WHITEFRIARS JOURNAL.

Edited by FRIAR G. B. BURGIN.

No. 17. Vol. III. June, 1912. Private Circulation.

CLUB DIARY.

SPRING PROGRAMME

January—May.

February 2nd.—*Club Guest:* His Honour Judge Parry. *Prior:* Friar Richard Whiteing. *Topic:* "The World and the Bench."

February 9th.—*Club Guest:* Sir Robert Ball, LL.D., F.R.S. *Prior:* Friar Dr. Kimmins. *Topic:* "Wild Beasts of To-day."

February 16th.—*Club Guest:* The Bishop of Birmingham. *Prior:* Friar Robert Donald. *Topic:* "The Germans and Ourselves."

March 1st.—Annual Dinner. *Prior:* Friar W. H. Helm.

March 8th.—*Club Guest:* Mr. William Archer. *Prior:* Friar Alfred Sutro. *Topic:* "What Playgoers Want."

March 15th.—*Club Guest:* Dr. Hagberg Wright, Librarian of London Library. *Prior:* Friar Sir Robertson Nicoll. *Topic:* "Books as Gifts."

April 19th.—*Club Guest:* Sir Almroth Wright, F.R.C.S. *Prior:* Friar the Hon. Gilbert Coleridge. *Topic:* "The Psychology of Women."

April 26th.—*Club Guest:* Field Marshal Lord Roberts. *Prior:* Friar J. Foster Fraser. *Topic:* "The Pen and the Sword."

May 3rd.—Ladies' Dinner. *Prior:* Friar Max Pemberton.

His Honour Judge Parry opened the year on February 2nd with a most interesting statement of his view of "The World and the Bench."

Prior Richard Whiteing, introducing Judge Parry, said that the reading world must be ever grateful for his discovery of

the "Letters of Dorothy Osborne"—letters comparable with those of Madame de Sevigné. He was in the best position to cultivate literature—that of a man condemned to a little oatmeal, but substantially able to make literature a hobby.

Judge Parry put it that he had done his best in writing odds and ends while Counsel were addressing the Bench. He added that on judgment summonses for literary men he had but one order—2s. a month—(loud laughter and applause)—and he believed it was very irregularly paid. Continuing the subject, he mentioned that he was very much in sympathy with a definition given to the late Lord Coleridge by Mr. Shields, K.C. A witness in a slander case gave evidence in the words: "He said he'd knock me off my —— peark." "Peark?" said Coleridge. "What is 'peark'?" "Oh, 'peark,' my lord, is a place where a man elevates himself above his fellows—a Bench, for instance." It was not necessary for Judges to put on "side" in this country. Should they lean? For his part, he did not think there was a human being without bias. As on a bowling green, the business was to use it properly; County Court Judges, in touch with the working classes, should move among them freely. Unless one knew at least a few homes, one could not possibly look after their interests. If one were merely a lawyer, the little problems would be difficult. Imprisonment for debt was a disgrace to our system of judicature; it worked only against the very poor. A rich man goes bankrupt, and for the price of £10 gets a pleasant report read by the Official Receiver, and leaves the Court unembarrassed; but a poor man leads the life of a slave, held up before Judge after Judge. (Applause.) This matter and another Judge Parry submitted for discussion. He was of the opinion that County Court Judges might do useful work as conciliators. Let the parties to a dispute see the Judge in his room before "going to law," and talk it out with the help of tobacco. This was Lord Brougham's idea, and he believed it to be a great practical scheme.

Friars Morrison, Helm and Coleridge, with some of the guests, thought the suggestion a good one; and the discussion revealed a great deal of ready sympathy with Judge Parry's kindly humour. Friar Morrison's remark was that if "England lives in her cottages," at law England lives in her County Courts; and Friar Burgin observed that only the saving grace of humour could enable a Judge of those Courts to deal with their sordid

small tragedies. Friar Lindley Jones heartily agreed that imprisonment for debt should cease.

On February 9th, Friar Dr. Kimmins in the chair, Sir Robert Ball was delightful in a new *rôle,* that of the friend and ardent defender of wild animals. Absent Friars missed a memorable occasion. The popular astronomer's father was secretary of the Royal Zoological Society of Ireland. He is himself a life member of the Dublin Zoo, and in an address distinguished by much humour and a fine sincerity he made us feel that one may have much the same sentiment for wild beasts as an average man has for his dog. From his point of view, therefore, the rapid disappearance of these creatures is a tragedy. He cited striking evidence of it. Gibbon's astonishing testimony is that 5,000 wild beasts were collected for the opening of the Coliseum. On one occasion 2,000 ostriches were turned into the arena; all the wealth of the City of London could not buy them now. Another day they killed 100 lions, and the next day 100 lionesses. The late Sir Charles Wilson told him that in Northern Canada the Red River Expedition was stopped for four hours by a solid mass of buffaloes crossing the track; now the buffalo was almost extinct. Forty years ago the Dublin Zoo bought four spotted hyenas for £20; the present price of one is £50 or £60. Smaller creatures like the smooth ant-eater are practically unprocurable. People talk of certain animals as "noxious." Absurd! The real noxious animals are the bacilli which kill their thousands where a snake or a quadruped kills units. "These animals," said Sir Robert amid applause, "have just as good a right to live on the earth as you and I have. We are trustees for future generations. You hear the most awful howls when a work of art is going to leave this country, but I think the man that levels a rifle at a giraffe is as culpable as the man who puts a Turner or a Raphael into the fire. We shall have other Turners, but once a wild animal disappears as a species, it is seen no more to the crack of doom."

The address was a strong plea for international regulations to diminish the rate of slaughter, and, incidentally, for an attempt to domesticate more animals. It is a striking fact that all our domestic animals were preserved by prehistoric men. Sir Robert Ball was of the opinion that the puma, for example, might be

domesticated. Tender-hearted men who brought up the cubs of wolf-like animals illimitable centuries ago and produced the dog, did more for the happiness of humanity than any other individuals who have lived. (Applause.)

Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, as well as the guest, told interesting stories of the bravery and humanity of keepers, and gave us in confidence his impressions of President Roosevelt, the Kaiser, and the King of Spain, all visitors to the London Zoo. He thought it sad that kings should set the example of sporting battues. Let men of sporting tastes hunt with the camera, like Mr. Dugmore and others. As President of the Zoological Section of the British Association, he intended to introduce the question of international co-operation on a great scale this summer. (Applause.)

Friar Coleridge, who has frequented the Zoo a good deal in hours when the public are excluded, told good stories, and indulged in some interesting conjectures on the rapport between men and animals; and Friar Torday supported the guest from his African experience. The number of African animals that might be domesticated is, in his opinion, enormous. Man has shown himself most improvident there. There has never been an attempt to tame the buffalo; the eland might be ridden, but is practically extinct; and the zebra may be tamed, though it is not built to be ridden. Meanwhile every greenhorn destroys at his pleasure.

On February 16th the Bishop of Birmingham talked about "The Germans and Ourselves," in the hope of promoting peace and goodwill. Friar Donald presided. It should go upon the record that the Bishop's protest against deliberate embroilments of the peace in certain newspapers was heartily applauded. He paid a lofty tribute to German critical scholarship and arts. Who, he asked, was more indebted to it than the members of his profession? Almost all the theological ideas he had he owed to German workers. His conclusions, upon a nice analysis of the special rivalry between the two nations, were that we should put our cards upon the table and not be over feverish about the upshot; he was of the opinion that a compact of peace between Great Britain, Germany, and the United States, with an interchange of counsel in social matters, would produce ideal benefits.

Friar Sir Francis Gould wished that each nation would learn to whack its own donkey: the extraordinary thing was that both were too patient with military castes. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald expressed very anxiously the conviction that in dealing with a country where the majority does not rule, one must go direct to the German electorate; while Friar Sir Robertson Nicoll, in happier mood, declared that Germany is the one country in the world with which it is possible for us to establish cordial and intimate relations. Friar Shorter asked why it should not be made clear to the Government that English feeling deprecates the spy system. Mr. Herbert Dawson and Friars Fraser and Kernahan having spoken, Friar Whitten roused the brotherhood by denouncing loose language and a reckless flow of ink in face of foreign affairs. What he could not understand was why the greater newspapers, which aspire to lead public opinion, should not attempt to bring about a conference between editors with the exercise of such proper reserve as obtains in Parliament on these matters. The Prior agreed, pointing out that the Germans, accustomed to an official and semi-official press, are unable to understand our liberties of speech and attach absurd importance to the work of irresponsible writers.

THE ANNUAL DINNER.

The annual dinner was held at Anderton's Hotel on Friday, March 1st, when Friar W. H. Helm was Prior, and the evening was wound up with some entertaining recitations by Mr. Charles Pond from his "Glimpses of Life" the one entitled "On Strike" being particularly well received.

The Prior, in proposing the toast of "Literature," coupled with the name of the Club Guest, referred to the debt owed to Mr. E. T. Cook by all lovers of good books and literary history, for his admirable work as biographer of Ruskin, and editor of his works. He deplored the fact that the conditions of hurry and competition in daily journalism tended to squeeze literature, in the old sense of the word, out of so many newspapers.

Mr. E. T. Cook, in responding, expressed his confidence in the future of literature. While admitting that old literature was not so much regarded in the daily press of the time, he thought it was quite a different matter in the case of recent literature,

with which the best newspapers were in close contact. He gave an account of some of his experiences in editing and writing on Ruskin, and he incidentally mentioned that he had consulted no fewer than eight thousand volumes wherein references bearing on Ruskin were likely to be found, though many of them, unfortunately, contained nothing of any value for his purpose. He ended an excellent speech with some reminiscences of his work as editor of *The Westminster Gazette,* and afterwards of *The Daily News.*

Friar Whitten proposed the health of the Club, speaking appreciatively of its purpose as affording opportunities for such attractive evenings as that which they were then enjoying, when men of distinction in various occupations came to dine with the Club and open its after-dinner discussions.

Friar Whiteing, having replied to the toast, went on to speak of his long acquaintance with Mr. Cook, in circumstances which constituted a good test of the quality of the man. He had served under Mr. Cook's editorship and had seen him go through herculean labours without turning a hair in temper or in mental power. He had seen him edit the paper for the day—no small task in itself—then write a leader for it, then throw off several trifles in the way of leader notes, then go up aloft to assist in the make up, and finally come down as fresh as paint, and hungry for more work. He was the gentlest of masters; his unruffled calm served to set the temperature of the whole office, and helped them all with their work. He was such a good journalist that some were apt to forget that he had been a distinguished student at Oxford, and might have realised the highest hopes of a purely academical career.

Friar Perris saw little reason for regret with regard to the position of literature in modern journalism, believing that there was an immense amount of good literature in the newspapers of the day.

Friar Clive Holland also touched on the charge sometimes brought against modern journalists of caring little about books, denying that such an accusation was justified by the facts.

Friar Alfred Sutro presided at the dinner of the Club on the 8th March, when the guest of the evening, Mr. William Archer, entered a plea against the subjection of the drama to the caprice of one or more men sitting in secret conclave at St. James's.

The vexatious meddling and muddling of the censorship was peculiar to Great Britain alone amongst English-speaking nations; it was not a bulwark of morality; if the managers would only co-operate with the leading dramatists they would have nothing to fear; and at a moment when we were on the threshold of what promised to be a great period in the history of the English drama, the Censorship threatened to stunt its growth, for authors could not put forth their best work if it was to be at the mercy of irresponsible officialdom.

Mr. Arthur Bourchier was not concerned to defend the censorship, but written words sometimes took to themselves a new meaning when spoken on the stage; managers in their innocence were sometimes unaware of this till it was too late, and they had to fear the common informer. He recalled from the *Pall Mall Gazette* the story of the ruse by which Mr. Laurence Cowen secured a licence for a play that had been banned, as showing the weakness of the censorship, and declared that he would love to have the coalition board hinted at by Mr. Archer.

Friar A. G. Gardiner contended that a censorship of the drama was no more logical than a censorship of the daily Press, but the latter was impossible and the former was a relic of antiquity.

Friar Richard Whiteing, whilst thinking that the censorship ought to go, regarded the case for it as resting on the fact that it purported to be a defender not of morality but of decency and decorum; while for the rest there was really nothing that could not be written or said provided that it was written or said properly and not as they found some things in *The Showing Up of Blanco Posnet,* for example.

Mr. J. B. Mulholland, speaking as a theatrical manager, condemned the censorship as a perfectly hopeless anachronism.

Friar J. Foster Fraser doubted if the censorship were done away with the kind of play Mr. Archer wanted would be produced.

Friar Alfred Sutro remarked that the censorship was no defence against the vulgarities of musical comedy. Any attempt to shackle author or dramatist was fatal. The censorship was one of the most dangerous institutions going.

Sir Ernest Clarke could not agree that the common informer was a bogey, but it was ridiculous that the drama should be censored and literature not.

Mr. Herbert Jones, a Librarian, in a witty speech brimming over with good humour, defended the censorship, and thought the duty of the dramatist was to produce works that were above the censor.

Friar W. H. Helm alluded to the difference of the various "publics" included under the term of "the great British public," and suggested that in this matter we were in a state of philosophic impotence.

The Rev. Canon Rawnsley, having supported the censorship, Mr. Archer, in replying, said the artistic temperament should be protected against interference with its work. As to the difference between decorum and morality it was hard to draw the line; but in practice, if the censor set up as a defender of decorum the example he showed us was of the very worst kind. He gave instances, notably that of the permitted horror of a bowl of blood and the prohibited representation of John the Baptist's head on a charger. The evil influence of a bad book was infinitely greater than that of any play, because the play was given in the open. The rotary press precluded a censorship of the newspaper. The censorship protected no one from disgusting things, but stultified virile art. The problem had been solved in other countries where there was no censorship.

Friar Sir William Robertson Nicoll was Prior, Dr. Hagberg Wright (Librarian of the London Library) the Guest, and "Books as Gifts" the topic, at the dinner of the Club on the 15th March.

The Prior contrasted Dr. Wright's services to letters with the destructive tendencies of libricides like Lord Rosebery and of pulpites like Dr. Edmund Gosse, and remarked that, though living amongst books, with so much to say and the power to write (as shown in his studies of Tolstoy and Ibsen), their guest had yet the courage to refrain from the writing of a single volume. "Would," he added amidst laughter, "that we could all say as much."

Dr. Hagberg Wright, who said that this was the first occasion on which he had ever attempted to make a speech, spoke of the way in which people give books, the humours of book-giving, the types of book-givers, ancient and modern, and the ideal that there should be a ring of sincerity and something of the tempera-

ment of the giver in the gift. He cited examples of book-gifts that proved the *entente cordiale* between scholars of this country and scholars of the Continent, and the history of which, sometimes shown in the inscriptions, represented the life-blood of master minds embalmed, as it were, through centuries of war and waste, to be the refreshment of the minds of the present day. He traced also the development in Italy and England of dedications, elegies, and epithalamia to the more valuable endowed research of later times.

Friar Clement Shorter advocated a more reasoned selection in prize-books, and, with reference to a complaint of Mr. Andrew Lang against the number of people who had "shovelled out" to him their various metrical efforts, said he had given £8—"eight golden sovereigns"—for a volume, "Ballads and Lyrics of Old France," that had been a gift-book. There was a difficulty in getting at any sort of definite data as to the books that another generation of London Library readers would want, so that it behoved them to be gentle in their treatment of even "minor poetry." When they were living, Shelley and Keats were "minor poets," and never sold more than fifty copies of their books. Mudie's had sold at 2d. a copy scores of first editions which now would have represented a small fortune.

Mr. Whale paid a tribute to the work of Dr. Wright in the compilation of the two volumes of the London Library Catalogue, which, he said, were invaluable and with no parallel in the language.

Mr. Peat (of Messrs. Longmans) alluded to the incongruous begging to which publishers were subjected, and recalled with pleasure the gift to him by Friar Shorter twenty-five years ago of a 16mo edition of Wordsworth which had an honoured place on his shelves, and that always went with him on his holidays.

Friar Richard Whiteing thought justice was hardly done to those who gave away books they did not read themselves. Such gift-books were generally classics, and at the present time the newspaper and the modern book between them had beaten the book of the past almost to a standstill.

Mr. James Milne (editor of "The Book Monthly") observed that the Prior of the evening was a Scot, and Dr. Hagberg Wright was an Irishman. He did not know what the "predominant partner" thought of it, but he asked what would the book trade do without the Scot and the Irishman? The giving

*

of books was much better done in Scotland and Ireland than in England, because the givers of books in those two countries usually knew books and what to give. In Scotland the books given were usually the Bible and "Burns." He did not know how far the Scot was actuated by the fact that good editions of these books could be had cheap. With a return to a better state of intelligence in the bookselling trade, better books would be given. The average buyer of gift-books went into the book-shop with a question, "What shall I give?" And the difficulty that then presented itself was illustrated by the old story of the lady who asked a bookseller for a volume of Browning. The bookseller said he had not a copy, as he never kept books he did not himself understand, and he could not understand Browning. "Have you Praed?" asked the would-be customer. "Yes," was the reply, "I have prayed, but still I cannot understand him." He suggested that there might be an advisory department at the London Library for the use of book-givers. Women were great book-givers, and they usually gave classics, partly because they were well bound and were not expensive, and the buyers felt "safe" with them. He added that it might not always be a good practice to send advance copies of a new novel to anyone connected with a newspaper. As to the "review copies" which they had been told found their way to Dr. Wright, it was a good thing they got into such good hands.

Mr. J. M. Bulloch (editor of *The Graphic*) spoke of that "godsend to printer and binder," the privately printed book. He mentioned two examples that had come under his notice, one a history of a certain college in India, the other the history of his family, which a particular Duke had presented to all the tenant farmers on his estate, and that must have cost at least £10 a copy. Of the last-named, a copy had *not* been sent to the British Museum, and this happened to other privately printed books, and sometimes caused them to be exceptionally valuable. Book-givers did not always give on a right system. Mr. Carnegie, for instance, should have given works on coal mining to Newcastle, and such works as those of "Jorrocks" to Newmarket. In some newspaper offices the custom was to distribute to the staff at the end of the year the books that had been sent in for review. The members of the staff had the choice of selection. Usually, verse was treated by them, one and all, with contempt. He himself made a habit of buying every book

published by a native of his native place. Sometimes the book happened to be in verse, and he left this in tramcars or gave it to the dustman. He once lived over rooms occupied by an estate auctioneer. When this gentleman went away he left behind him a large collection of estate catalogues. He rummaged amongst these and sent a selection to the librarian of a town which he thought they would interest, with the sequel of an application for some more; and he thus came to the conclusion that if books were sent to those places that were interested in the topics they dealt with, one part of the problem of book-giving would be solved.

The Prior said the first book he ever gave away was an edition of Mr. Andrew Lang's "Ballads and Lyrics of Old France." He gave, not £8, but 5s. for it, subject to discount. He got it from John Adam in the market-place of Aberdeen. His friend, Dr. Robert Neil, afterwards lecturer at Pembroke College, Cambridge, gave him in return a copy of "The Poems and Romances of George Augustus Simcox," and there was no book in his possession to-day that he valued more highly. He received a great many presentation novels, the majority of which were very welcome. The other day he got notice that one was on the way to him. He was told that it would illustrate a very important point in psychology. When he received it he found that it contained a great many characters, and everyone seemed to be either the father or mother of an illegitimate child. He was yet wondering where "the important point in psychology" came in. As to the gift of books by their authors, if an author could not give his books to his friends (and no one bought the books of his friends), the friends would never know the author's true greatness or quiddity. A divine who had a very large and wealthy church, wrote a book which had a large sale, but when he inquired how many of his congregation had bought a copy, he found that none had done so, but that two of the wealthiest had earnestly endeavoured to secure a loan of the book. He agreed that every book which was a gift should have something of the donor. There was always something of the donor about a book gift, more than perhaps the giver often knew. Dr. Wright had mentioned Joanna Baillie. Joanna Baillie was the real problem in English literary history. How on earth such trash as Joanna Baillie's plays was admired by Scott and others he could not understand. In regard to the presentation of copies of books to

the British Museum, a lady once went to a publisher with a manuscript. She was told there would be no sale for it. She wanted it to be printed, however, her reason being that she wished to have a printed copy of it in the British Museum. The book was printed and a copy duly sent to the Museum, but not a single copy was sold. He thought they would all agree that Dr. Hagberg Wright had made a most promising start, and they would all be glad to hear him again.

Dr. Wright confined his reply to a brief expression of his thanks for the reception accorded him.

On April 19th "The Psychology of Women" was discussed in a scientific address by Sir Almroth Wright, Friar Coleridge in the chair. The essential secret of the world, said Sir Almroth Wright, is reflex action, from the amœba up. But above the amœba there is the power to form mental pictures, memories of sensations that have had their reflex effect on the organism. These may be disturbing, and it is a test of sanity that they should be controlled. Men, he said, control them better than women. What he called women's "iconokinetic responsiveness" is higher than man's, especially at certain times; those women excepted who have borne many children and had all their reflexes satisfied. They must therefore be inferior to men in adjudication—in the exact knowledge of facts. From this, his conclusion was that women are rather useless when it comes to "the practical affairs of the world."

The Prior submitted that, if woman is not the mental equal of man, she is the mental equipoise. None of us would be here but for her profounder enjoyment and pain, the capacity for which is connected with qualities that we call the soul. She comes first in the work of creation, and if we have not had a female Shakespeare, Bach, Brunel, or Goethe, it is because she exhausts those qualities in the effort, and has less creative reserves. But she "may lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks," and, in spite of her high "iconokinetic responsiveness," she is often the best keeper of the purse.

Friar Whiteing observed that science may go too far if we don't go far enough. This unhappy creature, woman, who has so many impediments to right thinking, does a great part of the work of the world; and he could not understand why she should not discharge one of the simplest functions a man or a woman

can exercise, and record a vote also. Women are entrusted with the accurate labour of the Post Office and the Savings Bank, and he would like to be able to take an average of the mistakes of both sexes in those departments. In a minority, doubtless, there is extraordinary hypersensitiveness and a capacity for doing silly things, but men have had their "splendid follies," too, and civic wisdom is a matter of training and habit for one sex as much as the other.

Mr. A. H. Tubby, consulting surgeon, gave it as his experience that in women of the middle-class, great restraint and heroism are not uncommon. Woman's known gift of intuition—what is it but an accurate and very useful response to stimuli? The ablest women he met were the mistresses of large schools, who sometimes seemed to him to surpass men in all-round mental quality and the power of direction. In women, as in men, these things were a matter of education, and he wished that this might be borne in mind by legislators readjusting the franchise.

Friar Harold Spender did not believe that sex instinct dominates women so much as men: they are purer. If women are more responsive than men, more alert and quick, their help in political and practical affairs is precisely what men are wanting. Men's worst fault is surely sluggishness, and the greatest ship in the world had actually gone to her doom without a sufficient number of boats to save her passengers. If Sir Almroth Wright was right, the whole of western civilisation was wrong, and we ought to be Orientalists.

Dr. Ewart, consulting physician to St. George's Hospital, was eloquent in praise of woman as the guardian of morality and the ideal. Man supplies the energy of life, but woman has the making and the shaping. Pandora, Egeria, and Cornelia—these are three values that jointly comprehend womanhood.

In reply, Sir Almroth Wright defined the soul, amid laughter, as a complex of visceral reflexes, and, admitting as an Irishman that he had many of these himself, said his contention simply was that purely intellectual faculty, by which he meant the power of distinguishing coldly between what is false and what is true, is of all human faculties the most important. He could not persuade himself that woman has any intellectual morality.

The dinner to Field-Marshal Lord Roberts on April 26th was made the pleasant occasion of a presentation to Friar Shaylor,

in grateful and affectionate recognition of his three years of secretarial work. By his own wish, little was said to embarrass a modest man, and he took advantage of this to allege that he had deserved nothing, as well as to make acknowledgments to Friar Gaston. The gift was a pair of silver candelabra.

There was more than usual personal interest also in the distinguished guest and what he had to say. Prior Foster Fraser proposed his health as not only a great soldier, but one of our craft, reminding us of his books, "The Rise of Wellington" and "Forty-one Years in India." To tell what he had done for the Empire required one and a half columns of close print in "Who's Who," and he had never been afraid of anything except cats. (Warm applause and laughter.)

Lord Roberts, who had undertaken to speak about "The Pen and the Sword," recalled his relations with war correspondents. He had known Russell, whom he met at the relief of Lucknow. There had never been, he thought, a correspondent in India until that time; "and we all knew," he said tersely, "what work he had done in the Crimea. How magnificently he had put before the British public the necessity for a change of administration." Forbes he saw in the early phase of the Afghan War. With the next man, however—Lord Roberts did not name him—his relations were not so fortunate. When in command of one of the three relief columns for Afghanistan, he had to object to some of that gentleman's telegrams, and to say that he could have no hesitation about "anything right, reasonable and truthful." The correspondent was afterwards requested to withdraw from the camp. "His paper did not like it, and I was abused," was all Lord Roberts said of the sequel; "but when the war was over, and I got back to this country, there was no paper in England more complimentary." A reference to South Africa ended the pithiest and briefest speech ever made by a guest at a Whitefriars dinner, and it may be given verbatim:

"At the Modder River I had a large number of war correspondents. I collected them all together. 'All I'd ask you,' I said, 'is not to give any information that would injure the operations or forestall my plans. The one hope of success is to be able to act in the way the enemy doesn't expect.' I tried to convey that there was never an army in a greater difficulty, from the fact that the enemy were dressed in plain clothes. You couldn't tell the

difference between our oxen drovers or commissariat supply men and the Boers. The enemy knew everything. On one occasion Botha was cut off by some of our pickets near Johannesburg: Botha was within 300 yards of me; nobody told me about it, and the next morning he quietly got on his horse and rode off. I must say that, throughout the war, I never saw one word from a correspondent to which I could take the slightest objection. (Applause.) I told them all I could tell them, but begged them to work for me, and they did. At Bloemfontein they gave me a dinner, and I have the menu with all their names on it in a glass case at home."

The Prior told us that at Englemere there is probably the most interesting collection of newspaper contents bills in the world—"Roberts sent to Kandahar," "Roberts sent to Pretoria," and so on—evidence how a daughter loved the achievements of her father.

Friar Sir Robertson Nicoll was eloquent in the great soldier's praise—"a man who has made more history than almost anyone we can remember, whose name will go down to the last stages of the British Empire as one of its chief ornaments." He added that, as a Nonconformist, he read with the deepest attention and respect those wise and not craven counsels which Lord Roberts addressed from time to time to the nation. Sooner or later the nation would accept them.

Sir Mortimer Durand, who was happily introduced by Friar Clodd, added a delightful sheaf of reminiscences; and the discussion, to which there were contributions by Friar Leader, Colonel Langham (Royal Sussex Regiment), Friars Haldane MacFall, Sir E. Clarke and Kernahan, turned largely on the question of compulsory military training.

LADIES' BANQUET.

THE Ladies' Banquet was held at the Trocadero on May 3rd. Friar Max Pemberton was the Prior of the night.

The Club guests were:—Miss Darragh, the Rev. Dr. Dearmer, Mrs. Dearmer, His Honour Judge Parry, Mrs. Baillie Reynolds, Mrs. Sidgwick, Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

THE PRIOR brought Mrs. Pemberton, Mr. Max Pemberton, jun., Dr. Foakes Jackson, Sir Ed. Sullivan. FRIAR W. F.

AITKEN—Mrs. Aitken, Mr. A. Donelly Aitken. FRIAR ALDEN—Mrs. Alden. FRIAR GURNEY BENHAM—Mrs. Benham. FRIAR H. J. BROWN—Mrs. Brown, Miss Maude Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Goodspeed, Mr. Walter Gay. FRIAR BROWNING—Mrs. Browning, Mrs. Nielsen, Miss Nielsen, FRIAR SHAN BULLOCK—Mrs. Shan Bullock. FRIAR G. B. BURGIN—Mrs. Burgin. FRIAR SIR ERNEST CLARKE—Lady Clarke. FRIAR COOPER—Mrs. Cooper. FRIAR COULSON—Miss Coulson, Miss Florence Pitt. FRIAR F. J. CROSS. FRIAR EDMONDS—Mrs. Edmonds. FRIAR FAIRBANKS—Mrs. Philips, Mr. H. Stables, Miss Muriel Stables. FRIAR FOSTER FRASER—Mrs. Foster Fraser, Mr. Kilpatrick, Mrs. Kilpatrick, Mr. A. Strauss, M.P., Mrs. Arthur Strauss. FRIAR TOM GALLON—Miss N. Tom-Gallon, Mr. Engelbach. FRIAR E. P. GASTON—Mrs. Gaston, Mr. J. Oliver Stacey. FRIAR CHAS. GOSS—Mrs. Goss, Mr. H. Jones, Mrs. Pendrill. FRIAR DR. J. MORGAN DE GROOT. FRIAR JOSEPH HOCKING—Miss Hocking, Mr. Burden, Mrs. Burden, Miss Burden. FRIAR W. B. HODGSON—Mrs. Ashley, Miss Ashley. FRIAR WALTER JERROLD—Mrs. Jerrold. FRIAR ROBERT LEIGHTON—Mrs. Leighton. FRIAR SIR WM. ROBERTSON NICOLL—Lady Nicoll, Miss Coe, Miss Collins, Mr. Farquharson, A.R.A., Mrs. Farquharson, Miss Girdwood, Mr. Harris, Mrs. Harris, Capt. Leech, Mrs. Leech, Dr. Eric Marshall, Miss Ross, Mr. Sittampalam, Miss Stoddart, Mr. Cecil Stoughton, Miss Webster. FRIAR A. D. POWER—Miss Power, Miss S. D. Power, Mr. A. W. Dennis, Miss C. Dennis, Mr. H. Fryer, Mr. Reginald Groome, Miss Knollys, Mr. Sidney Low, Miss Reinold, Rev. C. H. Ritchie, Mr. Thos. Seccombe, Mrs. Sladen. FRIAR REYNOLDS—Mrs. Reynolds and one guest. FRIAR CLEMENT SHORTER—Mrs. Shorter. FRIAR W. B. SLATER—Mrs. Slater, Miss Slater, Mr. W. de Selincourt, Mrs. W. de Selincourt. FRIAR WALTER SMITH. THE HON. SECRETARY—Dr. Chapple, M.P., Mrs. Chapple, Dr. Rideal, Mrs. Rideal.

The Prior, with loyal appreciation, gave "The King," and the toast was heartily honoured.

Subsequently, the Prior extended a cordial welcome to the guests, the customary formula of the Order being read.

Mrs. Baillie Reynolds, in an aptly phrased speech, proposed "Literature." As to the discrepancy which she found between the subject and the speaker she would offer no apology. The discrepancy was not half so big as it looked. "Good aims do not always make good books." The moral of that was that a

poor writer might be an excellent reader. "I am an excellent reader," Mrs. Reynolds continued. "I emphatically assert that reading is my passion, my hobby—it is the only true recreation that the writer has. . . . When you take a book you step straight out into a new world; you are a potential Christopher Columbus every time you walk into Mudie's and change a book." Quoting the dictum of Augustine Birrell that the test of a true lover of books was a fondness for George Borrow, Laurence Sterne, and Jane Austen, she confessed to being able to take George Borrow only "in small doses." The admiration for Sterne was such that one gives in seeing little china dragons or the grotesques in cathedral adornment. Her enjoyment of Jane Austen, however, had amounted to a passion. "When I think that these extraordinary books," Mrs. Reynolds added, "were written by a woman—almost an uneducated woman, as we should call her—I cannot help thinking that the palm for fiction will have to be bestowed on a member of my own sex." (Applause.) In touching upon novels that evening she had a good excuse, seeing that the Prior had won his laurels in that field of literature; nothing could add to the lustre of the name of Max Pemberton. (Applause.) Not long since in a debating society she was breaking a lance with some critics of the Max Pemberton imaginative school. She then urged that people who lived in the 16th century were just as real as we were, although it was their misfortune not to live in South Kensington. The author who made these centuries live and gave a fascinating representation of them was as meritorious as the person who chronicled the trivial doings of the next door neighbour. (Laughter.) Criticising certain present-day novels—"the clinical school of fiction"—Mrs. Reynolds described them as a treatise rather than a romance; not a picture but a dissection; without a hero, only a subject for the laboratory; with no heroine, but an abnormal type. This was the result of the confusion of modern thought. Soon after the last century, Science took the place of everything; now it was to take the place of art, beauty and sympathy. Sympathy, she contended, was the one quality which the novelist must possess. The tendency of these books made one feel that there were no average people living in the world. It was more interesting to read works about people of normal mind, with self-control, and exercising free will, working out their destinies, and not the victims of inevitable tendencies. (Applause.) Having paid a graceful

tribute to Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the speaker concluded by coupling with the toast the name of Sir Wm. Robertson Nicoll, "the arbiter of the life or death of the rising novelist, and with a marvellous faculty for discovering young authors."

Sir Wm. Robertson Nicoll found a congenial subject in replying. "There was an Englishman once who went to Paisley," Sir William remarked, "and was invited to a public dinner. He had committed to him the toast, 'The Poets of Paisley.' To his great astonishment, all the company rose in answer to the toast. (Laughter.) He discovered that Paisley was a smoky nest of singing birds." (Laughter.) Everyone in that room might have risen to answer the toast of literature. Therefore he felt no diffidence in replying. As a lover of literature he had tried to see merit in all. He had tried to recognise real greatness in our contemporaries; it was his firm belief that we had amongst us some writers who would rank with the greatest of all times. As regards present-day fiction, in many cases there was a tendency for the elemental themes to recede, and "the background comes forward"—if that was not a "bull." (Laughter.) After laying down a new fiction book he was often thinking a great deal more about the problem than the characters or the course of the story. Charlotte Brontë wrote of a mill strike, but the story was a real one of two hearts. In Thomas Hardy's works there were great problems raised, and these were treated with power, depth and capacity, but the books were all elemental in nature. Take Charles Dickens, the greatest of all. Dickens called himself a Liberal; he wrote "Pickwick" at the time of the Reform Bill. There was not a single allusion in that work to the Reform Bill. Dickens was interested in the repeal of the Corn Laws; in his works there was but a casual reference to that repeal. He had great difficulty in believing that Dickens would have imposed the super-tax on the Cheeryble Brothers, although they were well able to pay it. (Laughter.) Sir William eulogised the value of humour. "Faust" was the book in the world with the least humour in it. The most humorous work, he should say, was the "Pickwick Papers." There was room for the satirist, just as there was for the hangman. (Laughter.) We wanted something a great deal better than satire; we wanted the oil of gladness—that rich distillation of humanity which was found in "Pickwick." (Applause.) The problem which Dickens amply solved was how to make a man ridiculous, but not con-

temptible. (Applause.) Shelley said: "The world will never be reformed till laughter is put down." That was a great falsehood—the world would never be properly reformed without laughter. He had discovered in a paper recently a proverb to this effect: "You can count the apples on the trees, but you cannot count the trees in the apple." From this he drew the analogy that authors could not calculate the influence which they asserted throughout the world.

Judge Parry fully supported the reputation he has attained as an accomplished after-dinner speaker in proposing "The Ladies." "What does a County Court judge know about women?" might be asked, he asserted. When he saw fashionably-attired ladies seated in the County Court, he knew it meant a servant, a dog bite, or a bodice. (Laughter.) The servant problem he was able to deal with; in a dog bite there was a certain element of difficult law one could tackle. A bodice had always been a difficulty to him. (Laughter.) He had applied for a lady assessor to assist him in the difficulty of ill-fitting cases. Do not think for a moment ladies were incapable of advocacy. (Laughter.) He went very much further than the leaders of the women as to what would happen in the future, when he saw how much better they conducted their cases than some of the solicitors and advocates who appeared before him. He remembered in the North the other day a collier's wife came before him; she opened her case in a few words—he wished every advocate was as concise. She said: "I want yon mon to give me my mon's Sunday trousers, for I want them back to pay the week's rent." (Laughter.) He defied Sir Rufus Isaacs, Mr. F. E. Smith, or Mr. Marshall Hall to do better in so few words. (Laughter.) He thought her case was clear and right was on her side. At last came the defence—not so glibly, but more sound—"Yon woman and my missis drank them trousers." (Laughter.) For himself, he could not help thinking that this idea that women should not vote was a hopeless piece of antiquity. If we look back, we find that woman always had voted. Every man puts himself up for election, and the women voted for him. (Laughter.) Most of them had been voted for, and others hoped to be voted for. As an indication of the ignorance which still existed in some quarters as to the work of women, his Honour told a story of an Alderman in the Midlands who was taking baths in a noted centre with Mr. Humphry Ward. When they parted the Alder-

man said: "I hope, Mr. Ward, that when you come to our town you will call and see me." Mr. Ward promised that he would. Subsequently Mr. Ward received an invitation to a dinner to be given in the Alderman's honour. There was a P.S. added: "If there is a Mrs. Humphry Ward, do bring her." (Laughter.) With the toast he coupled the name of Miss Darragh, who, he said, "had conquered the world in the North, and in a great measure in the South."

In a brief reply Miss Darragh disclaimed any qualification for the honour conferred upon her. She had never been a Suffragette and broken windows or walked in a procession. (Laughter.) "I have not written a line," Miss Darragh added. "I am only an actress. I am only known in Liverpool and Manchester for trying to do something for the repertory theatre." (Applause.) Many of them did not realise, Miss Darragh proceeded, what books meant to the actor and actress; how they were helped forward by them in moments of stress, worry and trouble. In conclusion, she sincerely thanked the company for the honour accorded her.

Sir Ernest Clarke, in proposing "The Prior," eulogised Mr. Max Pemberton's cordial good will, friendship and pleasant companionship. Their only regret was that since their Prior's removal to the country, and owing to his duties as a J.P. in looking after the lightning motorists, they did not oftener see him in their murky City. (Laughter.)

The Prior's response was of telegraphic terseness, as the hour fixed for the conversazione had been passed. Although Sir Ernest Clarke was a Suffolk man—and a very fine one—he (the Prior) was only an emigrant to Suffolk. He was still spoken of as a foreigner. (Laughter.) It had gone forth among the friendly rustics that he had once had "a piece in the papers"—(laughter)—but he had gradually lived that down. (Laughter.) He thanked them heartily for the cordial expression of their good will.

The musical programme was the best the club has listened to for some years, Miss Edith Blanchard, Miss Carrie Tubb, Mr. Arthur Barlow and the ever-vivacious Dr. Collisson being repeatedly encored.

CLUB NOTES.

The Staff looked at me. I looked at The Staff. "About book notes?" "What of 'em?" asked The Staff. "They won't take the trouble to send 'em in." "Put in a notice charging 'em at so much a line for one insertion," suggested The Staff. "That'll teach 'em to appreciate their blessings." "They haven't any powers of appreciation; depreciation's more in their line. There's one Friar very bitter because he'd done something about Troglodytes, and we didn't get it right." "Thought it was a patent medicine," admitted The Staff. "We'll larn him to troggle."

The Staff lit a match on the seat of his trousers with that dexterity and grace which characterise all his movements. "They say we talk too much about ourselves and too little about them," he suggested; "but in a personal column we've *got* to be interesting." "They don't see the necessity. When I took the chair at a dinner and you gave me twenty lines and the guest of the evening four, they said we lacked proportion." "Some of their proportions aren't all they might be." "Better be careful, or they'll turn a libel expert on to us. Shall we resign?" The Staff shook his head. "No; better try 'em with another postcard all round. I'll support you to the death." "Perhaps that's what they're aiming at." "Let 'em aim—and miss," declared The Staff.

We have left it at that.

If any of you doubt the truth of this bitter cry, come up to lunch and talk it over. It's a comfortable room—with the portraits of all our dead friends to give us an appetite and those of the living to take it away. One gifted editor always comes to lunch at "The Friars" when he is going to a heavy dinner in the evening. He says that the Club lunch gives him an appetite—later.

The opening dinner of the session, with Judge Parry as guest, was distinguished by the delight of meeting old friends again—friends who had recovered from the effects of the last season's dinners and were prepared to achieve distinction in new fields of

oratory. And they did—some of them. Others were oppressed by the responsibility of setting the ball rolling, and it was not until the guest of the evening had told several anecdotes that they came into the tented field and went one better.

There was a cheering statement of Judge Parry's which went home to the hearts of the Friars. He confessed that he had a tenderness for all authors and journalists, and that when, most reluctantly, he had to make an order against them for payment of the necessaries of life, he never, if possible, allowed it to exceed two shillings per month. Several members are now preparing to "go into residence" at Lambeth—not the Palace but the scene of the judge's labours.

The Staff was busily employed in taking down anecdotes, but generously allowed me to "cabbage" this one. A prisoner awaiting trial was condoled with by a friend. "At all events," said the friend, "you will come before an upright judge." "That's just what I'm afraid of," retorted the other. "I want one who'll lean a little."

There has been a good deal of diffidence—mistaken diffidence—on the part of the younger Friars in speaking at the various dinners this session. One, confused by the polite applause which awaited the beginning of his maiden effort, was heard to murmur, "Not guilty, my lord," and then sat down again.

It is not at all a bad thing to jot down a few notes as the evening progresses. If you're not called upon, it doesn't matter; if you are, you have something to which to cling. There's no feeling so utterly sad in this world as when a man, full of brilliant ideas, loses his nerve, looks despairingly round, and sits down again, knowing all the time that he really had something to say but couldn't get it out.

And it is such a trying audience—an audience which has heard all the anecdotes in the universe, and is wearily prepared for the worst. But when it does get something new, it is nobly generous.

One Friar made a very fluent speech the other evening. It came so trippingly that I asked him how he managed it. "Well," he said confidentially, "my poor dear mother's very deaf, so I try my speeches on her. When I've finished, bless her, she always says it will be the speech of the evening, and so I have what the missionaries call 'a sure and certain hope.'"

At the dinner to the Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Russell Wakefield) on February 16th, the bishop was late, and a telephone message came through to the Club Secretary: "*The Vicar of Wakefield* regrets that he will be a quarter of an hour late." Who shall say after this that a literary Government doesn't do its best for us?

"A fervent disciple of Ruskin's," said the guest of the evening at the Annual Dinner, "believed in the Master's denunciations of railways to such an extent that he walked from one end of England to the other to see Ruskin. Then he proudly told the Master what he had done. 'You're a fool,' said Ruskin. 'Abuse railways, but use them.'"

À propos of the literary gift dinner, authors are pestered a good deal for free copies of their novels. In my salad days I received a beautiful letter from a lonely old clergyman in a little island off the west coast of Scotland. He said that his great consolation in living at all was to get one of my books when it came out, and, as the gulls wheeled round his little home and the wild winds howled about it, he forgot all his troubles in reading me. He was too poor to buy my books, but he could tell from the undercurrent of deep sadness in them that I had suffered much, and was of a really sympathetic nature. If I sent him a copy of my last book, I would never regret conferring so much happiness on a lonely fellow-creature. In short, it was a be-yew-ti-ful letter, and would have moved a heart of stone.

I sent him a copy—with a touching inscription to the effect that if the gulls could stand it, it would then be safe to try it on himself. Six months later I received a replica of his former

letter from him in which the same gulls and same storms were worrying him, but with the name of the new book inserted in it instead of the old one. He wrote, on a postcard, to say that he was much grieved by my "coarse adjectival fluency," and that when he felt really up to it, he would pray for me. I wrote back that such a course would be better than preying on me. And now, "We do not speak as we pass by."

On the whole, it has been a good season, although illness and various other causes have prevented many old and valued Friars from coming to the dinners. Still, we are going strongly. I was once on the *Marguerite* for the first trip of the season to Boulogne. The boat was crammed with pressmen—of all nationalities. "Eh, mon," said one of them to me, as he made a dive for the luncheon saloon, "it would be a sair day for England if we were to droon." "The bearing of this observation lies in the application of it," as Friar Cap'n Cuttle once observed.

G. B. B.