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PRIVATE
CIRCULATION.

CLUB DIARY.

THE second half of the winter programme was opened on January 31st, when Friar Richard Whiteing occupied the Prior's chair. The guest of the evening was the Lord Bishop of Hereford, who, in introducing the subject of "Literature in Schools," related some of his experiences as a scholar and a head master, particularly in regard to the neglect of systematic teaching in English literature. He sought to show that in the curriculum of most of our schools and colleges English is quite disregarded. In the preparatory schools, he averred, there is a lamentable neglect of tuition in English, and even at Oxford there is little instruction given in the literature of our own country. When head master of Clifton, he made it a rule that once a week every boy should write an essay on a literary subject, and amongst these boys were T. E. Brown and others who had afterwards distinguished themselves with the pen. If public school masters insisted on boys who came from preparatory schools knowing something of English literature, the neglect of which he complained would soon be remedied.

Lord Stanley of Alderley compared our English system of literary instruction with the methods obtaining in Latin countries, and he suggested that less importance is attached by English teachers to correctness in literary form and expression than is the case abroad. In order to escape from the blight of provinciality, he said, we need to cultivate a higher standard of literary instruction in our schools. The Rev. C. E. Owen, of Harrow, added some practical suggestions to the debate. Friar Sir F. C. Gould objected reminiscently to the fiendish ingenuity displayed by his tutors to eliminate all interest from the instruction they imparted. The uses of Euclid were never explained to him, he learnt history in watertight compartments, each king having a separate cage to himself, and it was the same with other subjects. He wished that

English grammar could be abolished, and that, whilst being well grounded in Latin grammar, the young should be taught more thoroughly to read progressively the best books in their own language. The Rev. W. J. Street, Friars Max Pemberton, R. N. Fairbanks, J. M. Dent, F. W. Russell, Philip Wilson, Harold Spender, and Wilfred Whitten also contributed to the debate.

“The Reform of the Theatre” was the subject discussed in the after-dinner conversation on February 7th, when Friar A. E. W. Mason, M.P., occupied the Prior’s chair. The Club guest was Mr. Granville Barker, who, in a witty speech that sparkled with paradox, argued in favour of a greater liberty in the representation of plays on a stage unhampered by a dramatic censor. His remarks on the education of the public in matters of the drama met with considerable opposition from Friar Alfred Sutro, who maintained that it was the duty of the playwright to follow and not attempt to guide the public taste. Friar Sutro’s arguments were criticised in turn by Mr. J. T. Grein, who was followed by Mr. William Poel, Mr. J. B. Mulholland, the Prior, and Friar Mostyn Pigott.

On February 14th there was an informal House Dinner in the Club-room, at which Friar Alfred H. Miles presided.

Illness prevented Friar Gurney Benham from fulfilling his engagement to take the chair on February 21st, and in his place Friar W. H. Helm acted as Prior. The Club guest was the Hon. Maurice Baring, who opened a conversation on the topic of “Newspapers in War Time.” Mr. Baring served as a correspondent during the Russo-Japanese War, and he gave reminiscences of his experiences in Manchuria, particularly in connection with the official restrictions placed upon correspondents. Mr. Bennet Burleigh, in a vigorous speech, referred to his own work as a correspondent in various wars. It is the duty of the citizen, he said, to know that he is getting the truth from the seat of war, and the correspondent at the front is a necessity which cannot be dispensed with. If there be any danger of an irresponsible reporter

anticipating the plans and intentions of the army, the general must deal with the danger, grappling with the subject on his own authority, and trusting to the correspondent not to betray any secrets. But there is no way out of it; you must have correspondents. A censor, he admitted, is necessary, but the censorship should be at home. Lieutenant-Colonel Baskerville contributed to the discussion, and Friar William Senior spoke interestingly of the early war correspondents of the time when leisurely letters were sent by post from the front. Mr. George Toulmin, M.P., handled the subject from a statesman's point of view, and was followed by Mr. Atkins and Friar Albert Kinross.

Mr. Justice Neville was the Club guest on March 6th, when Friar J. M. Dent acted as Prior. The topic of conversation was The Garden City, concerning which Mr. Justice Neville gave interesting and enlightening particulars, referring to the colony at Letchworth as being already a successful undertaking, providing incalculable benefits upon workers in various industries established in a clean and congenial atmosphere. Friar W. R. Paterson and several guests spoke enthusiastically of the scheme.

Sir Edward Carson, K.C., M.P., was to have been the guest of the Club on March 13th, but owing to his inability to attend there was no meeting.

The Prior on March 20th was Friar Sir Ernest Clarke, and the guest of the evening was Professor Sylvanus Thompson, D.Sc., F.R.S., who, in responding to the toast of his health, opened a conversation on the subject of "Science and the Man in the Street." He spoke of the great part played by experiment in all scientific progress. Truth had to be tested, and it was only by the results of experiments that science possessed any authority. Logical deduction from fact was the basis of all science. It was what might be called proportionate truth which the man in the street failed to grasp. To arrive at scientific truth detachment of the mind was necessary. Huxley possessed that detachment, as also did Flaubert, although the latter dwelt in quite a different

atmosphere. In science the distortion of truth was hateful, and the political man in the street revels in distorting facts in order that his party may be successful. The party system, Professor Thompson declared, was the curse of the country, for which reason he had not voted for any party for many years. Friar Mostyn Pigott followed with a humorous speech, and the discussion was continued by Mr. Robert Machray and Friars Coleridge, Sir F. Carruthers Gould, R. N. Fairbanks, Walter Slater, Shan Bullock, and Alexander Paul.

ANNUAL DINNER.

THE Annual Dinner of the Club was held on February 28th at the Trocadero Restaurant. Owing largely to the prevalence of influenza, the company was smaller than it usually is on such occasions. Nevertheless the evening was a pronounced success, as it was sure to be under the genial Priorship of Friar William Senior and with so popular a Club Guest as the Right Hon. George Wyndham, M.P. The Friars and their friends were received in a screened-off portion of the Empire Room. The tables, which were beautifully decorated with spring flowers, were laid for eighty.

The Roll-call was as follows :

THE PRIOR—Mr. Hugh T. Sheringham and Mr. R. B. Marston ;
FRIAR HENRY J. BROWN—Mr. Louis A. Holman and Mr. Charles J. Petherick ; FRIAR G. B. BURGIN ; FRIAR LEE CAMPBELL—Mr. Walter Emanuel and Mr. J. Whitehead ; FRIAR EDWARD CLODD—Mr. A. H. Stockley ; FRIAR WILLIAM COLLEY—Mr. Joseph Newcastle ; FRIAR J. DRYSDALE—Mr. A. D. Keith ; FRIAR OSMAN EDWARDS—Mr. Herbert Draper ; FRIAR LOUIS FALCK—Mr. Arthur Polak ; FRIAR FOSTER FRASER—Lord Balcarres and Mr. S. H. Jeyes ; FRIAR W. L. GANE—Mr. G. H. Heath ; FRIAR CHARLES GARVICE ; FRIAR REGINALD GEARD—Mr. W. S. Sherrington and Mr. George M. Light ; FRIAR SIR FRANCIS CARRUTHERS GOULD ; FRIAR ALFRED GIBSON ; FRIAR LIONEL GOWING ; FRIAR THE REV. C. H. GRUNDY—Mr. C. A. Heimann, Mr. Wilfrid Trickett and Mr. Norman D. Grundy ; FRIAR H. A. HINKSON ; Lord Killanin and Mr. William Clark ; FRIAR SILAS HOCKING ; FRIAR CLIVE HOLLAND ; FRIAR WALTER JERROLD—Mr. Walter Gallichan ; FRIAR LINDLEY JONES—Mr. Alfred I. Hart and Mr. Richard Seares ; FRIAR HEATH JOYCE ; FRIAR KINROSS—Mr. Herbert French ; FRIAR W. G. LACY ; FRIAR ROBERT

LEIGHTON—Mr. George Frampton, R.A.; FRIAR ALEX. MACKINTOSH; FRIAR ALFRED MILES; FRIAR W. R. PATERSON—Count Lutzow; FRIAR CHARLES PEARCE; FRIAR G. H. PERKINS—Dr. Horace Fagan and Mr. Evan Ortner; FRIAR J. SHAYLOR—Mr. W. H. Nicholls and Mr. R. Champion; FRIAR W. B. SLATER; FRIAR WALTER SMITH; FRIAR KEIGHLEY SNOWDEN—Mr. Howard Gray; FRIAR ROBERT SOMMERSVILLE; FRIAR ALFRED SPENCER—Mr. H. Noel Williams and Mr. F. Rowland Munt; FRIAR RICHARD WHITEING—FRIAR ARTHUR SPURGEON—Mr. John A. McInnes, Mr. Arnold Toynbee; THE HON. SECRETARY—Mr. A. H. Behrendt and Mr. W. H. Kesteven.

The Vice-Chairmen were Friars Sir F. Carruthers Gould, Arthur Spurgeon, G. B. Burgin and W. Lindley Jones.

Following the toast of "The King" and some remarks from the Chair, Friar W. R. Paterson ("Benjamin Swift") proposed the toast of the evening, coupled with the name of the guest of the evening.

Literature.

FRIAR PATERSON said: In his brilliant and scholarly essay on the "Poems of Shakespeare," Mr. Wyndham makes the remark that in literature we modern people have created nothing. If this is the case, I find myself in a somewhat extraordinary situation, for I am rising to propose the health of an organism which has apparently ceased to exist. Whether the death of literature was recent or sudden or violent I do not know, but if literature is dead we may be at least allowed to propose its resurrection. (Hear, hear.) Perhaps Mr. Wyndham meant merely that although not wholly defunct, literature is leading to-day a precarious and somewhat sickly life; and, for all I know, criticism, which is the nurse of literature, is as sick as the patient. Both have been afflicted in their twin history by synchronous maladies. But, in the essay from which I have already quoted, Mr. Wyndham reminds us that the contemporaries of Shakespeare believed that they, too, were living in a decadent age, and I find some comfort in that fact. For it means that contemporary criticism is generally only provisional. (Laughter.) Not once nor twice in the history of letters the opinion of one age has been reversed in the next, and it looks as if each generation, unable to appraise its own artistic labours, delegates to its successors the final æsthetic judgment. When I hear our poets described only as minor poets, I always remind myself of Théophile Gautier's admirable essay, in which he says: that if you wish genuine poetry, you should go to the minor

poets for it. (Hear, hear.) And I notice that the minor poets of one age have a habit of becoming the major poets of the next. No doubt, during the longest part of his career, every man of letters has generally been an Athanasius *contra mundum*. But there are too many of us to-day. (Laughter.) Those of us who sell our knowledge—or our ignorance—to the public are sometimes reminded that the trade is too full. Book kills book, and they have to compete not merely with each other, but also with a dangerous rival and often predatory species in the form of newspapers. (Laughter.) I notice that the modern novelist does not observe even the etiquette of the organ-grinder who never starts his piano until the other man has finished. (Laughter.) We are all fiddling to the public different tunes at the same time, and the result is hardly a symphony. (Laughter.) Add to our domestic troubles the fact that from the outside great and hostile forces seem to be threatening the hegemony of literature. Only last year, in this room, Mr. Balfour suggested that the toast of "Literature" should be displaced by the toast of "Science." He said that in the future we are going to be dominated, not by the man of letters, but by the man of science. Great as is my respect for Mr. Balfour, I venture, on this occasion, very humbly to differ from him. (Laughter.) Even although it were true that the dominating personality of the intellectual world is, or is going to be, the man of science, he will not be able to dispense with literature as a means of spreading his ideas. (Hear, hear.) And he will spread them more rapidly and effectively, and they will be more certain of immortality, if he has learnt the discipline of literature—and it is no easy discipline—and if he has attained to the style of a Bacon or a Pascal. (Hear, hear.) It was my privilege to be a student of Kelvin at the University on whose roll of Lord Rectors Mr. Wyndham's is one of the most distinguished names—(hear, hear)—but, great as was my reverence for Kelvin, I could not help regretting that to his other immense endowments Nature had not added the gift of lucid and literary expression. Posterity will certainly be familiar with his great work and his great name, but they, too, will regret that a mind so intimate with the forces of the universe was unable or unwilling to leave a message about them in a great book. After all, if the sciences have a voice, they have to thank literature. There is no other medium whereby the experience of mankind as rational and emotional beings can be gathered up. And the words which have influenced the world have been and will be the words with wings, the words of the

masters not only of thought but of phrase. (Hear, hear.) If we have any faith in literature, we ought to believe that the world's best books have yet to be written. Truth, beauty, and mystery come afresh to every age. (Applause.) No doubt to-day we appear to be living under special disadvantages. Unlike the great writers of antiquity, unlike the mediæval singers, we are not living on a great tradition. Disintegrating and dissolvent forces are at work around us, and they have spread the contagion of their unrest into the books that are being written to-day. It is not an age of fixed belief, and yet in its deepest form belief has always had an intimate connection with the highest kind of literature. (Hear, hear.) But those who still cling to the old ship of Faith are not always able to hear the watchman calling in the night, "All's well!" Those of us, again, who keep our eyes fixed on the vast social forces of Europe are sometimes made to pause by a fear lest in one mad moment of alarm those forces might combine to shatter the fabric of human well-being. I do not think that I shall be guilty of great exaggeration if I say that we are living in a time of intellectual chaos, and that we do not know if any cosmos is at the birth. Literature suffers from such conditions. Nevertheless, surely just for such reasons must she recapture her ascendancy, and she will regain it and retain it if she remembers that it is no task of hers to imitate in a mere slavish way the world that lies about her; that she is more than a megaphone, to reproduce the world's noise or even its harmony; that in all her realism her idealism should be mixed, and that she is essentially an instrument of interpretation and guidance. (Hear, hear.) It is for such reasons that the toast which I have the honour to propose will remain, at least in *this* Club, no idle toast. This is a Club composed of men who live by literature—I hope that none of us die by it. (Laughter.) There was a great English poet, who, by the way, is sometimes called a minor poet, although he was nothing of the kind—John Donne—who defined the philosopher as "Nature's secretary." I sometimes think that Nature, after the manner of distinguished statesmen, has selected in the man of letters an additional secretary, unpaid. (Laughter.) But whether paid or unpaid, I think that in his better moments—if he has them—he believes that literature in *her* better moments—and she often has them still—represents and makes articulate as nothing else in the world can do the ideals of life. (Hear, hear.) Hence, once every year, we ask some distinguished man to come here to remind us how these things are to be accomplished. We

have as our guest to-night a gentleman who is as distinguished in the world of letters as in the world of politics. (Applause.) I do not know whether the world of politics is any more fissured and split up by controversy than the world of letters. At any rate, in both those worlds Mr. Wyndham has found fame and has kept it, and in the opinion of opponents, as well as of friends, he stands as one of the most chivalrous figures in English public life. (Applause.) I need not remind an audience of this sort of his literary achievements. He is not one of those men who believe that literature is a mere affair of *belles lettres*. In his admirable study of Ronsard he condemns in a happy phrase what he calls "the languid fallacy of Art for Art's sake." There is nothing languid in his own work. (Hear, hear.) His essay on Shakespeare betrays a wide and deep acquaintance with the sources of Elizabethan literature, and has been of great service to all Shakespearian students. His "Introduction to Plutarch" reveals both literary and historical insight and historical emotion of no common kind. In the monograph on Ronsard, he astonished his readers by the strange felicity of his translations of some of the most delicate poetry of France. (Applause.) Perhaps I may venture to suggest that one day Mr. Wyndham may do for a man whom the *Pléiade* despised, but who, I believe, was greater than any of them—I say, I hope, that one day Mr. Wyndham will do for Villon what he has done for Ronsard and his *confrères*. (Applause.) Lastly, I may be allowed to say that some time ago, when Mr. Wyndham was Lord Rector of Glasgow University, one of his enthusiastic constituents sent to me the Rectorial Address on "The Development of the State," an address which is full of illuminating ideas on a vast subject. (Hear, hear.) Mr. PRIOR, I am afraid that I have already gone far beyond the duties of a herald who should never annoy his audience by performing a solo on his trumpet. (Laughter.) He should use that instrument only for the purpose of heralding more important events. (Laughter and applause.)

Mr. Wyndham's Speech.

The toast having been drunk with much enthusiasm, MR. WYNDHAM said: Reverend Prior, ghostly Friars, and my fellow-guests, I thank you with all my heart for the kindness, and let me add the indulgence, with which you have drunk my health when coupled with the august subject of Literature. Of the tribute which has been paid by Friar Paterson to my desultory excursions into the field from which you have reaped such ample

harvests, I will say little or nothing. Friar Paterson touched on an indiscretion of ten years since, my little book on Shakespeare. I did not recognise the first passage to which he alluded—(laughter)—in which I am supposed to have mourned for an absence of all creative power at the present moment, but I did recognise the second; and I say to-night, as I said then, that periods of what are called decadence are really periods of exaggerated return to a multiplicity of births no less than of deaths. (Hear, hear.) Friar Paterson astonished me by saying that my revered political chief, Mr. Balfour, when occupying this place, sought in your presence to dethrone Literature, and to instal Science where literature should for ever sit, as she has sat through all the ages. I am shocked, and, emboldened by the absence of Mr. Balfour—(laughter)—I associate myself heartily with Friar Paterson. My gratitude to you springs from this, that you have allowed me to appear to-night in the capacity of what I have always thought the most fortunate character in the whole ambit of Holy Writ—in the capacity of the prodigal son. (Laughter and applause.) You have welcomed me as a prodigal son of literature, returning famished from the House of Commons and the husks of political controversy—(laughter, and hear, hear)—battered by the waves of acrimonious partisanship, to land, like another Don Juan, on a shore, which Shakespeare—anticipating Mr. Bernard Shaw's stage directions—(laughter)—would have described as the “Sea Coast of Bohemia.” (Laughter.) I mean the ideal Bohemia; not the historical Bohemia which my friend, Count Lutzow, has made real for us. (Applause.) But there is this difference, that the prodigal son to-night is apparently expected to supply some part of the entertainment. (Laughter.) By inviting me to respond for Literature, you are asking me to answer for a good deal. I promise you one thing, I shall not attempt to improve the occasion—I believe that is the classic phrase—for two reasons. In the first place, from my point of view, as the prodigal son, the occasion cannot be bettered—(laughter)—and, in the second place, because improving the occasion often means that a politician abuses the opportunity to respond for Literature by talking about education instead of talking about literature. I leave that aspect of the question on one side, because nobody has yet in England been able to trace any connection between the two. (Loud laughter.) Another reason is that if I improve the occasion I shall enlarge the subject, and it is already of Gargantuan proportions. (Laughter.) I leave out the subject of education, but if I am

to deal with Literature—if I am to restrict myself to the subject before me—I must define. I thought of that the day before yesterday—(laughter)—and in order to arrive at a succinct definition I looked in the dictionary, where I found “Literature” defined as “the entire results of all knowledge and fancy preserved in writing.” (Laughter.) You laugh! (More laughter.) I do not laugh. In the course of an after-dinner speech you do not, I presume, expect me to cover the whole field, from Cadmus, the legendary inventor of letters, to the prospect of Esperanto as a medium for pure lyrics or problem plays. (Laughter.) I must set up some device for reducing this enormous mass to reasonable proportions, to manageable limits. Selection would be invidious. The republic of letters is not only republican. It is also cosmopolitan, and if I confined myself only to English literature, I should be affronting the ripe knowledge of the majority of those before me, who, I dare say, know more of Greek, Latin, French, and Italian literature than of our own. (Laughter.) There is only one other plan—to lay down a generalisation. It must be at once brief and exhaustive. Your generalisation must be vast enough to be vague, profound enough to be obscure. Thereby he who indulges in it may boldly defy the chance of instantaneous argumentative refutation. (Laughter.) For example, when Arnold said: “Poetry is a criticism of Life,” nobody could refute him. You say, “Oh, well, yes, perhaps—(laughter)—but what then?” He is safe. I mean to make myself safe. But since the days of Matthew Arnold, paradox has become so vulgar, that the guest of the evening in order to be singular—and singular he must be or he would not be invited—(laughter)—must put his generalisation into the shape of a platitude. (Laughter.)

The Noise Peculiar to Man.

My platitude is this—Literature is the voice of humanity. (Hear, hear.) That is wide enough to embrace all the literary world. Is it deep? Let me demonstrate its profundity by telling you what happened to me the other day at breakfast. (Laughter.) A little child only five years old addressed to me, with the abruptness appropriate to that age, this question. She had brought me suddenly the toy hippopotamus out of her Noah’s ark, and she asked: “What noise does this animal make?” (Laughter.) I was not disconcerted. I improvised something between a shout and a gurgle. (Laughter.) It carried conviction. (Laughter.) It led to an encore. (Continued laughter.) But when the flush of

triumph and an unusual physical exertion had faded from my brow, I began to wonder what I should have answered had she brought me either Noah, or Shem, or Ham, or Japhet. (Laughter and applause.) I wondered, and for some time—as even politicians will—and now I know. The answer is the generalisation which I have ventured to lay before this Society. (Applause.) The noise peculiar to man, as neighing is to the horse, as bellowing is to the bull, as roaring is to the lion—the noise peculiar to man is literature. (Applause.) I exclude conversation, love making, argument, quarrelling—(laughter)—these are all indulged in by our fellow-creatures who are not human—onomatopoetically. I exclude these, and address myself solely to Literature, the noise peculiar to Man. Literature is the cry of the human pack scenting out the quarry of its destiny. (Renewed applause.) No doubt it can be carried to a high degree of artifice. But it ceases to be literature when it ceases to be an instinctive cry, uttering memories of all which has seemed good for man, and hopes for something unknown, but better than any good which memory records. (Hear, hear.) The noise of man, the cry of the human pack, is ever compounded of aspiration and regret. Literature ceases to be Literature unless it tells, or hints at least, of

“That something still which prompts the eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live or dare to die.”

(Applause.)

You see even Pope, for all his artifice, can be quoted by me in confirmation of my generalisation. (Hear, hear.) That is the noise that man makes—compounded of aspiration and regret. It follows therefore—I must proceed briefly and therefore boldly—that all literature, pure literature, falls into two categories—the categories of song and of story, and that the highest Literature is both—the story that is sung. That is why even now, though many of us are imperfectly acquainted with Greek and Latin, we still sometimes allude to Homer and to Virgil. (Hear, hear.) I suppose that is perhaps a high-falutin’ statement. Let me prove my contention by a commonplace.

The Choice of Books.

It is not so long ago, in years as we reckon years when we are more than forty, since we used to read a great deal in the newspapers and magazines about the choice of books. There were men so hardy as to draw up lists of the hundred best books—(laughter)—but I would put it to the test of experience—that familiar test—what one book

would a man choose if he were starting on a long and lonely voyage? It has only been my good luck twice in the course of my life to start on a long and lonely voyage. I am leaving the Bible out, though I think it would prove my case—(hear, hear)—I am leaving out Homer, because I know little Greek. On the first occasion I took Shakespeare, the Globe edition, bound in limp covers. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) The second time I took Virgil, and read the *Æneid* through from the first line to the last, without being distracted by any other literature of any kind. (Hear, hear.) I think if I took a third voyage I should take Chaucer—(hear, hear)—and having exhausted the best repertory of stories that are sung, I should then, supposing I was fortunate enough to have a fourth and a fifth *Odyssey*, take with me the “Arabian Nights” and Boccaccio. (Applause.) I throw that out as a test of experience answering the question, “What book would a man take if he were to be limited to one book?” But it is not only the man who crosses Africa, or who seeks the North Pole, who embarks upon a long and lonely voyage. It is every man who is born of woman into this world. (Applause.) Every man to be thrilled and encouraged on his quest must be able to hear the cry of the human pack. I ought now to consider some objections. I leave out Science. I believe Mr. Balfour dealt with that last year. As to another possible objection, somebody may say: “But what about Philosophy?” If Philosophy is not metaphysic, then I have not left it out. Philosophy which is not metaphysic is a pleasing or a tedious moralising over all the best songs and all the best stories in the world. (Hear, hear.) Philosophy if it is metaphysic, I leave out, and I leave it out of set purpose. I leave it out because I believe that any man starting on a long and lonely voyage will say with Romeo: “Hang up Philosophy. Can Philosophy make a Juliet?” (Laughter.) No; and it cannot, with Shakespeare, make a Mercutio, a Falstaff, or a Beatrice; with Virgil, a Dido and a Camilla; with Chaucer an:—

“Emelye that fairer was to seene,
“Than is the lilye on her stalkē greene.”

and a Wife of Bath into the bargain. (Applause.) Here you can have the companionship of the whole world of men and women. I rule that out, then, and assert that metaphysical Philosophy is not literature. It is all that is left when you have extracted all the songs and all the stories out of the medium of human experience. Some people say that nothing remains. I believe that Pro-

fessor Huxley was of that opinion. He regarded the man who set out to find anything by means of metaphysic as comparable to a man who tried to lift himself from the earth by his own braces. (Laughter.) Metaphysic is nothing to those who care for the companionship of the human race. (Hear, hear.) There is another objection which I ought to meet. I may be told that I have left out the essay. I have not left out the essay. The essay, if it be a good essay—if it be the kind of essay which Montaigne modelled upon Plutarch, and which everybody else has modelled on Montaigne—is either a narration of all the best stories, and these are the oldest stories, in the world, or else it is a song in prose. (Applause.) Not a song in lyrical form, but a lyric in prose. What is a lyric? It has been defined over and over again. And this is what all the definitions amount to. The lyric is the expression of an emotion compounded of aspiration and regret, refracted through the temperament of one human being. (Hear, hear.) Take the pure lyric:—

“O, that it were possible after long grief and pain,
To find the arms of my true love round me once again.”

or you can illustrate it fantastically from Thackeray:—

“Oh, what fun!
To have a plum bun!
How I wish it never were done!”

(Laughter.) That is the archetype of the lyric, the expression of aspiration and regret refracted through the temperament of a greedy little boy of ten years old. (Laughter.) You will find that the essays which are not reflections of stories, but which are lyrics in prose, are pure lyrics, no matter what their subject may be—conviviality or the splendour of Alpine dawns, marriage, or the delight of battle with our peers—I am not now alluding to the Prime Minister—(laughter)—I am merely adapting another quotation of Lord Tennyson. But enough! and more than enough, of my generalisation; of the deductions I have drawn from it and the objections I have met, or very properly scouted and ignored. It is time for me to sit down, for I understand that the austerities of your monastic rule do not preclude, but rather enjoin (I gather from the programme), the ritual of song, and (I gather from my own experience) the ritual of stories interchanged between the lay-brotheren during the hours of refection. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) I will therefore delay the practice of the creed I have dared to preach no longer than to say that I do thank you, shortly because sincerely, but with all my heart, for the honour which you

have conferred upon me with so much kindness to-night.
(Applause.)

"The Club."

SIR MALCOLM MORRIS, in proposing "The Whitefriars Club," said: We have had some definitions to-night. I am tempted to ask what is an adequate definition of a club. May I suggest the definition which was given by an American orator? He said "A club is a place where women cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest." (Laughter.) I was not sure when I came here to-night that the first part of the definition was a true one, for I did not know whether you had got, Mr. Prior, so far advanced in Bohemia as to have a suffragette sitting on either side of you. (Laughter.) But I understand that there are occasions when the Whitefriars Club actually entertains ladies, and therefore that part of the definition must fall to the ground. The second part says "It is a place where the weary seek rest." I have had the honour on several occasions of being a visitor at your Club, and I have never seen any sign of rest at all. (Laughter.) I was a visitor once when a paper was read upon "The *Times* Book Club." There was no rest then. (Laughter.) Somehow my definition of a club falls to pieces. I remember that discussion well. I wonder to-night, if that paper was to be read again, what line would be taken by those who took part in that discussion, for no man on that occasion dared to suggest, or ventured even to hint, that there was a prospect of the illustrious paper being put up for auction, or that its internal economy would be discussed in so frivolous a place as a Chancery Court. (Laughter.) On another occasion I ventured to be wicked enough to read a paper here on diseases incidental to literary men. I have been told that that paper caused the greatest possible depression in the Club. (Laughter.) I have been told that some illustrious Friars in consequence are now seeking repose in what is called "A place of rest." (Laughter.) Perhaps that has something to do with the diminished numbers we see to-night. The Prior said it was influenza. Influenza covers a multitude of sins. (Laughter.) If any of your Friars are now resting in any of those institutions for nervous diseases, I sincerely hope as a medical man they will, in the course of time, be able to return to your festive board. (Laughter.) Now may I air my own grievances? We doctors are discussed at every dinner party; we are criticised in the most ruthless manner; we venture, we are told, to invent diseases, the diseases of modern life. (Laughter.) We are told all sorts of

things about ourselves and our conduct. Let me, having this opportunity, when there are a great number present connected with the journals of the present day, ask them whether they are not responsible as much as we for all these various diseases of which we hear? (Laughter, and hear, hear.) May I, through your Prior, ask the various journalists who are present, and other literary gentlemen, whether they are not doing a great deal to promote a new series of diseases? Can I take up a paper in the morning without seeing all the horrors of the day before, depicted under headlines which are too terrible to tell of? (Laughter.) We have served up every morning at breakfast all the horrors that modern journalism can command; the latest suicides, the latest murders, and all the rest of it. (Laughter.) Can I not suggest to the journalists that in these days of weak nerves, weak health—weak health from influenza and other causes—they should give us something a little brighter? I suggest—especially in those papers which are rather cheaper than the other papers—(laughter)—that they might give us such a title as “A Happy Home in Hampstead,” or shall we say “Bright and Blue Birmingham,” instead of “A Suicide in Bermondsey.” (Laughter.) Might I venture to suggest that when a new company is floated in the City, “Joyous Jerusalem” might be a heading and an appropriate title, rather than the depressing ones we are in the habit of seeing? (Renewed laughter.) May I take to task the daily Press of the country for their gross inaccuracies? (Laughter.) Not a man who goes to a meeting or knows anything about the details of any particular subject but when he sees it depicted in the paper next day finds an amount of inaccuracy which I am sure that Mr. Wyndham would agree with me is by no means literature. (Laughter.) May I suggest that even a humble individual like myself has no particular pleasure in seeing in the morning paper his name mis-spelt? (Laughter.) I don’t care to see my name spelt M-o-r-i-c-e, nor do I care to see it spelt M-a-u-r-i-c-e, when Nature has given me another way of spelling it. (Laughter.) Are all these inaccuracies, I put it to you, calculated to improve the literature of the world? (Laughter.) Having got rid of my grievances on this subject, let me turn for one moment—I had a strict injunction from your Secretary to be brief—(laughter)—to some of the illustrious Friars who are present here this evening. We are greatly indebted to Friar Carruthers-Gould for what he has done to lighten the study of literature by work which may be included partly under the head of poetry and partly under prose.

(Laughter, and hear, hear.) Mr. Wyndham did not know that great artist was sitting at the far end of the table making a sketch of him where he stood—as he did for many minutes—in an attitude which he thought was peculiar to his leader, Mr. Balfour. (Laughter.) May I venture also to express our obligation to one or two other illustrious Friars, Friar Silas Hocking and Friar Mason, both of whom have given us such infinite pleasure through the books they have written for us. (Hear, hear.) In these few very discursive and imperfect remarks may I ask you to drink to the health of your own Club, which has existed now for forty years, and which I venture to prophesy will exist for more than another forty. (Applause.)

The toast having been duly honoured,

THE PRIOR, who was received with applause on rising to reply, said: I have a little rushed the pace this evening, but I did it according to a plan of my own. I daresay the Secretary will be a little angered at my having paid so little attention to his programme, but I suppose by all legal rights I am boss of the concern—(laughter)—and I was anxious to get the speaking over so that the remaining entertainment we might have while we were smoking our cigars and replenishing our glasses. I suppose I have been associated now with this Club for forty years, the year 1866 being the year when I attended the first Annual Dinner of the Whitefriars Club. Why has this Club been a success? We started in a very small way. We have had our ups and downs. We have made changes, some of which were attended by risk, but the Whitefriars Club—one can say it without boasting—to-day occupies a unique position. The mere fact of our success to-night proves it. Comparisons are invidious, but I will say of to-night that we have not only managed to muddle through it, but in my memory it will remain as one of the most brilliant of the Whitefriars nights. (Applause.) All our speakers will have said in their minds, "That is for me." (Laughter.) To a certain extent it may be so, but I attribute it to the appeal I made to the Brotherhood to put extra enthusiasm into the evening. You have done it, Brethren, nobly, with the result that the speakers felt they had a sympathetic audience before them, and so they gave us of their best. Of the Guest of the evening, I really do not know what to say, because he is here; but I will formally, on your behalf, thank him very sincerely for his oration, and, for myself, I say simply that I thank my stars I have lived to hear it. (Applause.) I asked a question a moment ago which I have not answered. Why

is this Club a success? I think it is a success principally because it was started with a determination to make it a real and not a nominal brotherhood. That was the idea with which the Whitefriars Club was started, and we have acted on it up to the present day. At first we had our Presidents. We tried a dictatorship. (Laughter.) The autocracy answered very well. I am the last of the tribunes. (Laughter, and hear hear.) I was Vice-President in the year when William Sawyer died, and I finished the year as President, but we got to know, looking abroad on the world and reading the papers, that where there was a King or a President—anyone in the shape of an autocrat—there was always somebody ready to run a knife into him—(laughter)—and we thought we would avoid difficulties in the future by converting ourselves into a Republic. (Hear, hear.) It is a model Republic, where every man in the most effective manner is soon brought to his own level, and where no man is allowed to say: "I am as good as you, and better." (Laughter.) They have complained of us for being, for example, a caucus, but these cauci do not hurt much. (Laughter.) Our Club has maintained its attributes of a real brotherhood by a variety of ways—principally a sort of traditional modesty, that runs amongst all the Friars. I assure you that even our dear Friar Carruthers-Gould, who is the boss, if I may say it, of our luncheon room—which is the rialto of our mental mart and exchange—(laughter)—even he roars as gently as a sucking dove when we are all sitting round them. We have, as I said before, had our ups and downs. Dynasties have changed, captains and tumults have died, societies like our own have flickered out the feeble breath of decay, or been rent by dissensions, and here we are to-night, a solid body, with the star of hope shining above us as brightly as ever. (Applause.)

During the evening music was given by Mr. Harry Barratt (solo bass of the Church of the Spanish Embassy), Mr. Franklin Taylor, L.R.A.M., Mr. Rowsby Woof, A.R.A.M., Mr. Lawrence Collingwood, L.R.A.M., and Mr. Nelson Jackson amused the company with his clever musical sketches.

NOTES.

At the dinner on Friday, March 27th, the Prior, before the Roll Call of Welcome was read, called on Friar Arthur Spurgeon to make an announcement. Friar Spurgeon said when it was known that Friar Algernon Rose committed matrimony, Friar Shaylor expressed his willingness to receive subscriptions for the purchase of a Silver Teapot for the Club's latest Benedick. This useful article, suitably inscribed, he asked the Rev. Friar Grundy to hand to Friar Rose, with the congratulations and best wishes of the fraternity. He hoped that the bride and bridegroom would enjoy long life and happiness. Friar Rose, in response, expressed his deep sense of honour paid to him. The gift from the White Friars would always be treasured by his wife and himself. In the Club he had always found the truest sense of comradeship, and he particularly thanked Friars Shansfield and Shaylor for personal acts of kindness.

Friar Rose is one of the Hon. Auditors of the Club, and has assisted Friar Leighton in editing the "Journal," besides being ever ready to help the Hon. Secretary in making the Dinner arrangements.

FRIARS will have received the intimations regarding the Ladies' Dinner, which will be held at the Trocadero on Friday, May 1st, under the Priorship of Friar Gilbert Coleridge. There is every expectation of a particularly brilliant gathering of distinguished ladies. Lady Grove's latest book, "The Social Fetich," following on the story of her intrepid travels in Morocco, gives her particular interest. Miss Cicely Hamilton and Miss Majorie Bowen, as playwright and authoress, are two of the débutantes. It is especially gratifying that Miss Constance Collier, who has hitherto been unable to attend, will be able to pay us a visit this time. The names of the other guests, each of whom has a special interest, will be found in the circular.

The Bishop of Ripon and Mrs. Boyd-Carpenter have also promised to attend.

Friars are asked to reserve the first Saturday in July for the Summer Outing. Postcards have been forwarded, with a view of ascertaining predilections, with the desire of giving the greatest pleasure to the greatest number. Three alternatives are suggested. Friars will realise that they can go to only one of the three, and will be ready to fall in with the wishes of the majority. It should have been stated on the card that the excursion to Salisbury would include a drive to Stonehenge.

W. N. S.

WHITEFRIARS CLUB.

LADIES' BANQUET

TROCADERO,

FRIDAY, MAY 1ST, 1908.



Prior :

FRIAR THE HON. GILBERT COLERIDGE.

RECEPTION - - - Alexandra Room, 6.30 p.m.

DINNER - - - - Empire Hall, 7 p.m.

CONVERSAZIONE Alexandra Room, 10 p.m.

