WHITEFRIARS JOURNAL.

Edited by FRIAR G. B. BURGIN.

No. 2. Vol. V. July, 1917. Private Circulation.

LIST OF DINNERS.

January 26th. *Club Guest*—Mr. John Buchan;
Topic—The Press and the War.

February 9th. *Club Guest*—Mr. Justice McCardie;
Topic—Journalism; Its Influence and its Pitfalls.

March 23rd. *Club Guest*—Mr. F. L. Crilly;
Topic—The Cinema and the Censor.

CLUB DINNER.

26th January, 1917.

THE PRESS AND THE WAR.

Club Guest—Mr. John Buchan; *Prior*—Friar W. H. Helm.

Among the Guests present were:

Mr. Ernest Hussy, Sir Harry Wilson, Mr. Cecil Palmer (Publisher), Mr. John McBain, Mr. Walter Gallichin, Mr. Alfred Alexander, Mr. Theodore W. Cock (of the Library of Congress, Washington), Mr. J. Vesey Fitzgerald (Barrister, now serving with the French Red Cross), Prof. Adams (Prof. of Education at London University), Major Sir Harry North, Mr. J. F. Lake, Mr. Sidney Fairbanks (a member of the American Ambulance Corps who has just returned from Verdun), Mr. B. Clewy (Student and Journalist, who has visited the British and French Front), the Rev. H. Martyn Sanders, Mr. W. J. Lomax, Ald. E. C. Moore (late Sheriff of London), the Rev. Walter Cooksey, Mr. Stanley Stone, C.C., Mr. W. C. Bassett (a well-known Kentish Journalist), the Rev. F. H. Northcote, Mr. Frederick Wissler, Sergt. Irving of the R.A.M.C., Mr. James A. Craig (Editor of *Great Thoughts*), Mr. C. H. St. John Hornby, Mr. Gonnosski

Komai, Mr. H. Scheurmier, Mr. G. Tyler, Mr. W. R. Smith, Mr. J. A. Stickland Burnett, Mr. Frederick Coleman (the well-known American War Correspondent, author of *From Mons to Ypres* and *With the Cavalry in* 1915), Commander Dorling (better known as "Taffrail," the brilliant author of *Pincher Martin, O.D.*, and other books on the war), Mr. Robert A. McBride (one of New York's well-known publishers), Mr. W. Douglas Newton (the war writer), Mr. A. J. K. Esdaile (of the British Museum), and Mr. Ivor Nicholson.

THE PRIOR paid a cordial tribute to Mr. Buchan's high literary qualities and to his remarkable versatility. Up to that evening Mr. Buchan had been an elusive personality as far as the Club was concerned, but we were delighted at last to have him amongst us.

Mr. JOHN BUCHAN considered that the connection between "The Press and the War" was very real and important. The Press formed the only medium by which the public were informed of the progress of the War. With the truncated condition of Parliament, and the absence of amusement like a General Election, it was the only means of bringing public opinion to bear upon Parliament. The part which the British Press had taken in this great crisis was on the whole admirable; it compared favourably with that of neighbouring belligerent countries. As far as Britain was concerned, without the newspapers the war could not be waged for six months. The duty of the Press was two-fold—to publish the news and to pass judicious comments on the news. He would be sorry to see any official control of newspaper comment. Newspapers might well be taken more into the confidence of the Government.

Dealing with the functions of the Press in describing incidents of the war, Mr. Buchan demonstrated the danger of giving details as to the army brigades and divisions. The same thing did not apply to battalions. The publication of information respecting the various battalions did an enormous amount of good in stimulating local patriotism, the importance of which was frequently overlooked. The war was far too anonymous. The French exalted their military personalities; Foch, Nivelle, Joffre, and others stood out in the public eye. In this country, a tenth-rate politician came into greater prominence than our great soldiers.

Not one man in a thousand in this country really realized yet the magnitude of our British achievement ; we had done something unparalleled in the history of the world. If we could create in the minds of the ordinary man an understanding of the magnitude of our achievement, we should achieve such a great wave of pride as to sweep away all sense of loss and discomfort. We were approaching the last stage of the war ; the crisis was over. The war must end in one of two ways, and the end was not very far away. It must end by attrition, or by a crushing military victory. If all went well, we should shortly have a crushing superiority of men ; already we had a great superiority in munitions. If we were to win, we had still to keep alive that wonderful fighting spirit which supported us through the first year of our defensive battles ; that spirit must be kept alive by the civilians at home.

This spirit was largely the work of the Press and it was for the Press to see that it did not slacken or wither until it had carried us a long way to victory.

Mr. Buchan was talking recently to a distinguished French officer, who said : " It is all right—I am now sure of the end." He asked him his reason for this faith. The officer answered : " Many things—principally the spirit of your men." Some time ago the speaker met a distinguished statesman, who pulled a long face, and stated " If we had an election and polled the soldiers at the Front, there would be a pessimist majority amongst them." On returning to France he made an experiment. A large number of letters written by men at the Front were collected at the time that President Wilson's first Peace Note was published, in order to see what the men were saying about it. Eight thousand letters made reference to the peace proposals but out of this total only five said that peace would be a good thing. Some, which he dare not quote, were simply blasphemous. One man in a letter to his wife, stated : " My dear Emma.—You asked me to write to you about peace. All I can say is this : when this war is over the first blessed Boche I meet, wherever he is, I does him in." With a spirit like that, could there be any doubt as to victory ?

Mr. HAMILTON FYFE gave some interesting details as to his recent sojourn in Rumania and Russia. He did not know anything

about the state of the Press whilst he was away from England, but understood that there had been some slight criticisms of the late Government. The Press worked under great difficulties in Russia, where the censorship was very severe. The censorship was even more strict in Rumania. Here the difficulties of the foreign correspondents were enormous. The censor of the foreign telegrams was the Minister of Education; a charming little man, kind and courteous, but difficult to get hold of. The correspondents spent more time in chasing the censor than in getting the information and writing it. It was difficult to make the censor understand English, therefore it became necessary to adopt words of one syllable, such as were used in a child's first reading book.

In Russia, one of Mr. Fyfe's telegrams referred to the blue sky, and the word "blue" was struck out by the censor because "it makes it obvious that you refer to the south. In the north of Russia, the sky is never blue." Mr. Fyfe gave some valuable information as to the attitude of Russia towards the war.

Mr. FREDERIC COLEMAN described some of his experiences in Japan, dealing with certain phases of the anti-Anglo-Japanese spirit amongst a portion of the Press. A most distinguished Englishman told him that in 40 years' experience he had never before noticed this attitude in Japan. It was started by an unimportant paper in Tokio. The day before the speaker left Tokio he had a talk with the Premier, and asked him what he should tell the people of England. The reply was: "You may give the people of England a message from me; tell them that I have not been in England since Queen Victoria's Jubilee, but I have been watching the conduct of the war by the British with the greatest admiration and sympathy; their doggedness and decision to carry the thing through at all costs have won our admiration. As far as the Cabinet is concerned, we will prosecute this war just as hard as we can. Any sacrifice you ask from Japan, the Cabinet will pledge the country to give. Further, it is my personal regret that matters have turned out impracticable for Japanese soldiers to take a greater part in the war."

FRIAR SIR JOHN FOSTER FRASER described his failure in the early stages of the war to induce the authorities to permit the

gallant deeds of the various county battalions to be described in the provinical papers. He also spoke of the failure of the Foreign Office to educate the neutral countries through the Press as to the exact position of Britain in the war. Anybody who had been in neutral countries knew perfectly well that the Germans were doing excellent work, from their point of view, in financing their propaganda.

COMMANDER DORLING, as a "simple sailor," disclaimed being a practised speaker like the other guests who had preceded him, but could not refrain from paying a tribute to the bravery of the fishermen and mercantile mariners who were engaged in mine-sweeping. There was a sailor who had fought in the Battle of Heligoland, had been in the Dogger Bank fight, and the Battle of Jutland. After Jutland, there came a dull period and the sailor requested his commanding officer to have him sent on *active* service. A dredger put into port and a yarn got about that certain members of the crew were afraid to go to sea. A leading hand, an old Scotch skipper, went to the Admiral and said: "I have come to see you about the yarn that has been set about. It's all damn lies; we will go to Heligoland if you will take us there." There was a man who had been blown up and had suffered severe injuries. He was asked whether he intended seeking a civil job ashore. He replied: "No civil job for me. For God's sake, send me to sea in something with a gun."

Mr. KOMAI (a Japanese visitor) envied the position of journalists in England, for in Japan and China journalism did not pay. The difference between the Press in East and West was that in the former case the journalist had fully to explain the details of each fact; in the West, particularly in England, the public were fully prepared to receive the information.

FRIAR MCCALLUM SCOTT, M.P., contributed some reminiscences of Mr. John Buchan at the time they were fellow-students at Glasgow University. He had published some of Mr. Buchan's articles in the *Glasgow University Magazine*. A member of the "Buchan School" contributed a review of Mr. Buchan's first novel. One of the sentences he blue-pencilled from the review was: "This novel is only surpassed by Shakespeare and the better parts of the Bible."

SIR HARRY WILSON recalled his associations with Mr. John Buchan when they were serving under Lord Milner in South Africa. Speaking of the necessity of exercising the greatest care in publishing statements in war time, he mentioned that a magazine with which he was associated published an article on the Irrigation of Mesopotamia. The Germans placarded Mesopotamia with an extract from the article, which was perfectly innocuous. As a proof that the Press manufactured public opinion, he alluded to the fact that one paper ridiculed the ploughing up of Hyde Park owing to the prevalence of wire worms there. After this appeared, he met three or four persons, who were not entomologists or agriculturists, and they stated: "What a ridiculous thing to plough up Hyde Park; you cannot do that without liberating the wire-worm."

Mr. BUCHAN briefly replied to some of the criticisms.

CLUB DINNER.

9TH FEBRUARY, 1917.

JOURNALISM: ITS INFLUENCE AND ITS PITFALLS.

Club Guest—Mr. JUSTICE MCCARDIE.

Prior—THE HON. GILBERT COLERIDGE.

Among the Guests present were:

Mr. J. B. Mathews, K.C., Mr. Sidney H. Webb, Mr. William Latey (Barrister and Journalist, now of the Ministry of Munitions, Grandson of a former Editor of the *Illustrated London News*), Mr. J. S. Wood (Founder of the *Gentlewoman* and Originator of the Women's Institute of Journalists), The Right Hon. Ellis Griffith, K.C., M.P., Mr. Llewellyn Williams, K.C., M.P. (Recorder of Cardiff and Bencher of Lincoln's Inn), Mr. F. T. Hopkinson, C.E. (of the Aviation Board), Mr. John Hinds, M.P., Mr. John T. Lewis (of Jesus College, Oxford), Mr. Philip Williams (of the London Welsh Battalion Committee), Mr. Arthur Pollak, Mr. Cecil Clayton, Mr. A. Hodgson, Mr. Alfred Pousette, K.C. (of the Canadian Bar), Mr. E. J. C. Savory, Mr. Alderman Domoney (Chairman of the

Theatres' Committee, L.C.C.), Mr. Richard Davies (Chairman of the City of London Red Cross Association), Mr. F. H. Davies, Mr. John Gennings, Mr. W. P. Forbes (Directors of the Central News), Mr. Frank Maynard, Mr. H. H. Twining, Lt. Eric Rideal, Lt. Leonard Rideal, R.N., Mr. H. Hodgson, Mr. Comfield, Mr. W. B. Willett, Capt. N. MacMahon, Mr. James Scoon (formerly of the *New York Herald*), Mr. E. G. Drewry, Mr. D. Young, Lt. O'Sullivan and Mr. T. Ottaway.

THE PRIOR felicitously welcomed Mr. Justice McCardie and said that, among other qualifications, our guest owed his present position to his capacity for hard work and his force of character. He told several amusing anecdotes of the Bar, in particular one of a certain Counsel who presented his case to the Court in the following words: "I may liken my case, my lord, to a certain artist's study from the nude. It is naked and unashamed. I appear for a money-lender." Two old friends, both eminent Counsel, were one day in Court and saw the judge wrangling with Counsel. "You'll do just the same if you are ever made a judge," said A. to B. "If you are, I'll look into your Court and remind you." Some time after, B. was made a judge, and A., on looking into his Court, found him wrangling with Counsel. A. sent up a note to B. "Didn't I tell you so?" The answer came back, "You d—d fool, can't you see I'm trying to bring him to the point?"

Mr. Justice McCardie, in the course of a luminous address, said that 23 years ago he had tried to combine journalism and law, but the tentacles of jurisprudence do not easily relax and he had been reluctantly compelled to abandon journalism. In course of time, he was engaged arguing a case in Court when a telegram was handed to him: "Will you contest South-West Birmingham? Can promise you a majority of 4,000. Answer yes or no." He at once answered "no," and when Mr. Chamberlain was told of this he said: "Who is this young man who has dared to refuse South-West Birmingham. When the ball rolls to his feet, let him kick it; it may never roll to his feet again."

As a relaxation from his legal labours, Mr. Justice McCardie played golf, and, arguing how little one can judge from appearances, said that at Musselboro he had an elderly dejected-looking caddie

who, when he failed in his approach shots, advised him to hold his club in a certain way. "You seem to know something of the game," he said to the caddie. "Who are you?" The answer came: "I was three times champion of the world, and my name is Jamie Anderson."

With regard to the law of libel, the learned judge pointed out that the primary rule in dealing with matters of public importance is to keep within the limits of fair comment. One's opinion may be strong, even extreme, without infringing the law, but one's facts must be true: and (here is a curious point) even if one's facts are true, one is guilty of libel if, in stating the truth, one is actuated by indirect motive of ill-will.

Another matter to which the Club Guest referred was unconscious libel. Sometimes the object of a writer's imagination corresponded in name or by description with that of a real person of whom the writer might have never heard. The celebrated case of Jones *v.* Hulton decided that if in so dealing with imaginary persons a journalist, however unconsciously, defamed a living person, he was guilty of libel and answerable for damages.

The learned Judge also referred to what are known as vexatious actions by men of straw who obtain no material damages, but mulct the unfortunate newspapers in heavy costs. He said it was not for him as a judge to advocate any alteration in the law, but a suggestion had been made that the law might be so amended that the amount of costs awarded should not exceed the damages.

Talking of the difficulty of making one's self heard in the various Courts, the learned Judge was once at the Old Bailey which was full of exasperating echoes. A prisoner who had just been sentenced to seven years and was obviously a man of humour, thus addressed the Judge: "I beg pardon, your Lordship, would you mind repeating it? I've heard seven years on my right, and seven years on my left. All I hope, my lord, is this—that the sentences are concurrent."

Mr. Justice McCardie concluded a memorable address with the following words to the assembled journalists: "With you lies the moulding of the future, and I know that you will maintain in the days to come the splendid traditions of your past."

THE RIGHT HON. ELLIS GRIFFITH, K.C., M.P., in the course of a subtly humorous speech, said that "people could go to an advocate 'for a consideration,' but could go to a judge for nothing." The new commandment was, "Do not libel, but, if possible, libel carefully."

Mr. LLEWELLYN WILLIAMS, K.C., M.P., thought that the present state of the law of libel was not generally unfair to newspapers. If newspapers made up their minds to fight all "speculative actions," that would do far more than any legislation to put a stop to them.

FRIAR G. B. BURGIN told several anecdotes of his sinless and youthful journalistic past.

FRIAR SIR JOHN FOSTER FRASER remembered that the Guest of the evening had been guaranteed a majority of 4,000 votes at South-West Birmingham, but had refused to contest the seat. The speaker was invited to contest a certain seat and had a majority of 5,000 against him. He once believed a statement of a Member of Parliament, published it, and it cost his paper £400.

Mr. POUSSETTE, K.C., of the Canadian Bar, told a story of Mr. Choate, who was once retained in an action for libel brought by a firm of lawyers whose name was Rubenstein. The case was settled by Choate out of Court and he asked Mr. Rubenstein what his costs would be. Rubenstein said two thousand dollars. Some time after, Mr. Choate sent for him and handed him a cheque for ten thousand dollars, under the impression that was the proper amount. Mr. Rubenstein, as he took the cheque, said: "Oh, Mr. Choate, Mr. Choate, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Mr. J. B. MATHEWS, K.C., had never been libelled, and envied his friend, Mr. Artemus Jones, who "roped in" £1,500. Some day, he hoped that a big newspaper would libel him.

FRIAR THOMAS CATLING, when he came into journalism in 1866, inherited a libel about a murder charge. Somehow, a journalist never likes the word "apology"; it is the last word he wants to use. But he resolved to apologize and the man was so satisfied with his apology that he dropped his action for libel. Another paper refused to apologize and had to pay £250 and costs.

FRIAR MOULTON PIPER, in discussing public speakers and their influence on journalism, noticed particularly the Saxon idioms in John Bright's speeches. He took 500 from the speeches of public men such as Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Hartington, etc., and divided them up. The percentage was very little different and John Bright scarcely topped the list. He sent the article to the late Mr. Stead. It came out without a head or tail; and there was no cheque for it. Wherever Mr. Stead is, he had never been able to get that account squared up. He disagreed with Friar Burgin as to "anonymity" being a hardship to journalists. Journalism had a dignity of its own and the influence of the Press of to-day was a valuable asset.

Mr. JUSTICE MCCARDIE, in replying to the various criticisms, said that he was reminded of the speech of a Counsel who opened his case by saying: "My lord, I appear for the plaintiff in this case. I have two points, one good and one bad. Which would your Lordship like me to take first?" In the speeches they had heard to-night, some points were good and some were bad, but it would take him until midnight to go through them in detail. The learned Judge thanked the Friars and their Guests for his cordial reception and said how much he had enjoyed the evening.

G. B. B.

CLUB DINNER.

23RD MARCH, 1917.

THE CINEMA AND THE CENSOR.

Club Guest—Mr. F. L. CRILLY (Censor of Films).

Prior—FRIAR G. B. BURGIN.

NOTE.—*Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., the Guest of the evening, was unavoidably prevented from attending the Dinner, and his fellow-Censor of Films, Mr. F. L. Crilly, kindly took his place.*—EDITOR.

Among those present were:—

Dr. Leslie Burgin (Lecturer at the Law Society), Mr. J. B. Charlesworth, Mr. Walter Bull, C.C., Mr. Hughes-Davies (Secretary of the Welsh Church Commission), Philip Williams (Hon. Adviser

of the National Fund for Welsh Troops), Mr. Chas. Comins, F.C.A., Mr. G. Y. Allen, Mr. R. W. James, Mr. D. F. Tuffill, Lieut. G. Alliston (of the War Office), Sergeant Irving, R.A.M.C., Mr. C. E. Fagan (of the British Museum, Natural History Department), Mr. Alfred G. Garside, Mr. Gordon Piper, Mr. George Scamell, Mr. Wilkinson Sherren (Author), Mr. John Oxenham, Mr. D. Power, Mr. Chas. Temperley, Lieut. E. K. Rideal, R.E., Lieut. L. G. Rideal, R.N. Mr. G. Hall, Mr. W. Harold Thompson, Mr. Thomas Burke (author of *Limehouse Lights*), Mr. Godfrey W. Cheesman, and M. G. Dussol (London Representative of *Le Petit Journal*).

THE PRIOR announced that, owing to an unexpected political meeting, Mr. T. P. O'Connor had been unable to fulfil his promise to be with them that night, but had kindly persuaded one of his fellow-examiners of films, Mr. Crilly, to be good enough to take his place at short notice. As the Club intended discussing the question of the cinema, he, the Prior, conceived it to be his duty to study up the matter very carefully, the more so as he had been recently invited to take part in the production of a film which included a representation of the House of Commons. It was almost the last public appearance of the late Sir Hiram Maxim. Sir Hiram told him about a raid which had taken place at Norwood, and he was asked if he was not very much afraid of the shrapnel getting into his garden. Sir Hiram replied: "I am an old man: I have arranged all my affairs, and am ready to go; it might have been a good thing and have saved trouble, if some shrapnel had hit me." He died peacefully in his bed about a month afterwards, this man who had invented a machine-gun which revolutionized modern warfare.

In the cinema production of the House of Commons' scene, there was an energetic gentleman mainly attired in shirt sleeves, who said: "You have to make a speech whilst the man over there turns the handle of his camera." He (the Prior) asked: "What am I to say?" The man answered: "Any damn thing you please; it don't matter as long as you say something." Then a symmetrical lady, dressed in khaki and representing St. George, rushed into the House, thrust aside the Sergeant-at-Arms, and made an impassioned appeal to the Members to forego their salaries for the

rest of the war. All the Members present shook their heads, and he then came away. This was as far as his actual participation in cinema work went. It was not his intention to detain them any longer, for he was mindful of a certain Chairman who spoke for one and a half hours and, when finishing his prolix remarks, declared: "I will not detain you any longer, because the Guest of the evening will now give you his address." Whereupon the Guest of the evening produced his card and handed it to a steward remarking: "Here is my address—good evening."

Mr. CRILLY explained that he had come out of the darkness of the cinema examination room to say something as to the "Cinema and the Censor." The Report of the Board of Film Censors for 1915 showed that in that year they considered 6,273,924 feet of films, representing 4,767 subjects, of which 4,395 were passed for universal exhibition. Three hundred and seventy-two were passed for public exhibition, which meant only a limited exhibition as young people were excluded from seeing these particular pictures. Twenty-two films were absolutely rejected. During the month of January last, 212 films had been passed through before the Censors, the majority of which were marked for public exhibition.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, in his censorship, had set himself against crude films which depicted the crimes of burglars and thieves. Another rule followed rigidly was the exclusion of the nude in the films. Mr. O'Connor and the other examiners had also taken up a strong attitude against the exhibition of brutality in fighting. Ninety-five out of every hundred of the films which were submitted to the censorship came from the United States, where different social conditions existed. Nothing which would in any way interfere with the amicable relationships of the nations was allowed to appear.

The propaganda of religious and political views was excluded, and also the representation of Christ in the flesh.

The allegations that Cinemas had encouraged crime amongst juveniles had not been supported by the evidence before the Commission. The police, who were the best judges of this matter, gave evidence strongly against this suggestion. If the public recognized the work which was being done by the Censors, with

Mr. O'Connor at their head, they would not be so nervous about the effect of the Cinema on the youth of this country. He was perfectly amazed at the amount of care and attention bestowed on this work. He had known a case where a film had been shown before the examiners six times in succession, and a little bit of what was objectionable taken out before the certificate was granted.

DR. KIMMINS, one of the Cinema Commissioners, dealt with some of the evidence which had come before the Commission. " Whenever a witness said that a film was an improper one, we at once decided to see that film—as a Commission. In the trying process of watching films the Commission felt very bored after a two hours' sitting, although some of the films were highly improper. We saw one the other night which caused a good deal of attention up and down the country; it was known as " Five Nights." Really, that was a disgusting film. We watched four nights, and decided that we would omit the crimson night of the final scene. Some films which had been described as highly improper we found to be absolutely harmless; we had evidently had some neurotic witness who could not judge the pros and cons."

Dr. Kimmins had asked children in London schools to write essays on the Cinema and the pictures which gave them the greatest pleasure. The boys preferred cowboys and adventure films, whilst the girls were in favour of domestic stories. It was found that children banned educational subjects absolutely. Out of 700 essays, there was only one child who made reference of any kind to an educational film, and this was " The Marvels of the Life of a Frog." The serials, " The Clutching Hand," and " The Broken Coin," as indicated by the evidence given by some school children before the Commission, were especially popular. The great difficulty was that 95 per cent. of the films came from America. These were rather tiresome, and dealt with particular phases of American morality. The wife was not all that she should be; the husband *would* take the typist out to dinner at night. Then the wife started off in pursuit and used motor cars, with a reckless disregard of petrol. There was a perpetual marital insecurity in these films.

FRIAR TEDDER, from his experience gained in occasionally visiting Cinemas, considered the love stories supremely ridiculous. Educational films were interesting, but they seldom received much applause. The nearest approach to indecency had been a night-shirt and pyjama scene, which was rather silly. He was bound to say that he delighted in seeing Charlie Chaplin. Whenever he missed seeing him, he thought that he had been defrauded.

DR. LESLIE BURGIN stated that when one of the Government Controllers was recently appointed and knew something of his subject, a ribald paper brought out a placard with the words: "Somebody has blundered—this man knows his business." Whether he knew his business or not, they would have an opportunity of judging in a few minutes. He had had the good fortune to be connected with the film trade rather longer than anybody who had spoken that evening. Dr. Burgin then gave an explanation of the immense work involved in the preparation of the film before it was brought to the Board of Censors. The censor's task was to educate public opinion as to the really acceptable kinds of films. Dealing with the educational side, the speaker alluded to the splendid use to which the Cinema can be applied in making known the wonderful resources of our Colonies and Empire. The three great countries from which films were obtained were the United States, France, and Italy. The United States' films were extraordinarily crude—in many respects, the marital insecurity depicted made them unsuitable. In the French films, one was struck with the quality of the photography, but there was too much gesture both from the actors and actresses. As regards the Italian pictures, these of course depicted scenes and settings unfamiliar to English audiences. There was a fine field for English productions. The speaker concluded by describing the valuable work the Cinema accomplished in aiding shell-making and aeroplane construction.

Mr. HUGHES DAVIES struck a note of dissent in protesting against the idea of a censorship. Although we have had a censorship of the drama for may years, no censor has dared to appear in public to defend his horrible profession. He was not surprised that Mr. T. P. O'Connor had gone somewhere else to speak on

behalf of liberty for the Poles, instead of coming there to defend the enslavement of England. He (the speaker) had gone to the Cinema, like a Royal Commissioner, to see improper films, but not like Friar Tedder to see Charlie Chaplin.

In the figures Mr. Crilly had given, there was but a small percentage of films rejected. Let him remind them of another instance from another Inquisition. A distinguished Jesuit, defending the Inquisition, stated that in one year they tried 1,500 heretics, but burnt only two converted Jews in oil. This was the typical defence of the censor and the Inquisition—always a small percentage burnt in oil, always a small percentage rejected. The censorship was the most indecent form of original sin.

The speaker would not trespass into the fields of theology, although speaking before a gathering of Friars a theological disquisition would not be amiss. Censorship was an impossible art. The greatest church in the world had instituted a censorship, in the Index Expurgatorius ; they had a definite intellectual basis to go upon. When Voltaire's works were put on the Index, the great defence made by the Cardinals was that his Trinitarianism was not quite healthy. Then there was the instance of a political censorship. An Eastern potentate ordered that any inflammatory political opinions expressed in a pamphlet should be suppressed by the censor. The censor found in his hands a New Testament, on which he reported : " This book is perfectly all right, except one small part of it in which a certain Paul writes a very inflammatory epistle to the people of Ephesus."

Before there was a perfect censorship, they must have omniscience and omnipotence. One characteristic of European civilization was that it had developed a sense of public decency. This was a sufficient and the only possible censorship. He was reminded of the story of an old parish minister, famous as a figure in Scottish religious life, and one of the relations of the great European philosopher, Kant. Dr. Andrew Kant went around Scotland, preaching in the villages. He came to a corner of the Highlands, where at the place he was staying he found over his bed the picture of another great apostle, St. Peter. At any rate, this could not be suffered in a Christian country. This modern censor—the Mr. Crilly of his day—removed the engraving from

the frame, and placed his own photograph there, departing the next morning. The proprietor of the hostelry added these lines :—

" Come down from thy place, thou superstitious sant—
Give place to thy modern master, Dr. Andrew Kant."

Mr. CRAWFORD PRICE defended the work of the film censors, giving his experiences of the baneful effects of the uncensored pictures he had seen in the Balkans. Vice and immorality were depicted in their most grotesque, arrant, and vulgar forms in the uncensored films.

FRIAR PIPER related his experiences of seeing the film " Les Miserables." When he came out of the Cinema, he exclaimed : " Thank goodness I have not read that book."

Mr. CRILLY having briefly replied to the points raised, the PRIOR expressed to him the Club's deep gratitude and sincere thanks for having been ready to sacrifice himself at a moment's notice to minister to their pleasure and instruction.

The evening was noteworthy for the remarkable quality of the speeches, although want of space prevents the *Journal* from doing justice to them. All were good, most of them brilliant, and the light-hearted gaiety of Friars and Guests alike gave us a brief respite from the cares of these trying times.

G. B. B.

FRIAR JOSEPH SHAYLOR RETIRES.

SIXTY YEARS OF BOOKS.

" THE other day a London suburban bookseller put into his window the announcement, ' All these books at *2d.* each, or they will be exchanged for potatoes.' It was a little war-time study in books and potatoes, and Mr. Joseph Shaylor, a very well-known London bookman, is including it among the literary anecdotes he may tell in a volume of memoirs. For, this week, he retires from the position of managing director of ' Simpkins,' who are the largest book distributors in England, perhaps in the world.

" Mr. Shaylor has been connected with the firm for 53 years, and before then he served a seven years' apprenticeship with a bookseller in his native Gloucestershire. Thus, he has been sixty

years a bookseller, and what he doesn't know of literary commerce in that time can hardly be worth knowing.

" 'When,' he said, 'I was quite a young bookseller there was a great boom in poetry. People were all reading Wordsworth, Longfellow and Tennyson, also Mr. Martin Tupper's "Proverbial Philosophy." Now, at the close of my 60 years' run—although, to be sure, I am still "not out"!—there is another boom in poetry, caused, no doubt, by the spiritual stimulus of the war. At the head of this movement are the name and poetry of Rupert Brooke, with a whole small army of other young poets behind him.'

" DRAMATIC CHANGE IN THE BOOK WORLD.

" Perhaps the disappearance of the three-volume novel, fully 20 years' ago, was the most dramatic change in the English book world, as Mr. Shaylor has known it. If less dramatic, the rise, within recent years, of the sevenpenny novel and the shilling serious book, in pocket edition, has been even more important, certainly to the public at large. The increase of fiction has all along been remarkable, and is to be associated with the growth of democracy and the modern multitude of women readers.

" 'Another thing which I have noted,' said Mr. Shaylor, 'is the falling away of evangelistic literature, such as that associated with Richard Weaver and Moody and Sankey. I suppose this sparser demand for "hot-gospelling," as somebody called it, and its consequent sparser supply, springs from our larger and more tolerant views on heavenly as well as earthly things.'

" Mr. Shaylor thinks that the introduction of the 'net system' as a corrective to the excessive 'discount system' which existed, almost saved the English book trade from destruction. He would like to see still more common working among publishers and a closer organization in the whole book trade. To this end, he would have a joint committee established as between the publishers and the booksellers.

" The suggestion will instantly be made that Mr. Shaylor is the very man to preside over such a committee, for, although 73, he remains as active as an Eton boy, and he will continue to be a director of 'Simpkins,' coming to Stationers' Hall Court when, as an 'elder statesman,' he is needed there."

—From the *Daily Chronicle*, March, 1917.

THE FRIARS' CLUB.

Subject for Discussion—

"ARE NOVELS WORTH WRITING?"

By Friars Clement K. Shorter, Coulson Kernahan, Joseph Shaylor, Silas K. Hocking, Shan Bullock, St. John Adcock, Charles Garvice, Robert Leighton, J. A. Steuart and G. B. Burgin.

Friar Clement K. Shorter surveys the subject blankly.

My mind is a blank on the subject.

Friar Coulson Kernahan is modestly dubious.

It isn't fair thus to put the question to me. For many years, I was a publisher's reader. Four days each week I spent in reading novels, of which, as a rule, I did not think much. The remaining days I spent in writing novels, of which everyone else thought worse.

Of course novels are worth writing.

But of course novels are worth writing, so long as you can find a publisher (it wants some doing) to pay your price. But don't ask me as a Friar who has many novelist friends at the Club, whether novels are worth reading.

Friar Joseph Shaylor's Opinion.

In attempting to express an opinion upon the questions involved in the above title, one naturally asks from which point of view the subject is to be considered—the author's, the public's, or its intrinsic value to the world of literature.

The Author's point of view.

First, the author's point of view. I suppose few authors have written novels without being greatly influenced by the financial side, but we will imagine it is a higher ideal that has prompted some authors to write such books as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and others of that class, which may be termed novels with a purpose. These mostly soared above the ordinary idea of making money and had for their ideal the bettering of humanity; but, on the other hand, one cannot help coming to the conclusion that the offer of £10,000 for Beaconsfield's *Endymion*, George Eliot's £7,000 for *Romola*, Dickens's £24,000 for *Our Mutual Friend*, and such large sums

as have been given for novels to Mrs. Humphry Ward, Miss Marie Corelli and many others, must have proved to them that novels are worth writing.

The view of the Public.

From the view of the public, I cannot help thinking that the times and national events greatly decide this point. Undoubtedly, to-day most novels are dominated by the war and, except with a certain class, *The Haughty Earl* or the problem novel has ceased to be an attraction. The public of to-day do not want dry reading or yet too much excitement, but plenty of human character, with its passions and waywardness, not touching too much upon the ideal, but helping to all that is true to nature and life.

The novel's place in Literature.

As to the novel's place in literature, time alone can decide that point. Many novels of to-day are held up as belonging to this category, but they, like many before them, have their day and cease to be, while many that were thought little of during the lives of their authors find a place in the annals of our English literature :—

" Sowing brave words, high thoughts for Truth, for Right,
And unseduced by all life's siren brood."

Friar Silas K. Hocking loses his subject.

I AM asked for a contribution of 100 words but the subject is not mentioned. Now I want to know, Mr. Editor, as a reasonable man—but stop. Are Editors ever reasonable ? Are they reasonable when they send you a guinea for an article that is well worth ten ? Are they reasonable when they keep your MSS. until they are mouldy and moth-eaten and then return them without a word of apology or explanation ? Are they reasonable when they ask you for " free copy " (they have many little ways of doing it), when they are aware that your poor children don't know where their next potato is to come from ? Are they reasonable when—— But why pursue the subject ? Has not the unreasonableness of Editors become proverbial ?

And airs a grievance.

A long time ago, I sent an article to an Editor on a very important subject. It was a very nice article. At least, the Editor said it was, and asked if he might keep it. I said he might. He is still

keeping it. What good it does him, I don't know. Perhaps he reads it on Sunday instead of going to Church. But don't you see that he is keeping millions of other people from reading it, as well as keeping me out of my guinea? Now is it reasonable?

And Later.

Some time later, an Editor asked me to contribute to a symposium. I contributed. It was a great contribution, but the wretch never printed it. He said it would have bust up the whole "caboodle," or words to that effect. I ask again, was that reasonable?

Still more recently.

More recently still—much more recently—an Editor asked me over the telephone what I thought of Christian people (in view of the scarcity of food) working on their farms and on their allotments and in their gardens on Sundays. Now any reasonable person must admit that you can't do your best work over a telephone—there isn't time. You can't give to it the proper literary touch. I expect I was flustered. I said I thought that agriculture was nearly as much a Christian institution as war, and that if it was right for our Tommies to kill Huns on the Sunday, I didn't see how it could be wrong to grow food for them on the Sunday to help them to go on killing. I am afraid I said many other equally foolish and ill-considered things. But what can you expect of a man when he is talking down a tube? If the Editor had been a reasonable man, he wouldn't have printed it. He knew it would get me into hot water, and it did. I haven't dared to show my face in certain quarters since.

Friar Shan Bullock's big problem.

A BIG problem, with many answers, according to your point of view and your interpretation of the terms of the problem. What kind of *Novel* have you in mind? If what is termed the average novel, written and published mainly for sale, without distinction or influence or merit and read chiefly, it is understood, by library subscribers—the kind of novel which recently could be viewed in thousands of copies, piled in numbered lots throughout one of our large libraries, and offered for sale at sixpence each within a few months of publication: if that is the kind of novel in mind

(and to an extent it must be), then the answer must be NO ! Should the war or any influence of the war cause the suppression of such it would be good for the mental health of those who write, as well as of those who read them.

The significance of worth.

What is the significance of *worth ?* Is the value monetary ? If so, the experience of most who have written novels, whether for sale or fame or for food of the world, the experience of all novelists, that is, save a score or two in the front ranks, probably would confirm the answer that novel writing is in reality the worst paid hobby or profession or art or whatever you choose to call it, in existence. Deduct the cost of ink and paper and coals and gas, and food and clothing (of these only) from £30—£40—£50 down to nothing at all, plus an expenditure often for the joys of publication, and what is left wherewith to purchase sugar and potatoes ?

What is meant by Writing ?

What is meant by *Writing ?* Is it dictating so many thousands of words per day ? Is it " throwing-off " a book in three or four months ? Is it sitting down to write a book, without due preparation in thought and experience and observation and the sternest application after knowledge, without a kind of dedication to the task, without a care for workmanship and the claims of literature—is it that ? If so, then the answer must be a very large NO indeed.

Generally Speaking.

But, generally speaking, are novels worth writing ? Yes, they are : most emphatically they are. There can be no greater joy in life than the writing of a novel really worth while by someone really worth something ; and the joy of reading such a book must be at once a distinction and a refreshment.

Friar St. John Adcock is Concise.

IT all depends on whether they are worth reading.

Friar Charles Garvice thinks it depends upon their Quality.

SURELY it depends upon their quality. Certainly the novels written by the Members of the Whitefriars' Club are worth writing, because no Whitefriar ever writes a bad or a poor novel. Seriously, I

think that if ever a good, honest novel was worth writing, it is now. It is well known that the sale of fiction, especially in the cheap editions, has increased month by month since the war began. A very large number has been sent to the Front, and to the naval stations; but there is an enormous balance which has been distributed at home; and, if I be not guilty of presumption, I should like to say that it is a good thing for the Government that the people have chosen to fill in their spare time by reading novels instead of dwelling upon the wisdom of their rulers.

Importance of Amusement.

At no period of our existence was it more important that the people should be encou aged to indulge in innocent amusement; we want to keep them from brooding over the terrible incidents of this awful war; there is no better way of occupying their minds than by giving them good, healthy, interesting novels, which shall help them to forget, for an hour or so at least, the horrors of these days. By the way, it will certainly not be worth writing novels if we can't get paper on which to print them; and it looks very much as if the supply were petering out—though I receive official letters, say, of four typewritten lines on large foolscap paper and enclosed in capacious envelopes.

He has a Plan.

If the paper should give out, how would it be for the novelists of the Whitefriars' Club to form themselves into a company of itinerant story-tellers? At a certain hour of the day, your novelist takes up his position at the corner of a crowded street, and recites the first instalment of his new story, following it up on the succeeding days at the same hour and at the same place until the story is run through. I have a kind of suspicion that there's money in this idea. Of course, he would be accompanied by a pretty girl to play soft music at the pathetic parts and to take round the hat. Copyright in Great Britain and America; and *all* dramatic rights reserved.

Friar Robert Leighton Distinguishes.

THE obvious answer is that it depends upon the novels—and the publishers. Quite half of the novels written are not worth publishing in these days of the shortage of paper and the limitation of labour.

Even the better kinds of fiction, which in peace time would be eminently worth publishing, must be superlative in quality to enter into competition with the enthralling dramatic interest of the daily newspaper. Few novels can rise to the prominence of forming a topic of table talk in face of the more immediately absorbing subject of our food rations ; few can claim the attention of reviewers in an abbreviated press : booksellers and the libraries are giving little encouragement to this line of literature, and the novelist is fortunate indeed who can count upon earning a living wage by his pen.

Why Write Novels in War Time ?

But why write novels at all in war time, when there is so much else that is of national importance to be done ? Why write and publish anything whatsoever in the form of an unessential book when there are the more vital and profitable occupations of keeping pigs and planting potatoes ?

Another Aspect.

Yet there is another aspect of the question. We are living through the most bewildering and terrible era of the world's history. There is not one of us without an especial cause for grief. We are so sensitive to the pain at the nation's heart, so fearful of the things that may be, that the reading of the war news becomes a duty rather than an interest, and in the quiet moments snatched from our brooding anxiety there is no anodyne more soothing to our anguish than a book beneath a bough. And if that book be a novel, tender in its sympathy, strong in its human appeal, or exhilarating in the freshness of its wit, we bless alike the soul that conceived it and the publisher who assisted at its birth. In this way, even a bad novel may justify its existence by taking our minds off worse things.

Friar J. A. Steuart says the question is satirical

ARE novels worth writing ? Put to a novelist the question has a flavour of satire : but, letting that pass, the answer must surely be in the affirmative. So long as novels solace and uplift the sad, entertain and beguile the weary, or even minister to the innocent amusement of the frivolous, they are worth writing. When they cease to fulfil these functions, then their worth will also cease. Doubtless in

a worldly point of view there are many more profitable callings than that of novel writing—pawnbroking, for instance, or beer-selling or food profiteering, or any other of the many trades by which the shrewd and wise accumulate bank balances.

A Big Book

But—well, a big, big BUT. For some considerable time the best brains in literature have found their best expression in fiction. Moreover, on the world's great roll of fame, the novelist occupies a place of conspicuous honour. Homer is more to the world to-day than all Homer's heroes. Let us take the moral to heart and try to be happy even in the midst of war and scarcity of paper.

Friar G. B. Burgin Explains.

ARE novels worth writing? That depends. You have the author's, the publisher's, the reader's respective points of view. And they all differ. The base-minded author wants to pay his butcher's bill—in that event, the butcher sometimes says that novels are not worth writing; the publisher generally sides with the butcher; and the reader is influenced by the weather, his digestion, his, or her, love affairs, and a thousand other things. I once knew an invalid old gentleman who was very angry when lions weren't shot by distinguished travellers, according to his ideas. He said he could shoot them so much better himself: that's the average reader's point of view. He could do "the whole darned thing" so much better himself.

Try it.

Gentle amateur, have you ever realized that it takes about 100 *Times'* columns to make an average novel? You generally find a four-sided letter a great test of endurance. By the time you have achieved one column, you want to throw it into the wastepaper basket and go and play.

The Novelist's Point of View.

The worst novel writer in the world is a benefactor to his race. If you don't like him, there is always the whole-hearted pleasure of damning him. Who else can make one forget life's sorrows? Who else can charm and soothe, especially after lunch, as an old lady once told me, and diminish the fever and the fret of our daily lives? Who else but your modern novelist sits in his garret,

feeds scantily on a dog biscuit and drinks the waters of affliction? He freezes, very often starves, sustained alone by the divine spark within him, and grieving to part with the phantom friends he has conjured up. It is a fine thing to write a novel worth reading. It is a sweet, a good, and a gracious thing to know that the novelist has helped his fellows, has made friends of them, has never stooped to the base, the sordid, the mean. What becomes of *him* doesn't matter—to the average reader.

"Rattle his bones, over the stones,
He's only a hack whom a publisher owns."

"Wagh! I have spoken."

CLUB NOTES.

SOME stories told at the lunch table:—

"Are you the ship's mate?" asked the fair young thing as she came on board. "No, ma'am. I'm the man who cooks the mate," was the answer in a strong Irish brogue.

A pious gamekeeper watched the Bishop knock out the tail feathers of a magnificent cock pheasant. "Did I miss him?" anxiously asked the Bishop.

"Oh, no. You only reminded him of 'is latter end, your 'Oliness," replied the gamekeeper.

A professional runner was in the trenches for the first time. "'Ow far off are them German blighters?" he asked the sergeant. "Two hundred yards." "And 'ow far is it to our base?" "Never you mind our base, young feller; keep your eyes on the front." But the runner anxiously did little sums in addition and subtraction and turned to the sergeant again. "'Ow far is it to the base, sergeant?" "Eight hundred yards," said the sergeant. The runner cheered up. "Two 'undred and eight 'undred. I'd like to see the Boche as can give me two 'undred yards in a thousand, *when I'm really tryin'*."

This is the way an Eskimo interpreter of the Bible rendered the phrase "everlasting crown of glory."—"Beautiful Old Hat which will never wear out."

A Friar was writing to a Canadian friend, and said in his letter, "I feel so sorry for all the drivel the poor wretch of a Censor has to read. Here's an anecdote which may cheer him up a bit." The letter reached its destination with a marginal note—"Many thanks. It has. The Censor."

There is any amount of poetic talent among the Friars; and Friar Cooper has been moved to poetic expression by the information he acquired at the Cinema dinner.

CINEMA RECIPES.

Take a patch of Western Prairie and some broncho-busters bold,
A tenderfoot who's just come west in search of virgin gold,
A pretty, flower-like maiden who can shoot so straight and true
That she saves her tyro lover from a reckless, lynching crew ;
Then set them all on horseback, riding onward like the wind,
With a runaway before them, and a peck of dust behind,
And let there be some killing, and some kissing, and you've got
Ingredients for stewing in the Picture Palace pot !

Take a man who is a robber and an acrobat to boot,
Who busts a bank and jumps aboard a motor with his loot,
Then add a smart detective who can see and hear through bricks,
And has a score disguises and a hundred downy tricks.
Put the tec. upon an engine, follow on the burglar's track,
Catch the villain by the necktie and with one hand haul him back,
Let it boil a good ten minutes, ever faster to the end,
And you've got a tasty entrée for the Cinema, my friend.

Take a race-course, and a jockey, and an owner, and a maid,
And a bookie who's a " wrong-un," and who gets some inside aid,
And be sure to let the jockey be in love with pretty Nan,
Who sees the bookie nobbling the Favourite—naughty man !
Then let the jockey ride the nobbled horse for all he's worth,
And run his bit o' blood so fast he'd beat the best on earth,
And let the grateful owner give the jockey cash galore,
And you'll suit the public taste, my boy, and make 'em ask for more !

Take a child—precocious infant—who is in the house alone,
And a burglar, big and burly, weighing fully fifteen stone ;
Take a chocolate revolver that would fail to shoot a mouse,
And put the lot together in a twenty-carat house ;
And while the kid is holding up the robber with her " gun,"
Show motor cars, police, and tecs, all hurrying towards the fun,
And let the bur—gu—lar be found inside an oaken chest,
And you've got a picture-palace pie the folk will eat with zest.

Take a masher on the war-path and a pretty girl or two,
And a very heterogeneous and very drastic crew,
And let the masher mash too much and set this horrid horde
To jumping over hay-stacks and careering o'er the sward,
To leaping over bridges and cavorting into streams,
And doing generally the things we only do in dreams,
And when they've caught Don Juan and have shaken him to chips,
You'll hear the praise of that rag-out from everybody's lips.

Take a lion, and a panther, and a tiger if you please,
And let a bally idiot these pretty playmates tease,
And have a dance—the Lancers, say—just going on inside,
A gallant lad, in scarlet, leading off, perhaps his bride,
And just when things are lively let the wild beasts wander in,
And cause a general stampede and a most unholy din,
And let the bride—a lion-tamer—chase 'em with a chair,
And you've got a dish for Cinema will raise the public's hair!

A. B. COOPER.

A few statements which the reporter seems to have missed in Mr. John Buchan's speech :—

"I don't think that Mr. Belloc has ever been wrong on any great thing that matters in this war."

"The newspapers might be taken more into the confidence of the Government."

"Governments are much more nervous than individuals."

"The question of what can or what cannot be published, can only be determined by the General Staff."

"The German Intelligence Department is not as good as ours, by a long way."

"Our war is far too anonymous. A certain amount of personal advertising is necessary and right."

"One can do an enormous amount of good by stimulating our countrymen's honour and pride."

"All wars are fought under a time limit."

Friar Shaylor would like to know whether any Friar can spare a copy of the first number of the Club *Journal?* It is the only one missing in his set, and he does not want the *Journal* to go down to posterity without it.

Friar Dr. Leslie Burgin, on his election, has kindly presented the Club with a recondite legal work, *Administration of Foreign Estates*, his maiden effort. The Club Secretary is open to receive similar donations, legal, fictional or otherwise, from Members. It is about time that we started a really good Club Library.

Here is a poem by Friar Coulson's son, who —" died in France." There are many others in a wonderful little book of his called *From an Outpost*, and everyone of them is good.

BEAUTY.

The seed of beauty is in all things sown,
There is no ugliness that will not bring
Its meed of beauty when the time has grown
Ripe for its harvesting.

Nothing uncomely that will ever stand,
That will not yield to beauty in the end;
Nothing is shapen that the magic hand
Of beauty shall not mend.

Do we lose heart that ugly things abide,
That we are passing ere the change begin;
Have we not eyes to see the endless tide
Of beauty sweeping in?

* * * *

The last poem ends:

" And hear the lark beneath the sun,
'Twill be good pay for what I've done,
When I come home!"

Alas, poor boy, he never did come home. And it is so many of the bravest and best of these wonderful lads who never come home.

"Friar Joseph Shaylor retires." Happily, not from the Club. Our hearts' good wishes go with him into the pleasant and bookish retirement of his restful days. We owe him gratitude for a thousand little acts of unobtrusive kindliness and goodwill. No one will ever know how energetically he has always striven to maintain Friarly traditions and to help us all.

Friars will be delighted to hear that Foster Fraser becomes "Sir" Foster Fraser. It is the only time I have ever known him be-knighted.

A most successful and pleasant season. The attendance at the respective Dinners has been in every instance abnormally large, and the Club has fully maintained its time-honoured reputation. If this number of the *Journal* is smaller than usual, blame the paper-makers and not that perennial paper-spoiler,

G. B. B.

BOYLE, SON & WATCHURST, Ltd., Printers, 8 and 9, Ivy Lane, London, E.C.4