his genius.

Very soon, indeed, a compatriot of Burns's was to demonstrate exactly how much a canny body could make out of great writing when earnestly resolved upon it. Sir Walter Scott made so much money out of his poems and novels that he was able to set himself up as a wealthy nobleman. Then, faced by the bankruptcy of his publisher partner, Ballantyne, he grimly earned no less than £70,000 during four years' effort to pay off his share of the debt. Scott's popularity, be it noted, was in no sense

the result of his "writing down" to a public. He might have been the Kipling of his age, but he was scarcely the Hall Caine. He wrote for all time, and yet he made a fortune in his own time.

Eleven fat editions of Lord Macaulay's "History of England" were sold on the publication of the first volume. William Makepeace Thackeray began life with an inherited fortune, lost it, then made another by writing books that are still read. Charles Dickens, who began life with nothing at all, died worth £93,000. Tennyson established a county family and a peerage on the proceeds of his verse, while W. S. Gilbert made a substantial fortune out of poking fun at his contemporaries.

Publicity has been given in recent years to the posthumous estates of modern authors. Thomas Hardy left £91,000, and John Galsworthy £88,000. Arnold Bennett, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and W. J. Locke left £40,000, £30,000 and £24,000 respectively, while Lytton Strachey left only £8,000, Robert Bridges £6,000, and D. H. Lawrence about £2,500. Commenting upon these figures a year or two ago, the *Daily Telegraph* found them disappointing, and remarked that "playwrights, novelists, poets and authors generally do not

greatly benefit the Exchequer through death duties."

This may be so. The British inland revenue may find Socialist and Radical tub-thumpers (like the late Lloyd George and John Burns) a more fruitful source of unexpected income than eminent authors. But the fact does not alter my opinion that literary genius, even in these times, is bound to make a reasonably comfortable living for itself provided that it is absolute and undefiled. D. H. Lawrence possessed genius, but, like Goldsmith, Coleridge and, say, Katherine Mansfield, possessed other qualities that prevented him from expressing more than a fragment of that genius.

I expect to be misunderstood and told that I have been playing with words. Who am I to exalt Dickens above Coleridge and Keats or Scott above Burns and Chatterton? The "eminent" authors of every age are naturally those who have succeeded in the worldly sense. I am accused of begging the question.

To escape from the difficulties of my position, then, I shall briefly state my theory again. Genius need not necessarily starve, and, in fact, does not always starve, because the world is always ready to appreciate genius provided it has the opportunity. I admit that genius only

too often has an innate aversion to providing proper opportunities.

Bad Names

I am still faint from one of the most hectic nights of my life, spent at the house of a remote relative, whither I had been summoned to assist in the naming of the latest addition to the family.

It was an all-night sitting, of proud yet determined mother; avowedly indifferent yet abominably discursive father; aunt from here and uncle from there; all the nearest neighbours and a little girl from down the street who had won ten prizes for crosswords.

Why I was invited I still don't know. Possibly because of my somewhat shady family reputation as a writer, and therefore juggler with words and names; possibly because I had been co-opted as godfather, and therefore nominee of the innocent.

But I do know this: my invitation, so far as the future nomenclature of the unfortunate child was concerned, was an unconscionable waste of time. Not a single one of my carefully thought out suggestions—I won't fatigue you with a detailed list—enjoyed longer than a moment's consideration.

After six hours of the most inane chatter I had listened to for weeks they called the young hopeful—Attlee!

Now, the reader must not leap to the conclusion that I am either a Park Lane Fascist or a Whitechapel Jacobin, nor that I dislike the name or impugn the character of our Socialist Prime Minister.

But I do hold that the present generation of parents in Britain are losing their heads over this business of labelling their offspring. They are labouring to go too far afield; they are trying to be too smart; they are beating too much about the bush; there, I knew I would mix my metaphors before I had finished. It can be put down to sheer emotion.

In front of me at the moment is a list of Christian names that at various times I have culled from reports in London and provincial papers of children's parties, sports events, prize-givings, and so on. I have underlined in red ink those names that have struck me with peculiar force. Here are some of them: Vindictive Perkins (I have, of course, invented the surnames, to avoid a host of grateful letters from readers' solicitors); Jubilee Hedman; Ottawa Hinks; Duke Featheringham; Thames Visters; Hail Dewlap; Zasu Rampeater;

Brighton Bingley; Happy Holmes; Junior Crosston; Lad Chellingway; Gaynor Cumberbatch.

I freely admit that I may have allowed sheer malice to get the better of me in some of those surnames. But I must insist that the Christian names are all taken from the life, and are all, from the viewpoint I have adopted, a dreadful blight upon our expanding civilisation.

I mean to say . . . Vindictive, Happy, Brighton.

It is easy to imagine, though painful to contemplate, how these calamities occurred. Father had just been presented with a claim for arrears of income tax; or mother was in an unusually cheerful frame of mind at the time of the happy event; or they had spent their honeymoon riotously at a justly renowned holiday resort. The possibilities are as interesting as they are absurd.

And that is why I am writing this note—before it is too late.

Do we want our sons and daughters to grow up with the idea that names are fortuitous phenomena, manufactured on the spur of the moment, bestowed in commemoration of this and that, branded on the brow of the helpless child to perpetuate irrevocably some trivial

event, person, or place, in nine times out of ten totally irreconcilable with the child's eventual character, appearance, and disposition?

There in the cradle is a charming infant. He is given the name Beverley. He grows up a plumber.

There in the pram is another young hopeful, blessed with the name of Happy. She grows up and writes a book on "The Comparative Anatomy of Oleaginous Amoeba."

Another is named Lad and becomes a bishop.

Ottawa completes his mortal span as a police sergeant.

Consider also what a handicap names may be to a child in after life by proclaiming to all and sundry the date of his birth. The South African War produced a crop of "Mafekings," "Kitcheners," and "Baden-Powells," branding the poor children for life.

There was a song current at the time, part of which ran something like this: "And the baby's name is Kitchener, Carrington, Kekewich, Mafeking, Buller, Methuen, etc., etc. . . . Blobbs!"

I must confess that in such matters I am a hidebound traditionalist. I would be the last to insist upon the resurrection of such Victorian abnormalities as Marmaduke, Ezekiel, Sep-

timus, Hephzibah, Theodore, Enoch, Deborah, or Felicia.

But I do maintain that there are certain names, both masculine and feminine, that have stood the test of centuries, that have evolved, as it were, from the collective good taste of our race, and that are pretty safe names, in that they possess no positive attributes, and are made to sit on Cabinet Minister as effectively as on a dustman.

These names, within decent limits, should be adhered to.

The Overseas Book Scandal

"Why is it that we don't have more good book by overseas authors?" An earnest young publisher asked me that question the other day at a Bloomsbury snob party.

"Why is it that English publishers won't look at books dealing in an intelligent way with life in the dominions?" An extremely talented individual who actually tries to earn a living by writing in Australia asked me that question 18 months ago. And the two queries, considered together, cover much that requires frank discussion.

The chief complaint in London seems to be that Australian and New Zealand novelists,

South African poets, and writers of books on Canada are shallow people, who choose meretricious themes, and who write forever with a bold eye cocked upon the cash consequences. Then they are hopelessly romantic, and so pre-occupied with the sword-and-cloak details of their young lands' stories, the convicts and bush-rangers, Maoris and gold rushes, South African farms and mounted police, that they have no time at all to trace and signalise the emergence of their own new characteristic manners and philosophies.

My chief qualification for dealing with this matter are that I have lived and written both in London and overseas, and have talked the subject through with many overseas authors. Strangely enough, most of them have been more contemptuous of the romantic type of book described above than are the English critics themselves. But they dare not abandon these hallowed themes. If they "got serious" they would also get the cold shoulder—from the London publisher. For the publishers of England were like that.

Such was the universal tale, and I began to tell it myself after I had written two or three books with oversea themes. Therefore, I submit that the answer to that first question "Why is

it that we don't get more good books by oversea authors?" may be simply given. It is because oversea authors can't get London publishers to risk money on their books unless they fill them with certain stock ingredients, calculated to appeal to the greatest number of romantic-loving English library readers.

Now for the second question asked by the literary Australian: "Why is it that English publishers won't look at books dealing in an intelligent way with life in the dominions?" Well, the obvious answer is that publishers are not interested in books that they can't sell. The English reading public does not want intelligent accounts of life in the dominions when there are so many more exciting things nearer home; the dominions themselves do want such accounts, but are not prepared to pay for them.

A friend of mine recently had published a really good novel on life in one of the dominions, which promptly sold no fewer than 3,000 copies in that intensely patriotic country. His novel also sold 500 copies in the United Kingdom. My friend eagerly anticipated his first royalty statement, and bit through the stem of his pipe when he read that his royalties from the English sales were actually greater than those for the 3,000 disposed of overseas, and that the grand

total of all amounts came to no more than £50.

The trouble is, first, that large overseas book-sellers are in the custom of making English publishers a round offer for a large number of copies of any book with a special interest for them.

The price per copy is often ridiculous—3s. 9d. was paid by an overseas bookseller for each of 500 copies of a new 10s. 6d. book recently—but the English publisher usually has no choice in the matter. Then he is told a great deal of exaggerated nonsense about differences in currency and costs of freight, insurance, advertising, and distribution, and he never has had much opinion of the colonial market anyway; so he turns to the next business quickly and forgets overseas sales, except in so far as they occasionally save him from undue negotiations with the remainder merchant.

Therefore the publisher has to insert a special clause in all contracts with overseas authors to the effect that royalties on overseas sales will amount to 10 per cent, of the net proceeds, and not 10 per cent, of the published price, as in the case of United Kingdom sales. There is a vast difference between the two percentages. It is a fact that publishers make very little out of sales

to the dominions, and authors make practically nothing.

I have described a vicious circle. Talented writers in the dominions—and there are many, despite the strictures of English critics—know that they have not an earthly chance of selling their books to London publishers unless they produce shoddy, so-called "popular" stuff. London publishers are chary of accepting serious books by overseas writers, because they know they cannot sell them in the dominions at a reasonable profit. The results are that overseas writers lost heart and turn to happier occupations, while the London book trade becomes rooted in the conviction that the dominions are not worthwhile.

The existing methods of overseas marketing date from the days when the dominions had very small populations and were exceedingly "difficult" markets to exploit. They should be overhauled in the light of modern changes. English publishers and overseas distributors should get together and discuss the matter, and devise more satisfactory arrangements. This would be in the interests not only of the trade and the authors, but also of the Empire as a whole. One cannot expect a widespread people to have a sense of cultural as well as

economic and political brotherhood unless their literatures are interdependent also.

How to Make an Anarchist

Take a young male of intelligence and sensibility. Mix with a little Thames water and set down to simmer gently in childhood over the slow heat of World War One. Remove afterwards to the cold slab of that mingled instruction in biased history and idealistic philosophy which passed during the 'twenties for higher education and mould him softly into shape, adding a touch of Marxist and/or Fascist flavouring. Return to fierce heat of World War Two, and leave until he is nicely browned-off. Then serve with a garnishing of modern Soviet Imperialism. You have your leading thinker, poet, politician of tomorrow, Kropotkin's and Barcelona's fulfilled prophecy at last, the pervading and universal *Anarchist*.

Mind, it is possible to produce the dish without the recipe. If we agree that children must react from the position of their parents, how else can the intellectual offspring of a Shaw, Russell and Joad proceed but merrily anti-clockwise, which is to say, in the opposite direction from a reasoned plan to organise society, from humanitarianism, from Government itself? So there would have been an

outbreak of young, posturing Anarchists about this time in any case, maugre all wars and Warsaws, as there would have been a similar, unimportant rash of corduroy trousers. (Anything to react against those Oxford bags!) Yet that would probably have been unimportant. You don't produce deep and fierce "isms" just by conventional fashion: they must be the product of *fire*.

Thus our Shaws, our Russells and our Joads did not come to their highly-organised and passionate opinions just because their fathers were Pontifexes—but because they were moved strongly in youth by what their eyes saw in a drab, cruel England, a volcanic, threatening world. Their resultant social "ism" was forged in the flame of that true emotion. It was at least a true, strong emotion, urging them to sanguine, constructive thought.

Well, the modern youngster comes along and is prepared to react somehow. In any case there would not have been much fun in Socialism, Communism or Fascism for him, and he would have liked to find something "new." As described in the recipe above, he is nurtured in the unnatural atmosphere of the last war, taught afterwards by those constructive people who still vaguely represent the irrepressible school of

the ever-sanguine Dr. Pangloss, then hurled into the second war and peace.

Now Russia, *vide* that education, has been his Jerusalem from the start, not a very shining and exciting city perhaps (because those educators did speak rather too much about it) but acknowledged youthfully and trustfully by him as the sole light in a dark contemporary world. And with the second war Russia at first supports one side, then the other, and official Communists are shockingly revealed like gentlemen in underpants, turning and twisting, abandoning shamefully all pretence to respectability *of the mind and soul*—just time-serving, obedient, political hacks.

He might, our young man, maintain some kind of defence against this undermining of his education if he is strong: he might even survive the spectacles, two-a-penny each glorious, martial day, of former peace pledge luminaries clamouring for the good war jobs, of fiery and revolutionary poets of his inspiration trailing away in a maze of mysticism, even of a gallant little Finland transformed into a brutal haunt of barbarian reactionaries overnight. He is tough, perhaps, a proud young cynic of his generation, and can cling quixotically amid all to a central nucleus of his original hard-inculga^

ted social philosophy—that man is reasonable, and *good* government is, in the last analysis, still an attainable, ultimate solution.

But can he resist the blatant crudities of the Kremlin?

This is no attempt at a political discussion on the subject of Eastern Europe. It is just a discourse on the theme that youth will not lose faith, or attain faith, without some strong emotion.

He may not have seen the pattern in the Warsaw tragedy, our young man; he may not have begun to understand the many complications of Eastern European politics; *but*, he has seen the tragedy, he has, however instinctively, begun to understand the essential hoUowness of the politics, the cynicism of the politics (on every side, yes!) and how can he, being a clean young Englishman, ever stand up and shout for those systems again? Somebody advises him to read Kropotkin, or to follow the verse and prose of certain half-baked cafe scribblers—and, hooray, with a grateful sigh he finds his generation's inevitable niche: to hell with all systems, with man's intolerable interference with man, with organisation only for war, bloodshed, sorrow, disillusionment, and I am (pardon the gesture) WX Anarchist!

I don't think I am, for two outstanding reasons, the first that the sort of anarchical system they're preaching would inevitably mean that somebody would hit me on the head for writing like this and I would be unable to call the police: the second, that as an artist I can temperamentally abide the strait-jacket of no kind of "ism," even that of an "ism" to end "isms." The sole glory of being an Englishman for me, is that I live in a system which, like Topsy, "just grewed," and requires no ideological framework as it rejects all philosophical explanations. England *has* got something there, in spite of all the class-consciousnesses, the tepid Socialism, the abuses and Westminster catches.

But the danger in the emerging philosophical anarchism of the intelligent and sensitive young, product of seeing the system lauded to them in youth betraying and betrayed, is that to-morrow you may not be able to get them to work for, to subscribe to, to believe in, to tolerate *anything*. "We have seen," they will say, "and, no thanks, we won't be caught again." Then what will Moloch do?

This note shall not pursue that frightening theme. Rather will it be, for a brief, concluding space, constructive^

I was talking to that Joad mentioned before, a representative of the earlier generation. "We have failed," he said. "No," I replied, diffidently and hesitantly, "for you have at least inculcated in some of us the love of truth." And it might be suggested that if the Joads, and teachers of that generation, resolutely continue with their teaching now, but divorcing themselves completely from the old fatal attempt to relate that teaching to current affairs, then their influence might slowly be regained, might prosper, and, as a true thing, attract youth. Stick hard to Plato, then, our educators, shout him aloud with all your eloquence and magnetism, eschew those treacherous concerns of the everyday, and our sons, instead of flaunting a sterile, fashionable anarchism, may listen, find the solid, and begin to build anew.

Cult of the Pseudonym

It is scarcely too much to say that every author concocts a new name for himself at least once in his career. Some are forced to it by expediency, and it is they, as a rule, who retain the new name permanently, and are known to many of their readers by no other. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, the Oxford don and mathematics lecturer, could not very well reconcile

the authorship of " Alice in Wonderland " with his academic reputation, and so to the world at large he became Lewis Carroll. Hugh Stowell Scott published his first book under the name of Henry Seton Merriman in order to escape his father's censure, and later had to retain the name because of its reputation. O. Henry was Dr. Jekyll to Sydney Porter's Mr. Hyde; Owen Meredith was the second Lord Lytton's refuge from his father's taint; George Birmingham, to mention one modern example, was the more daring self of sober Canon Hannay.

The foregoing are examples of the pseudonym proper, and there is every justification for them. They are, however, a slender band. Innumerable other examples, of other kinds, overshadow their fame. There is, for instance, the pseudonym adopted by young authors at the timid commencement of their career, but later, discreetly slipped overboard. Scott kept in the background until his first novel was a great success, then, on the peak of fame, bashfully revealed himself. Shelley was for a modest time John Fitzvictor; Hugo was Paul Foucher; Barham was Ingoldsby; Southey was Shufflebottom; Barrie first footed it as Gavin Ogilvy; and Galsworthy as John Sinjohn.

Yet another kind is the pseudonym adopted

by authors whose real names have obviously displeased them in some way or other. Anthony Hope dropped Hawkins for literary purposes early in life, and Gabriele D'Annunzio was wise to abandon his proper Gaetano Rapagnetto. The exploiters of Alfred Aloysius Smith cannily proclaimed him as Aloysius ("Trader") Horn; while Major Ian Hay Beith has no surname to his most devoted admirers. Then there are the examples of Lewis Melville, whose real name was Lewis S. Benjamin; Jules Verne, who was christened Olchewitz; Rolf Boldrewood, who was originally a Browne; and Oliver Onions, who for some reason or other adopted that pseudonym when his real name was George Oliver.

A type of pseudonym which may be studied with profit by the literary psychologists is that used by prominent writers for the press. The identity of "Junius" has never been indisputably settled, but biographers of Sir Philip Francis say the name is characteristic of the man. Whether or no the same could be said of G.K.C. and his famous "Arion" is another matter; but it is not difficult to understand why Elia and Boz thus named themselves; and there are rather more than nominal connections between Calchas and J. L. Qarvin, Caradps and

H. Chance Newton, Ephesian and C. E. Bechoffer Roberts, John O' London and Wilfred Whitten, Runnymede and Lord Beaconsfield, Nauticus and Sir Owen Seaman, Beachcomber and J. B. Morton, Bartimaeus and Paymaster-Comdr. L. A. da C. Ricci. Martinus Scriblerus and that delicious trio Swift, Pope and Arbuthnot are perhaps not so compatible, but the roots are there for those who have time to dig for them.

It is worth noting that pseudonyms among women writers did not become general until last century; most of the 17th and 18th century poetesses and female novelists wrote under their own names. Then with Victoria came a great but brief humility. The Brontes, submitting their first poems and novels to a London publisher, masqueraded under the names of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, and for a time they got away with them.

Successive writers of that age followed suit, obviously under the impression that literary fame was for gentlemen only. Marion Evans, later Mrs. J. W. Cross, chose the name George Eliot, and it is still hers. Coincidentally in France Madame Dudevant rechristened herself George Sand for once and for all. The list could be extended indefinitely. John Oliver Hobbes was *in* reality Mr§. Pearl Mary Teresa,

Craigie; Sarah Grand was Frances Elizabeth MacFall; Ralph Iron was Mrs. Cronwright, who later changed her mind and decided to be immortally Olive Schreiner; Vernon Lee was Violet Paget; Richard Dehan was Clothilde Graves.

It is to the credit of their sex that in recent times women authors have almost abandoned the parasitical pseudonym. Indeed, it is easier to find instances to-day of men writing as women. Desmond Coke will surely take some time to live down that hasty non-de-plume of his youth, Belinda Blinders. When the modern woman author desires for some reason or other to hide her identity she either retains her maiden name or concocts a new one. Thus Ruby M. Ayres was legally Mrs. R. W. Pocock; Stella Benson was Mrs. J. C. O'G. Anderson; E. M. Delafield was Mrs. Paul Dashwood; Ethel M. Dell was Mrs. G. T. Savage; Storm Jameson is Mrs. Guy Chapman; F. Tennyson Jesse is Mrs. H. M. Harwood; Sheila Kaye-Smith is Mrs. T. P. Fry; Margaret Kennedy is Mrs. David Davis; Dorothy Richardson is Mrs. Alan Odle; Naomi Royde-Smith is Mrs. Ernest Milton; Viola Sackville-West is the Hon. Mrs. Harold Nicolson.

Examples of women who have concocted

new names for themselves are Winifred Ashton (Clemence Dane), and Cecily Elizabeth Fairfield (Rebecca West). Two prize chameleons are Gabrielle M. Long, who is better known to the reading public as Marjorie Bowen, and George R. Preedy and Mrs. L. Adams Beck, who has earned diverse reputations as E. Barrington and Louis Moresby.

In addition there is a smaU but highly-commendable class of women pseudonymists, wives of distinguished men writers, who have deliberately forsworn advantage, among whom may be noted E. H. Anstruther (Lady Squire), Rosamond Langbridge (Mrs. J. S. Fletcher), Fanny Marlow (Mrs. T. S. Eliot), A. D. Sedgwick (Mrs. B. de Selincourt), and Hilda Vaughan (Mrs. Charles Morgan).

Indeed, there is but one class of pseudonym that has declined in popularity with the years. I refer to the jocular one. How many modern writers of the eminence of Sir Walter Scott (if there are any) would publicly sign themselves Jedediah Cleishbotham? It is equally difficult to imagine a modern critic of Matthew Arnold's reputation flaunting the nom-de-guerre Arminius von Thundertentronckh; a poet as famous as Longfellow rejoicing in Hans Hammergaffenstein; or a philosopher as virulent as Carlyle

allowing himself to be popularly dubbed Herr Teufelsdröckh. Such things are quite unthinkable in this enlightened age.

Adam Lindsay Gordon

Adam Lindsay Gordon has been called the national poet of Australia. As his best biographer Mr. Douglas Sladen points out, "in Victoria and, South Australia nearly every family owns Gordon's poems, and they are better known than any English poet's are in England."

Perhaps the explanation of this lies not in Gordon's verse but in his life. He was almost the last of the poets in the "poetic tradition" beloved of Victorian lady novelists and humorous artists. His ancestry was among the noblest in Britain, but he spent his prime years as a horse-dealer and steeplechase rider in the rough colony of Victoria. He affected to his last hour a Byronic eccentricity in dress and manners. And, though his daily company was with folk from the humblest grades of life, he sat down in his meagre spare time and penned thoughts which have since become Australian household words.

He was born in 1833 in the Azores, where his father, Captain A. D. Gordon, a grandson of

the notorious Lady Henrietta Gordon and a direct descendant of the false Edom o'Gordon, held a military position. His mother was a flighty, pleasure-loving woman. When Captain Gordon retired on half-pay the boy became one of the first pupils at Cheltenham College, but he would not submit to the discipline there, and after a year was taken away and placed in the Woolwich Military Academy. At the age of eighteen he was virtually sent down from Woolwich and was given another year at Cheltenham. But racing and boxing associates perverted his naturally high spirits and made him so unmanageable that in the following year his father told him he would have to leave the country and seek his own fortune.

Gordon elected to go to Australia,' and was given letters of introduction to useful people in Melbourne and Sydney. But a great change took place in his character the day he left England; and at the end of the voyage he ignored all proffered opportunities and applied for a position in the South Australian Mounted Police. For two years he carried out his duties faultlessly. The work was arduous, the pay was poor, and the life had only crude amenities; **but** Constable Gordon became respected as an expert horseman **and** a good, if quiet

companion. Then, in consequence of a quarrel with his sergeant, he left the Force in a night, and struck the bush trail as an itinerant horse-breaker.

This was in 1855. For nearly seven years Gordon wandered from one place to another, obtaining work where he could, meeting all kinds of people, and gradually learning how to write verse. He had a naturally contemplative mind, which so far had been browbeaten by the manner of his life; but now, on the long bush rides, his thoughts turned inward, and in his tent at night he would always be thumbing battered copies of old classical authors, and scribbling fly-leaf essays of his own.

Then he took a wrong turning, marrying and "settling down" in Penola, South Australia. Why Gordon did it no one knows. The girl was his social and intellectual inferior — if his superior in strength of character—but he told a friend subsequently that there was "little romance about his love-making." He had scarcely enough money to keep himself; and the young couple would have been in the direst straits if a legacy of £7,000 from his mother had not suddenly reprieved them.

Now Gordon entered upon his only, period of affluence. He made some speculative purchases

of land in Western Australia, and in 1865 was elected to the South Australian Parliament, where he sat for a year and made one speech about, of all things, the renewal of annual leases. He also entered upon his meteoric career as a steeplechase rider, astonishing everyone with his skill and daring, and winning most of his races. And he continued writing verse, gradually perfecting his inimitable style and publishing one or two chosen pieces.

But in two years the fortune had gone. On the face of it Gordon had not over-indulged himself with the windfall legacy, but in a hundred and one ways it had slipped through his fingers. He now began to worry about his future. He began to ride his steeplechases seriously, and he thought now of selling his poetry. The rest of the story is dismal. Certainly Gordon, for his racing success, became the hero of horse-loving Australia; but in due course he came down to the livery stables at Craig's Hotel, Ballarat. His riding deteriorated towards the end, and he had several serious falls, which left him with unnatural headaches. He was told that he was heir to a Scottish estate, and had the disappointment of learning after two years—years of accumulating debt—that he was not. He continued writing his verse, and

writing it better than he ever had before; but on June 24th, 1870, a short while after the financial disappointment, and the day after he had read a magnificent two-column review by Henry Kendall of his "Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes," he left his home at day-break with a rifle and was never seen alive again.

Gordon was essentially the poet of action. He was popular with literate and illiterate alike, because all could follow and appreciate his homely tales and stirring epics of saddle and bush, and all could understand his grim, yet very human philosophy. Such pieces as "The Sick Stockrider"—often described as Australia's "Scholar Gypsy"—"The Ride from the Wreck"—again described as the Australian . "Aix to Ghent"—"Wolf and Hound," "How We Beat the Favourite," and "The Roll of the Kettledrum," will probably live as long as Australians love horses and appreciate martial music. It is extraordinary how many sayings and quotations from these poems are proverbs and household words in the Dominion. One critic has discovered 32 Gordon quotations in constant Australian use. This is a fine test, for it shows that Gordon is both read and remembered.

He put some of his best work into purely philosophical poems such as "Doubtful Dreams," "De Te," and "A Song of Autumn," but these do not possess the popular appeal of the others, and it is doubtful whether they will survive so long. In them Gordon seems to be strongly influenced by Swinburne. His greatest poetic debt, however, he owes to Browning, who was the originator of many of his stirring metres, the founder of several of his themes, and past master of his philosophy.

But every writer must serve his apprenticeship somewhere; and, in his turn, Gordon became the model for the Australian jinglers' school, and, it may be suggested, for another great bard of Empire, Rudyard Kipling.

The Horse in Literature

I especially love those authors who also love horses. Man's oldest friend has accompanied him through the ages in his work, sport, and art; in the books he is to be found from the beginning; and if motor cars and tractors have swept him out of many modern authors' ken, then it is they who are the losers. An author who does not disdain to place a horse among his characters is a proper man; and for his generosity he remains all the more distinct in my memory.

It may be a hard reflection upon the ancients that the first horse in literature was a wooden one. But surely it was not a base motive in old Homer's mind that made him betray his Troy with a hollow, evil-bearing charger gift to old Priam: rather it was a tribute to the whole equine race, that the great siege should at last be ended by the agency of a monster wrought in their semblance. Moreover, the Greeks and Romans on the whole were especially generous in their literary treatment of the horse. One, Pegasus, they made spring from the blood of Perseus-subdued Medusa, and then ascend to Olympus as thunder-bearer to Jove, later to win immortality as the bard's symbol and thought-carrier. And another, Alexander the Great's charger Bucephalus, they made equal symbol of the conquerer of men and animals.

Geoffrey Chaucer, the first great writer in English, gave a lavish sentence here and there to the palfreys straddled by his gentle pilgrims, and the chargers of his knights. During the Middle Ages the horse, as the bearer of chivalry and the only competitor to Shanks's pony, was bound to receive due recognition from authors; and later Edmund Spenser carried on the good tradition and Sir Philip Sidney described his Muse tempering "her words to

trampling horses' feet." The great Bard himself coined an immortalising line when he made Richard III., eager in search of Richmond, declare: " A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!" But the Elizabethans invented no great *equine characters*.

Then came Jonathan Swift, and his conception of the Houyhnhnms brought the horse at once to the literary fore, in as graceful a tribute to the equine race as had ever been made. The child reads " Gulliver's Travels " with laughter at the pretty conceit of an author who makes the world suddenly turn topsy-turvy, who changes men into ugly hairy Yahoos and horses into intelligent masters of men; but the older reader finds Swift's satire on human manners and institutions to be less a source of laughter than of shame. " The word *Houyhnhnm*, in their tongue, signifies a *horse*" says the satirist, "and in its etymology, *the perfection of nature*" So he describes some of the fairest horses in fiction; and leaves the reader among the Yahoos, disconcerted with his kind but " loving his nag as never before."

Cowper stands out for me among all eighteenth century poets because he loved a good horse. In " John Gilpin " he made one gallop bravely away carrying a foolish man

willy-nilly and terror-stricken upon his back; but elsewhere he voiced his admiration for the fine animal still more succinctly:

Tis plain the creature whom He chose to
invest

With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
Received his noble nature and was made
Fit for the power, in which he stands arrayed.

Meanwhile a foreign Swift had created another great horse of literature, Rozinante, steed of Quixote; an unassuming nag but one destined to carry its master through brave deeds. Quixote chose the resounding name because *Roztn* meant an ordinary horse, or hack, and *ante* meant before. The steed was once but an ordinary hack, but he was now elevated among the immortals, "in a word, a horse before or above all the vulgar breed of horses in the world." And later Cervantes gave literature another equine character, albeit another wooden one, in Aligero Clavileno, "the wooden-pin wing-horse," by the occult aid of which the knight achieved the deliverance of Dolorido and her hirsute damsels. It is a memorable passage where Quixote and Sancha Panza mount Clavileno, with their eyes bandaged by the prank-playing maidens, and imagine themselves being transported through the skies until

at last some fireworks explode inside the horse, and they are hurled to the ground, to receive the mock-thanks of Dolorida.

During the eighteenth century a famous horse of popular legend was Black Bess, who valiantly carried the highwayman Dick Turpin on his long ride from London to York, and at the end lay down to die. Then Smollett in " Sir Launcelot Greaves " invented another equine immortal, Bronzomarte, the " mettlesome sorrel."

Sir Walter Scott was the true countryman, in that he could recognise a good piece of horse-flesh when he saw it, and in his stories of knights and ancient wars he did not forget to pay a tribute now and then to the silent hero. " The Lady of the Lake " contains the famous equine character Bayard :

Stand, Bayard, stand! The steed obeyed
With arching neck and bended head,
And glaring eye, and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to bear.

And few readers of a stirring poem will forget Marmion's trusty charger " yclept " Bevis.

The nineteenth century was ushered in with the most wretched horse of all literature, Grizzle, the skin-and-bone nag of Combes' dry Dr. Syntax. But the indignity done to all the equine race in this miserable portrait was repaired soon

after by the inimitable word-pictures of Nimrod, the first of the great sporting writers, who set a long fashion. Perhaps the greatest horse character of last century was Anna Sewell's "Black Beauty," but Adam Lindsay Gordon's "Challenger" was still more alive and pathetic—as when he surveyed his stricken master:

Did he see? Could he feel the faintness, the
numbness,

While lingered the spirit half loosed from
the clay;

Dumb eyes seeking his in their piteous
dumbness,

Dumb quivering nostrils too stricken to
neigh?

And among all modern poets Wilfrid Scawen Blunt has revered his horse the most. His most characteristic sonnet is worth quoting:

To-day, all day, I rode upon the down,
With hounds and horsemen, a brave company,
On this side in its glory lay the sea,
On that side Sussex weald, a sea of brown.
The wind was light and brightly the sun
shone,

And still we galloped on from gorse to gorse:
And once, when checked, a thrush sang, and
my horse

Pricked his quick ears as to a sound unknown.

I knew the Spring was come. I knew it even
Better than all by this, that through my chase
In bush and stone and hill and sea and
heaven

I seemed to see and follow still your face.
Your face my quarry was. For it I rode,
My horse, a thing of wings, myself a god.

R. B. Cunningham-Graham described Blunt's "horsey" surroundings in one of his essays, and himself wrote an equine classic "The Horses of the Conquest,"⁵⁵ in which he told the heroic story of the horses brought to South America by the Spanish conquistadors. Another modern, Feuchtwanger, has added to the gallery Asyadah, Jew Suss's fine white Arab; and Siegfried Sassoon has described some "noble brutes"⁵⁵ in "Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man"⁵⁵; and of course, there is "National Velvet."⁵¹

Best-Seller

The house was one of three red-brick newcomers to Hampstead Hill just under the famous Church Row. A large American car poked its nose aggressively from an open garage. Daffodils swayed in a narrow bed before the front-door. A bird sang clearly in a nearby tree, and three Royal Air Force bombers roared viciously overhead.

A manservant opened the door and ushered

me into an immaculate white hall, incidentally supplying the key to Beverley Nichols⁵ essentially masculine and bachelor environment right away. I had really expected to find this author's surroundings somewhat precious and effeminate. They were certainly beautiful and tasteful, if that is the meaning of precious, but I do believe that they could only have been conceived by a very masculine man.

Another door opened, I entered a long, white room with many windows and a serious-looking Nichols in checked tweed jacket, new grey flannels and brown shoes came forward hurriedly to meet me.

"Look here," he said at once, "I really should have put you off to-day. To tell you the truth, I haven't been sleeping at all well lately. Hardly had a wink last night."

While speaking he stood on the white hearth-rug before the large, brick fireplace. He bent down to fondle a somnolent tabby. "Do you like cats?" he asked; and at once we could talk without constraint, because London had lately affected my sleep also, and I also liked cats.

But during the conversation I was studying my man, who was older than I had expected; and, of course, I realised, he must now be nearly 37. He had ruddy cheeks, almost the look of a

countryman; brown, wavy hair set down to a careful parting; brownish or hazel eyes, but I would not be certain about this; and the mouth of a sensitive, kindly but not altogether happy youngster. He had a youthful figure, but the slightly rounded shoulders of the habitual desk-worker.

Surprisingly Nichols remarked: " My principal object is to achieve success as a composer of music." Perhaps my eyebrows mounted, for he continued: " I mean, a composer of serious music. Yes, I have done some revue work, but my first love was real music—years ago I won a prize for it—and now I want to devote as much time as possible to that object. I've just had an idea for intermingling two themes from Gershwin and Chopin, the new and the old. Do you mind?"

He sat down at the charming cottage grand and improvised before me carelessly. He had a smooth touch, and the impromptu composition sounded very well indeed. Afterwards he showed me an elaborate instrument he had just purchased to make recordings of his own musical work.

I steered the talk to books, and Nichols told me that " Down the Garden Path " had been his chief best-seller. It had already sold 110,000

copies, and was still going strong. But the writing of the book had been easy work, occupying only six weeks, because it had been "himself talking." Nichols went on to remark that it always annoyed him when critics insinuated that he very cleverly wrote books such as "Cry Havoc!" "The Fool Hath Said," and "News of England" deliberately to "tune in with the times."

"Life is too short for one to be anything but honest with oneself," he was saying, and, "Consistency is a much deeper thing than some people think." It was not only he who had changed since "Cry Havoc!" and 1933, but also the world. It was foolish to turn the convictions of yesterday into the prejudices of to-morrow. "In other words," he said, "I am writing a different kind of book to-day, because the world has changed, and probably I have changed with it. Can't you understand?"

Afterwards Nichols took me into his garden, where workmen were turning a suburban rectangle into an Italian arbour of curved walls, curved paths, and a summerhouse with high cupola in the corner overlooking London sun and smoke. He showed me a photograph of the same garden taken six weeks before, when it had been a hopeless waste. He introduced me

to his charming dining-room, cream ironwork, glasswork and subdued decorations. We were followed everywhere by the tabby cat.

The Unbeatable

A painter friend of mine had a Scots gardener who always insisted that he knew more than anyone else. The painter and a friend decided to humble the conceited man. Washing the hard roes of some herrings, they carefully packed them into a neat paper packet and sent for the gardener. The painter then informed him that he had just had some foreign seeds sent to him, and asked if he could tell what they were. The canny Scot took the seeds in the palm of his hand, and, having examined them carefully, smelling them, and turning them over with a brawny finger and thumb, announced they were so-and-so (reeling out a long and totally unintelligible name). The painter was delighted, and suggested that, as he seemed to know all about them, perhaps he could grow them for him.

"Aye, aye," replied the gardener, "but it wull tak about three weeks. If ye'll come then, maybe ye'll see them sprouting."

The two friends were extremely pleased with the success of their little plot, and punctually

in three weeks⁵ time they appeared in the garden, ready to gloat. Looking totally unabashed, the gardener met them, and in answer to inquiries as to how the seeds were progressing, assured them that they were coming on nicely, and with proper soil and temperature should do very well. If they would kindly look at the forcing bed he felt sure they would be pleased. The painter and his friend exchanged glances of triumphal meaning, and followed the gardener. The Scot lifted the frame. The two men fell over each other in their anxiety to see the "fraud"—and their gaze was rewarded by the sight of several neat little rows of herrings' heads protruding from the soil.

London's Books

We went to an exhibition of books in London. The show was planned well; the exhibits tastefully arranged. We had the impression of walking into a great house or a modern hotel. It was a black afternoon, but the atmosphere of the exhibition was naturally bright.

I don't think it was just because we were particularly interested in books. I am not a lover of books in the mass. They make me disturbed and fidgety, because I don't know which one to start on first. Books are meant to

be read, not to be gazed upon from a respectful distance. Even at this exhibition the actual books did not give me much fun.

First we climbed easy stairs to the lecture hall, where a distinguished author was billed to speak on a subject near our heart. We wanted to hear this man, so we came early, and were fortunate to obtain two odd seats at the very rear of the tight-packed hall. There we sat for half-an-hour in agony, only diverted by our companions in distress. These included an old fellow with a beard like Tolstoy, who insisted on endeavouring to light a short cheroot among his tangled hairs with a dangerous match; two dessicated spinsters who spoke elementary French for their neighbour's benefit; a man in queer tweed knickerbockers, who turned round every minute and glared at us as if we were his natural enemies; and a heaven-sent genius, who flung his head back and gazed enraptured at the ceiling throughout.

The lecture did not begin for half-an-hour, and then the lecturer was introduced by a languid young man with a figure like a newt, who bleated some strange words that sounded from the distance suspiciously like the Lord's Prayer. The lecturer consisted of a very large stomach and a bright watch-chain. This

advanced a pace, as if preparing to swell and descend upon the audience like a balloon. It receded into the background as if delicately refraining to obtrude any further. It waggled from side to side. The voice of the speaker, amplified strangely, rattled like dark pebbles from the ceiling. When the speaker came near the microphone his voice was a piercing whistle.

We left our seats because we felt uncomfortable at the predicament of the speaker and his restive audience. We came nearer to him, and discovered he was a perfectly ordinary man who was saying perfectly ordinary things in a perfectly ordinary voice. So we left the lecture hall in disgust.

But we returned later to see a book publicity film, and we were reassured. The film started badly, but ended well. The theme was the development of the book from the earliest times and the manufacturing of a book at the present day. The method was impressionistic, and was most successful when dealing with modern conditions. The film had a penetrating quality that eventually transcended propaganda.

Afterwards it was exciting to watch others intent about the classified stands, handling books for curiosity's sake, and saying nice things about the expensive editions, which we also praised,

for they were so beautiful and yet so cheap* We do not approve of bodes as furniture, but we have formed a new respect for books as objects of permanent beauty. A room had been set aside for children's books, and most of them were so precious in their cellophane wrappers that we feared for the parental peace of mind later on.

Our stay at the exhibition was finally memorable for an inspection at the stand of "The New Statesman and Nation" of a collection of the early work in England of David Low. These drawings—they were something more than caricatures—revealed the artist in a light that can never fail. They bore little or no relation to his cartoon work for "The Evening Standard," and should be remembered when his political name has long been forgotten. We were interested to learn that Arnold Bennett was primarily responsible for Low's original English appearance. He suggested to a London newspaper that they seek the services of a real cartoonist for a change, and said that a man then working for the Sydney "Bulletin" showed more promise than any. A cable was sent to Low, and he came to fame.

They also told us that when Benaett attended the offices of "The New Statesman and

Nation" as a director he was once asked to contribute to a small fund in aid of a journal devised by the office boy, or something of that kind, and he complied at once, but a moment after opened his pocket-book to enter the sum expended, so meticulous was he over details of personal expenditure. But it was obvious that the man remained in memory still a unique example of what a Man from the North should be, shrewd, conscientious, and warm-hearted to an absurd extent.

We did not linger long over the section of the exhibition devoted to relics of genius. Locks of famous authors' hair, pens of poets, shirts of novelists, and chairs of Doctor Johnson always fail to overcome our fundamental irreverence. Such things had better not be; their exhibition is bound to detract from the books.

The Name of Your Cinema

Anyone who gives a moment's thought to the matter will notice that cinema proprietors tend to make constant use of a small stock of names drawn from limited sources. This is due to a certain innate conservatism on the proprietors' part, but may also be traced to the public's own taste for the old and familiar.

I should say that the principal motive guiding

the choice of a name for a cinema is the desire to have something that "sounds rich/⁵ and is likely to create an illusion of size and magnificence in the minds of patrons.

Thus it will be found that the hardy annuals of theatre nomenclature are nearly all connected with countries that have a reputation for high living in low latitudes.

The name *Rialto* comes from the largest and first settled of the islands that compose Venice, and derives from two words, rivo and alto, signifying "highest bank." This Rialto district has for centuries been a resort of the wealthy pleasure-seeking.

Similarly *Tivoli* is taken from the name of a town near Rome, which was a favourite holiday place for noble Romans in antique days; and *Colosseum* is from the famous Roman amphitheatre, which seated over 40,000 spectators of gladiatorial contests, chariot races, and violent deaths.

Plaza is the Spanish for a "place" or open space in a town, where theatres would often be situated; and *Granada* is the Spanish for "pomegranate" as well as the name of a very beautiful district in Spain; but *Astoria*, curiously enough, derives from a town of that name in Oregon, U.S.A., which in turn, was

called after John Jacob Astor, the famous German-American millionaire, ancestor of the present chief proprietor of "The Times."

Theatres of the name of *Hippodrome* are not fulfilling their true function, for the title in ancient Rome was applied to a public course for horse and chariot racing. The modern "made-up" name, *Picturedrome*, is far more applicable to a cinema.

The original *Palladium* was a wooden statue of the Greek goddess Pallas Athene, on the safety of which the fate of Troy was thought to depend; and the *Forum*, of course, was a place for public assembly in any ancient Roman town.

The very popular modern name *Odeon* probably derives from the Greek word "odeum," meaning a building used for musical performances. But "Roxy" was the nickname of a famous American theatre proprietor, who later used it as the title of the great cinema he built in New York.

Then there are the time-hallowed names that have no historical story, but that are used to denote size or grandeur. I refer to such familiars as *Grand*, *Super*, *De Luxe*. Another class of cinema name comprises those appertaining to *Royalty*, which is a name in itself. Everyone knows a *King's*, *Queen's*, *Regal*, *Majestic*

and *Prince's* theatre, and the title *Regent*, so popular in South Coast towns, dates back to the days of the Prince Regent, and probably started with the famous *Regent's* Cinema, Brighton.

London has for so long been the centre of the theatrical world that its stage theatre names are to be found on the outside of cinemas all over the country. Such titles as *Haymarket*, *Carlton*, *Court*, *Embassy*, *Gaiety*, *Comedy*, and *Strand* are only too familiar. *Savoy* has lately come into prominence, and it might be of interest to note that the term originated in the Palace of Peter of Savoy (1247), uncle of Queen Eleanor, the wife of Henry III., which was situated on the site of the present Savoy Hotel, between the Strand and the Thames.

A recent importation from the United States is the cinema named *State*. This is a very common title on the other side of the Atlantic, where it originated in the name of the chief theatre in each State.

Even the naming of a new cinema can present difficulties to a proprietor. Not only must he be careful to avoid clashing with another theatre in the locality, but he must pay attention to the tastes of his prospective patrons.

Only too frequently the proprietor discovers that the best thing is to choose one of the tim\$«

honoured names I have mentioned, and so "play safe."⁵⁵

But there certainly is scope for an original mind in this very unimportant matter.

The Library Habit

I don't think it is generally realised that every new subscriber to a public library means one less customer to the bookshop. Perhaps one library subscriber in fifty waxes so enthusiastic over the books he takes out that he goes straightway and secures a permanent copy from the bookshop; but the fact is that from the authors⁵ and publishers⁵, and, of course, the booksellers⁵ point of view, the library habit is fast becoming a menace to trade. The word "menace"⁵⁵ is not too strong, and is used advisedly. When readers obtain books from libraries they pay for them a tithe of their cost. When readers buy books each book read fairly reimburses author and publisher; when readers borrow books the author and publisher are unfairly reimbursed. I have it on authority that an efficient lending library calculates upon "circulating a single book some fifty times."⁵⁵ Several million new books might have been read in England last year, but you must divide the figure by fifty to arrive at the number of books
§9W,

The complaint might be ungrateful. Authors and publishers might be content in the knowledge that every day, in at least one way, more people are reading more and more. But authors and publishers will be fools if they are content. A novel published at 7/6 returns to the author from 9d. to 1/6, and the total returns to authors from most first novels are negligible. I know a novelist whose total return from a moderately successful novel was £10. "That works out at half-a-crown a thousand words on an 80,000 words book," he said. "I'll be better employed in the future doing journalism for the newspapers at four guineas a thousand words."

It might be asked why publishers continue to sell books to the libraries when they are losing on the transaction. Why don't the publishers combine and refuse to supply except at an adequate library price? But wrongs are not so easily righted as all that. Publishers and authors have been combining for several years now, but so far they have not acquired the combined strength, or collective courage, to impose a fairer system on the libraries. So far, indeed, a generally acceptable basis of reform has not been discovered. In his book, "Some Memories, 1901-1935," the publisher, Mr,

George G. Harrap, certainly makes a suggestion:

Many books of which fewer than 2,000 copies are sold, and which yield no profit to their publishers and only a pittance to the authors, are read through the libraries by many thousands of subscribers. . . . To-day most new novels are borrowed, few are bought, and in my view the novel should in the first place be published for the libraries at a higher price; the successful book should be issued, say, at three shillings and sixpence, some months later. . . .

But there are booksellers who do a substantial trade with the libraries and would object to such a scheme because it would send the libraries direct to the publishers; there are booksellers who do a substantial new book trade, and would object to the libraries getting the books first; objections bristle everywhere as soon as a definite reform is suggested.

But something will have to be done sooner or later. Abuses are always reformed in the long run-

What Date Is It?

At a period of the year when every home, ofice and school receives its quota of new calendar* and proceeds proudly to nail them up

on the long-suffering wall, it is interesting to take a short journey into the past and investigate our ancestors' methods of determining the date.

The calendar was given its name by the Romans. The new month was always announced in ancient Rome by a special notice in a prominent place. As the first of the month was the Kalendae, the special notice was called Fasti Calendares.

Among the ruins of Pompeii has been found an old Roman calendar made out of a block of marble. It closely resembles a modern calendar. But the Romans, when calendar-making, were more concerned with the future than the present. Not only did they expect their calendars to tell them the date, but they relied upon them to foretell coming events.

Thus the average Roman calendar is divided for the greater part of its space into perpendicular columns, that are filled with sundry information about what might happen in the future. One column is occupied by predictions of religious events; another contains astrological information; another, in the modern manner, informs the farmer what kind of crops he might have; and so on.

The oldest type of English calendar is the Clog Almanac* Up till recently this type was

still used in country districts; and according to antiquaries, it was first introduced by the Danes. The calendar consisted of a block of wood, that was hung in the chimney-corner. The days of the year were marked by notches in its sides; and anniversaries and special dates were distinguished by curious hieroglyphics similar to those on the Roman calendars.

There are several Clog Almanacs in the British Museum, and they have a curiously foreign appearance. This effect is produced, no doubt, by the hieroglyphics. They seem to have strayed from the Egyptian section.

Our ancestors were no less superstitious than the Romans. Calendar-making in old England was the prerogative of the astrologers, those unfortunate individuals who spent their lives "seeing stars" and then frightening their neighbours with the news. They were particularly fond of issuing their curious predictions in book form.

Here is the title-page of such an almanac published in 1553 by a certain Leonard Digges: "A Prognostication everlasting of Right Good Effect, fructfully augmented by the **Author**, containing Plaine, Briefe, Pleasant Chosen **Rules** to judge the Weather by the Sunne, Moon, S[^]arres, Comets, Rainbow, Thunder, Clowdes?

with other Extraordinary Tokens, not omitting the Aspects of the Planets, with a Brief Judgment for ever, of Plentie, Warres, etc., opening also many natural causes worthie to be knowne. To these and others now at the last are joined divers generall pleasant Tables, with many compendious Rules, easie to be had in memorie, manifolde wayes profitable to all men of understanding."

In due course these makers of almanacs waxed so rich and important that they adopted a new name, "philomaths," meaning lovers of mathematics, to distinguish them from the ordinary astrologers. Their period of greatest prosperity was that of the Civil War, when the uncertainty of the times encouraged superstition.

Occasionally an almanac would be produced that possessed considerable literary value. Such an one was the *Kalendarium Hortense*, or *Gardeners' Almanac*, by the great diarist John Evelyn, published in 1664.

To-day the calendar is almost completely divorced from the almanac; that is to say, it confines itself to telling the date. If our modern calendar has any outstanding feature that will distinguish it for posterity, that will possibly be the use of pictorial illustrations, To our eyes

a calendar without a picture is a dull thing.

Though in these times the almanac has been divorced from the calendar it has not altogether disappeared. Such publications as "Old Moore's Almanac"⁵ that was founded in 1698, are still firm favourites with a certain class of people. The age of superstition is not yet over. Not by a long way.

To be a Bookseller

Many boys and girls with literary leanings want to become booksellers, but it has always been the custom to dissuade them. Wiser heads have advised that, however great may be the love of books, it will no more compensate for commercial hardship than youthful passion between man and woman will, in the long run, counter-balance poverty and squalor in the home. Let the child be a grocer, yes, or an official at the Ministry of Bindings: those are sensible and rewarded professions. But book-selling *does not pay*.

And it is probably true that the larger number of independent booksellers in Britain to-day, in spite of a great fillip given to the trade by war and post-war scarcity of competing amusements, are poor and sometimes disappointed men and women* They inhabit

small, dusty shops and try desperately to make a living from the sale of sidelines other than books, from fancy-goods and stationery, from printing and sub-post office work, even from agencies for motor-coach companies.

The reference in this note is to the selling of new books, not the second-hand trade, which is quite a distinct profession, and, when it is combined with new bookselling, tends to dominate and spoil the character of the business. But it might be said in parenthesis that the truly bookworm type of youngster would probably be happier in the antiquarian department, which, however, is not a career unless developed as a highly-specialised trade in rare books.

And, not only are the majority of booksellers seedy and grizzled, but Britain as a whole obviously cold-shoulders the trade. There are whole tracts of the country wherein no bookshop of any kind can be found; where, it might with superficial wit be deduced as a corollary, no bookshop could exist. These tracts include some of the most thickly-populated London suburbs and some of the industrial towns where the inhabitants enjoy unusually high wages.

Those facts seem to be irrefutable; and there are others to support a warning to would-be young booksellers. The library habit is

spreading and Britons increasingly grumble at the price of books, borrowing instead of buying, or buying cheap reprints, the sale of which yield too small a profit to the shopkeeper. There appears, moreover, to be no immediate way in which booksellers and their underpaid employees can expect to participate in the golden State subsidies which are becoming so helpful to other trades and professions.

Yet all these facts are not quite correct, and are positively dangerous to the future of reading in this country if accepted moodily and without hope. Let us examine them again.

Possibly the *larger* number of booksellers in Britain to-day quantitatively considered, are poor and sometimes disappointed men and women. But does that not apply to many occupations? Are not the majority of confectioners, of estate-agents, of professional soldiers and sailors, of tailors, of journeymen and of thieves to be regarded as impoverished and relatively unsuccessful if the eye of the beholder is concerned alone with the prospect of great and glittering careers?

And if there are far too many seedy and failing bookshops in Britain, so there are a surprising number of highly prosperous concerns if a careful count is made. Perhaps a wealthy

industrial town of the Midlands may lack so much as a single, well-stocked, independent shop, but does one go to the Philistine for godliness? Should one expect that such towns and suburbs, at their present stage of development, could support good bookshops any more than they could cultivate a careful Oxford accent? Does the young man or woman interested in Sanskrit go to Surbiton for study, or to an old university?

If the youngster be genuinely interested in books, but lacks the considerable capital required to be a publisher, and is repelled by public library work, there is no reason why he or she should not be encouraged to enter book-selling to-day and to find a modest and at least a satisfying career there. Salaries of managers and departmental heads in the good shops are equal to those in most clerical employments. And quite a considerable proportion of book-sellers, Mr. Hardcash, *do* make quite a lot of money. The business romances of the Foyle brothers, of the great Mr. Wilson of Bumpuses, of Mr. Basil Blackwell in Oxford, and, above all, of the princely Smith family, are in their way just as grandiose and just as encouraging as those of a Selfridge, a Nuffield, and a Boot. (And Boots', it may be noted, have had the

commercial acumen to harness books most profitably and efficiently to their drug trade).

The young man or woman is accordingly advised to seek an apprenticeship, immediately after leaving school, with one of these good bookselling firms. Each area of the country, however bereft in places of attractive shops, has at least one famous business. A youngster in the West Midlands, for example, would approach Banks' of Cheltenham, the remarkable booksellers whose founder left a five-figure fortune. Or he would go to Overs of Rugby, Hatchards of Wolverhampton, Cornishes of Birmingham. These examples are given to show that even a superficially unpromising part of England has its real opportunities. London, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, have numbers of large, successful, independent bookshops, most of them only too willing at present to employ keen and well-educated youths.

Then the entire country is honey-combed with branches of the ubiquitous Smiths, which demand that recruits must serve a short time as paper-boys (the highest executive officers in the firm have been paper-boys) but which gmaian*tee in return a lifetime's settled career to every employee, and which are looking all the time for youngsters who *want* to be booksellers

and who are ready to educate themselves specifically for that department alone.

" Educate themselves. . . ." It is probably the best way to learn the trade still. Boys and girls should learn lists of titles of books at an early age, should read the literary papers, should make sure of proficiency in commercial arithmetic, and should carefully study works such as Arundell Esdaile's on bibliography and the technique of book production. English masters could help this kind of study by introducing occasional half-hours on modern book lists and book manufacture, making sure that their pupils could at least understand the meanings of the terms " Spine," " Cover," " Jacket," " Half-title," and " edition " before plunging into the market-place. Then, while serving their apprenticeship, youngsters can to-day take evening classes at most local technical schools on bookselling. These are sponsored by the Associated Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland, 28 Little Russell Street, London, W.C.I.

But, as said, the actual trade is learnt in the shop. Serving his or her time in a fine business such as one of those mentioned above, the youngster will especially be taught how to avoid the pitfalls that entrap the many unsuccessful
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booksellers. These particularly include, paradox as it may seem, over-stocking and under-buying, "going-for" popular successes that may date rather than solid works that will always sell, misunderstanding the nice relationship between net and gross profit, failing to appreciate that books "turn-over" more slowly than most goods, and expecting that books possess some peculiar quality which enables them to be sold without effort.

Then comes the parting of the ways, whether or not the youngster is to continue a servant or boldly strike out for independence in a shop of his or her own. The decision will chiefly be made on the personal factor. Is he or she the type of individual to combine a love and knowledge of books with commercial acumen? This is very important. The majority of failed and disappointed booksellers are those who thought that their knowledge of the Elizabethan dramatists or their affection for good bindings and neat shelves was sufficient to justify their taking a shop in the High Street and providing the book-starved people of Cherry Garden Suburb with a valuable service. Ask any successful bookseller what is most important, literary taste or a flair for percentages, and he will regretfully answer "percentages, confound

them!" But he will add that the combination of the two is irresistible.

At least £1,000 of capital is required for the establishment of a small business, and it is best to choose a shop in a good area, paying a high rent if necessary. As said before, bookselling is a luxury trade and thrives best in rich soil. But the question of capital is not extremely important, as publishers and wholesalers allow credit, and too much capital may betray the tyro into premature overstocking. Lastly, he must consult the Associated Booksellers aforementioned, and obtain recognition by the Publishers' Association in order to be granted trade terms, which yield a gross average profit of 26-27½ per cent.

For the keenly ambitious youth a real challenge may be seen in the present position of the book trade. A great potential demand for books exists, and it is primarily a matter of selling them, of persuading the public to buy them instead of spending the equivalent money on something else. Much can be learnt from American methods. And to a certain type of fighting character there will even be a challenge in those sterile suburbs, where, all the authorities will say, it is harder to sell properly-priced new books than tickets to Mars.

But ambition need not rule, and the more retiring type of book-loving youth will find quite a satisfactory life in bookselling to-day and in the future, provided that he is content with a modest income—which will probably be no more modest than a harmless person of his type will receive in any other occupation.

Gems of the Ancients

The jeweller rightly regards himself a member of one of the oldest professions in the world. Precious stones have been found in deposits left by ancient cavemen; and a student of classical history knows that the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Greeks, and the Romans were all fond of gems, and employed artificers to work them into beautiful ornaments, rings, intagli, cameos, and scarabaei.

Most varieties of precious stones were known to the ancients, but they were distinguished only by colour, specific gravity, and density, for scientific and chemical analysis were then unknown. And different peoples called their gems by different names, so that often it is hard to distinguish the stones mentioned. However, research work in this field is of absorbing interest to the expert jeweller.

For instance, the inhabitants of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Asia had a stone which they called

the Achates, because it had been found originally near a Sicilian river of that name. But modern research has established that this was in reality the agate. According to old writings it was considered a champion charm against scorpions and spiders, and was greatly prized as a talisman by athletes. Different varieties of the ancient agate were known as the Jaspachates and the Dendryachates.

Then the opal was known as the Paedoros. This jewel came from India, and the largest ever seen in the ancient world, the size of a hazel-nut, was the lucky treasure of a Roman senator named Nonius, who on one famous occasion refused to sell it to Mark Anthony for a fabulous sum. On the other hand the topaz has been identified with the ancient Topazon, which was first discovered in the island of Cytus in the Arabian Gulf. This stone, evidently of great size, was sent to Ptolemy in Egypt, who had a statue carved out of it and set up in his renowned "golden temple."

But all records were broken by an ancient specimen of the emerald, which was called the Smaragdus. This was sent by a Babylonian king to the King of Egypt, and, the old records say, was 4 cubits long and 3 cubits wide—roughly translated, 7 feet by 5. In those days.

however, outsizes in precious stones were greatly favoured by wealthy monarchs and potentates. There is the story of an obelisk in a certain temple of Jupiter which was 66 feet high, and consisted of four great emeralds.

Ancient gem-engravers apparently used emeralds, suitably worked, as eyes for statues. A great Lion at Cyprus, erected to Hermias, winked down on the world through two immense emeralds. The Roman Emperor Nero, it is well known, used a stone of this species for a lens when he wished to watch the fights of his gladiators in the arena.

A list of curious forgotten gems is given by the historian Pliny, and among these are some which need a large pinch of salt to aid their modern consumption. The Aspilates, it is alleged, was a fiery stone that burned the hand of the daring mortal who picked it up; and it came from the nest of the Arabian phoenix. Another gem, the Aromatites, of Arabia and Egypt, was supposed to have a fragrant odour. And yet another, the Alectorius, was found, according to all the best writers, in the gizzard of the domestic fowl!

It is believed that the ancient Anthrax was the ruby, and the Hyacinthus was the blue sapphire. The jasper, most certainly, known in

old days as the Iaspis, was a popular stone among the Romans, and was used for signet rings. The aforementioned Pliny speaks of a fabulous statuette of Nero, executed in Iaspis, which weighed 15 ounces. The Sardonyx, identified as a variety of the onyx, was also a great favourite of the Romans, and was used for cameos, the light-coloured layers being cut down to the darker for a background to the figures. And garnets were known as Granatici, jacinths as Lyncurii, and green tourmalines as Sandaresesii.

In these ancient times the wholesale jewellery trade was exceptionally well organised. There were craftsmen for all types of work, artists, engravers, polishers, and arrangers. The most common stone, perhaps, was the diamond, known as the Adamas; and the chief engraving instrument was made by splinting these stones, and fixing them into metal handles. A drill called the terebra was used extensively for hollowing work, and a kind of emery powder, the Naxian stone, for polishing. To aid their vision artificers used globes filled with water, but it appears that for the most part they trusted to the naked eye.

On Writing an Article

Is the difficulty the right choice of subject,

the method of treatment, the almost insurmountable first paragraph, the laziness that has been in the bones of every scribe from Moses to Edgar Wallace; or is it the very English fear of ridicule, of how the finished product will be regarded by that vast horde of mythical readers that are always peering with an air of boredom over the shoulders of all the potential egoists who desire to be renowned as writers?

Perhaps the best method is to say to yourself: "Now what is the hardest thing about this job?" Then tackle the task in that frame of mind, starting so to speak at the blunt end, taking the line diagonally opposite to the line of least resistance. Samuel Smiles and "Self Help" are still readable.

Many things under the sun wait to be discussed, and if they are discussed from your own personal point of view, then quite logically the result will be fresh. Because, although it might be thought that individual members of one hockey team would all treat of hockey in an article in more or less the same way, actually one of them might turn out to have a cleft palate, and his viewpoint would be influenced to a perhaps absurdly infinitesimal but a no less tangible degree by his affliction.

When "O. Hcary" chose the title "Cabbages

and Kings" he showed the way. Thus, it is open to anybody with a non-medical mind to discuss the possible effect on the community of a shortage in the supply of raw cabbage. He might develop the theory that the word "depression" was first used to describe the state of those persons whose neglect of vegetables as a part of their everyday diet caused them to be visited by attacks of melancholia that eventually made them believe that the world was as rotten as their own physiological affairs. Greatly daring, but undoubtedly entertaining, he might go so far as to suggest that Job could have done with a little less goat and a little more of the herbs of the field; that Thomas Hardy might possibly have written as successfully as Miss Dell if only he had taken a little more of spinach with his good Wessex beef. The writer of the monograph on "The Cabbage" could go round in circles for ever, and his range would be bounded only by current convention.

And Kings. Every farm-hand and machine-minder, and I venture to suggest every editor in the country would like to know what it really feels like to be aware that an account of your first attack of hay-fever has been cabled to every worthwhile newspaper in the world. Are the real Kings to-day those Jewish gentlemen in

Lombard Street and Wall Street who decide whether or no the Taranaki City Council shall build a municipal motor-car on the strength of a long-term loan? Or are the real Kings the editors themselves (that would give them the right sort of tickle), and is it possible to visualise a world one hundred years hence when Government shall be by Paperocracy?

The possibilities in the word " King " are so enormous that they make me tremble to think of the labour of typing them out. But, for the delicate-minded there are countless congenial topics that cannot fail to titillate the tympanium with their preciousness, and asphyxiate the adolescent with their faint suggestion of far-away things, etc. Nevertheless, it is necessary to go to, and to go to with a will. Faint heart ne'er won fair lady, as the Bishop said to the Actress, and although I might be exceeding my licence if I ventured temporarily and for the purpose of illustration to invert the sex of the traditional editor, yet I would suggest that vertigo should be studiously avoided by the literary aspirant on his first visit to the Sanctum.

So that, from a theoretical point of view, anybody with a sense of humour and a love for the playing of practical jokes should be able to achieve literary fame and financial stability.

What was Shakespeare, after all? A hard-working scribbler whose ingenuity in word-weaving was only equalled by his desire to propagate his thoughts about life, and his hope for a comfortable old age. By indulging the sweat of his brow he achieved both, because, after all, old age in ye good old days was only in the exception hoary. Will said himself that we are of such stuff as dreams are made of. Translated into cold print dreams are the matter of literature.

Joseph Aloysius Hansom

It must be admitted that his title to fame is not wholly clear. The vehicle known to the Eminent Victorians was really perfected by a Mr. Joseph Chapman, who later widened his reputation as projector of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. Moreover, there is an illustration in Pennant's London, published in 1790, of something that looks remarkably like the father of all hansom. But it is impossible to deny the great Joseph Aloysius Hansom the eminence conferred upon him by universal use of his name. This is the history in which he figures. First of all the only vehicles for hire in London were hackney-coaches, usually broken-down affairs. A writer in the "Monthly Magazine," about 1825, describes them well:

Nothing in nature or art can be so abominable as those vehicles at this hour. We are quite satisfied that, except an Englishman, who will endure anything, no native of any climate under the sky would endure a London hackney-coach; that an Ashantee gentleman would scoff at it; and that an aboriginal of New South Wales would refuse to be inhumed within its shattered and infinite squalidness.

The time had come for one of the sudden leaps of civilisation. The notion of the *cabriolet de place* was brought from Paris, and the day of the coach was over; but this startling vehicle—it ran fast on two wheels, and the driver perched on a queer seat between the body and the offside wheel—was not yet perfection. Passengers sat uncomfortably under strange box-shaped hoods, which earned the name "coffin-cab"; and at any moment an accident to horse or wheel or shaft might pitch everybody forward into the road. To remedy these defects the "omnibus slice," "duobus," or "backdoor cab" was invented by Mr. William Boulnois. It consisted of a box, upon two wheels, with room for two passengers facing each other inside, and a seat for the driver on top. Unfortunately the backdoor favoured the old and dishonourable

pecially-formed company for £10,000. Yet no practice of "bilking," as is illustrated in the story of the sportive young peer who set out to prove for a wager how easy it was to "bilk" a cabby. He hailed one, and directed him to Kensington. Then he secretly left by the back-door, to observe with glee the cabby's rage and consternation. But as the cabby was returning to town the young peer unobtrusively took his seat again, called out, and asked the cabby what he was doing, driving him so far away from his destination. The poor cabby was unable to answer for astonishment, turned round, and once more travelled the Kensington road. But when he arrived there his fare was gone again. Convinced that he was the victim of supernatural forces, he whipped up his horse to get back home as soon as possible. At the last moment he could not resist one more peep into the cab, and there was his noble passenger.

Mr. Hansom's opportunity had arrived. He invented his cab. It was a great square vehicle, with wheels seven feet six inches high, taller than the body, with a door at the front **and** driver's seat just above the door. He drove it from Hinckley in Leicestershire to **London**, greatly diverting the countryfolk, who gathered at the crossroads to throw cabbage-stalks; **but**

in the metropolis he sold his patent to a sooner had poor Mr. Hansom's cabs been manufactured and placed upon the road than endless faults were discovered. He never received his hard-earned royalties, and, though his name was immortalised, the cabs that bore it were Mr. Chapman's. This Mr. John Chapman was the secretary of the Safety Cabriolet and Two-wheel Carriage Company. With great ingenuity he corrected Mr. Hansom's mistakes. He placed the driver's seat at the back, but fixed a sliding-window in the body, to communicate between the cabby and passenger; and he so constructed the framework of the front part of the cab that it rested on the ground when tilted a short space forward. Hansom's disappointed company bought the new patent and placed 50 of Chapman's cabs upon the streets. Instantly successful, in a short time they earned a long-lived popularity.

Not that the invention of British coach-builders was exhausted. The four-wheeler was an early competitor, then the "Clarence"—more familiarly the "growler"; and Lord Brougham's preference for these vehicles and his choice of a specially-designed one established them in high favour among the aged and genteel. By contrast the hansom became the choice of youth and dashing disreputability.

There was never anything to equal the hansom at the height of its glory. Its exterior, said one delighted mid-Victorian, "is as glorious as the sun and as many-hued as the rainbow." Hansoms darted about the streets, decorated in primary colours as startling as their proprietors could obtain, and picked out in the strangest devices, gorgons, porcupines, and unicorns, ever known to the College of Heralds. Time sobered and at last demoded and antiquated them; but their music is in the lines of a poet still living, they are part of the endeared "period" furniture of works like the Sherlock Holmes stories, and indeed it is not so long since Mr. Chesterton regularly and vehemently indulged a passion for riding in hansoms, comparable only with the great Johnson's delight in driving in post-chaises. They will not soon be forgotten. They are not yet unregretted.

Epitaphs

"Let the air go free where e'er you be, for farting be the death of me."

(Genuine, from a country churchyard).

"Who plucked this flower?

I, said the Master;

And the Gardener held his peace.

(Baby's grave, in a Welsh churchyard).

THE END

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