

19 DEC 1958

# Gryphon

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# THE GRYPHON



WINTER  
1958

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Page one

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## Editorial

"THE GRYPHON" has danced across the pages of the Union's history since 1897. It is therefore seven years older than the University itself, for it was not until 1904 that a charter was granted to Leeds, transforming the Yorkshire College (part of the Victoria University) into a full-fledged University in its own right. Indeed, before 1904, the prestige of the place was perhaps rather low, for the bright boys from the two endowed Grammar Schools in the city went straight to Oxbridge and "not to the College down the road where the students are, on the whole, a rough lot".

The price of *The Gryphon* in those days was six-pence and the tone was of a kind of "Union News" plus "Poetry and Audience" multiplied by any school magazine. Its peculiar fascination is left to us to discover, however: the fascination of a less cynical, less realistic but perhaps more gracious period; the fascination of finding characteristic student traits nevertheless expressed in staid terms and worked through with a deal of patriotic fervour; the fascination of dead tongues and nearly-forgotten echoes still amusing and odd, infuriating and touching, grave and smug, light and fanciful. In a small way, such a link with the past as a copy of *The Times* or *Punch* or — yes — even of *The Gryphon* contains more essential history than reams of text-books. Great writers do not invent the paradoxes in man's nature, they perceive them: this is what makes them great. In the same way, magazines do not dictate the fashion of a period, they reflect it; this is what makes them interesting.

A tiny slice of life at the turn of the century is described in our article on *The Gryphon* as it was sixty years ago. Students change little: *styles* change much and we hope you enjoy this glimpse into the character of our forbears among the academic bowers of Woodhouse Lane. In the next issue we will be continuing the story with a look at the Edwardian age.

In the March edition also we are continuing our series of forums with a look at the world of the spirit, especially at the extraordinary subject of exorcism and its implications. As usual we hope to print the opinions of well-known authorities in this field of work. But articles of a different kind are still required for the March edition. The last date for copy is *January 31st* and any kind of article submitted will be given full consideration. "Gryphon" office is always open to anyone who wishes to discuss their ideas before committing them to paper and the "Gryphon" contribution-box still lodges outside Union office . . .

Page three

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## Forum on the Theatre

This country has a long and wonderful heritage of drama. Ever since the early Morality plays, the English theatre has flourished both in the material written for it and in the artists who have graced it. Even the "lean" period of the nineteenth century was not without its great actor-managers and its fine plays.

And yet, in spite of this history; in spite of Shakespeare and Jonson, Dekker and Dryden, Sheridan and Wilde, Shaw and O'Casey; in spite of Garrick and Siddons, Kean and MacReady, Irving and Granville-Barker; in spite of everything, theatre in this country is sick, some will say dying. Playhouses close, companies break up, strictly commercial plays fill the theatres which remain, the burden of "good" drama falls on the amateur company, the actors play night after night until, if only to save themselves from a break-down, they no longer give of their best.

On the Continent theatres are springing up or are being rebuilt all the time — magnificent theatres with spacious stages and superb equipment. Drama Festivals are frequent and are often paid for by the Government. Actors with long and difficult parts are only called upon two or three times a week in many places — in other words, there are *repertoire* (not repertory) theatres running for whole seasons in certain countries. And because these facilities are provided, so therefore are playwrights forthcoming — men who know that their plays, if worth anything at all, have more than a good chance of being produced.

In comparison with the state of the theatre in Italy or Austria or Germany, England's theatre is shoddy indeed. A place of art is turned into a block of offices — this is a parable in one sentence which reveals the materialist ethics of a once great nation. The theatre is only one example of the loss of fundamentals which pervades the nation today — the distrust of anything which "costs us brass" and does not show any *material* return; the disbelief in anything which is beautiful, because it has no immediate money-value; the spurning of anything which is creative in itself and not creative for monetary purposes. We are not alone in the world in having the money ethic as our god, but the sooner we learn to restate our values on what is truly valuable, then the sooner will this shuddering globe come to rest. And in spite of the gloominess of the picture I have painted, there is still hope. It is a hope in the effort of individuals. And if there are individuals fighting to save the theatre, then there are also individuals fighting to save everything worth the salvation.

In our forum, we have set out to find a few of these individuals. We have invited them to express their opinions, not merely on the state of the theatre now, but also on the possible ways out of this contemporary slough of despond. We have asked them not merely what they are fighting *for*, but also *how* they are carrying on the fight.

BERNARD KOPS is a young dramatist, whose play "The Hamlet of Stepney Green" was widely acclaimed and who has now taken up the post of Resident Dramatist at the Bristol Old Vic. He has sent us his impressions of group drama in a forthright, personal contribution to the forum which he has entitled "A Way Forward".

Established writers tend to mix too often with other writers; they begin getting their ideas second hand and soon they lose contact with their original impetus. This realisation prompted me to jump at the unique opportunity offered me, so I left the rat-race of London and now I'm getting down to real work as Resident Dramatist to the Bristol Old Vic. I draw a salary along with the rest of the company and am writing plays especially for them.

Here in the provinces I am close to the real, hard, ordinary world and I can work in peace without the constant pressure of demands and gimmicks.

I am taking breath, am thinking and learning, learning my craft, learning that I am just a beginner, learning about every facet of theatre; learning the techniques of the involved mystery that helps to make a successful production. I'm learning how to write a play without tub-thumping, without preaching but through action.

I work with a dedicated group in Bristol; a great spirit pervades a happy company, and theatre on these terms becomes an affirmation of life — this in turn affects my work, but a finished script is still only a blueprint and so I give it back to the company, who, with a lot of love and headache breathe it into life.

In my few months here I have learned some essential facts. If the theatre is to survive as a vital force in our lives, it is important that young people must be brought into the audience, or rather that they gladly come. It is only by understanding and presenting their problems, dreams and hopes that we will get them to come. Another thing I've learned is, no matter on how many levels a play comes off, it *must* come off on the sheer entertainment level. Of course the more levels the play has, the better, but I let that take care of itself.

I watch audiences night after night at this Theatre Royal. Clerks and Housewives, Nurses and Undergraduates, Old Dears and young culture vultures, most of them are unwinding after a hard day's work. Some come to pass the time and some to use the time, some come for stimulation, some for adulation, some for education and some to be uplifted, but *all* of them come to be entertained. It's a marvellous sound to hear a full house laughing at the right place.

I hope that other companies will be able to follow suit and engage a resident dramatist — it brings to a company a sense of excitement and this is the first essential ingredient in drama. Here I'm in touch with reality, I feel happy and secure with a group and know that group theatre is the way forward, perhaps the only real way forward. On the foundation of experiment and co-operation vital theatre has always existed.

On Thursday, 30th October, SIR DONALD WOLFIT spoke to the Union about the National Theatre. In a vigorous and compelling speech he showed how procrastination, fumbling, the two wars, and sheer incompetence and unwillingness had prevented the building of such a theatre for as much as 40 years. "And yet," he said, "there is a law actually on the statute-book voting the sum of £1,000,000 towards the building of a National Theatre on the South Bank."

Some months before his talk he had sent a contribution to this forum, but really the following passage acts as a postscript to what he told us at his meeting:

Can any theatre lover or student of the drama imagine Paris without the Comédie Française, from which the inspiration of French dramatists and actors springs? Can one imagine Germany without her chain of State theatres and operas, or Russia without her Art and Bolshoi Theatre? Can anyone doubt that until we have a National Theatre in this country, where our heritage of great dramatists from Shakespeare to Shaw can be played in repertoire by our finest artistes, that we shall continue to be the laughing stock of the artistic world? The site is chosen on the South Bank, a million pounds voted by Parliament and four generations of theatregoers dulled by an inactive lethargic committee. Let every lover of the drama bombard the Prime Minister with letters and force some action.



DAME SYBIL THORNDIKE was working on a film when we wrote to her, but she very kindly sent us this personal — and very hopeful — view of the work of the experimental and amateur theatres:

I believe the “serious” theatre in Britain is growing rapidly, and when I say “serious” I mean plays of comedy, tragedy, problem, any play in fact that is written because the author has something to say, and actors who are eager to interpret it. Its present growth, I think, is due to the pioneer work of such theatres as the Royal Court, London, which is seeking — and finding — new authors. We want new ideas, new interpretations of classics, and to this the pioneer theatres, authors, actors and directors are striving. One wishes the Amateur theatre were more alive to its real function, which is research into new ways of production, new sorts of plays, but with a few notable exceptions the amateur movement is concerned mainly with reproducing professional successes, which is boring of them, not at all the thing which could make the Amateur Theatre of service to the whole Theatre. A professional Theatre like “Theatre Workshop” is doing fine service — for it has the ideal of both the Professional and the Amateur — i.e. making the theatre a profession, and for the love of it, not only for a living. We have to be thankful for these sort of Theatre folk, rich in idea, disciplined — for from them the Theatre of our country will grow strong and serviceable.

The New Shakespeare Theatre in Liverpool has aroused great interest and we asked SAM WANAMAKER himself to describe this exciting venture in the presentation of great and unusual drama. The following we print as a tribute and as a pointer to what can be done, given the faith and the drive:

It is a sad commentary on the theatrical health of this country to realise that only one new theatre has been built in England since the war while dozens of other playhouses and music halls have closed because of lack of support.

In the New Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool, my fellow director, Miss Anna Deere Wiman and myself are trying to establish in one building as many art forms as possible which will be available to both the general public and members of the theatre club, seven days a week and up to 12 hours a day.

Before the New Shakespeare opened last October we set out our aims: to provide *good* theatre, an art gallery, children’s plays and films, a self-supporting film society, jazz and classical music concerts, discussions on drama, fashion shows and social amenities in a well-appointed restaurant and lounge where members could relax. We also introduced a television lounge so that members who might wish to watch a particular programme and who might have already seen the play earlier in the week, would not be deterred from spending an evening in the theatre club.

Undoubtedly, the ideals of the New Shakespeare aroused the interest of the public not only on Merseyside but in all parts of Britain. Today there are more than 22,500 members and we can say that the first full year of operation has been an undoubted success.

When we first decided to re-open the theatre, which has been widely described as “the most beautiful in Britain”, we believed that a theatre should be treated as a real estate property — like an office block which should be utilised for as many hours in the day as possible. Most theatres in this country are only open for about three hours a day which seems to be wasteful.



The New Shakespeare opens before 10 o'clock each morning (apart from Sundays) for members who may wish to have coffee in the lounge or Art Gallery, or to see the membership secretary or even deposit their shopping in the cloakroom. At lunch-time the bars in the Smorgasbord Lounge and the restaurant are open to members who also have lunches there, whilst in the theatre itself members and city workers can listen to record sessions lasting an hour each Tuesday and Thursday. During the afternoons members can have tea and on Tuesdays a number of them play bridge. In the evenings, of course, plays are presented in the theatre. On Friday the auditorium is filled in the morning and afternoon by schoolchildren and on Saturday mornings and afternoons there are more children's plays or films. On Sunday afternoons we have jazz concerts or recitals of classical music by prominent instrumentalists and singers. On Sunday evenings there are two performances of films sponsored by the Film Society.

This, I think you will agree, is an exciting programme. It is so ambitious, in fact, that many people believed that it would not materialise when it was announced before the opening. But the critics have, in the main, returned to praise the venture.

WILLIS HALL is not a newcomer to the profession of playwright. He wrote for the B.B.C. whilst in the Forces, and he broke into T.V. drama by a long apprenticeship of sitting through good, bad and indifferent programmes in order to learn techniques. He made an impression on the Edinburgh Festival with a play which was simultaneously produced in Nottingham under the title of "Boys, it's all Hell!" In a challenging contribution which closes the forum, he has cut across the usual views of declining theatre and the weak state of drama in this country by a powerful — though good humoured — defence of the helpful elements in theatre, under the title of:

The Dramatist Today

or Put him down; you don't know where he's been.

Being one of the modern school of playwrights and, at the same time, not angry — though mildly perturbed — I am always at a loss, perhaps even a slight disadvantage, when asked to contribute an article or address an audience on the subject of the theatre today.

Basically I write plays because, as far as I am concerned at least, it is an easier, more pleasant and far more lucrative way of earning a living than becoming a builder's labourer, plumber's clerk or launderette detergent dispenser. This is an all too obvious statement, or so it would seem considering the number of builders' labourers, etc., who have joined the ranks of British dramatists recently. As I have already said — I am mildly perturbed.

It is not that I feel there is no room in the theatre for these new dramatists, or even that their presence in the ranks will decrease my own opportunities of earning a fast buck. Indeed, in unhappier times than these I have myself resorted to a diversity of occupations — ranging from fairground attendant to hack reporter on a Chinese daily newspaper, and I challenge any budding dramatist to go one better than that.

It has always been my firm belief that the finest background for a playwright is to have written plays — the fact that these plays may never have been produced, may never have been submitted to a reader or even got beyond the writer's waste-paper basket is of no consequence. I maintain that the writer's craft is only cultivated by experience in writing — what the writer was doing in the struggle to keep himself alive, apart from eating rejection slips,

during the period when his work was unacceptable is of no interest to the public and of little value to the writer.

I say 'of little value' because there is the obvious value of a dramatic situation to be found in every occupation which the writer has experienced and, if he has a keen ear for natural speech, the dialogue is to be had for the listening. Indeed, I am writing a play at the moment which concerns fairground attendants and, who knows, perhaps I may sit down one day and give birth to a dramatic masterpiece concerning the tribulations of a hack journalist on a Chinese Daily — though I hardly think so.

However, personal experience apart, the good dramatist must be, first and foremost, a craftsman. It is one of the most depressing signs of our time that the word 'craftsman', when applied to the playwright, has come to take on an almost dirty significance. I am aghast at the number of young writers today who wear their innocence of theatrical craft like haloes — and far more aghast at the increasing numbers of the otherwise sane theatre-going public who tend to make a religion of this innocence.

The situation is all the more mysterious when one pauses to consider the opportunities which exist today for the young writer to learn his trade. Radio and television are both mediums which are only too willing to offer to any above-average dramatist the opportunity of a production of the highest standards, plus the benefits to his script of a cast which, excluding the West End, he could otherwise only dream of having. I cannot express my own debt of gratitude to the B.B.C. which enabled me, as a writer struggling to master his craft, to work with, and therefore learn from, actors at the peak of the profession: Sir Donald Wolfit and Esmond Knight, to name but two.

The current vogue to disparage television drama shows, at best, ignorance — and, at worst, pseudo-snobbery. For the writer television playwriting is an exacting, demanding and very worthwhile medium. Whilst T.V. offers the writer an immense mass audience (and where is the writer who doesn't wish his work to be seen by as many people as possible), it cannot be stressed too greatly that the audience is essentially a mass of individuals sitting each in his or her (or their?) own home and capable of a gradation of feelings which the group reaction of a theatre audience cannot comprehend. This range of emotions demands a subtler approach from the writer than he is called upon to express within the stricter limits of the theatre.

But to return to the position of the young dramatist today — what is there to say? He has admirable opportunities for learning his craft. Repertory theatres, at the time of writing, seem more willing than ever before to experiment and produce the works of new authors. In London the Royal Court, the Arts and Theatre Workshops are all writers' theatres in the purest sense. The past two years have witnessed the finest crop of young actors and actresses for a very long time: Albert Finney; Peter O'Toole; Brian Bedford; Frances Cuka; Avril Elgar — only space condemns me to shorten the list.

With opportunity, progressive managements and good actors in search of good plays — what more does he want? I am not angry. Though, at times, slightly perturbed . . . . .



# Carried Away

Harry Freedman

Admittedly the Motor Show does take place two hundred miles away, but only the most introvert of pre-war car owners would let it pass without just the slightest tremors of doubt as to whether his vehicle can, especially if parked in the Union near that new Citroen, still indeed be called a "car". To such geographically remote spots as Leeds, Earls Court sends its latest brainchild. Dealers of course are the trouble; there must be more car dealers in Leeds than cars. No day passes without someone opening somewhere a garage or showroom, and no matter how humble its origins, within a week Appleyards are worried. Cars have a limited life, even if many students do still run, or push when necessary, cars which a Parisian schoolteacher would gladly sell to the breakers for his Metro fare home. Car dealers, if I may resume, have not; they, like the Biblical children of Israel, have promise of becoming as numerous as the grains of sand upon the sea-shore.

Some fifty years ago it was discovered that, despite the revolutionary theories of Euclid and the chairman of the L.N.E.R., the quickest way to get to Leeds to London was along the A.1, most of the way, in a four-wheeled vehicle later described as a "motor-carriage"—hence "car". Since travelling from Leeds to London was (and still is) a most desirable occupation, the car was acclaimed as a worthy object, and has carried on ever since.

By something of an oversight the earliest cars were built without tops; the designers, apparently, had never been to Leeds. Several examples of such lid-less horse-less carriages can be seen, without charge, abandoned within the precincts of the Union.

One must not be misled by appearances—some of these cars do, in fact, go. This you may well think, and quite rightly too, is all that can be expected of an apparatus which, one is forced to admit, is primarily a means of transportation. If manufacturers realised this there would be something worth writing home about from the Motor Show of 1958, (the cars, by the way, were made in 1959, except some American models which, by virtue of greater foresight and the most advanced methods of mass-production, were made in 1960) for all the cars exhibited there do go—of this I was assured by one salesman after another. But manufacturers do not, they *will* not. I saw one young man, just fresh from Nuffield College, Oxford, attempt to buy a Rolls-Royce for travelling between his home in Hampstead and his work at Lloyds. He wanted a Rolls-Royce, he said, because his father and grandfather had had one (one each, that is) and it was the only car he could drive. They respectfully showed him their range, from £5,000 to £8,000. He said he didn't want one with a built-in bed, bookcase, radio, gramophone, television, refrigerator, sink and mincing machine. He'd got all these things at home, and if, by George, he ever did feel like carrying them about with him, he could jolly well put them all into the boot. He merely wanted to travel in the dashed thing, not live in it. Besides, he quite reasonably explained, he was liable to pull the wrong damned knob, and come to grips with the nearest Bentley, doing considerable damage to the cathode-ray tube (sarcastic, of course).

They were amused, hysterical, they danced the Charleston and collapsed onto the floor, a three-inch thick layer of brochures breaking their fall. That was the funniest thing what they'd 'eard in all their born days. They advised the young man to buy a bicycle. Which he did, after carefully ascertaining that it did not contain some cunningly concealed washing machine.

# A Chink in the Iron Curtain

## Reminiscences of Poland

*Judith Corden*

.....The enthusiastic welcome, accompanied by two beautiful bouquets of flowers, at 1.0 a.m. on the Polish border was to be typical of our whole visit. All the Poles were eager to try out their English, which perhaps had not been used since schooldays twenty years ago, and to hear what we thought of Poland and what Britain was like. Wherever we went, on trains, buses, or even in the street, as soon as people heard us speaking a foreign language, they would tap us on the shoulder and ask where we came from. Indeed, the only other foreigners we came across were some Czechs and East Germans, so ten young Britons were a real curiosity.

Very few of the people had ever been outside Poland. I remember meeting only two — both teachers of English. Strangely enough, it is as difficult for Poles to go to the U.S.S.R. as to come to Britain — though some students do their practical work in the Soviet Union. Until a year or so ago there was almost no machinery for issuing passports, and the ones which are produced are expensive, the cost being graded from about £5 for students to about £32 for ordinary workers.

Prices were very difficult to compare since there are four rates of exchange: 11 zloties/£ for trade, 67 zloties/£ for tourists, 250 zloties/£ being the most realistic, and 400 zloties/£ the black market rate!

How people make ends meet, I just do not know. In general, Poles look surprisingly well dressed but their homes are very poorly furnished. Most people have several jobs since the average wage is only thirty shillings a week, a ten pound-ish man's suit being the equivalent of seven-eight weeks' salary. If one tried to buy three medium-sized tins of Nescafé on a week's wage one would be "in the red". Rent, however, is very low — one shilling and ninepence a week — and fares are half the price of ours.

Impecunious student, consider yourself lucky! Your Polish counterpart's grant is only about twelve pounds a year and many students have part-time jobs. For instance Z..... tutors a primary school lad three nights a week. As far as I could gather, the students' union is much the same as ours but more students (over 50%) are in halls of residence. Scout and Guide club members might be interested to know that the Polish movement is now very similar to the British one. Communist slogans have disappeared, following the 1956 revolt, and the only difference seems to be in the promise — to do one's duty to one's country, to fight for truth, and to further social justice, (there being no religious clause).

We were surprised at the comparative freedom of speech (compared, that is, with Russia). On the bus a Pole talking to one of our groups mentioned "the silly government". Will ..... is a very outspoken person who frequently stands up in public meetings and criticises the government — but on ten occasions he has wanted to leave the country for conferences, etc., and been refused permission.

There is no secret police but the ordinary force is very eager to impose fines, receipt books being carried for the purpose. When Denis, one of our party, was on a photographing tour of the interesting buildings two policemen suddenly stopped him and took his camera. Apparently they had been summoned by a man who thought he was being followed. After an English-speaking person had been sent for, the camera was returned — one cannot take down evidence while holding a camera — then with cigarettes and handshakes all



round, Denis was dismissed. When the translator arrived he was told that the Pole had been drunk.

When discussing the buildings it must be remembered how terribly Poland suffered during the war. 80 per cent. of Warsaw was razed to the ground. Now 80 per cent. of it is rebuilt. Its centre is much like that of any other capital, but the suburbs are quite different. There are large blocks of very small flats, all in exactly the same style. The mortar is oozing out of the joints, or seems not to be there at all. Some day they *will* be faced, but there is such a housing shortage that flats must be erected as quickly as possible and the finishing touches can be completed later. Thousands of zloties have been spent on building an exact replica of Warsaw's fine Old Town and the beautiful "Long Street" in Gdansk (formerly Danzig).

The Polish people struck us as being friendly, cheerful and very courteous. For instance, a waiter spilt a drop of soup and then slipped on it while bringing mine, spilling this all over the floor, though not soiling anyone's clothes. At the end of the meal he brought me a plate with a white serviette and a beautiful red rose on it, and apologised profusely.

In theory our holiday was part of an exchange scheme with a Polish touring club. Some of our hosts accompanied us all the time so that we were able to chat with them a great deal and really get to know and understand them. International goodwill starts at rock bottom with personal relationships. How stupid wars and other international crises seem when one knows individual Poles, or any other nationality, as ordinary human beings, friends with just as many lovable or annoying characteristics as the folk at home.

We hope that our Polish friends will soon be able to follow the little "ships of goodwill" they gave us, and spend as interesting and enjoyable a time with us here in Britain.

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# OUTSIDER

by *Bill Laughey*



“ . . . at Worcester 2.30: the betting — nine to four Royal Crusade, eleven to four Pepyden, fives Stonway, same price Night Road, eights bar . . . ”

The metallic blare of the inter-com echoed through Farnell's like a dry whip. A low murmur crept above the silence; a murmur that rustled countless “Sporting Pinks” and sent a squeak of chalk scurrying down the blackboard.

Max Farnell, tall, debonair, glowing with the art of good living, wondered how many times he'd heard it before. For the first time in years he seemed to be moving away from himself. Now, looking across the counter, he felt like a stranger surveying the scene for the first time. Subconsciously he checked an impulse to hate what he saw: the shapes that fitted shapeless overcoats, the faces distorted by cheap cigarettes — all resigned to common, decent poverty. Men like Joe Hutchinson whom Max could see standing by the door; a cheap, mean-faced little dolebird who squandered his ten bobs on the first jockey that took his fancy. All had one thing in common — the sad, downward cast in their eyes, reflecting a look of bemused disparagement, as though they were facing life not as a

challenge but as a burden, which they had long since become too frail to bear.

“ . . . the betting — two to one Royal Crusade, three's Pepyden, fives bar . . . ”

Max himself was a proud man; proud because he was respected. Everyone knew Farnell, and those who liked to think they didn't were constantly faced with his sign in the High Street — MAX FARNELL, COMMISSION AGENT.

Ph. GOSFORD 779.

He had learnt plenty during his fifteen years in Gosford. His confidence grew quickly, keeping pace with his wealth. And the moment a premeditated fraction began to trickle into local charities, Max became strictly respectable. ‘Top’ people began to speak of his enterprise, his desire to get on in the world; they tactfully avoided the word ‘bookmaker’ when confronting him in the street; and in five years it was Councillor Farnell, complete with Labour seat and Conservative leaning — the essential basis of a Gosford councillor.

It was almost 2.30. Max found himself analysing the thrust of silver that jerked across the counter. Yet today his scepticism had a generous blend of sympathy.

“ . . . They're under orders Worcester . . . ”

The afternoon seemed like twelve years bundled into one. His twelve years without



Anna, the girl he had hoped to marry. That morning he had lifted the telephone and heard the familiar, thin voice. For a moment he couldn't believe it. The world seemed strangely elevated; like the ideal in a child's story book — the Princess had returned and the Prince was staking claim. Yet when he replaced the receiver, the fairy tale had faded. There would be no courteous embrace — only a quiet chat in Tommy's Snug; nor could there be a "happy ever after" — they never match an unattainable Princess with a Prince soiled in the Divorce Courts.

" . . . Night Road the leader from Pepyden, Royal Crusade . . . one to go . . . night Road clear of Royal Crusade, Pepyden . . . Night Road, Royal Crusade . . . Night Road . . . number eight, Night Road, the winner, two Royal Crusade second, four Pepyden third . . . S.P. — five to one, two to one favourite, seven to two . . . "

Max motioned the clerk towards the books, then hurried from the room. He walked briskly, past the sunlit fronts of the shops bordering the High Street, on towards Chapelgate and Tommy's Snug.

A clean, constant smell of coffee and brown sugar greeted him as he opened the door. The place itself was deserted. Only the brazen tick of a china clock broke through the silence. It was a quarter to three. Anna was due at three. Max moved to a table away from the window and waited.

The clock-tick gave rhythm to his thoughts. He tried to recollect all the things he'd dreamt about Anna in the last twelve years. Above all he felt a new self-confidence: money, influence, security, were practical virtues. Anna used to praise security, and Max had struggled years to find it.

Now he hoped she would see a change — not only in the cut of his suit, but in the shape of his character.

He had turned to order coffee when Anna entered the room; so that he was first conscious of her fingers on the formica, then the tenderness of her voice as she stood beaming before him.

"Hello, Maxie."

The familiar "Maxie", spoken casually, startled him off balance.

Anna!"

She made a comic gesture towards the coffee.

"Don't forget. Mine's black."

"I didn't."

They laughed spontaneously and the tension snapped.

"You're more beautiful than ever," Max said. "It makes me feel good just to look at you again."

"Flatterer!"

"Are you happy?"

"Wonderfully happy Maxie. I wouldn't change my life for anything in the world."

"How come you're back in Gosford?"

"Simple. I asked leave to visit Mum and Dad. It may be the last chance I'll get. And I couldn't go without a peep at Maxie Farnell. Mind you, if I'd known he looked the same I'd have waited another twelve years."

"Now who's flattering . . ."

Anna smiled; the same, warm smile — half mischief and half innocence; her blue eyes pastelling the pallor of her cheeks, her chin dimpled by a perky forefinger. He became ineffably aware of her tenderness, hovering about him like a flutter of wings.

"Tell me about yourself. How's business?"

"As good as ever. I'm already acting like a rich uncle. But I still need some poor nephews."

*Why phrase it like that — why shield himself — he'd made a mistake — Liz was a shameless bitch — he knew that soon enough — things couldn't have gone on — there had to*

*be a divorce — yet mustn't go into that — odds on she didn't know — better it should stay that way.*

"I hope you're not harming anyone, Maxie," Anna was asying, "not taking more than you should. It's not always their own money they spend . . . ."

"This is where we should start an argument," Max quipped, "it's a good job I'm not as temperamental as the horses."

*She's right — blast the idiots — no sense of values — close down? — God, they'd come whimpering.*

"Remember Goblin Prince?"

Max coughed down a grin. "Yes. I'll never live that down."

"We went for some long walks after that one."

"I think every favourite won that week except Goblin Prince, and we had to back it."

Anna affected a grimace. "I'll always begrudge that pound."

*Goblin Prince — forty-six Ebor — ran like a martyr — God, she's lovely — like a saint — what a waste — better change the subject.*

"Don't you miss this place?"

"Often."

"Sometimes feel you want to come back?"

"Sometimes. That's the trouble with Gosford — you take roots. Every face becomes part of your life. I found that out the week I left. I didn't think I could bear it. But I could never be happy coming back — I know that all the time."

"Maybe one day you'll change your mind."

"Only if someone changes it for me."

Anna twirled her cup playfully in its saucer. She looked him straight in the eye — a habit of hers when she was about to say something funny.

"Dad tells me you've turned middle class."

Max laughed. "Only after the five-oclock."

". . . . And you're a future M.P."

"Not quite. But I campaigned for electric lighting in Cumberland Avenue. They said nice things about me in the local paper."

"I'm glad to see you're getting on Maxie," she suddenly became serious. I always thought you would."

"I'm glad you're happy, Anna."

"Are you?"

"Can't grumble. Things haven't changed much."

*Grumble! — why grumble — life's the same — middle class — M.P. — getting on — Hell! — life's the same — always the same.*

Max scrutinised every movement as she sipped from her cup. She looked older, yet it was impossible to pin-point the change: the perky twitch of nose, the deft flicker of eyelash, the elbows on the table were all Anna. It was as if middle age had settled on her like dapple-dust, lying tentatively on her moments of seriousness, only to be swept away at the mere suggestion of a smile.

Looking at her across the table, he felt a sudden impulse of happiness — the kind that happens to a child; the coffee was tannic and lovely, and Anna was there before him, and the sun was shining.

"I suppose you're married by now?"

The question acted like an alarum clock, startling him to reality. He gulped at the coffee.

"No — that is, not now. I was, but it fell through."

Anna's voice dropped to a whisper. "I'm sorry, Maxie. I . . . ."



"It's alright — just one of those things, that's all. You try these things and they don't come off. It only lasted six months. She was what you might call broadminded."

"It must have been terrible."

"No. Sometimes you have to do a thing and you do it. I had to sue for divorce."

"Did you ask God to help her?"

The question angered him. It seemed futile. "No. She was beyond that."

"No-one's beyond that Maxie."

*God — help Liz — poor Anna — never mind — God helps Anna — she's perfect.*

"Perhaps He'll help her in His own way."

"He will if she gives Him the chance. I'm sure of that."

They were silent for a moment. The clock ticked reluctantly towards the half hour.

"Is He helping you Maxie?"

"Not much."

"Do you still try?"

"Sometimes."

"You need to try all the time — until it becomes a habit. It's a wonderful thing Maxie, after it becomes a habit."

"It's no good Anna — it's the same as before. I don't *feel* anything in Church, just sit and listen like an intruder. I've seen too much life for that kind of thing."

"Promise me you'll keep trying."

Max softened a little. "There are times when I feel I've got to try. But I must do it my own way. It's the only chance I've got."

Anna smiled sympathetically, clutching his hand as it lay on the table.

"I'll help you Maxie. I'll pray for you all the time."

"You always did get a lot from religion. Even in the old days."

"Never enough. That's why I want more. You're never satisfied until you've enough."

*Enough — business, council, bow-tie, accent — she's right — they're static — Gosford's static — Anna's different — she moves.*

"Some are satisfied. Even with nothing."

"Only because they've nothing of worth to live for. They fall in with life and never step out of it. They live without relating their existence. That's the essence of all religion Maxie — finding the power to relate . . ."

Max suddenly felt lost: small and insignificant.

"Some day you'll have to teach me."

Anna sensed his discomfort. "I'll be glad to. If you're not too obstinate."

"I could never be obstinate. Everything about you is perfect."

"You're quite a guy yourself Mr. Farnell."

The clock struck twice. She released his hand and reached for her bag, a white wicker-basket painted with flowers. Max took it from her. They walked together into Chapelgate.

The sun had paled now, shading the streets a delicate orange — the colour of Demerara rum. A cool breeze swept obdurately between the tenements. The whole effect was as smooth and refreshing as egg-nog.

As they crossed by Blueberry Park it seemed that Gosford was sleeping. For a moment there were only trees, and grass, and the river, and the paper mill, silent and austere in the sunshine. Then, beneath Mary's Arch the traffic echoed noisily on the cobbles of the market place, finally bursting on the throbbing pulse of the High Street. The number nine bus was rumbling by its stand.

They hurried towards it, passing Max's premises on the other side of the street. Anna pointed to his sign: gloss and stark below the second floor windows. One of the windows was open.

\* \* \*

Inside Farnell's a mixture of thrill and disillusion had been too much for Joe Hutchinson. He had to recuperate. He moved to the window to rid himself of the smoke and chalk-dust, breathing deeply of the oxygen without.

Right now he was in the mood to believe anything. Yet he gaped like a chub at the two people moving towards the bus-stand. The sight moved him to words.

"Blow me! If that ain't Max — with a blinking nun!"

"That'll be old Dan O'Connor's daughter," a voice replied. "They were pretty thick at one time. Better be careful there Hutchy. It's a touchy subject with Max."

Hutchy watched Anna on to the number nine. He gaped when Max kissed her quickly on the cheek, and gaped again when he stood waving at the bus till it turned beyond the market. He caught a glimpse of the nun on the upper deck. She was waving too, and she was smiling.

Hutchy's remark had a curious effect in the betting room. When Max returned there was a surreptitious stillness; a voiceless lull of expectancy, broken spasmodically by the teppity-tap of the tic-a-tape. Max moved towards the counter, his face flecked with white. The silence became unbearable. Hutchy squirmed out of it with a chirpy flick of "The Formguide."

"Fancy the four o'clock favourite Max?"

Max answered subconsciously, staring fixedly at his book, his expression blank.

"Back an outsider," he said. "They usually win in the end."

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# FALLEN FEATHERS

“Gryphon” 60 years ago

by *John Hougham*

It is the turn of the century. Queen Victoria has been on the throne for sixty-three years; the Wright brothers have yet to make their first flight; Britain is fighting the Boers and beer is to be had for a song. It is the Britain of Rudyard Kipling and of Jingoism, of “The Empire” and “The White Man’s Burden”, of lantern slides and limelight. Rowland Winn is advertising “Motor Tricycles and Cars for the Medical Profession. References given”, and you can have a bicycle made to measure at £5 10s. What of the student body? How do our predecessors react to these stirring times?

The war in South Africa brings a surge of patriotism into Union activities, and there is always some sturdy Englishman, fortified with cigar and tankard, who is ready to burst into song at the least provocation:

“That redoubtable wight of the Agricultural department, Mr. Stapleton, next enlivened the company — and the rafters — by his strident rendering of ‘The British Grenadiers’, and being vociferously encored he rattled off ‘Here’s to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen’ in his own unique style.”

Nor was the Agricultural department alone in having its “redoubtable wights”. A certain Mr. Thompson of the Leather department was also a frequent performer.

“Mr. Thompson first sang ‘Queen of the Earth’ which, to judge by the way it was received, is evidently an old favourite with his audience: and later on his spirited rendering of ‘The Old Brigade’ was greeted with thunderous applause. There is a fine military and patriotic flavour about this song, that just now commended it especially to us. Indeed, we were all ready to express our loyalty in exuberant fashion whenever the opportunity occurred. Later on we had the whole song with a mighty chorus, and more cheers for General Buller and the Queen, and groans for Oom Paul. Having come in like lambs we went out like lions, with roarings of “God save the Queen”, “Rule Britannia” and cheers for Joey Chamberlain, and all others handy.”

On another occasion, after a concert held in the examination hall, “Mr. Dyson’s band discoursed sweet and patriotic music entitled ‘Our Empire’, closing with that hymn of pride and defiance ‘Rule Britannia’. We then stood and sang or shouted with might and main the National Anthem; this outburst seemed particularly suitable on the morrow of the relief of Kimberley.”

If no one could be found to supply a song, an extremely rare eventuality, there was sure to be an ardent student somewhere to oblige with a stirring speech:

“Mr. Grotzschke was called upon for a speech, and he gave one that would have made the Emperor William turn pale, and Little Englanders ashamed, so full of enthusiasm was he for ‘Dear Old England’, to whose undying glory he asked the company to join him in drinking.”

There is little doubt as to which songs would have been favourites in a contemporary Top Twenty. The audience knew what it wanted, demanded it, and invariably got it:

“Mr. Stapleton, responding to the enthusiastic calls of his friends, rendered ‘The British Grenadiers’ in a style which will never be forgotten by those who had the good fortune to be present. His voice rose triumphant above the feeble efforts of the company, and at the conclusion a perfect storm of applause elicited an encore, ‘Here’s to the Maiden’.”

This was nothing, however, merely a rehearsal for greater things to come. On March 1st, 1900, over a college bursting at the seams with patriotism, broke the news of

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the relief of Ladysmith. At last a chance to get down to some real singing, and cheering, and Rule Britanniaing! And the students, with a student's gift for spontaneous organisation, went to town quite literally.

"A little before half past ten on the eventful Thursday, the news of Ladysmith reached the College. Cheers filled the corridors, everybody smiled and looked happy. A band of students marched down to the Medical School where they called to all to come out and leave the books to themselves. The ranks of shouting, singing, whistling students then marched to the Town Hall, on the steps of which they sang the National Anthem with such gusto that the Police Court was stopped. Headed by a bugler the 200 students paraded the principal streets cheering themselves deaf and hoarse. When City Square was reached the recruiting Sergeants, who for many a month had attracted youth searching for glory, were besieged with demands for speeches. When given they were cheered to the echo."

Later, at a meeting in the smoke-room, "where all was noise and patriotism," it was decided to send congratulatory messages to the Queen and General Buller. Delight knew no bounds when two days later Her Majesty sent a similar message expressing her pleasure:

"A meeting was held to decide what was to be done with the document, as it was called in awesome tones."

Even 50 years ago there was a minority who could be relied upon to raise the ire of an enthusiastic majority:

"Two self-styled patriots, who sat in the seat of the scorner, and apparently languished for the sweets of martyrdom, said that nothing should be done with the treasure."

Whether this veiled threat was carried out is not recorded but it was finally agreed that "the document" should be framed and hung in the Union Room, "so that future generations might know what was done in the old time before them." So much for pious hopes!

'Gryphon' had its own war-correspondent who contributed graphic accounts of skirmishes with the Boers:

"We even got within 400 yards of the Boers, and then had to retire as their fire was too hot, and we had a lot of men and horses hit. I don't know how we ever got out of it alive. My chum who was riding next to me got killed, shot in the mouth by an explosive bullet which shattered his face. They use a good deal of explosive bullets."

War notes were not the only articles which created a momentary break in the singing and merry-making which pervaded the pages of 'Gryphon' at this time. Melancholy news was received too from an even remoter part of the globe, from Russia. Students at the Russian universities had risen in protest against tyrannical and harsh treatment — but let 'Gryphon' tell the tale:

"Living as we do in a country in which we enjoy almost all the rights of combination and free speech, it is most difficult for us to imagine the hardships and restrictions which have to be undergone in that benighted country — Russia. One of the highest crimes a Russian student can commit is that of being of an intelligent and independent turn of mind. It is for crimes such as this that the flower of Russian youth is to be subjected to all the horrors and brutality of the life of a Russian soldier. How well the Russian government seems to understand that its very life depends upon keeping its citizens as far removed as possible from all advanced thought and refined feeling!"

But melancholy could not reign for long. While others are distinguishing themselves at the wars, some high-minded youths are furthering the name of Leeds on the Home Front.

In particular one Mr. Sowerbutts has a particular claim to fame in the literary world:

“One of our first year medicals — to be precise, Mr. Sowerbutts — has just obtained third prize for a poem of three verses descriptive of the merits of a much advertised remedy for corns. It opens as follows:

‘In olden days men’s toes were free,  
Uncramped by boot and shoe;  
But now unfortunately we  
Have corns which make us rue.  
Alas! We must endure this pest  
That comes with civilization,  
Unless we for ourselves do test  
The famed corn cures of Mason!’

Do not laugh, gentle reader. This poem is well up to the general standard of others which appear in the same volume.

But enough of the males and their boisterous jubilation. What of the fairer sex? What were they up to while their male colleagues were busy in the time-honoured activity of disrupting the traffic and obstructing the policemen in City Square? From a cursory glance it would seem that the ladies led a highly athletic existence, for almost every edition of ‘Gryphon’ mentions their exploits on the hockey field, usually in satirical vein. One gathers that the male students of 50 years ago found the sight of two-and-twenty otherwise decorous maidens chasing a small ball through the mud a stimulating and amusing spectacle:

And now these mud-bespattered maids  
With shrieks began the strife;  
They evidently had conspired  
To take the other’s life.  
That famous field I doubt me not,  
Had witnessed many fights;  
But surely ne’er a fray like this,  
A war for women’s Rights.

These ladies were all-rounders too, as witness their performance in the annual sports:

“Mention should be made of the ladies’ slow cycle races: they created an interesting diversion, and, as usual, the quickest cycle won, after mutual annihilation of the others.”

A brave gentleman writing in the edition of June, 1902, did not consider that participation in the aforementioned athletic activities was sufficient:

“Sir,

There appears to be a feeling among the ladies of the college that it is *infra dig.* for them to grace the College cricket matches by their presence. The truest way for woman to do good is to exercise for good such influence as she possesses over man. This may be done to a great extent by her presence at their sports, for nothing promotes gentlemanly sportsmanship more than the criticism we see in the expression of the ladies. In addition, there is no doubt that the ladies receive physical benefit from the fresh air and change.’

Women were finding themselves the subjects of a great deal of serious discussion also. The Medical Society debated “This house views with disapproval the admission of women to the Medical profession”, and elsewhere a writer also views with disapproval the action of a group of female students who joined in the heckling at a public meeting at Manchester, “standing amongst the rowdiest of men, aiding with all their strength, with whistles, rattles and squeakers, to drown the rhetoric of the speakers, and to encourage their comrades in gowns.”

The ladies themselves did not long remain silent in the face of this sustained attack.

Strangely enough an almost modern article brought matters to a head. It was entitled "Notes from the boudoir" and began:

"My Dear Girls,

Knowing my intense love for you all, and my intimate knowledge of things feminine the Editor has asked me to take charge of this column."

After a few highly detailed, and no doubt pointed, remarks about dress, the writer continues with "answers to correspondents":

"I am truly sorry for L.P. and advise her to have nothing to do with the wretch again; his conduct is worthy of an engineering student.

'Scorcher' — 1. Personally, I use C.B. 2. Trilene tablets."

Having dispensed worldly wisdom in the time-honoured manner the writer concludes:

"In the August edition I propose to deal with the training of our children.

Till then, be good, like your dear old AUNT BELINDA."

P.S. Give my love to mother."

This article brought a spate of letters from enraged females culminating in an imposing document from no less a body than the Women's Representative Committee, which referred to "several objectionable paragraphs in the last issue", threatened the Editor with loss of subscriptions, and expressed the pious hope that "this is the last time that anything undesirable will be printed in the College magazine."

In all fairness to the gentlemen it must be pointed out that the ladies too were occasionally guilty of treading upon hallowed ground. The following question was asked in debate:

"Why will a man draw in smoke just to puff it out again? Why can't he swallow it, or institute some sort of carbon-consuming apparatus within him?"

This, we like to think, was treated with the contempt it deserved.

The Editor was not without his worries even in those remote days. In one edition a report of the Geological society read as follows:

"It is quite a new valley, the old one, which can still be easily traced, having been DAMNED up by a moraine of the Uredale glacier."

This chance slip on the part of the compositor set hearts a-flutter and almost completely disorganised the next edition. In his next editorial the Editor, poor man, makes a public apology, but nevertheless the same edition carries two letters of protest!

In reading these editions of yesteryear it is apparent that students have changed little, if at all. Their visits to the theatre were as memorable as they are now:

"With the exception of one gentleman, who made, to our mind, some extremely ill-advised remarks, the audience seemed as pleased with us as we were with ourselves." And again:

"The pantomime certainly went better for the presence of students. Our enthusiasm must have been a pleasant change from the apathy of the usual Leeds audience."

The editorial, keeping its fatherly eye on things, had this to say:

"There are too many at the college who mistake rowdyism for wit, and obtrusiveness for humour. The terms are not synonymous."

Exactly the same remarks were made about Freshers and Refectory fifty years ago, as are made today: ("The word refection is of Latin derivation, viz., refectum, from reficio, 'I make again'. It is called refection because the same dishes are served up again and again." — and again.)

Finally we should like to mention a lone pioneer who appears in these mouldering pages, the first of his kind, the forerunner of many; the man with the beard:

"One always admires courage, and the effort made by a certain student



to disassociate himself from the conventionalities of everyday life and the barber is most praiseworthy. Application of a well known hair-restorer would remove the impression that the hair belonged to an equally well-known quadruped, and not to a Leeds student of no mean capabilities. Unfortunately this hirsute appendage bears a distinct resemblance to that of a domestic animal whose Christian name is not Fanny. But the old order changeth . . ."



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# The Changing Cinema

by Jeffrey D. Soester

Since the war, the cinema has maintained, in the teeth of television, an influence that, almost at its inception, it found itself capable of wielding over the life of social man. Although the romantic glamour in which moviedom basked in the 'thirties has vanished, Paradise is far from Lost — the cinema is still the only place where people gather to see what they believe is a comprehensive picture of real life. It maintains its immense power and influence.

But both producers and cinema audiences persistently refuse to acknowledge that the bearings of the world in which they now live have changed at all over the past twenty years. There is something of the frantic clutch of the drowning man in the practice, long current in the cinema, of viewing contemporary life through the spectacles of the 'thirties. Great capital is made from this aberration by the producers of British comedies. The idea that a doctor, lawyer, or even a student should act in an unsteady, or so-called 'bohemian' manner is the basic impulse behind the British comedy film; the sight of a judge in his braces evokes shrieks of laughter from even the most sophisticated of audiences.

Now the race of bohemians, to which those comedies allude, has been extinct for at least twenty years. Its national characteristic was that a rich man (in money, antecedents, or intellect) should act like a poor one, either by inclination or by compulsion. *La Vie Boheme*, while it lasted, was never self-conscious — it was played out naturally. Today, however, the social situation has liquidated the bohemian. Make no mistake, he is gone forever. Although we laugh when the respectable, opulent doctors and barristers of the screen drive ancient cars, or eat fish and chips from a newspaper, our merriment is nowadays unfounded, for the closely defined society that demanded a doctor to behave according to a fixed code of customs and conventions has disintegrated. The professional man who acted like a bohemian, was attacking the hidebound circles in which he was expected to move; it was an unconscious anarchy, involving an attack on society itself.

But the society of today (we like to think) is not hidebound. It purports to be classless, and its conventions are vastly different from those which obtained in the past. Thus bohemianism, so far as it professes to be a revolt against convention, is invalid, under present circumstances. It is now the exception for people of standing, or students, to possess a background of tradition and special manners. Thus a liking for jazz, which has lost its power to shock, is no more bohemian than it is significant of integrity. It signifies as much dissatisfaction with society as a ride on a trolley-bus.

Deeply involved with the view of a conventionalised society is the conception of the pattern hero; here the change in the past twenty years or so is instantly noticeable: yet he is still judged by the ideals of between-the-wars!

Great Britain used to set the standard in heroes. A man of any worth had the full public school turn-out: he combined the leadership and courageousness of the Duke of Wellington, the wit and *panache* of Oscar Wilde, and the profile of Ivor Novello. The woodcut from the girls' paper was vitalised on the screen. Millions of women, at whom this most unlikely character was aimed, could escape from their drab quotidian existences into the arms of a home-counties Adonis.

The pre-war American cinema, significantly, followed suit. Their hero was, bating the accent, an exact replica of ours. In these days, when the cinema was not ashamed to know itself as an escape mechanism, everyone looked for perfection; today things are changed. The decline of Britain as a world power has hastened the disappearance of her ideal, young pattern hero — the last discredited remnants of his glory being caricatured in the film roles of David Tomlinson. The Americans set the standard nowadays, and they search further down the social scale for their heroes. Significantly they do not, like the



Russian cinema, find him in the working class, but in the jungle of bourgeois 'life'. The clue here comes from the strip cartoon, with its mackintoshed young gulper of 'I guess', who acts out a conscious assertion of unscrupulous individualism, on the windy side of the law. This young man is pathologically keen to acquire the appointments of good living, which consist in owning a flashy car (not at all like his precursor's noble open-tourer), gambling at Las Vegas (the nearest one can get, these days, to Sodom and Gomorrah), and hanging about nightclubs. He fancies himself, mistakenly, in the same position as the bohemian — as a social iconoclast, the deadly enemy of officialdom, bureaucracy, and stuffiness. His main dislike is to be 'pushed around'.

Ironically, the influence of the American pattern hero on this country has thrown up an entirely new type, the obnoxious television personality, recognizable by his significant haircut, streamlined suit, and a phoney hint of the U.S.A. in his voice (the Oxford accent having fallen into contempt). This character is rapidly dominating the screen, as the only type of manhood deemed worthy of admiration; he is acted by Mr. Bogarde in the 'Doctor' series of films, and reappears, in the spate of neo-Gothic scenarios, as the 'scientist' who successfully copes with monsters and radio-active horrors.

But another, far more insidious trend, is noticeable. This is the further degrading of the hero to rock-bottom level. The classless, trench-coated, serious hero of the 'forties, in whom there was so much of which we could approve, has given place to the avowed gutter-snipe, the amusement-arcade lounge, barely too old to be called a juvenile. This was a commercial inevitability; the film industry was bound to discover its largest potential audience. Hence, since the 'forties, heroes have been getting younger. There is a deliberate turning away from the problems of what used to be regarded as martyrdom, towards adolescence. With all the acumen of a share-pusher, producers invest the teen-age brat with the stature of a hero, pursuing such lines as 'a right to one's own independence', of freedom from adults, and our old friend, the dislike of being 'pushed around'. The immature hero vicariously enacts the secret longings of the greater majority of film-goers. The cinema is helping certain political theorists to sustain a situation, long established in America, where adolescence is prolonged into middle life. The adolescent is not treated as an embryo man, but as the finished article. His qualities of inarticulateness, and a need for violence as the only mode of emotional and sexual expression, are being turned into qualities of normality, on the screen. The good old American anti-intellectualism, and dislike of individual difference (shown admirably in *Tea and Sympathy* where the balance of sympathy overtly lay with the hollow young 'regular guy', in flagrant perversion of the written play), have already taken fast hold here. It is all symptomatic of the urge towards standardisation that is at work today. It used to be the proud claim of this country that it taught its youth to think as individuals. Unless we are very careful, we shall soon be doing all our thinking, as they do in America, in teams. The continued glorification of mass-approval (put into actual practice at Little Rock) will one day sound the death knell of individual endeavour. Welfare State or no, the world will be a much duller place.

Now the screen heroine, and, in fact, the entire attitude to sex, have undergone some curious changes since the pre-war years, largely due to the commercially profitable disregard of maturity. The woman is no longer treated as a distinctive individual, but, as the adolescent sees her, like a sexual mechanism. The days of Garbo and Dietrich (as in *The Blue Angel*) are over; the subtler connotations of womanhood are at a discount. Monroe, Mansfield, Bardot, are not embarrassed by their pathological inability to act; they satisfy today's audiences by merely existing as a symbol of the female genitalia. The film actress is become the drawing-on-the-lavatory-wall come to life — this is borne out by the artificial emphasis on the breasts, as the sole repository of a woman's selfhood. This is a significant perversion of the erotic-aesthetic, for every man knows, and every pre-war film producer knew, that the thigh is the area of erotogenic significance. The Hayes Office censorship is very touchy about this, and a peculiar paradox has arisen. A certain laxity in dialogue attends the type



of scenario that producers describe as 'frank'. This means that clinical conditions (such as homosexuality in *Tea and Sympathy* and sterility in *The Sun Also Rises*) may be hinted at in the most indirect terms. Basically, this is a healthy trend. But Mrs. Grundy has merely changed hats. A new prudery has arisen on the visual (the most important) level. Whereas scenes of female undress have increased since the 'thirties, the garments that new screen sirens discard with laborious frequency, bear no similarity to those worn in real life. Why are the undergarments that play such a vital role in the films of Bardot, etc., made of plastic curtaining? Why did the lady in *Silk Stockings* wear tights and not stockings? The answer to these questions could give Freud and Margaret Mead quite a number of field days. The taboos of Polynesia aren't a patch on those of Hollywood or Elstree, where the target to be aimed at seems to be a washable-plastic sexuality. This undoubtedly bears some of the blame for the phenomenal rate of broken marriages in America. It is only an adolescent mentality that can entertain this bogus sexualism, deodorised and Tide-clean. It can provide a warmth and a happiness that is about as substantial as an un-neurotic as the tranquiliser pill.

This degeneration of the screen woman to the depersonalized vehicle for the female genitalia has caused scenarios to boast a monotonous sameness, limited to the antics of the plural males sniffing round the prospective mate at rutting time. The female wears an expression that has become second nature to all teenagers in Britain and the U.S.A. — The cinematic attitude of bored indifference has caught on like wildfire in the world of young people, obviously because qualities of wit or physique are no longer needed to ape a film star. The alteration in the balance of the sexes has had something to do with this. After the First World War, screen females had to act, and the gentlemen merely had to look beautiful — an activity of which Valentino was the supreme exponent. The boot is now on the other foot. John Mills and Co. act like mad, while mesdames Martinelli and Gayson perform the noble function of filling sweaters to bursting point.

But the picture (to use an appropriate metaphor) is not entirely depressing. Socialism has made its inevitable impact in a manner that promises to be salutary. Although it must bear some of the blame for the practice of glorifying the teen-age lout, it is responsible for films dealing (in intention at least) with aspects of real life, and for dispensing with the artificial dream world into which the pre-war cinema escaped. It is, at very long last, making it possible for the working classes to be treated without patronising humour, or false sentiment. (I must make it clear that by 'socialism' I refer to an invisible contemporary ethic of life, and not to the Parliamentary Labour Party!)

However the American film industry still lacks integrity — look at the way "1984" was castrated. The American attitude to religion and philosophical systems manifests itself in Western and anti-communist films. God is conceived (I speak without blasphemy) as an omnipotent sheriff, who is as aware of the dangers of individualistic thought, as he is incapable of indulging therein. Virtue is nonentity, and the rule of life is to live and think like the man next door — or rather the newspaper that the man next door reads. In a way this is inevitable, for there is no obvious social wrong left to rebel against. Yet whether life as film producers think it should be lived can be happy and satisfying, is something that the articulate individual must decide for himself. Before the war, it was significant of integrity to identify one's values with those of the working class. Nowadays, in our near-classless society, things are different. Unless one breaks away from the ideals of the 'Admass', with its holiday-camp aesthetic, and glorification of the second rate, one renounces adulthood; the cinema, in this respect, has let us down. It has also corrupted the Continental cinema, turning what was a flair for social realism into a machine for tumescent thrills.

The cinema must learn to grow up. It can make a start by restoring the warmer standards of twenty-five years ago, when films contained a genuine love interest, with the libidinous element held in subordination; and, on the other hand, by emphasising the social morality of the present, with its abnegation of any form of violence. Only then can we genuinely say that the Cinema has progressed since the pre-war years, and has not merely manifested change.

# The Paradox of Bride Price

*Tony N. Ukaigwe*

It is difficult to resist the temptation to write on marriage, a subject which many young men are loathe to discuss these days, especially if they have been initiated into the mysteries of "dating and date-keeping"; for births, deaths, marriages, the various successful consummations and their corollaries are legitimate parts of the real drama of life and an examination of the science of bride-price as practised in some parts of Nigeria cannot help imparting some thrill. Bride-price is the money given to the parents of the bride-to-be by the prospective son-in-law in order to be allowed to marry her. It is a practise which is universal, proper and grown-up in the East and, to a certain extent, in the West. Bride-price, a pledge rather than a commodity-value, varies in different parts of the country where it is practised.

The practice of paying cash in order to take away the bride (prices ranged from ten to about fifty pounds before the War) increased to alarming proportions after the War and many suitors were forced to deposit over a hundred pounds before marriage. It was a harrowing and miserable period for young bachelors; some audaciously wise (but not very wisely) refused to marry. They regarded the high bride-price with an overtone of contemptuous disbelief and would rather "buy a car than buy a female." Others were prepared to "sell all they possessed" in order to get the girl of their choice; sadly willing to pay exorbitantly and hope for the best, for we are governed by circumstances, we cannot govern them. A few years ago, the Government of the Eastern Region stepped in with a control fixed at a maximum price not exceeding about forty pounds, and any parents offering their daughters at a much higher price would be liable to prosecution. But the effectiveness of this control is doubtful as transactions can still be made by back-door means.

Let us not waste sympathy on the suitor who has paid an exorbitant price, for this invariably lends respectability to the girl's association with other women and even men. she is proud of her fiance who has given this pledge of his ability to maintain her and care for her, and I will risk saying at this point that brides-to-be believe among themselves with much piety that "where there's money there's happiness". It is a universal error. Parents who charge a high price for their daughters are well aware of the responsibility it entails, and they vouch for the training, the tough and dedicated training which Nigerian girls undergo in their home preparatory to marriage. Any girl who hopes to marry should know how to look after her own children; her hands, those strong, capable and slightly work-stained hands, give babies a sense of security, and so from childhood parents give their daughters a stricter training for their future life than they give to boys. They are trained to be useful, able, delightful, very unstuffy, dependable, and are never left unchided for indiscretions. Courtship, therefore, is not the random, impulsive way people act and react in this country and other parts of Western Europe, where the bride-price is paid as dowry in many forms by the bride's parents or guardian, and where many girls with more money than charm and sense wear all their wealth on their persons in order to attract young men who, one might almost say, go about, notebook in hand, jotting down helpful hints. There is a creative, and perhaps a scholarly pleasure, in upholding the custom of buying the bride in Nigeria; it is a practice which may seem unsettling on the face of it, but which is really a healthy social phenomenon. Marriage is a social event and much more so in Nigeria than elsewhere; it brings together two families, two villages, two towns, in a bond of friendship, and weddings with over six hundred guests are very common. It is an occasion for music, dancing and merry-making and requires preparation and sound training. Any wonder, then, that some



couples court for six years or more before getting married! The rewards of a happy married life demand self-sacrifice and patient and unremitting toil. Time, tact and temper are essential ingredients.

There is a striking paradox in the practise of bride-price; neither in Europe nor elsewhere are people married without one party contributing something; in Europe the brides' families, in Nigeria the suitors, where the money paid by the suitor is invariably returned to him in kind, on the wedding-day, in the form of dowry. The bride receives the dowry from her parents in proportion to the amount charged as the bride-price. A hundred pounds charge may in turn yield on the wedding-day a sewing-machine, an iron bed with double spiral springs, trunk-boxes well stuffed with clothes and bedding, some cash, a lady's bicycle, crockery and cooking utensils. In parts of Ibo-land foodstuff, poultry and livestock also accompany these, and quite often the money paid as the bride-price "returns" entirely in the form of dowry especially if the bride's parents are sufficiently wealthy. It is perhaps significant that a man who pays about twenty pounds does not expect much more than a few odd pounds, a couple of gowns and frocks, and a cheap suitcase, and it is uncomfortably true that a poor dowry stigmatises a woman as a pauper and she wears this complex for life.

Bride-price then, if it is not abused, is no evil thing. It is nothing but an agreed sum of money paid to the father-in-law to help buy the presents and prepare the dowry. It would be sheer indiscretion to regard it with soul-rattling cynicism, for did not Adam himself give a rib from his side for the woman he loved and did not Jacob toil for seven years for the wrong woman and fourteen for the woman he adored? No sacrifice is too great for a wife; she is by no means the man's property or slave by virtue of the bride-price although, as in every part of the world, man is the head of the family, and the ruler in major issues. Women who are secured at a high cost are guarded with jealous pride and care, for the husbands know how "expensive" they have been, and a man treasures what he has suffered to obtain. The women for their part develop a sense of belonging, a feeling of adequacy, and they conduct themselves with propriety in the discharge of their family duties. There is in short a sense of mission on both sides and this makes for stability. Divorce is not common, but where it occurs (unless the marriage has been solemnised in a Christian Church) the bride-price is refunded, either partially or wholly, according to the length of time the couple have lived together, and the number of children born to the marriage. It is not idle to speculate that where bride-price is virtually absent, divorce is rampant, for the bride feels no obligation to the husband if she finds married life irritable and disillusioned. She proclaims the equality of the sexes and displays in full measure those not-too-civilized traits which the emancipation of women has brought in its trail, for marriage, we are told, is a gamble. It may well be, but the success of marriage will stand or fall with the realisation of the responsibilities of both parties, as well as the sacredness of the vocation in which the partakers enjoy equal rights theoretically and know how to avail themselves of them. Intelligence will give them eyes and while our age is beginning to despair let us fall back on hope. The tragedy of our age, an age terribly complicated as it is, is that people's minds are being trained to think in cliches, and "for better or for worse" takes on a sinister meaning, while the rearing of children in marriage becomes a taboo in "civilised" society. There is something healing and liberating in family life, and the success of marriage depends on the attitude with which we go into it. Unfortunately the fire of optimism burns low in our world today and pessimism dominates the hearts of most bachelors.



# At Your Convenience

*A lighthearted survey of the public convenience  
at home and abroad, with an introduction by  
Peter W. Hancock and anecdotes retold by  
Peter W. B. Hall*

In the course of a long and intensive study of the sanitary habits of our own and other nations I have reached the conclusion that not only may the relative level of civilisation but also the political actions of a nation be thus equated.

France, although nominally a Republic, still retains some of the evils of the Ancien Régime, namely the vicious custom of "farming-out". This has spread from the Intendants down to the humble 'guardienne'. The individual standard will differ from convenience to convenience and thus the rate of tipping similarly fluctuates. These standards of service, comfort and cleanliness vary from the leaf-strewn to the homely-pleasant, via the antiseptically scrubbed and shined. I remember with particular affection one which was beautifully furnished with lots of little polished tables with flowers and lace mats on them. A general atmosphere of welcome and comfort encouraged an easy flow of francs from pocket to tin bowl, with the reward of a grateful "Merci bien, Monsieur."

Among les gardiennes themselves there is keen competition for the best position. The most sought after and valuable sites are in l'Avenue de l'Opera and l'Etoile. It is here of course that Americans are sure to over-tip generously for the privilege of enjoying experiences which to the French are commonplace and to the American are "simply cute".

The standard deteriorates as one leaves the centre of Paris. The tourist rarely penetrates further than Les Invalides and the resultant drop in revenue is alarming. From the secluded comfort of the Etoile to the barbaric splendour of Montparnasse — a sheet of tin wrapped round air — provides a contrast which is at once significant and to the Englishman disconcerting in the extreme.

Further it is a phenomenon in the Code Napoleon that to urinate on the King's/President's highway is *not* an offence. The French, usually so blithely contemptuous of all rules and regulations, seem to find fulfilment and consummate joy in the exploiting of this anomaly. This sight, which in England would call down the instant wrath of the police, not to mention assorted maiden ladies, here arouses no mention, no interest and no flood of outrage expressed under the time-honoured pseudonym of "pro bono publico". Herein may be seen the freshness or alternatively the basic decadence which is modern France.

From the natural rather than social habits of the French to the purely social habits of the American. The contrast is huge when one considers the introduction of the public convenience of the Canine. Here beautifully all-American white clad kennel-maids overlay the natural habits of the animal with the superficial veneer of the human. The obsession of the American for propriety and glitter is well illustrated in this facet of national pride and civilisation.

A sideline of this fascinating study is the Modi Operandi. So many various methods of operation are found which range from the clumsily-frightening to the profoundly satisfying — but that's another story.

\* \* \*

Great Aunt Kitty loved to travel and this year her journey's end was Rome. Shortly after her arrival at the plush tourist hotel, as she was making for the Ladies' Room, she was stopped in her tracks by the emergence of a plump and dapper little Signor from the entrance of the convenience. Now Aunt Kitty was the headmistress of a girls' private school in the Lancashire Lake District — a strictly straight-laced establishment where the three

Rs, right, 'rong and retribution, dominated the curriculum. The sight of a man on the threshold of the Ladies' Room made her blood run cold; she had read about such things in the Sunday newspapers but she thought it could never happen to her. But the Italian, pirouetting on his neat little toes, blew out his chest, flashed her a smile and with a gallant bow and wave of his arm, swept Great Aunt Kitty on to her appointment.

\* \* \*



A friend of my brother's who had had a reputation as a japester in Oxford ever since he drugged St. John's swans with aspirin, was making his way to the famous 'Trinity Square Suite' in Nottingham's busy shopping centre. He noticed a sign while he was there which practically ordered him to wash his hands — 'for your sake and for the sake of others'. Ted complied but insisted on being given a hand-towel free of charge. "It's tuppence, Sir," said the attendant regretfully. "I refuse to pay. Kindly pass me a towel —

both for my sake and for the sake of others." The harassed attendant did not realise how true Ted's warning about the convenience of 'others' was to prove. The argument swelled, Ted dragged in a policeman from the street above, the Sanitary Engineer was phoned, then the City Health Department and finally the parties concerned would be satisfied with nothing less than a visit to the magnificent council chambers fronting the City Square.

Over luncheon with the Civic Dignitary, Ted won his case, free towels and the freedom of the City of Nottingham lavatories.

\* \* \*

Friends of ours visiting France found the attention of the hotel's patrons centred on the tall, angular woman whose loud voice, tweeds and leathery complexion cried out, 'British'. Leaving the side of her staid consort, the lady disappeared through a side-door in the lobby. A few seconds later a delighted shriek resounded through the lobby: "Reginald, Reginald, Do come and see the largest lavatory in the WORLD!"..

\* \* \*

A charming female student acquaintance of ours has found that the new kind of toilet rolls — advertised in different colours and as "soft to the touch" — are very useful for removing excess make-up from the face. And it was for this purpose that she went into a store to buy a new one. Learning that they only had double-packs left, she involuntarily remarked to the startled assistant: "Oh, but I can't possibly use all that in a term...."

\* \* \*

Field latrines are a rich source of humour as any soldier can testify. Once, on a mountain-side on the Luxembourg frontier 2nd Infantry Division Rear HQ set up its own canvas and timber-frame flapper — the work of a R.E.M.E. carpenter and coach-trimmer. A strong wind blew up whirling the snow round the 'Sentry Box' and no one had the courage to follow the white tape which led through the blizzard to the tarpaulin door. In the end, Ginger the perky Clapham carpenter responsible for the construction of the convenience,

made his bid for fame.

All was well for the first few seconds but then, with a creak, the frame began to topple as the snow was whipped away from the foundations. The framework shuddered as it inclined fully into the gale. Suddenly the canvas was torn free and the whole edifice was caught up in a flurry of snow leaving Ginger to rue the inefficiency of his handiwork as he watched canvas and timber bowl down into the valley from what was correctly termed, 'an exposed position'.

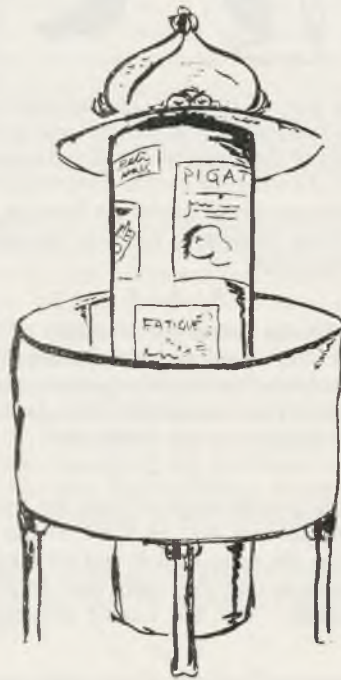
\* \* \*

The father of one of my Cambridge friends claims to have begun his life as a mystic in an Italian toilet where his first reaction to the ice-cold jet of water which shot from the pedestal was: "How can I account for the familiarity of this sensation?"

\* \* \*

San Malo in Brittany is a town within a town. The gates to the old inner city bear the inscription, 'San Malo Inter Muros'. Outside the walls is the town camping site where the newly built men's urinals were exposed — in true continental style — to common view.

Four Leeds' undergraduates, having suffered what to them was 'foreign indignity', left a plaque to commemorate the occasion: 'San Malo Contra Muros'.



THE END



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## Contributors

JUDITH CORDEN is a Third-year Social Studies student and is also the secretary of the War on Want Community in the Union. She can't really stand smoke or drink and thinks that the nicest thing about Leeds is that you can get out of it quickly.

HARRY FREEDMAN is *still* not keen on work. Articles written for all occasions, political, serious or downright barmy. A regular and ever welcome visitor to "Gryphon" office, though in Hall his piano renderings of patriotic tunes in an off-key (Fault of the sheet-music, he says) make his presence less desirable!

BILL LAUGHEY is a Second-Year General Arts student. HorrorScopes made to measure. Writes good stories but is often suffering from a surfeit of Union News. Has had a number of his stories published professionally.

TONY UKAIGWE graduated last June and is still waiting for a passage home to Nigeria. He remains a bachelor but "I don't hate girls". His other interest is refereeing for Leeds and District Football League. When his ship comes in he intends to work for the education department in Nigeria.

PETER W. HANCOCK has perfected the art of getting into local cinemas without paying. Has been known to attend lectures when inspiration has dried up. Did a great deal of original research for his article, involving him in many personal inconveniences.

PETER W. B. HALL is still a second year student but hopes to do better next year. We doubt if he will better his cover which remains to grace "Gryphon" a second time. An interesting young man who can always be relied upon to know someone who knows somebody else . .

JOHN HOUGHAM likes minding his own business but has recently been suffering from an overdose of minding "Gryphon" 's. Hobbies include coffee, a car called Willy, and keeping the Editor on the straight and narrow.

JEFFREY D. SOESTER is now taking a Diploma of Education in London University after completing an English Literature degree here. Would much have preferred to live in the 1900's when there were no Engineers, or in the 1920's when his own clothes would have been new and he could have worn a homburg hat and trench-coat to his heart's content.

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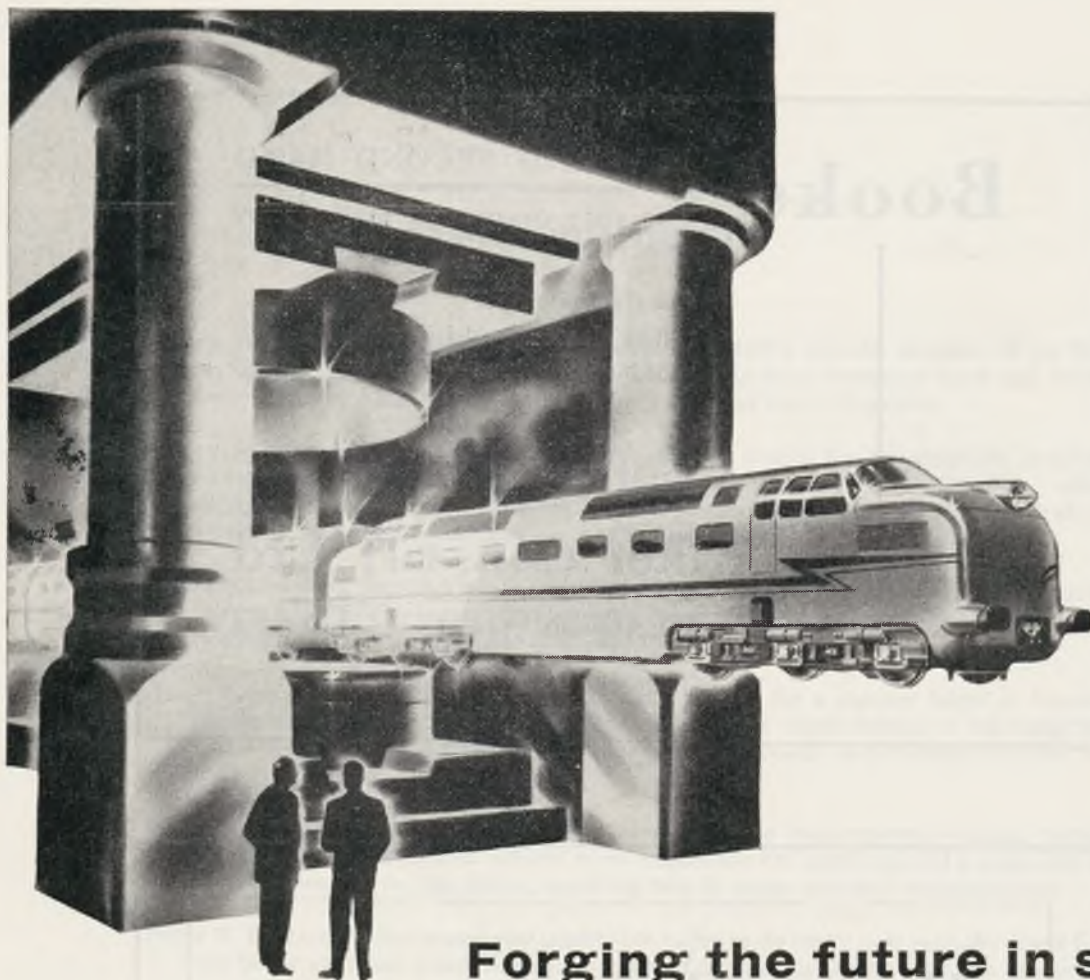
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