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# THE GRYPHON



*Summer*  
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JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



## EDITORIAL

*Let's be decadent* Calendar reform has often been advocated—an odd number of days in a week, an irregular number of days in the months and the erratic falling of such annual events as Easter all throw a fog over mental time-keeping. We're not concerned here with a permanent or national solution, but would suggest a practical experiment to the University authorities—let us in term have ten-day weeks. As it is we have about ten seven-day weeks, which would become seven of ten days each, and we could at the same time observe the ordinary calendar for external events. Such a reform might be chaotic if applied to the whole country, but we are convinced that there need be no upheaval in our own closed society.

Surely an amazing number of ills can be traced to the rapid revolution of the academic wheel to which we're tied, and could be cured by its retarding. The weekly essay has to be prepared, the less thoroughly with the less time—three more days might cause the tutor less unease. The lecturer would not have to prepare endless hours of speech, but could give greater emphasis to what is at the heart of his subject and supplement it with printed notes. There wouldn't be so many Monday 9 o'clocks. Societies' functions would come round less frequently, and we might be able to support properly *all* those we've joined. There are a good many improvements on similar lines—what it all amounts to is that there'd be a slackening of life's speed and tension, more leisure time for us to work on our own, and perhaps not so much of an impression that the whole place is a forcing-house for brain and not much else.

Should our suggestion find an adopter we have gone to Norse and Celtic mythology to pick mentors for the three extra days, and we favour Skulday (after the third Norn (Fate) who governs the future), Balderday (god of light) and Branday (lord of the Welsh Celtic underworld and patron of poetry). Perhaps usage would corrupt these a little—some variations suggest themselves.

**“Have you no larger bricks?”** Where’s the fun of writing a controversial article if no-one else joins in? This session we began with a knock at the Parkinson and had to go out with a lantern to find a defender. And now we’ve sent a broadside at Leeds to which no reply at all is forthcoming. No more controversy for us—short of blowing the caf. wing off the Union we’re powerless to meet the definition of the word.

Two Leeds newspapers took up the cudgels, *The Yorkshire Post* with tolerance and the *Yorkshire Evening News* by quoting us and leaving its readers to comment (one indignant citizen at Crossgates did). Now we said it was no use tangling with the newspapers because they always have the last word—if we annoy them today they can hit back tomorrow, and have then about 130 days’ grace before our riposte. But *one day* after its pained protest that we should say ‘the local press. . . . sits waiting for something to distort to our disadvantage,’ the *Yorkshire Evening News* impertinently told us that we must not invite the I.U.S. to the Union, hinting that behind our hospitality lurked a sinister purpose, and it contrived to be anti-Communist and anti-*Gryphon* in the same editorial. We hadn’t intended to add anything to our last editorial, but when your opponent proves your case you want to crow a little.

**Everyone a winner** Again we stress that *The Gryphon’s* no-one’s pet preserve—it’s open to anyone in the University who can write. But very few *do* write. Because the Union as a whole has scared itself off *Gryphon*: has convinced itself that only ‘literary’ contributions stand a chance and that to be comprehensible is to be rejected by the editorial clique. This just isn’t so. Clarity of prose is within everyone’s reach—to study English literature is only to learn what a subtle superstructure can be built on to straightforward telling. “The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty about words, “which is to be master—that’s all.”

There are two pieces in this issue which bear this out—Tony Cain’s mountaineering diary and Derrick Metcalfe’s prose-poem. Both are completely successful from their authors’ points of view: each has expressed something in a mind by



using everyday words one after another in special conjunctions. Everyone tends to 'visualise' abstract conceptions. 'An attempt on Naranjo de Bulnes' presents itself, once read, as a line with a sequence of events falling logically one by one upon it—perhaps this line is not straight, and takes the configuration of our mental picture of the mountainside. 'Somber Song' is not at all like that—its impact is as an entirety, it catches a mood, an impression. It is a piece of conscious craftsmanship.

But the odd thing is that our Union of three thousand believes, by-and-large, that there are scores of students who can write like Derrick Metcalfe, and that to these we fling open our pages, and that there are few who can write like Tony Cain, and who wouldn't stand a chance if they did. What people think and do is interesting. What has been thought and done can be easily expressed in writing. And *The Gryphon* is the place where the individual can share his unique experience with the rest of the University.

***Solution, but nothing solved*** The competition in the last issue of *The Gryphon* fell quite flat. We'd hoped it would prove sales-bait, and that people who'll buy a raffle-ticket for a shilling might hazard a chance at some easy money when the ticket had a magazine attached to it. The winning correct entry, for which Miss Erica Cleaver and Mr. Alan Teviotdale have received the half-guinea prize, was in fact the *only* entry. But we still think the money was worth *competing* for—our seven pictures were chosen from memory of things noticed: we didn't trot round the obscurer corners of the University looking for the unnoticeable. We're forced into the unhealthy attitude of slating our public—we must claim either that we are super-observant, and that everyone else rushes from objective to objective with dull and unseeing eye, or turn to our generation's watchword, 'apathy.' These aren't satisfactory reasons, but the disappointment remains.

But not to make a mountain: here are the identifications. No. 1 is any of the four brass-cased clocks which are mounted on the catalogue in the Brotherton Library, and No. 2 is the

two fishes (Pisces) carved in relief as part of the Zodiacal design round the Veale Memorial Clock which is above the entrance to the Brotherton from the Parkinson Central Court. The gargoyle head of No. 3 is in cast-iron, and two of them can be seen on the handrails outside the back door of the Baines Wing straight through from the Great Hall entrance. No. 4, the Y.C. monogram, is up high round the Great Hall—sixteen times repeated. 5 and 6 are both open-air carvings let into the main fabric on University Road: the former, a teazle, is on the Textiles Building, alone and as part of the Clothworkers' Company's Arms, and the spatted foot is that of one of the money-changers on the Eric Gill War Memorial. No. 7, the words 'Education and Philanthropy,' forms part of a plaque outside the General Lecture Theatre to Edward Baines, after whom the whole wing was named.

*Varia — not trivia* A good many people work in the Union Library. Last year as exams drew near a mechanical shovel began work on the building site: this year it seems likely to be pneumatic drills. English summers are hot enough for open windows, so we'll be able to follow the activities of the jolly workmen in any case. It's at times like these that the future generations who will use the completed building become more shadowy and more tiresome.

Invigilators can be a major hazard in examination rooms. They talk to visitors; they talk on the telephone; they point out subtleties in the framing of questions when we've either read them properly or botched them beyond repair in the time left. They walk up and down and knock papers off our desks with their long sleeves. An allowance of marks for competitors under a notorious offender would not be practicable; let us remind him only that although the three hours are tedious for him, it is the one period when a member of staff becomes an object of envy.

Back to the Parkinson. Its apologist in our columns, Mr. Conway Broughton, answered the points we raised and went on to say that "this Central Court could, and should, be all that its founder desired and its architect planned.

But first three fresh conditions must be fulfilled . . . a threefold provision of Food, Furniture and Friendship is required. Let us call them the three F's of sociality." Your friends are your affair. For furniture—the ponderous seats provided will take 24 of you (but any one person can then only be *sociable* with three others, as between every seat is a wide space with a screen or showcase), and there are inviting little flat spaces at the bases of the (sham) pillars, if you can stand the cold on your fundament. As the stone is not hard, a requirement not to kick or put a foot on these places is necessary, but there's also an extraordinary ruling by the planning engineer that they mustn't be *sat on!* The toe of St. Peter's statue in his church at Rome has been worn away by the soft lips of worshippers—is there a fear that the Parkinson will be dented by the soft posteriors of undergraduates? Then there's food. No-one wants to see the Court turned into a snackbar, but a case could be made out for the discreet provision of coffee—condemned to stand about we just don't stay in the Court long enough to respond to it. Workers in the City are made free of some pleasant places in their lunch-hour, but repair to the Parkinson with the homely sandwich and again a porter will come with orders from the planning engineer—faith, we must put up our tripes and begone. A well-polished floor is desirable only, not sacred. That this ornate and expensive corridor should have to be so protected from those who use it is a sad confession that it has no appeal of its own—we shouldn't think the Greeks littered the Akropolis with their sandwich-wrappings. And if the people who use it don't respect it a showcase mentality sets about simulating the effects of respect with the effects of regulations. There's a fear that the Court might come to look shabby and no thought that it might come to look used. It was expected, when the building was designed in pre-Union days, that the Court would become a meeting-place. Dr. Parkinson asked for "an entrance hall which would leave an indelible impression on the mind of the student . . . . . which he would remember in after years with affection." The impression made on newcomers must remain an incalculable, but affection belongs to the warmer side of humanity, and the Parkinson's administration to the colder.



*Ronald Holmes*

THE LAYING TO EARTH  
OF JAMES SMITH

PATRICK BELCHED LOUDLY and sat down on a tombstone. "God, I need a drink," he said to himself. He was, in fact, waiting for the tavern to reopen, having exhausted his extra-mural supply of liquor. He had wandered aimlessly into the cemetery whilst passing the time away.

He noticed a burial was in progress. His empty gaze turned to surprise when he saw they were burying his cousin Jim, one of his closest friends. He was quite sure of this because Jim was sat on the coffin-lid having a last smoke. Patrick rose quickly and went over to pay his last respects.

Jim was talking to a young man who moved away as Patrick walked up. Jim's face warmed pleasantly.

"Thought you weren't coming," he said.

"Never heard anything about it. Just happened to be passing and luckily I noticed it. Who was that?" Patrick pointed at the departing figure.

"Just a medical student trying to cadge my eyes and anything going. Spun a hard-luck story."

Jim stubbed the butt of his cigarette on the coffin. This brought a sharp cry from Aunt Tabitha; "Jim, mind the coffin."

"It's a very nice coffin," Patrick remarked.

"Figured oak, quite nice," replied Jim unenthusiastically.

"Thirty pounds that cost," put in Aunt Tabitha sharply, "thirty pounds your poor old mother didn't get."

Jim whispered, "She's a bit upset because I wouldn't be cremated."

Patrick peered down on to the grave. "It's a very nice grave," he said.

"Oxford Clay with a little Boulder Clay on top. It's not really my cup of tea. I prefer the other cemetery myself,

there's a local outcrop of Keuper Marls. Keuper makes a lovely grave. It's also near the place I found my first Levalloisian artifacts."

"For goodness' sake stop moaning," said Aunt Tabitha. "First you wanted a death-mask like St. Clare of Assisi, and then you wanted a photograph, of all things, on your tombstone."

"They have them in Italy," Jim put in. "I spent many a happy hour walking round a graveyard near Taranto. Special ones they are, printed on marble I think."

"Have you *got* a gravestone?" Patrick asked.

"Yes, I've been very lucky about that. I discovered a poor quality sandstone which will weather so badly and irregularly that all the writing will be eroded away in a few years' time—in fact, it'll become a positive eyesore. The Town and Country Planning people didn't know that when I got round them."

"Are you having an epitaph?"

"Well, I don't think so. I thought about 'Questi non hanna speranza di morte' from the Inferno, and a sentence from Axel Munthe: 'It will be lonely to be dead, but it cannot be much more lonely than to be alive.' But I don't think I'll bother. I'll just have my name and my ration-book serial number."

Patrick shuffled uneasily. "I'll miss you," he said.

"Yes." Jim smiled sadly, then brightened and asked, "Would you care to join me?"

Patrick started, then said, "That's a damned good idea. But the coffin's too small."

"Perhaps we could get a bigger one or a double one. Siamese twins must have 'em—the undertaker might have one in stock. I've got my patience cards," he added in a fierce whisper.

This proposal was quickly killed by the mourning relatives, led by Aunt Tabitha, who found the project unworkable, immoral and disgusting.

"Bloody lot of reactionaries," Jim muttered, but the matter ended there.

“ Well, I suppose it’s time I moved,” Jim said. “ Speech !” someone called, and “ Speech ! Speech !” it was taken up.


“ Don’t you dare stand on that coffin-lid in those boots,” said Aunt Tabitha.

“ I’ll put my slippers on now, as I’m being buried in them. It’s my last wish.” Jim removed his boots and put on his carpet-slippers. He rose and stood carefully on top of the coffin.

“ Friends,” he began. “ I just want to say Goodbye and Thank you. Funeral orations are often full of advice to those left behind. You’ll get no such rubbish from me. I’ve never been spurred on by any great principle, and my beliefs aren’t worth tuppence. I have generally, though fortunately not consistently, advocated a policy of peaceful resignation. My political watchword was ‘ drift’. The only ambition I ever suffered from was a desire to learn to ride a one-wheeled bicycle. I have no message for future generations . . . and now there are just two announcements I’ve been asked to make. The first is that my will is being read at my house at 10-30 tomorrow morning. I hope there is a good attendance and I appeal to you all to turn up and make it a success. The second is that after the ceremony a collection will be taken for the Widows and Orphans Fund. Several mourning telegrams have just arrived. I’d better read them out.”

Jim started reading the telegrams quickly. As he did so Patrick turned and walked slowly away with sadness on his face and sorrow in his heart. He felt confused, for his feelings were complex. He was filled with a genuine sorrow at the loss of Jim, and horror at the thought of his decay, but he was also filled with frustration and anger at the stupid people who would not let him go with his cousin. Just irrational prejudice, he thought, another example of the flight from reason. Each person must be laid to rest in his own narrow, cold, boring, lonely grave because society decrees it. There was some deep question of social philosophy here, he thought, but he couldn’t quite work it out.

He crossed a patch of sorrel and sourgrass and reached the gate. He looked up and saw a swift wheeling, which reminded him of the lice with which swifts are covered. A hunting-wasp passed close by and he thought of the terror-stricken spider in whose paralyzed body it must have hatched out. In the hedgerow a butcher-bird was impaling a beetle on a thorn. Patrick snorted, "God, I need a drink." He squelched the life out of a grub with his right boot and crossed the road to the tavern.

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## *Tony Cain*

### AN ATTEMPT ON NARANJO de BULNES

[*Extracts from the diary of a climbing holiday in the Picos de Europa, Spain, July, 1951. The diary forms the report to the Trustees of the C. A. Smith Fund, which exists to help members of Lyddon Hall to take "adventurous and unusual" holidays abroad.*]

*Monday, July 2nd.*

[The party of four men climbs to the col.]

**F**ROM THE COL WE HAD a breathtaking view of Naranjo de Bulnes. It rose up facing us, several thousand feet of the smoothest, most unbroken rock I have ever seen, and yet it had magnificent symmetry and balance, making it a truly great peak. With one accord we said, "We'll never get up that." Yet we were determined to get to grips with it.

We levelled ourselves places on the scree edges for the night. Then we made a crude meal and a good cup of coffee apiece. We then retired to our sleeping bags. Harry and Chris were on a wide ledge under a rock while I was on a narrow scree ledge overlooking a sizeable drop, and Stan levelled himself a platform of snow in a bergschrund.\* For safety, I passed a rope round my sleeping bag and belayed it before I retired. We lay admiring the view before we went to sleep. The most fantastic spires and peaks all round us slowly changed colour as the sun went down—first golden and then pink until the colour faded, and it seemed to be pitch dark before we realised it.

*Tuesday, July 3rd.*

[The climb begins after breakfast.]

We lost a bit of time in traversing some slabs to the foot of the East wall. We were then confronted with a vast series of slabs stretching up for about 2,000 ft. and steepening towards the top. The whole face reminded me of the West face of Gimmer Crag in Langdale, but magnified about ten times.

\* Gap between glacier and rock slope.

Harry and Chris decided that Stan and I should climb the East face today and form a judgment of the route and prospects of a way down, for us all to climb Naranjo by the ordinary route tomorrow if the East face should prove too stiff.

We therefore gathered all our equipment together—hot water bottles, slings, 16 pitons,\* a hammer, two ropes, and Stan and I set out up the slabs, hoping to gain the top of a crack formed where a large flake had split away. About 100 feet up we came to a halt. A bald slab stretched in every direction from our little belayless stance. I picked at it hopefully, got about 10 feet up and came down. Stan could get no further up it than I, but by walking round to the right we found that we might go to the top of the big flake, using its right-hand crack. This way looked steep and very sensational. It would mean crossing the crack and breaking out across its overhanging left wall to overcome a bulge 250 feet up. Again we set off.

Stan led-through with me for the first few hundred feet until we approached the bulge, then I went ahead. My way led up to the left into a vertical "V" chimney undercut, and fell away in an overhang below. A few feet up this I had to quit it for a further chimney on its left. The walls of this one were closer together and the left one overhung. This was the true crack on the right of the big flake and it looked pretty stiff and a bit rotten, so I used a piton as a running belay. Reassured that if anything gave way I would not fall much further than the piton, I carried on. The next 15 ft. were very hard, the chimney forcing me out as it narrowed and I had to turn round at its most awkward point and climb out on the overhanging, rotten-looking left wall. However, all held, and I found myself standing on a ledge big enough to accommodate one foot sideways. The section above looked very stiff—another overhang and smoother-looking than the last. I would feel safer doing it with Stan nearby, so I brought him up to my one-foot stance. Again there was no belay (there were very few anywhere on the climb), so I banged another piton in, and belayed to that. Changing over belays

\* Metal pegs for rope-holds.

was a tricky business, involving a lot of standing on one another's feet, and a delicate one, as we were in a very exposed position, perched between two overhangs, on a not too gently angled slab. But all went well and I started up to inspect the overhang. The bulge of it was very uncomfortable for the balance and I could see nothing useful with which to pull up. When I had forced my way as far as I could go against the bulge, I spotted a deep pocket hold, which, at full stretch, I grasped and used as a side pull to mantelshelf on to the top of the bulge. Another 20 ft. up a fairly easy groove brought me to a ledge with a belay, to which I brought Stan. We carried on up the groove for another 100 ft. or so until we came to another bulge, broken only by a lay-back crack in a corner. I tried this and found it too strenuous and we looked for an easier route to the side. There was no alternative except very smooth slabs, so I returned to the crack. I managed it at this attempt, though it was very strenuous and more suitable for starting a climb at Almscliff than for tackling half-way up a route of this length.

I continued up steep slabs and then a fairly easy chimney to a large glacia which extended some distance across the face. Stan joined me and we held a confab as to where our route lay. The slabs extended up for another few hundred feet and then abutted against a ferocious wall of brown rock, smooth and unbroken to the summit. Stan said we could at least go up the slabs and see if any way opened up when we got to them, so we did that, and stopped on a ledge near the top to look round us again.

We then realised that clouds were forming on the peaks and it was getting colder. We decided to get down quickly, and banged a piton in, preparing to abseil.\* Before we had threaded the rope it had started to hail. Moving as quickly as we could, we abseiled down to the ledge below. We gave the rope a tug. It came partly and then stuck and we couldn't shift it. There was nothing else for it—I climbed back solo to the ledge above, loosened the rope and abseiled back down it. The hail was now bouncing off the rocks and thunder crashing

\* To let themselves down by a rope looped round a rock or piton.

in the peaks around. The rope came through this time until it reached the end, when it must have stuck by the rubber ring in the end of the nylon rope. I could not climb back now as the rock was too wet to be safe. The position was desperate so we had to sacrifice something. I climbed as far as I safely could up towards the rope and then hammered it through with the piton hammer, leaving about 30 ft. behind. With the other rope tied to what we'd rescued, this gave us about 210 ft. of rope, allowing us to make abseils up to 100 ft. at a time.

We scrambled down a groove until we came to the lip of an overhang, where we banged in another piton and made another abseil. Again the rope would not pull down. We were standing in a shallow gully into which the water was now beginning to pour. Stan tried to climb up the rope which was running up the overhang. He failed and slid down the rope, landing in the gully quite heavily. It was too strenuous to manage in our present state. I knew without trying that I could not have got more than a few feet up that rope by arm strength alone and I knew what Stan must have put into it. The storm was thickening and we pondered on our chances of weathering it out. I thought of the cigarettes in my pocket and we had one each. They fell to pieces in our hands before we had smoked a fraction. We pressed ourselves in to the gully wall to get what shelter we could, while the hail and rain poured down. It seemed a very long and horrible time. Nature brought everything to bear on us. The hail fell like a solid wall, thunder crashed and boomed incessantly, water washed knee-deep into our gully bed, dislodging the scree floor on which we stood and sending stones and rocks down from above us in a crashing whizzing tornado of sound. Stan was hit on the shoulder by a stone and I suffered a similar blow on my knee. The sky was full of the stones, now falling almost as thickly as the hail.

We are not ashamed to admit that we prayed then, each with a sincerity and desperation which we had never used before and I hope never to use again. An event then occurred which I swear was as near an answer to a prayer as any could be. The storm eased slightly and the rope came down

at my first pull. Even though we had both swung on it before and never moved it, it came freely with my weak one-handed pull.

We still had a long way to get down, but it was as though we had been given a fighting chance. We made the most of it. While I was still pulling in the rope, Stan was banging pitons in the only crack he could find, which was really too shallow for safety. Still, it was the only one so he put in two pitons, side by side, to reinforce each other.

This was the pitch over the overhang. Would the rope end on a ledge or in thin air?

Stan set off down while I looked after the pitons as he went. They moved a bit so I had to keep banging them in. The storm had now come on thick again and I was feeling frozen. Stan seemed a devil of a long time. I felt the rope every now and then to see if his weight was still on it. Finally it went slack and I felt sharp tugs travelling up it. He meant me to follow. I gave the pitons a few reassuring taps and set off; down over the upper bulge on to the slab, then half swinging, half climbing, round and down into the chimney. It became more difficult now, as the ledge where Stan had arrived was about 30 ft. out of line with the abseil. It was a fight to get across to him—pushing and kicking against vertical edges until I reached him, with about 2 ft. of rope to spare. I realised that Stan had had a pretty grim ordeal doing that abseil first, not knowing the rope could reach or that he could force himself on to a ledge. If he could not have done this he would have swung out and hung in space completely clear of the rock, in a hopeless position. We both hung there, unable to stand on the steeply sloping, hail-covered ledge, while we pulled down the rope from above and threaded it for the next abseil.

From here to the ground was plain sailing, but we were both suffering from the exposure to icy conditions in our light clothing.

[They return to the camp on the col and the whole party descends to a village inn for the night.] We were soon tucking in to a solid Spanish meal, while our clothes steamed on us in front of a roaring stove in the kitchen. We finished off with a glass of "Anis" each and a hand-rolled cigarette of strong Spanish tobacco. We were shown to our rooms, clean and comfortable, though simple. So the day ended.

*Derrick Metcalfe*  
**SOMBER SONG**  
 on the Death of a Tree

**S**AFE. and silent. this moonslivers. Black grass, grass, in shadows of golden touch, reflected in silver-green.

Yellow, so peacefully gold, ah! stoop to see, where glow worm lies. Safe. and silent. Cloud running; castle, steeple, city, go, blown by a wind, a wind chasing morning, clouds funning, a man, cedilla, Helen, and Circe. Your piglets slip under the moon, the moon, your piglets slip under the moon too soon. Dark world, resting purple, slit by a star, dark world: these limbs are lifted to embrace, to grasp, to sweep, you bastard, right out of the sky. Terror, sleeps, wakes and cries and fights in loneliness: and seep and sweep, your piglets slide under a moon, sweet Circe, play with stars and slide to my arms, my arms so stretching, safe in their silence, to sweep you, bastard!, out of the sky.

With wind, wind, chasing morning, sneering and sneering in pale blue and salmon on dark olive-green. Cruel from East, breath of red dragons in shine-scales and red tails, and ballet dancers patting, tapping, soft silk/wood.

Grass, ss, tapp, lass, pat, feet in mouse trap, sawing little Sammy on a hand machine. Grass, tap, hedge, ap, berries going yellow when a hand wipes the hill. God, a, at, pat, in these leaves, snap, windwhisped clouds and snap this green. High. Snap this green at pat and branch, swell this cloud-speed, sway my arms. At bat, tap pat, ballet spat. Grass jump, bend in colour with white on the green. Lean at prone at back at forward, bend these branches, tap this beam. Dove-coloured up part, racked, cracked, lonely, dove-coloured, at, dance, down and in. Ballet, ballet, pirouette in colour tarantella where light taps leaf shade and red stain runs. Red mark, soft mask, ogre part to wind slap, stiff tap, at pat, sun is golden-brown. Red, brown, death mark, red mark—see dancers swaying lullaby—soft again. Soft in—at—again: death comes to rock and stone, to man and stone. Dancers, DANCERS: a lullaby.

At. Sleep softly my dreams, while there's gin in a bottle. Don't wet the bed, be sick or dribble. At tap. Dancers, notice this mixture, brown signifies.... red signifies.... sighs. Get ready your... sighs. Grass, tap, dancing, dancing, lemon and white at pat and branches, brown tap red in green so merry. Death will come to man and stone. Arms are weary clapping, trapping: death will come to sugar and trees. God, at, these leaves, power in man, at, stone. Power, crest, creak and power in

Bone. Bone of my bone, to beat, to groan. What is this life? A too and fro, a garden, a parden, a fart and a blow. Aie! "these friezes, stripteazes, not forgetting geazis which are found in Iceland, or is it Newzealand?, make you think deeply in Church on Sunday, or when you go to stool." Aie! my body leans, then away. With sleep, aie!, to forget the creep of red or brown. Now there is no sun, God is stone and man and sleep. "The creak of my follies, the port and sherry that have swilled my bellie." You too have gray. Aie! Then you find out God, the tone of music, that there is loneliness inside the tomb of your body. Aie! And you wish for death "or a young wife to take the gall out of your bladder, making you sadder you ain't young, son. This advice daddy has stored up." My arms are aching, life was life, a road, a branch. Life is groan, wind and the Devil, movement upon one's roots in very existence. That shift from side to side's never noticed. Look how deeply you've dug into earth. That small movement's never seen. Life is groan, grain and stone, and God is Stone, is birth, the moan. Have not I forgotten Your goodness while my roots were firm? There is loneliness in Heaven. There is a streak of day in Hell. Shriek of day, stone of Heaven, rock of Hell and groan of day. Hell in—sway, sway sweetness, these arms are tired—stone, in cold wind and loneliness. Heaven, Heaven, HEAVE! en.

You grow deep in this soil and forget your God, yea even while the wind blows; the wind, that dragon from the East. But the red! Aye. And thoul't take that earth with thee.

"... Soon get through it. If you'll take that side."

And there is loneliness even in heaven. My arms no longer ache. The wind is still.

*James Backhouse*

## RAKINGS

*Luna premit suadentque cadentia sidera somnos,  
Sola domo maeret vacua stratisque relictis  
Incubat.*

## I

Mutters and stutters and  
Fritters for tea.  
Translucent on the upperside layer  
I stood ageless blessed by an ageing moon.  
Nine o'clock; and with Gregorian pomp  
They carry the corpse  
Through hurried doors  
    Relentless.  
In Barcelona they're happy to-night  
With fricative reasoning.

## II

A mellow sticky honey buzzing.  
August on the moors.  
Hills heaped up against a tympanic sky.  
Lazy fishpond pacing puddles and  
The sea put out to graze.  
Eleven p.m. Litter  
And dark satin strollers against  
A glowing marble sky.  
Evening in Paris.  
Jack-with-the-watering-can exhibits late night flowers  
And says good-night to the dog.



## III

A dark damp wind and saturated leaves  
 Breathe a dirge outside the window.  
 AX 117 splatters past  
 Going fast  
 To Beaconsfield.  
 A shudder of coal switches on my consciousness.  
 Back to Racine.

## IV

Let us then for argument's sake  
 Consider the scuttering dusk of a spineless day ;  
 The rancid bacon from yesterday.  
 Let us consider the peelings and wailings,  
 The twangings and plangings of a minor harp  
 Against a Slovene sky.  
 And let me ask,  
 Was it worth the cut up ends of dingy ideas,  
 The spreading out of life at Banja Luka,  
 The folding up again at Porto del Puzzini ?  
 Was it worth the giving up and the returning to  
 Gas-hissing tenements with the owl outside ?

*The steak is ready dear.*

Uzbuna.

Pirazzia.

Fugazzia.

*Robinetta Armfelt*  
**SNACK BAR**

Chiki chooses words with care ;  
Seals his thoughts in cellophane ;  
Brings them out in germ-free air,  
Carefully wraps them up again.

Esmerilda's gilded hair  
Speaks a tongue he's never spoken.  
Chiki drops his plastic ware  
(Strong, hygienic saucer broken)

Lor', what things she makes him say  
(Sandwich curls up, horrified) . . .

A tanner in the juke box makes it play  
And we don't need disinfectant spray-  
Can't you see we're Fresh Today?  
Chiki's being purified !

*Pauline Carter*

**MRS. CUMFREY AND THE POACHER**

**J**AKE WAS NO WORSE-LOOKING than any cabbage-field scarecrow, and his mind was not half so empty.

Last night he'd spent in a barn behind Old Oaks, twiddling his toes through his boots and tossing in the straw like a pair of mongrels, while the lights from main-road cars swung across the roof, thin and thick, silver and gold, picking out the swift's nest, tie cross-beam, two rusty nails and a muck-fork. This morning he was slouching through the fields to Banbury, keeping a watch-out for a place for dinner and ruminating on life, which was good. Sky like a pale blue ensign. Swallows cutting patterns with their wings.

"Umph," he growled, "I'll stay a day or two," and stooped to lay a rabbit-trap near a clump of dandelion leaves. Nasty wire contrivances, rabbit-springes—get your finger chopped and torn if you're not careful. Bloody messes.

Mrs. Cumfrey had just nabbed the Vicar on his way from the Church. Leant over the garden-gate and positively forced her greeting over the morning air.

"Ah Vicar, just the person I wished to see! How convenient!"

The steeple clock chimed the quarter, and the Vicar automatically set his watch. Get away from Mrs. Cumfrey in a quarter of an hour and you've something to rejoice about, he was thinking as he said aloud: "Delighted, Mrs. Cumfrey. Anything I can do, of course. Don't hesitate to ask."

Mrs. Cumfrey didn't.

"I know you will give me your help in a little matter connected with my Work for the Animals."

The Vicar knew about Mrs. Cumfrey's Work for the Animals, which was indeed her mission in life. The local branch of the R.S.P.C.A. met in Banbury Parish Hall on Thursday nights, with Mrs. Cumfrey as President; a Junior Group met

at her house on Mondays to learn about a different animal each week, with lantern slides and a free tea (they had chosen crocodiles and bison as the subjects for the first two weeks and the meetings were extraordinarily successful), and there was also a local Spinsters' Cat Society in the village, which ran itself without any organisation. Now here was Mrs. Cumfrey obviously fermenting with a new idea.

"I wonder if, in respect of this work being launched so enthusiastically in the Parish, I could prevail upon you to deliver a sermon on the matter next Sunday, which, as you know, we have dedicated as Animals Day—to help all poor creatures in distress. Our fellow-creatures, you know. All one under God. All God's children."

The Vicar felt for his collar apprehensively. Andrew, Mrs. Cumfrey's terrier, brushed and polished, sleek and shiny, thoroughly morose, slunk past the Vicar's legs, afraid to sniff, ashamed. A looking-glass of a dog. An outcast among hounds. The Vicar patted him unmercifully to gain time.

But Mrs. Cumfrey was adamant. Caught him neatly in the frying-pan of his own charity and tossed him the way she wanted him. The Vicar stared wildly up and down the lane, found no help for it, capitulated and promised, and sped away after Mrs. Cumfrey's dog.

Andrew rounded a corner and came out among the fields. Here he began to lift up his head and look other dogs in the eye. He wagged his tail and snuffled at a clump of grass. He barked!

Jake stood up and peered about the fields. Little springes of wire at about a dozen likely places round the edges, hidden except to the knowledgeable eye. He spat contentedly in the direction of the nearest trap, for he saw that it was good. That should bring a rabbit for tomorrow's dinner, and perhaps one or two over which he could sell. Rubbed his back with a hand like an old leather glove, bare in patches and peeling, scratched by the barbs of blackberry clumps; and hoped it would warm away the rheumatism. He shuffled his boots along with his toes. Andrew came up and sniffed at him. Friendship rippled over his face like stars on water. He tail was going like an

electric fan. The poacher and the Christian's dog sat down together and each thought of rabbits.

The Vicar excelled himself on Sunday, so that the choir forgot to suck their peppermints and tear the sticky paper off fruit-drops, and Old Tom Roberts, the church-warden, returned reluctantly from a vision of his allotment. The text was Matthew 10, 29 (the death of a sparrow), garnished with selections from many of the established poets, and it somehow seemed to fit in with the joyousness of the morning that was warming and penetrating the mediaeval stones and circling, like that crow round the steeple, the church, and all who were in it. Silver winked on the offertory, as an enthusiastic congregation rose to pour out its self-satisfaction in Hymn 444: "All Creatures of our God and King."

"Now," thought the Vicar's wife, neatly side-stepping Mrs. Cumfrey behind a monumental gravestone, "I must see how that rabbit's getting on for dinner." Mrs. Cumfrey was looking for her dog who hadn't been home for two nights. She feared for his morals. Banbury Parish returned home to eat.

A thin stream of smoke twined itself round Jake's neck, in the clearing where the fire was made, as he bent to poke into the pot with the end of a peeled stick. Andrew was so excited by the cooking smell that his tail and nose vied with each other in restlessness. A contortionist, his nose; rubbery and full of bounce. Jake jangled the coins in his pocket—Banbury had proved a good market for rabbits. Good, sensible people with no sentimentality or squeamishness about them, took their rabbits—skinned 'em, and asked no questions. Paid their money over the doorstep, and took hold of the rabbits by the ears. If there was rather a lot of blood about it merely proved that they were fresh. Mrs. Cumfrey had been out when he called.

"Umph," grunted Jake. "Here boy!" and threw a fair share of the rabbit to Andrew, and then leant back to contemplate the crow-dotted sky. Philosophically inclined was Jake, especially when he was full.

*Michael Williams*  
**PRIVATE ENTERPRISE IN  
LYDDON HALL**

**S**IXTY YEARS AGO a Hall of Residence was opened for students of the Yorkshire College. It was established with the admirable aim of "supplying students whose homes are at a distance from Leeds with the advantages of a common collegiate life", to which end a Limited Liability Company was formed by some friends of the College, with the Principal, Professor Bodington, as the Chairman of Directors.

One of these friends was the physician Clifford Albutt. He was a friend of George Eliot, whom he had entertained in his house near the College and in whose book "Middlemarch" he had figured under the name of Lydgate. Albutt consented to part with his small but elegant house and its literary associations for three thousand pounds. A slightly greater sum was expended on erecting and equipping the new hostel on this site. The existing house had been known as Lyddon House, after the Lyddons who had once owned the land, and the hostel was consequently named Lyddon Hall.

The building was designed in full accordance with scientific and hygienic principles, embodying such modern conveniences as splay-backed fireplaces with hollow hearths, a coal-hoist and an expensive system of ventilators with built-in filters. The rooms were L-shaped, in interlocking pairs, this form permitting a modest concealment of the bed in a curtained alcove. To quote a prospectus: "The Hall is furnished with every attention to the health and comfort of the students."

The structure being prepared, nothing lacked save students and a Warden, and for the procuring of the latter the dual rôle of the Chairman proved most valuable. A young lecturer, C. M. Gillespie, later to become Professor of Philosophy, accepted the offer of the post, impressed less by the advantages of acceptance than by the dangers of refusal.

Unhappily, students were less readily obtainable. The building had been designed to hold 30, but in an exceptionally good year no more than 17 were in residence, and to make matters worse these were not all the fairest flowers of the College. It appears that the first members of Lyddon Hall were young technical students, at once the people most in need of an academic tradition and least capable of producing one. Their College education was almost entirely practical, and the resultant empty evenings were frequently misspent. Professor Gillespie relates that some in a single week had been known to visit the pantomime four times. Furthermore, they did not make the coal economies made possible by the new fireplaces, and after some trivial talk of draughts blocked up all the special ventilators with sand.

After two sessions the Warden relinquished his post to Herbert Rowe, a prominent Leeds surgeon who had acted as demonstrator in anatomy at the College. Keen as Mr. Rowe and his wife were to further the cause of common collegiate life, they were unable to attract more students to the hostel. Such notices as, "The presence of a lady at the head of the domestic arrangements of the institution is a sufficient guarantee that the comfort of the students will be ensured", could serve only to bind the students in lodgings more closely to their landladies.

The simple fact was that the Hall was too expensive. If, as so many were, one was willing to sacrifice the felicity of a common collegiate life, one could live at half the expense of a hostel student in equal bodily comfort. Protestations like, "The charges cover everything except beer (if taken) and the student's laundry bill", cut little ice at a time when the yearly saving owing to living in lodgings could furnish 900 gallons of beer (if taken).

It is scarcely surprising, then, that the moderate demands of the Founders, who had never expected the average dividend to be very much more than 4% p.a., should be sourly answered by a steady loss. In 1898 the Directors seriously considered winding up the Company, but instead let it at a yearly rent of

two hundred pounds to the Warden, Mr. Rowe, who quite incomprehensibly made it pay until his death in 1910, when Professor Jamieson took over for a time on similar terms.

Three Oriental students were in residence during one session. A later report says : " There is now a disinclination to admit them other than quite exceptionally. The desirability of their exclusion is not universally accepted, though it was said to be necessary because of the objections of the other residents. Whether the reasons for exclusion are sound or not, it can only be regarded as unfortunate that these students who are in special need of supervision and advice, should be debarred from the advantages of hostel residence." Unfortunate indeed, for the report later adds : " It is worth considering whether these students, if admitted, might not be charged at an even higher rate than at present ; this would be justifiable in view of the extra trouble they entail."

This plan for the justifiable exploitation of Oriental students was never carried out, so though the wages of cook, butler and maid totalled only £70 p.a., and the housekeeper's salary but £45, the Hall still lost.

At the closing of the 1913 session, the Directors made representations to the University (no longer the Yorkshire College), declaring that " they did not feel justified in continuing the Hall unless the University could give such assistance as would enable it to be carried on without further loss to the Company."

Action was plainly necessary and within four years the last entry had been written on the deeds of Lyddon Hall : " 24th May 1917 Indenture, Yorkshire College Hall of Residence Limited to Leeds University, affecting Lyddon House Hostel and other buildings in Virginia Road."

This most extraordinary Company was at an end, but, ironically, out of its death had come the first real security for the principle which had given it life.



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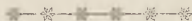
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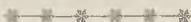
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## A FLAMING NUISANCE

**T**O THE TOWER, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me ; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire. So down with my heart full of trouble to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding lane, and that it hath burned down St Magnes Church and most part of Fish street already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat, and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Every body endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river, or bringing them into lighters that lay off ; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about their windows and balconys, till they burned their wings, and fell down.

Pepys' Diary.

Play the man, Master Ridley ; and we shall this day light such a candle in England as by the grace of God shall never be put out.

Latimer's Last Words.

*I don't want to set the world on fire :  
I just want to start  
A flame in your heart.*

A Smash Hit.

These buckets were about the size of large thimbles, and the poor people supplied me with them as fast as they could: but the flame was so violent that they did little good. The case seemed wholly desperate and deplorable : and this magnificent palace would have infallibly been burnt down to the ground, if, by a presence of mind unusual to me, I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I had the evening before drunk plentifully of a most delicious wine called *glimigrim* (the

Blefuscudians call it *flunec*, but ours is esteemed the better sort,) which I voided in such a quantity, and applied so well to the proper places, that in three minutes the fire was wholly extinguished, and the rest of that noble pile, which had cost so many years in erecting, preserved from destruction.

*Swift*: Gulliver's Travels.

*There are 750 fire hydrants inside the Vatican palaces, including three gilded ones inside the papal apartment itself.*

The Tablet.

On discovering an outbreak of fire

- 1 Shout FIRE FIRE FIRE until help arrives.
- 2 Try to put it out with the nearest fire appliances.
- 3 The fire alarm will be raised  
and reported to.....

### ALL RANKS MUST PREVENT FIRES

A.F. 46755/1793.

*In Brytayne both hoot welles wel arayed and yhyght to the use of mankunde. Mayster of thilke welles ys the gret spyryt of Minerua. Yn hys hous fuyr duyreth alwey, that neuer chaungeth into askes, bote thar the fuyr slaketh, hyt changeth ynto stony clottes.*

*John of Trevisa*: Marvels of Britain.

London's burning *bis*

Look yonder *bis*

Fire Fire *bis*

But we have no water *bis, da capo*

The position of the ignition limits is directly connected with the magnitude of the combustion velocity, for a mixture that no longer shows a finite velocity of flame propagation can obviously no longer ignite. The ignition limit is here understood to be a function of the composition of the mixture (and possibly of the temperature and pressure), in other words, the limits in the composition below and above which no self-propagating explosion can be caused by external manipulation.

*Wilhelm Jost*: Explosion and Combustion Processes in Gases.

*Patricia Ball*

## TIME FOR QUESTION

**D**OWN THE LAST THREE STAIRS, across the hall. Her hand slipped round the door knob in her eagerness to open it. In the moment's pause before she could turn it, she was hit by uncertainty. What was this surge of excitement? She had been so sure she would know as soon as the sun was around her. But at the top of the grey steps above the grass, she looked blankly at the afternoon. If only there had been no time for doubt, whatever had spilt over into her rush through the house would never have drained away.

Now she gazed out into the garden as she went heavily down the steps, scuffing aside the curled tufts fringing the edge, merging stone and grass. On the lawn she stood aimless. An irritating breeze caught the mood of her resentment, snatching and dipping at her skirt. She might as well go in again.

But it was so dim in there now, and the angles of the stairs rose stiff and hostile. As she blinked inside the door swung, and shut with a faint shudder.

No staircase. Only the brass knob a globe of solid sunlight.

Glad of this decision, she was stirred by it. She was not in full control of the afternoon: it had not stopped happening. She knew there was something she had lost.

Not back inside. Her conviction was as firm as the shut door. She realised this with a flash of cynically tinged surprise, before turning into the sun, alert for hints, suggestions of the shape the afternoon should be. But she could only grope her way towards it.

Leaving the heat on the grass, she took on the cloaking shadow of trees. They stood around her, and their quiet was remote from the vast embrace of sun with warm earth. It was older, and made of depth; the dark silence of roots.

Minutes dropped by. She traced her unsure expectation in the crooked ridges of a trunk leaning slightly towards her. A shiver of the breeze wandered through the trees, irresolute, then hovered above her, disturbing the hanging sleep of the leaves.

A stick of bark broke off under her finger's arrested shock as she looked up and saw him. He was looking down at her, incuriously, yet with a wariness of suspended movement. They were both stone figures, suddenly aware that they were seeing each other, so that surprise still held them motionless. The smell of damp soil and moss in shadow was cool in the air.

With quick deft gestures of hand and foot he came down from the tree. He was smaller than she had expected, his hair flecked with fragments of leaf.

On the ground he faced her uncertainly. "It's a hard one to get up, that," he shot at her, clinging to his superiority. A bird whistled to the sun, a single comment on the wood's silence.

She glanced up into the confusion of leaves and branches. "Yes, it looks it." He was so very small, it would have seemed impossible. It never occurred to her to wonder that she knew this would not be the right remark. Just as there was no idea in his head of moving away yet. Not that he wanted to waste time talking to a girl. There was at least one more climb he had to tackle before tea. But he hoped she was not going to say anything silly—like telling him he might hurt himself. Or tear his clothes.

Waiting in the dim light for her to steer the conversation, he knew obscurely how disappointment would swell and make his throat feel too big, if she did say something like that.

"What does it feel like when you get right up to the top?" The question propelled itself and her eagerness for his answer brushed aside the thought, how dirty his knees were. He was all delight. And crumbling the earth at the roots in his triumph, he told her, in jerks marked by his boot's prodding: "You don't feel nothing till you get up to the windy parts. Then the leaves

are all twitching about, and you can get your hands right round the branches. They sort of bend under you a bit, then move and move till you can see the top and the sky only a little way off. And soon you can grip your arms round its trunk and then hang on and swing about just like a ship. It's always moving up there. All the other trees are too. You can see them bowing about. Only you don't hear 'em. I mean they just bend about and they don't look as if they're all bits of twigs and leaves scratching on each other. Just green. And if you stay there and cling on all limp, you can pretend you're like that and the wind thinks you're a bit of tree and blows you just the same."

He stopped prodding suddenly and looked at her, the final flood of his words ebbing into an awkward silence. She was not just waiting to laugh. But had she even been listening? She was still staring at the foot of the tree, and he was acutely aware there was nothing else to say. Before that look he was confused again; uneasily he saw his hands with his mother's eyes. Filthy. Somehow it was this girl's fault. He cast around in his mind for some parting shot to penetrate through to her.

"Girls can't climb, anyway. Not to the top. Ever." Before his mustered scorn could slip away into uncertainty, he was gone, dodging between the trees, playing an elaborate game of tag to the audience with the twigs.

Slowly the moss and leaf mould resettled in release from the pressure of his foot. She glanced around her, breaking surface into the afternoon. The leaves trailed from her fingers as she turned slowly back, still lost in root and shadow, not ready for the broad light of the sun.

It claimed her in the sharp green of the grass, stabbing her with its sudden brightness. With it the resentment came to her again. She felt cheated, a question mark she could not grasp dancing before her.

Blindly crossing the grass, she was no longer at the centre of the dim afternoon, and she could only know it perfectly by remaining motionless within it. Though later she could perhaps hold it and feel its newborn outline, now it was merely fading from her.

So nearly had it left her, she was beginning to remember it. Through the pictures and words floating about her unwilling mind darted the question mark, leaving her on a high note of tormented inconclusion.

A sun burning in the door knob pierced her eyes, and she stumbled on the first grass sunk step. As the gold circles dwindled away she saw the blades curling over the grey slab. Suddenly, but as a memory falling into place, she recognised the stone powdered with dust, the quiver of the tips of green brushing against it. The elusive question mark sank into the grass as she forgot it, and the whole afternoon came to rest under her hand.

\*

\*

\*

*Awmacks*

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*Tim Evens*

“ LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO ”

French Society Production of Beaumarchais' play,  
Riley-Smith Theatre, March 4—6.

WHEN THIS PLAY was first publicly performed in Paris in 1784 three people were suffocated in the crowd which tried to get in to see it. In Mr. Richard Coe's production here the audiences could be said to be the weakest part of it. They were never large enough to give that sense of a full hall that is so helpful to a cast, particularly in comedy. However, full houses for a play in a foreign language are hardly to be expected even in a university, and this production triumphed despite the rows of empty seats before the actors.

The standard of spoken French was high, and for the most part closer to 'Frenssh of Parys' than to that 'of Stratford-atte-Bowe.' Most of it, too, was audible in the gallery. The action went at a good speed and in the complicated scenes towards the end of Act II, in the trial scene and in the final machinations *sous les marronniers* there was rarely any slackening of tension. Where there was, this might well have been due to the lack of the quickening power of a good-sized audience. Business was slick, movements lively, and costumes charming. The décor was indifferent, but the plot, and the acting of it, were so good that this did not matter. Bad make-up however did, and in some cases made it hard for us to suspend our disbelief.

In a complex comedy of intrigue such as this it is team-work that counts and actors not mentioned here should not think that they made no contribution to the general high level of success. But outstanding were Patricia Biggs as the *Countess*, with a particularly clear and expressive voice; Pat Shaw's bustling *Suzanne* and June Melling as *Chérubin*. Among the men,



Paul Corney in the small part of *Brid'oison* performed with just the right amount of senile drool. As the *Count*, Anthony Armstrong was adequate in this unsympathetic rôle, and as *Figaro* Richard Coe was suitably agile and wily, though his beard made him seem oddly out of period—*barbé* rather than *barbier*.

Mozart's famous opera of the same name, based on Beaumarchais' play, was produced two years after the latter's first success, and is now more widely known than its original. Mr. Coe wisely avoided Mozart in the incidental music to this production and it is to the credit of the cast that one did not find oneself mindful of the lack of the famous music. What was daring social and political satire to its first audiences is no longer vivid to us, but what makes the play live is its portrayal of the universal human characteristics of snobbery, gossip, jealousy and love, and these came over in this quite delightful performance of one of the world's most brilliant comedies.



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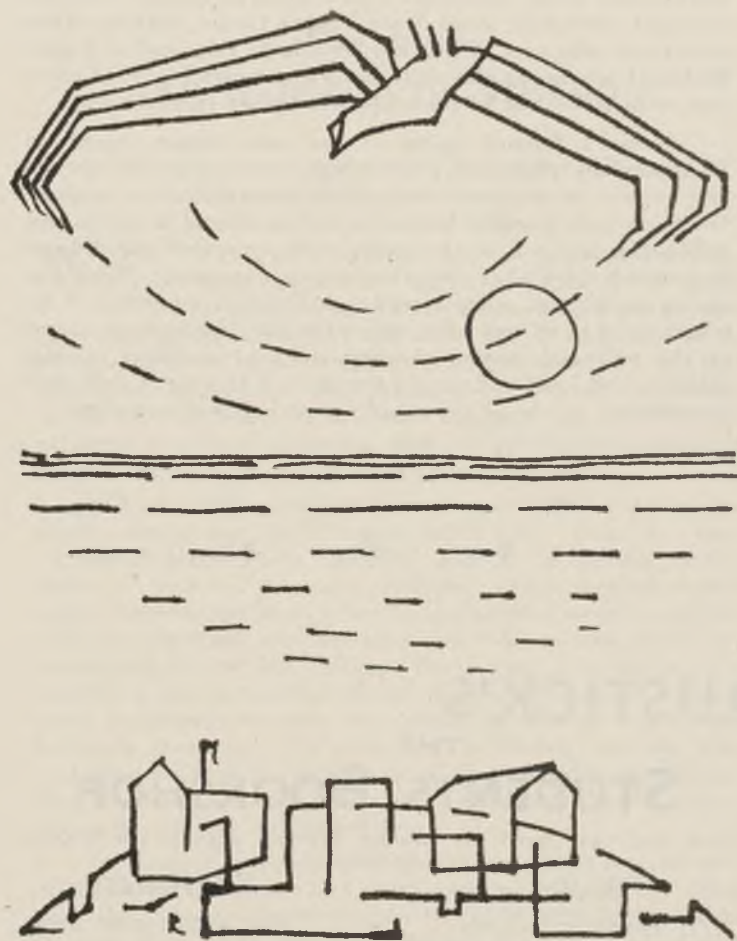
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## GULL

Lost above the houses of men,  
Now greying in the grimy swirls  
Of city air, the gull turns, then  
Sweeps upward, and despairing falls.

Beneath, on the window-ledges,  
Far from their friendly hedges,  
Chirp the sparrows—wretches!  
Perky on the rusty benches,  
Forsaking liberty for crusts  
And turning freshness into dust.

Lost, but not in purpose,  
Only in direction, the white bird  
Asks for recognition, gracefully, without fuss,  
And men in cities have not heard.

They can hear by lonely shores,  
Where feeling is tinged with awe,  
And call it Nature crying!  
Strangers, seeing without nearing,  
Trying sometimes to penetrate  
While standing quite apart.

*November 9th, 1951.*

## *James Kirkup*

### A VISIT TO BRONTËLAND

The road climbs from the valley past the public  
Park and turns, at the Haworth Co-operative Stores,  
Into the grey stone village, and the steep  
Street leading to the Parsonage, the Inn, the w.c.'s;  
To the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, high in trees.

The West Lane Baptists are putting on  
"Patience", the playbills say. The Heathcliff Tearooms  
are aglow  
With English teachers in sensible tweeds. Bearded cyclists  
Lean on their pedals, and their saddles shine and sway  
Up the hill to the Y. H. A.

Across the valley thick with mills  
The fellside rises like an aerial map  
Of fields and drystone walls and farms.  
Pylons saunter over with a minimum of fuss,  
And round the bend from Keighley comes the Brontë bus.

An arty signboard poses Charlotte in a crinoline  
And ringlets, penning *Jane Eyre*, at a table with a quill.  
"This must be *it*." The wondering Americans, like  
technicolor ads,  
Have reverence plainly written on their open faces.  
They know just how one should behave in hallowed places.

A sea of scripted slabs  
Shines in the graveyard under the twilight rain.  
The cold winds are crying in the trees.  
New heights above the pines  
Are wathered by tractors of open-cast mines.

The church where the Brontës worshipped  
 Is long demolished. Only a brass plate  
 Marks where their bones are buried. Smothered  
 In Parks Committee geraniums, Anne lies alone  
 In Scarborough Old Churchyard, under a dolled-up stone.

Now, in the village roofs, the television aerial aspires.  
 No idle toy would have tempted Branwell  
 From the "Bull", and brandy; or kept that sister  
 From her tragic poems. They knew they had nothing but  
     the moor  
 And themselves. It is we, who want all, who are poor.



## *Theresa England*

### IMMOBILITY

The willows drip green on the grass,  
 Where the old man slobbers, the old woman twitches.  
 Boughs of elm trees lean, silent on the air.  
 Beneath, the glazed eye stares, the velvet violets droop.  
 The seat, freshly green, does not stir,  
 Under the shrunken thigh, the stiffening bone.

At twilight, when they rise to go,  
 No ear hears—"it is time to go"  
 (To wake into sleep)  
 Each word drops in the sodden blanket of air.  
 The willows drip green, the elm boughs lean,  
 The seat does not stir,  
 But darkness presses hard upon the turf.

*Neil Morley*  
TWO PLAYS

"THE SAINT AND THE SINNER," by *Tirso de Molina*.  
Joint Theatre Group and Spanish Society Production,  
February 26th—March 1st.

FOR THE FOURTH YEAR IN SUCCESSION we were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to see and to hear a Spanish play. Certainly, we treasure the memory of 'The Saint and the Sinner', and we are grateful to the Spanish Society and to Theatre Group for enabling us to become acquainted with Tirso de Molina's fine work, which must be considered yet another rich masterpiece to be found in what is, in this country, a poorly prospected Golden Age. Even if what we saw was not as refined or as well polished as we might have hoped, we nevertheless realised that there was something of considerable value.

'El condenado por desconfiado' is an exciting drama: to the very last line of the play our attention is riveted on the progress of the Saint into Hell and on that of the Sinner into Heaven. It is an eminently actable play: and we were given in John Boorman's translation an eminently actable version. Although there were one or two badly mixed metaphors, although some parts of the text could not be reconciled with what we saw or heard elsewhere, we must conclude that this was a fine version, avoiding the pitfalls of banality and bathos.

The play was produced by John Boorman, and we will say at once that parts of this production must be counted among the finest things that we have seen in the Riley-Smith Theatre. Memorable effects were achieved in the scene in which the Devil, dressed like an Angel, encountered the Saint; in the first Saint and Shepherd scene; and in the powerful middle passage in which the Saint desperately urged the Sinner to confess. Even these were surpassed by the two culminating

scenes—the Sinner in the dungeon, and the Saint in Hell. In the former, the voice contrast between the Devil, the Sinner and the Shepherd was most effective : we recall that G. B. Shaw regarded the third Act of his 'Man and Superman' as a quartet for operatic voices. The trio in this play remains still a lingering delight. The reconciliation of the Sinner and his father, also in the dungeon scene, was a very moving and an extremely powerful moment. These parts of the play—and notably the acting and the lighting—were magnificent : and a falling-off in the other scenes was perhaps only to be expected. It was not, however, an inconsistent production, and clever use was made of rostra, cyclorama and curtains to achieve a fine simple setting. Costumes and make-up both were good and fitting. Music was selected with taste and proved an admirable medium by which to effect a transition in mood from one scene to another ; and we were glad, too, that a sparing and an effective use was made of background music accompanying the voice. The cast had been adequately rehearsed, there were few noticeable cue-lapses, and, most important of all, every word could be heard. For all these things we can but bow the head and give praise to all concerned.

Yet there were several things that might have been bettered. The production gave us the impression that much of the play had been neglected in favour of the two most impressive scenes : it did not, for instance, start off well. The opening contemplative soliloquy of the Saint was played perhaps too forcefully, with a seemingly unprovoked intensity : there was a lack of restraint here, so that contrast was lost between that and the following, crucial soliloquy leading to the encounter with the Devil. Dramatic presentation is all a matter of tact : when we go to a play entitled 'The Saint and the Sinner' we are quite willing to believe that there will be a Saint quâ Saint and a Sinner quâ Sinner. But the whole course of the play depends upon the fact that, on the one hand, the Saint's part develops from a life of faith rarely diversified by doubts into a life of doubts rarely diversified by faith, and that, on the other, the Sinner's vicious nature becomes redeemed by the evergrowing seed of affection for his father. These transitions—the essential moments of the

play—were not effectively reproduced : at the very moment when our whole attention should have been concentrated on the Saint and his dream, or on the Sinner and his sentiment for his father, the dramatic effect was dissipated, in the first case by the distracting (intentionally premature) entrance of the Devil ; and in the second by the attitude and efforts of the minor characters. The former needs no amplification, and with regard to the latter we will merely reiterate the platitude that in crowd scenes a mean ought to be achieved between complete boredom and woodenness at one extreme and over-gesticulating scene-stealing at the other. We must note, furthermore, that the first meeting of the Sinner and his father was managed with little degree of proficiency. The drapes were drawn somewhat clumsily and the Sinner's reactions were unseen and therefore lost.

The play is a parable : and as long as the moral implicit in the story emanates naturally as heard and seen through the thoughts and actions of the two main characters, we remain engrossed : but when the moralising didactic elements become explicit, we demand careful handling, for where there is pontification, there can be no drama. After the magnificent dungeon scene, an anti-climax seems difficult to avoid : but the second meeting of the Saint and the Shepherd-cum-Good Angel could have been more effective if their conversation had been conducted at a more intimate level, with a more vital intensity. As it was, half the stage intervened between the two speakers and much of the effectiveness was lost. A similar state of affairs was observed elsewhere, notably in the Neapolitan lords scene. The movements and groupings were generally well managed, but this Naples scene did not come off too well in this respect : a natural development is to be aimed at, otherwise the jerkings of the strings of a stage puppet become too palpable. Too often in this scene movements seemed to be designed to jerk the actor into a position where the acting-area or spotlight fell or where the exit was meant to be. One such crossing of the stage tried to combine grace with fleetness and crashingly succeeded in achieving neither. Technically and artistically the lighting in the majority of the scenes was extremely good : in some,



however, the cyclorama again defeated all attempts, and ungainly shadows set us off once more on a now familiar princely train of thought . . . . cloud . . . . camel . . . . weasel . . . . whale . . . .

Other minor comments would include an observation that gestures tended towards the vague and the repetitious, although Galvan was exemplary in making each of his gestures meaningful; that the bungled sword fight emphasised the need for authoritative instruction in such things; and that there was a curious number of unnecessarily hunched shoulders.

The standard of acting was high. Brian Lees as the Sinner Enrico fulfilled the part admirably, and we noticed with great satisfaction his remarkable development as an actor within two years. He was suffering, we understand, from an excessively sore throat, yet we must confess that the resulting voice was peculiarly effective for the part. His earlier scenes had not perhaps the assurance and convincingness of his later ones, but his variety of 'attack,' his sense of timing and his whole stage bearing were extremely fine. Paulo the Saint, played by Malcolm Rogers, was another sincerely portrayed character study: it is not an easy part, yet it was made to look so. We had here some very competent acting—his articulation, his facial expressions and his movements were particularly good: indeed, an intense rendering was marred alone by what can only be described as repeated catchings of the breath necessitated through immoderate raising of the voice. The Riley-Smith Theatre is essentially an intimate theatre and the revue technique is not to be altogether despised. Peter Wakefield as Pedrisco was an egregious foil to the Saint: and if some of his humour was just a little too belaboured and 'plugged,' we were grateful for some excellent comic relief. The vicious part of Galvan was played quite well by Peter Goodrham: his stage presence and his gestures were commendable, but a certain intensity in the part was lacking. Gordon Luck, whom we should like to see more often on the Riley-Smith stage, was in appearance, voice and grace very good indeed in the part of the Shepherd: a little more variation in the delivery of his longer speeches would however have been welcome. With respect to voice Frederick May was admirably cast for the rôle of the Devil:

both his scenes were particularly effective—and not merely because Tirso de Molina, like every other dramatist, has given the best lines to the Devil. Alan Tompkins, doubling the parts of Octavio and the Governor of the Prison was much better in the latter capacity. In what was an essentially masculine dominated play, Marguerite Tate and Shirley Wood very competently gave us one aspect of femininity. As the Sinner's father, Anareto, John Boorman rendered a skilful performance: we are quite prepared to forgive the underplaying in his first scene on account of his splendid acting in the later dungeon scene. Here was an elderly part really well done, in which, we might add, the potency of dramatic pauses was made manifest. It will be a long time before we forget the moving sight of that pathetic silent figure looking well-nigh heartbroken upon his son. A large and, on the whole, not incompetent cast supported these leading players.

In short, 'The Saint and the Sinner' was a triumph. We look forward to the next Spanish play.

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"SUCH IS LIFE," by *Frank Wedekind*.  
Theatre Group Production, March 11th—15th.

**I**N ITS TWO MAJOR PRODUCTIONS this year, of plays by Shakespeare and Wedekind, Theatre Group has given us the known and the unknown. The exigencies of box-office returns presumably necessitated the former: the true function of a University Group was realised in the latter, and it is to be hoped that the Theatre Group Committee will continue a policy of presenting drama which can rarely be seen elsewhere; without doubt, in this particular case, it was a salutary experience to pass from 'Henry IV, Part I,' to 'Such is Life,' at the very least if only to make us acutely conscious of our insular tradition.

Indeed, to derive any satisfaction from this production of 'Such is Life,' it was necessary to exorcise the spirit of Shakespeare from within us, to divest ourselves of any preconceptions. In seeing a play such as Wedekind's we have to forget the technique of the Elizabethan playwright who tactfully

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brings about our 'willing suspension of disbelief,' mainly by means of an uninterrupted continuity of action; Shakespearean drama, we may say, with slow and sure twists of vice-like inevitability, works itself out to its pressing conclusion. For a German play, however, we must assume the habits of a German; try to orientate ourselves in an exotic tradition of construction and production, in which dramatic effect is made manifest in a series of 'bilder' or tableaux: between each tableau there is necessarily an interval. From such a series we experience a succession of pounding, pile-driving effects. It is no longer the vice, but the sledgehammer.

Now although this production of 'Such is Life' quite often rang with dramatic effects, we must state that our attention was not held throughout. We do not mean by this that the length and number of the intervals detracted from the play; obviously, we have to accept that convention: but that, while parts of the scenes were most interesting, parts were dull. And we cannot attribute the dulness entirely to the playwright or to the translator.

Certainly the translation was far from being wholly satisfactory: many phrases and words created momentary uneasiness; archaisms and colloquialisms were intermingled and hence jarred. The all-important Fairground scene, in which the play-within-the-play occurs, lacked that lucidity essential to any drama. It was unfortunate that the hero of the play had the greatest number of difficult lines, for upon him the play depends.

'King Nicola'—and that incidentally is the correct title of the play—is the tragedy of a king, and Nicola is a king not only of the province of Perugia, but also in the province of the intellect—who suffers in a society seen to be confined and bound in by its conventions, its morality, its hedonism. Wedekind's favourite themes are aired—society as a circus with its tragic clowns, mankind akin to beasts, unrecognised and persecuted genius. Nicola and his daughter, Princess Alma, plumb the depths of humanity, and in their so doing we are made aware of the potentialities and the facets of true human nature, of life.

Mr. Nick Hodges' production was a thoughtful and consistent one, conceived artistically, and executed with very definite decisiveness. Some scenes stand out in the memory. The third tableau, the Tailor's Shop, was very fine, a brilliant climax being achieved here; the Courtroom scene which followed was also most effective; and the very last scene of all merits special note—the whole direction bringing about a very powerful climax during the final abdication and death of Nicola. Other scenes, however, fell short of this standard. The décor, designed by Gerald Robinson, was not only most ingeniously composed, but also extremely effective, particularly in the Tailor's Shop and in the Fairground scenes, in which the necessary atmosphere was admirably created. We hope that we shall have an opportunity of seeing his work again. The colour schemes—apart from the green cyclorama in the first and last scenes—managed to be both pleasing to the eye and appropriate to the themes of the play: and it was certainly a well-dressed production.

The play did not, however, have quite sufficient finesse and all-round polish. The lighting, although normally good, was at fault once or twice, and it was unfortunate that the cast did not make the fullest use of the lighting that was there—in the Beggar's Fair scene for example. The groupings and movements blended harmoniously, but more than once, in trying to achieve variation, Nicola had to speak some of his lines in positions that did not always help him to any great extent. The cast had been adequately rehearsed, cueing was good, but more attention might have been paid to clarity in diction. It was a welcome innovation to have specially composed music to introduce each tableau and the experiment was quite successful: two themes in particular were effective, the solo flute passage before the Forest scene, and the appropriate Fairground music. The whole production—aurally and visually—was such that we were subjected to a very definite dramatic experience: and we are grateful to all concerned for it.

One of the best things about the production was what we might call the perpetual centralisation on the hero, the heavy, crushing forces of nature descending on Nicola—emphasised by the movements, the design of the sets and the lack

of footlights, etc. Now the essential quality necessary for any player taking the part of the protagonist in a play comprised of tableaux is stage personality : the internal unity demands this. Nicola in the very first scene has to give the impression of true sovereignty, of assured inherent superiority : and the full tragic effects of his suffering, of his life as a court jester necessitate rich undertones in voice and noble grandeur in character. It is an extremely difficult part and Raymond Gentle is to be congratulated on a very fine attempt at it : his Nicola, although it did not realise the part to the full, brought home to a considerable extent the pity, the tragedy of it all. His opening scenes were not perhaps as effective as they might have been : on his first appearance, kingly characteristics gave way to the arrogance of an angular sprightly youth : and there was a certain lack of balance in the personalities of the usurping king, Princess Alma and Nicola. Yet there was a steady development in his character portrayal. In the Tailor's Shop and in the last scene he brought in a wonderful vitality, a passionate grandeur that was really good—and which we found strangely lacking elsewhere. Possibly the part was played with too much stoic restraint : and a greater variation might have been achieved in the delivery of his lines. But it was an extremely creditable effort, an exacting part well done.

In the part of Princess Alma, Joan Oldfield proved herself an actress with considerable talent and stage personality : and she was particularly good in the rôle of 'Punchinello' during the jester's show. The whole character-study was extremely moving, though at times we felt that she was trying just a little too hard to act the part. Her movements were graceful and her voice was pleasantly varied, but we must note that she had a tendency to end her sentences with a dying fall. Fred Youell, who played the part of the bourgeois usurping king gave an admirable performance, bringing a refreshing enthusiasm into the play : the sheer aplomb with which he spoke was an effective contrast to the rest of the cast, and the bitter ironic humour surrounding the character was cleverly suggested. His movements about the stage could however be improved, and the pitch of his voice varied. A splendid piece of acting

came from Derrick Metcalfe as the Judge : perhaps there was an excessive amount of coughing and wheezing, but there is no doubt that he contributed most to the success of the Courtroom scene, and we recall with delight his final exit whereby, closing a tome with one hand and scratching an ear with the other, he shambled down the steps still delivering the sentence. He also played the part of the Procuress, and this was well done too, but we are not so sure that the right atmosphere of unhealthiness was created. Three parts were taken by Richard Courtney, all with considerable ability : as the Theatre Manager he spoke clearly, had a good sense of timing and carried himself well, but as the Tailor, Mister Pandolfo, a propensity to slur his words was noticeable. In all three, his facial expressions were worth watching. John Linstrum dealt with the part of the Attorney-General with delicious irony : a neat little study here. More however could have been made of his other part, the Circus Rider : his costume was not much help to him, but a certain restraint on the employment of jerky gestures might have helped. Mention must be made also of Denis Pepper as the Jailer—a short but awe-inspiring performance, although his stage bearing seemed to be somewhat self-conscious ; of Brian Mosley as Filippo—he had a good speaking voice, but vague gestures ; and of Nelson Burkinshaw as Michele—a minor part very well done. The remaining members of the cast played their parts competently but without distinction.

We cannot at this point desist from congratulating the stage crew on some good work, but remarking also that during the intervals their conversations—if we may call them that—were by no means inaudible. We trust that such conversations will not recur in future productions.

Finally, we must express our regret that this play—which was so well worth seeing—did in fact meet with such poor audiences.

*David Furniss*

## A FORTIETH CENTURY DRAKE

“**W**HERE IS HEAVEN?” said the fortieth century child. “That,” said his father, “is a difficult question. We are having the same difficulties now as men did over two thousand years ago in answering that question. In those days the Church taught that the earth was flat, heaven was above and hell below; the difficulty started when someone proved the earth was round, which rather upset people’s ideas. Now something similar is happening because an expedition has just proved space is curved.

“About ten thousand people gathered to see the expedition set off. The departures and arrivals of space ships are, of course, sufficiently common to be interesting only when enlivened by some mishap, which accidents the press duly and floridly reports in its desire to print the truth. On this occasion the crowds were attracted not by the possibility of an accident, but because the expedition had been planned to settle an important World Argument.

“The Argument concerned space. In the Dark Ages a scientist named Einstein had produced a theory that space was curved. At the time space travel was not possible and few thought the matter to be of any practical importance. Even now space journeys are not prolonged enough to make the matter worth worrying about. However, recently the Religious Leaders have devoted much thought to this subject since it has a bearing on the Universal Belief, produced by the Theological Subcommittee of United Nations and accepted by the General Assembly about a hundred and ten years ago.

“This belief, which summarises all that is known about religion, states amongst other things that Heaven is at infinity. The penalty for disbelieving is severe but, as befits church matters, humane. The culprit is anaesthetised and cremated; this it is



thought will give him the opportunity of discovering his error for himself, by conveying him to infinity. For Hell is stated to be there also. There is a distinction between Heaven and Hell, according to the Universal Belief, but I forget what it is.

“The trouble started when some people pointed out that if space were curved infinity did not exist. Rather than have another session of the Theological Sub-Committee of United Nations the World Primate decided to treat this matter as heresy since that would probably be the outcome anyway. His reluctance to recall the Theological Sub-Committee is understandable when it is remembered that it sat for one hundred and fifty years before reaching agreement on the Universal Belief at its last session. However, rather than have a person removed before he has had time to repent, the usual practice is to place the offender in deep freeze for eighteen months or so and, if necessary, to repeat this treatment three or four times. Fortunately it has been found that most people so treated lose interest in intellectual matters, after two or three freezings, and readily agree that space is straight, and so the problem has been allowed to rest.

“A hundred and one years ago a scientist offered to prove that space was curved. He suggested that if he flew in a space ship far enough in one direction he would eventually return to earth from the opposite direction. He owes his life to the fact that he made the offer over the World Television Network. Had he made it in private I feel sure the World Primate would have had him removed to infinity.

“The preparations for the voyage took a year. A space ship was specially built for the purpose and new calculating machines were erected to produce figures which allowed for all the celestial phenomena, particularly the expansion of the universe. The journey was expected to take about a century.

“I didn't expect anyone who set off on the expedition would reach earth again. However they arrived back last week. The journey was plotted both from the earth and by recordings of readings of the ship's instruments. The records of the plots taken on earth show that the ship disappeared after about twenty-five

years, having reached what was thought to be the end of the Universe in that particular direction. Fifty years later it was identified again at the limit of the Universe in the exact opposite direction to that in which it disappeared. It has been approaching the earth for the last twenty-five years. The instrument readings from the ship confirm that the journey was made without a change of course, that is, in what was previously thought to be a straight line.

“Although the expedition has had such amazing success the World Primate is not at all pleased.”

The fortieth century child found his father's answer rather confusing.



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