WHITEFRIARS JOURNAL.

Edited by FRIAR G. B. BURGIN.

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DINNER TO LORD RHONDDA.

22ND OCTOBER, 1917.

Prior—FRIAR SIR VINCENT EVANS.

Topic for Discussion—

THE TROUBLES OF A FOOD CONTROLLER.

NOTE.—*Lord Rhondda's engagements not permitting of his presence on a Friday, an exceptional departure from our traditions was made for this occasion, and the Dinner was held on a Monday.* —EDITOR.

Among the Guests were :

Mr. Llewelyn Williams, K.C., M.P., Mr. John Hinds, M.P. (Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire), Mr. Haydn Jones, M.P. (for Merionethshire), Dr. D. L. Thomas (Medical Officer of Health for the Borough of Stepney), Mr. F. T. Hopkinson (of the Air Board Service), Mr. John T. Lewis (Jesus College, Oxford), Mr. Tim Evans (Foreign Produce Importer), Captain Lewis Vincent-Evans (15th Royal Welsh Fusiliers), Mr. C. W. Strange, Mr. Jno. Ferguson (Manager, National Bank of Scotland), Mr. A. B. Bryden, Mr. H. C. Preece, Mr. G. P. Holden, Mr. A. E. Pitt (of Sydney, N.S.W.), Mr. Harold Wood, Mr. Herbert Jones (Chief Librarian, Kensington), Professor Conner, Mr. R. W. James, Mr. W. P. Bicknall, Mr. F. H. Norman, Mr. A. C. Stanley Stone, C.C., Mr. George Whale, Mr. S. G. Hobbs, Mr. J. A. Craig, Mr. E. A. Bertram, Mr. Spencer Leigh Hughes, M.P. ("Sub Rosa"), Mr. Henry Poole (Sculptor), Mr. E. B. Bull, Mr. Frederick Kaye, Mr. W. Mackenzie, Mr. Sydney Walton, Mr. Winton Thorpe (of the Ministry of Food), Mr. H. W. Carless Davis, Sir W. H. Dunn, Bart. (Lord Mayor), Lord Burnham, Mr. C. E. Lawrence (Author of "Much Ado about Something"), Mr. R. W. Dibdin, F.R.G.S., and Mr. George Pedler.

NOTE.—*The following admirable report of Lord Rhondda's speech is by that most obliging and hard-worked of men,* FRIAR KEIGHLEY SNOWDEN.—*Editor.*

On Monday, October 22nd, we listened with questionable pleasure to "The Troubles of a Food Controller," a plenary and delightful confession by LORD RHONDDA, who had even then a long catalogue of them.

PRIOR SIR VINCENT EVANS recalled the happy days of thirty years ago, when, as a journalist, he welcomed the young Member for Merthyr Tydfil to the House of Commons and gave him wise advice. The new member refused it, but was good enough to offer his friendship, and they had continued to this day good friends. Lord Rhondda was a man of great independence of spirit and sincere conviction, but willing to allow those qualities in other men. Such a man was of extreme value to the State. He had become one of its greatest administrators, and that he would carry his heavy responsibilities to a good end we all hoped, and, he thought, believed.

Greeted with warm applause, LORD RHONDDA undertook to tell the whole truth. He assured us that he was quite unlike the American business man whose son was asked for a frank opinion of the paternal habit in this particular, and said: "Wal, father mostly speaks the truth so long as he don't queer business." But he wished some one would invent a system of camouflage to cover his doings; he had been an advocate of publicity and he was getting far too much of it. One had to do one's bit. First, he was asked to go to the States when he did not know the difference between a high explosive and shrapnel; then to go to the Local Government Board and look after babies, when he knew nothing about babies whatever; and, finally, to control people's appetites. He found it difficult even in theory to do this. Sooner or later he would have to ration us, but the theorists were not agreed as to how much food a man requires. And the mortality among Food Controllers was very high. After four months, he was the oldest Food Controller in the world. However, the press had been very good to him, and he wished to say at once that unless he got the continued support of the press, he could make no success of his job.

As to his troubles, Lord Rhondda thought the farmers had helped him without meaning to do so. He had had the pleasure of telling one of them that every time he got up and attacked him, the Food Controller made twenty friends. But some matters were quite outside his powers. He was often up against diplomatic considerations and the weather, as well as a world shortage of men and wheat, and the submarines. What was worse, people did not take the situation seriously. That very day's papers showed that the Prime Minister had once more repeated an optimistic statement about it. We had got to economise. He strongly hoped that we should do it, but, frankly, he was making his preparations for rationing even then. Reduced prices might mean increased consumption. In any case, he had to bear on his shoulders the pressure of over forty million little Mary's, and to reorganize a Government Department at the end of three years' war, when lots of good men were already engaged in war work, and at the same time to deal with complaints, most of which were consequent upon promises made beforehand—for example, the high prices for milk, involving cheese and butter. He was, at all events, determined that milk should be put within the reach of poor children and he had brought down the price of meat. Also, he had to a very large extent, he thought, eliminated profiteering. A system of costings, worked out by a very large staff of eminent accountants, fixed prices at such a figure that no man—whatever the definition of profiteering might be—would be able to make more than a reasonable pre-war profit. He must add that the magistrates had hitherto been too lenient ; in these days, it was criminal in a trader to take advantage of the war.

Lord Rhondda begged us to remember that he was an old man doing a young man's job. With the flight of years, what one gained in experience one did lose in energy and courage. Besides, he had hitherto got other men to do the work while he collected the money. In the circumstances he could not undertake impossibilities, and he desired, for instance, to put an end to any hope that he could immediately increase the supply of bacon. He could not make pigs.

The discussion following a speech so happily conceived was sympathetic, and of necessity a little serious. Friars A. G. Gardiner,

Sir W. Treloar, Harold Spender and G. B. Burgin sustained it on behalf of the Club, and Lord Burnham, Mr. Spencer Leigh Hughes, M.P., and the Recorder of Cardiff on behalf of the visitors.

Acknowledging some compliments, Lord Rhondda said that in trusting the press he was perhaps a little like the old lady in church who always bowed at the name of Satan. When asked why, she said: "Ah, well, politeness costs nothing, and you never know." He was at a bazaar once, in a mining district, making himself agreeable, and heard a collier presently say to a mate, "That's the third time the damned old fox has shaken hands with me." But we wanted to win this war at any cost, and he could not think it possible that he had overstrained our attention.

THE LATE FRIAR FRITH.

By Friar Robert Leighton.

The older Members of the Club in especial will hear with deep regret of the recent death of Friar Henry Frith. During the past eight or ten years he has not often been seen at Anderton's, but a quarter of a century ago he was one of the most constant frequenters of the Club room, where his genial good nature and unvarying high spirits made him a very general favourite.

It was in 1885 that Frith joined the Whitefriars, and he soon became a useful Committeeman. On the retirement of Friar T. Heath Joyce from the Hon. Secretaryship, Friar Frith undertook the difficult post and held it with conspicuous ability for several memorable sessions. He was ultimately elected an Honorary Member of the Fraternity.

Although not perhaps brilliant as a conversationalist, Frith was yet bright and engaging as a talker and his talk was usually flavoured with native Irish wit. He was at the same time a good listener, with a charming way of drawing out the best in others.

Before becoming a professional man of letters, Frith was a hard worker in the War Office. He possessed a wide knowledge of military history: a knowledge which held him in good stead

in the writing of military fiction. His earliest writings, however, were on the subject of cheiromancy, concerning which he was responsible for many valuable text books, which are still accepted as of the highest authority. He was an expert hand-reader and a shrewd interpreter of character in handwriting. Many of his prognostications proved to be surprisingly accurate. Engineering was one of his practical hobbies. He wrote several volumes on the history of the steam engine and the mechanism of the railway locomotive. His work in fiction was designed mainly for the adventure-loving boy reader, and in this direction he was more successful than in his contributions to the miscellaneous weekly press. He was never at any time, I think, a writer for the newspapers.

Of late, Friar Frith lived in quiet retirement in the country, seldom coming to town; but he is remembered with affection by all who knew him in the early days when his *confrères* at the Club included such men as Tom Archer and Robert Brown, John Williams and Horace Green, Jonas Levy and Manville Fenn.

FRIAR WARD MUIR'S OBSERVATIONS.*

By Friar Joseph Shaylor.

Every Member of our Club will not only congratulate, but will feel proud of those of our Members who are taking their place in defending our Country and also others who are helping to relieve those who are sick and wounded. It is, therefore, a very great pleasure to call attention to Lance-Corporal Friar Ward Muir's volume of experiences entitled *Observations of an Orderly*, which has just been published.

Friar Ward Muir, as we know him, is an orderly in the 3rd London General Hospital, where he has been serving since the outbreak of the war. As the outcome of his experience, he has given us a volume of pathetic and humorous sketches of hospital life. The book will be read with intense interest and sympathy.

* "Observations of an Orderly." By Ward Muir. 2*s*. 6*d*. net. *Simpkin*

A few extracts selected at random will best show the character of the book, and the following will illustrate the daily routine of an orderly when engaged in his active work :—

Arrivals of wounded, even when they occur several times a day (I have known six hundred patients enter the hospital in forty-eight hours), are far from being our chief pre-occupation. Admittedly they take precedence of other duties. The message " Convoy coming ! every man wanted in the main hall ! " is the signal for each member of the unit who is not engaged in certain exempted sections to drop his work, whatever it is, and proceed smartly to report to the sergeant-in-charge. The telephone has notified us of the hour at which the ambulances may be expected ; the hospital's internal telephone system has passed on the tidings to the various officials concerned ; and, five minutes before the patients are due, all the Orderlies likely to be required must " down tools," so to speak, and line up at the door.

They come streaming from every corner of the hospital and of its grounds. Some have been working in wards, some have been pushing trollies in the corridors, some have been shovelling coke, some have been toiling in the cook-house or stores, some have been shifting loads of bedding to the fumigator, some have been on " sanitary fatigue," some have been cleaning windows or whitewashing walls, some have been writing or typing documents, some have been spending their rest-hour in slumber or over a game of billiards. Whatever they were doing, they must stop doing it at the word of command.

Here is an instance of the splendid spirit which our poor wounded soldiers maintain during the troubles and trials through which they are passing :—

A convoy of new arrivals demanded our presence. The silent ambulances were gliding up to the entrance of the hospital. Orderlies, fetched from their jobs and from the entertainment, lined up in the rain to take their places in the quartettes of bearers who lifted out the stretchers. The Assistant-matron, standing in the shelter of the door, checked her list ; the Medical Officer handed out the ward tickets ; the lady clerks from the admission and discharge office took the patients' particulars ; and the bathroom became very busy.

As I started to wheel a much-bandaged warrior to his ward, the recreation room door opened and a burst of music-cum-essence-of-nigger emerged on his astonished ears. I was a little doubtful as to whether our new guest would not think his reception somewhat flippant in key. The poor fellow was visibly suffering, and the sound of tambourines and comedians' guffaws seemed a scarcely proper comment on his condition. I might have spared myself these misgivings. " Say, chum," he interrogated me feebly, " what's that noise ? " " Nigger minstrels, old man." " Golly ! and have I got to go straight to my bed ? "

Let us take one other extract showing the humorous side of hospital life :—

It came to pass, after a week of pitiful anxiety, that the Medical Officer pronounced Bill safe once more. " Bloke says I'm not goin' ter peg 'art," he told me. I congratulated him and remarked that his wife would be thankful when he met her on her arrival, with such splendid news. " I'll 'ave the larf of my missus," said Bill ; " w'en she comes I shall tell 'er I've

some serious noos for 'er, and she's ter send the kid darn on the grarse ter play. Then I'll pull a long fice and hask 'er ter bear up and say I'm sorry for 'er, and she mustn't tike it too rough and all that; and she 'as my sympathy in 'er diserpointment: *she ain't ter get 'er widow's pension arter all!*"

These extracts amply indicate the character of the book and the splendid work our orderlies are doing. The volume is not a long one and will repay a careful study.

"FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD."

THE FRIARS' CLUB.

Subject for Discussion—

DO CLUBS DESTROY ONE'S INDIVIDUALITY?

By

FRIARS ALFRED EDMONDS, ALGERNON ROSE, HALDANE MACFALL, W. H. HELM, GURNEY BENHAM, F. FRANKFORT MOORE, T. HEATH JOYCE, W. FRANCIS AITKEN, WALTER JERROLD and SIR FRANCIS CARRUTHERS GOULD.

NOTE.—*Friar Sir Francis Gould is reported as saying—"I believe it is not altogether a good thing for literary men and artists to see so much of one another as they do in clubs and other London coteries. They are apt to lose the grip of their own ideas whilst exchanging ideas with each other.*

Friar Alfred Edmnods is "orty."

SIR FRANCIS GOULD'S contention goes to support the theory of the futility of middle age. It is only middle-aged or old men that we see or ought to see about just now, and if by exchanging ideas with other middle-aged or old men they feel that they are losing a grip of their own ideas, a remedy could possibly be found by the provision of a room in every Club, which might be called "The Grip Room." This should be guarded by a couple of special constables fully qualified to judge that the individual seeking admittance was possessed of an idea, or any grey matter guaranteed to be taken from the brain of the applicant, or a *bona fide* blast of the Divine afflatus. The "blast" need not necessarily be expressed in terms of the dictionary, but should be original and picturesque.

Perfect Silence.

Of course, perfect silence must be maintained in "The Grip Room," and should any loquacious member seek to impose his ideas upon anyone else, the special constable should be immediately called in with a loaf of war bread to be consumed as a punishment by the interrupter. The whole question pre-supposes the existence of ideas amongst literary men and artists, as to which some people seem to "hae their doots."

Friar Algernon Rose on Individualism.

DOES not Sir Walter Besant say, somewhere in the Autobiography, "Save me from the narrowing influence of the Club smoking-room"? Narcotic influence might have been more appropriate. As well might the soldier exclaim, "Save me from meeting my brother officers daily in the mess." Curiously those people who talk most about the common interest of society, and preach a sort of psuedo-socialism, generally prove to be the greatest individualists. In this world war, Britons are gradually realizing that our enemies are powerful mainly because their education, during several generations, has been directed to making them think and act as members of a body, rather than as unduly magnified solitary atoms. Even then, as no two blades of grass can grow quite alike, so does individualism assert itself in leadership.

A good literary Club is a clearing-house.

Mediocre members of Clubs may lose the grip of their own ideas while exchanging thoughts with their fellows. If so, that loss is the individual gain of whoever has the better of the argument. A good literary club is a clearing-house for all sorts of information. There are certain novelists who get plots tied up in a knot owing to a slight hitch in technical knowledge, be it astronomical, typographical, nautical or what not. In such cases, Club membership has often proved most valuable. Through meeting other writers possessing the special knowledge needed, the grip of the novelist's own idea has been strengthened by his getting quickly the precise information he wants.

Friar Haldane Mac-Fall thinks dull Clubs slay men's souls.

If by a Club be meant the dreary, ill-decorated and unhomely emptiness in those melancholy piles where a certain type of dull dog foregathers in as dull barns, lounging at a loose end with himself and without aim in life on as dull furniture in dreary contact with his kind, the Club is not only "not altogether a good thing for literary men and artists," but it slays their souls. I speak not of the writer or the newsgatherer, but as an artist. One of the first of battle experiences is that a man who advances under fire alone, well away from his comrades on either hand, but knowing they are comrades, has a far higher courage, moral, vigour, and initiative than he has in a close group: and the same applies to the vigour of soul of the artist, whether writer or painter.

The Artist must hew out his own salvation.

The artist, literary or otherwise, must hew out his own salvation. It is his only excuse as an artist. The moment he tries to see life through the spectacles of another, whether alive or dead, his art is mimicry, and at an end. Nothing so much bemuses his art as flinging it up and down a Club room. It loses pluck and force. Worse still, others pick up his ideas, debauch them and slay them—at three guineas a thousand, and upwards. Besides, the time spent in the Club is what we soldier folk call "dead ground."

The Club is a leveller.

The Club is of its essence a leveller. Like regimental life in peace time, it regards with the raised eyebrows of aloofness the man who is above it quite as much as the man who is below it—it is suspicious

of the individuality of the one as much as it detests the bad manners of the other. Again, the sincere artist must be above vogue, and the Club tends to admire popular mediocrity—for the impulse of the crowd is the impulse of its weakness, the crowd has not the vitality and singleness of purpose of its strongest man ; if its strength led, there would no longer be a crowd—those that fall out would gather together and form lesser Clubs. But if by a Club we mean a jolly foregathering of good fellows as we have in dining Clubs like the Whitefriars, then such Clubbishness has no weakening effect, but rather a broadening result that helps to prevent the artist from thinking that the grass that grows in his little parish is the only real grass, and the village pump the only wellspring from which flows the stream of life.

Friar W. H. Helm thinks it does.

HABITUAL association with fellow members of Clubs does tend to lessen that personal dependence on the powers of the individual intelligence which alone can produce any first-hand opinions. More especially is this true when some of the components of a particular group of members possess notably stronger characters, or mix more freely in the inner circles of public life than the rest. The Clubman adds the Club conversation to those other sources from which " opinions " are for the most part derived.

Few people express their own thoughts.

Comparatively few people are accustomed, in any case, to express thoughts of their own, instinctively preferring to depend on conventions or newspapers, and on the sayings of others for such " views " as they offer. I was once at the Royal Academy, standing in front of a picture by an almost unknown artist, over which a lady and her daughter were pouring out unstinted praise until the daughter, who held a catalogue, said, " Oh ! but this is not the picture, it is the one next to it," which happened to be by a highly popular landscape-painting Academician. Whereupon the gushing stream of " lovely," " sweet," and " exquisite," was promptly diverted to the object for which it was so fatuously intended. On another occasion, at the theatre, I was watching the opening scene of a play in which one of the most successful comedians of the age was billed for the principal part. An important-looking actor

came on the stage, and a man and woman sitting behind me burst out laughing and clapped their hands with extreme zeal. But in a few seconds the man, after referring to the programme (on which the *dramatis personæ* were named in the order of their appearance) said, "No, this isn't him"; and never another laugh came from this worthy couple until the "star" shone before them.

The vast majority.

Both these cases illustrate the value that can be attached to the opinions expressed by, I fear, the vast majority of our noble selves, the British public. Clubs, then, as well as newspapers, are apt to be factories of "views," factories which, like those where fashionable dress materials are woven, may change the patterns and colours of their productions from month to month or even from week to week.

Friar T. Heath Joyce says it is a question of individuality.

THE whole question is one of individuality, and strength of mind, or rather of character, and I am not aware that "F.C.G." himself has lost any of his force or originality through his constant association with the Friars; at all events, he never showed any trace of it either in his work or his conversation.

Friar Aitken thinks that for literary men Clubs are a necessity

PERHAPS nothing in this world is "altogether a good thing," but for "literary men and artists," Clubs are, as a rule, a necessity. Whether the good derived from membership outweighs the drawbacks (if there are any) depends upon the Club and the member. By "coteries" are possibly meant "The Souls" or "The Archangels," and their imitations, from which the ordinary man or woman may pray to be free. Club membership should save one from the insularity that kills.

And that all exchange of ideas is a lottery.

As to "exchanging ideas," all exchange is more or less a lottery. One of the great poets was found prostrate with *ennui*. "I am afraid you will find me very stupid, my dear fellow," he said to a friend. "The fact is, I have just been *exchanging thoughts* with Dr. ——!" In Clubs, as in any company where people gather to talk, one

generally gets what one gives; sometimes the mere statement of one's thoughts leads to their self-clarification. The right Clubs for "literary men and artists" (women are doubtless included by implication) must be intellectual exchanges. To be Clubless, is one of the drawbacks of kingship—and poverty, though it may be the proud prerogative of genius or of one who has entered into the blessed state of *otium cum dignitate*. To be Clubable is not to have lived in vain.

Friar Gurney Benham thinks we should not cherish our own ideas.

EVERY intelligent idealist over twenty-five has discovered the fact that his own ideas have been, and probably always will be, hopelessly wrong. The most wrong idea of all, therefore, seems to be to cherish your own ideas. The necessary thing is to compare them with other people's wrong ideas and to learn how to improve them by giving them an apparent freshness and value, so that they may be profitably negociated.

But frequent the society of literary men.

You cannot do this better than by frequenting the society of literary men and artists who have invariably made their living by passing off spurious ideas as the real currency. All intellectual traders, including smashers and politicians of genius, have derived benefit by comparing notes and other tokens of value. As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the wits—and temper—of his friend. For this very reason, it is well to change the sharpening apparatus from time to time. That is why Friar Burgin who has had great experience in these matters, is inviting us to sharpen our wits on Go(u)ld.

Friar F. Frankfort Moore pins his faith to police Clubs.

THE only Clubs which I have known to have such a tendency are those at the command of the police force of New York City. The ordinary Fleet Street weapon operates, I believe, in exactly the opposite direction. I have never known two members of any literary or artistic Club agree on all points on any subject—literary, artistic, social or political. Every individual member has at all times shown the most courteous willingness—I might even say eagerness—to assert his individuality in any discussion; and I may add

that upon no occasion have I discovered that the assertion of his individuality had any effect other than to strengthen the individual opinions of any member within hearing.

He makes an exception.

Only upon the eulogy pronounced by the Chairman at a Club dinner upon the virtues of the guest of the evening do all the members agree; but this acquiescence is due to the effervescence of the genial hour. Walking home together in couples, you will find that the members are ready to assert either that the eulogy went too far or that it did not go far enough. I wonder if Friar Gould did not mean to write "Churches" instead of "Clubs" in his enquiry. If he did, I am with him, heart and soul.

Friar Walter Jerrold waxes poetical.

STRANGE dictum this; that men should lose
With their ideas all touch,
In meetings where the clash of words
Gives form and force to such;
For through the interplay of wits
True Wit itself has ruled;
E'en miracles have come to pass—
Gilding refinéd Gould.

FRIAR SIR FRANCIS CARRUTHERS GOULD SUMS UP.

My feelings on finding a casual remark made by me in the course of an interview used as a text for a discussion can only be illustrated by the story of the Jew who was indulging in the luxury of roast pork, when a violent thunderstorm broke overhead. "My Gott!" he exclaimed, "vot a row to kick up over a little bit of pork!"

I am flattered by the attention given to a futile expression by an old man who has been far from the madding crowd ever since the war broke out, and who naturally would console himself for his exile from his former haunts by finding compensative solaces for his comparative isolation.

Perhaps I may preface my comments on the commentators by saying that the title "Do Clubs destroy one's Individuality?" goes rather beyond what I told the interviewer. I don't think

that Club life does destroy the personal individuality; on the contrary, it tends to encourage a sort of argumentative antagonism; but does it strengthen his work, assuming that that work has to be of the inventive kind? I was not thinking of the literary man who has to deal with political or social subjects and who has, therefore, to mix with others so as to find out what is being thought or done in the world.

If it could be proved to me that Thomas Hardy and Robert Louis Stevenson spent much of their time in Clubs and literary coteries, I should admit that my views on the advantage of segregation are wrong. I should like it to be clearly understood that I had in my mind cases where the literary man or the artist has to rely entirely upon his inventive faculty for his originality.

This, I think, disposes of the arguments of those commentators who introduce the military parallel. Friar Algernon Rose says, "As well might the soldier exclaim 'Save me from meeting my brother officers daily in the mess.'"

But the officer has not to depend for his success on his individual inventive faculty; he is part of a great machine of which all the parts must piece together and work in harmony under definite orders.

Friar Algernon Rose also speaks of the literary Club as a clearing house where information can be obtained on technical points. No doubt that is so, but I fancy that a novelist, for example, who wants to be correct as to the effects of a poison administered by the villain, or of an accident sustained by the hero or heroine, or the accurate handling of a nautical incident, would only go to the Club to find some particular person who might happen to be a member of that Club. What is generally done in these cases, I imagine, is that the novelist goes to a doctor, a surgeon, or a naval man, to get posted up in the technical details.

I have only once been in a London Club smoking-room since the war began. I was cornered immediately by a Club bore who demanded to know why General So-and-So at the battle of So-and-So had done so-and-so, and hadn't done something else? I could only reply that I didn't know—I wasn't there!

Friar Helm expresses my thoughts better than I have worded them myself when he says "Habitual association with fellow-

members of Clubs does tend to lessen that personal dependence on the powers of the individual intelligence which alone can produce any first-hand opinions."

I have enjoyed too many hours of pleasant personal intercourse with some of my commentators at various times and in divers places to deny the value of sociality. But if I find that the grass in my little village street helps me more than the Turkey (or other) carpets in a Club smoking-room, or if the village pump inspires me more than the Club bore, I must have the courage of my opinions, express them, and stick to them. I have enjoyed many Whitefriars' Dinners, but if I find that a cold pasty munched in remote isolation on a heather-covered slope of Exmoor, helps me more, why should I not say so?

FRIAR ALDERMAN TRELOAR'S "WILKES AND THE CITY."

By Friar Joseph Shaylor.

It is not often that a man with such a questionable reputation as the hero of this book made for himself, should, after nearly 200 years, have found an author of exceptional qualifications ready and willing to write his life and one who is also able to explain away many of his weaknesses. Friar Treloar has been able to use unpublished official documents by which he is in a position to show that John Wilkes was a man of more honest ideals than most of his previous biographers have attributed to him. He will be congratulated by every Member of our Club upon having produced a most interesting and historic narrative and one which is particularly interesting to all who are associated with the social and political history of the City of London.

In turning to the index to the volume, which often proves almost as interesting as a hasty perusal of a book, one cannot help noting the intense study the author must have given to his subject, for, under the word "Bibliography," 33 different memoirs and notices of John Wilkes have been referred to. Also

an appendix of 30 pages is taken up with a "Diary of Dinner Engagements." One of the occasions mentioned was "Attended the trial of Miller for printing Junius' Letters," and another, "Seizing 60 Spanish Muskets and 60 Bayonets at Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill." Every Member of the Club will sincerely hope that Friar Sir Arthur Spurgeon will see such an event as this never occurs there again.

The volume begins with the birth of John Wilkes on October 17th, 1727, in St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, and traces a long line thickly studded with interesting and historic events. At 30, Wilkes was elected Member for Aylesbury at a cost of £7,000. He fought a bloodless duel with Earl Talbot, and was arrested and sent to the Tower for unlawfully publishing an article in the "North Boston." His activities in the City and Parliament, from which he was expelled, were unceasing. His Middlesex constituents, however, stood by him and returned him in 1784 for the seventh time, unopposed.

Wilkes died after a short illness in 1797. His public career was marked by great magnificence and full of volcanic eruptions which left their mark upon the succeeding generations.

The book is well worth reading and is one of which our worthy Friar and Alderman may be justly proud.

CLUB LUNCH.

5TH DECEMBER, 1917.

Club Guest—THE RT. HON. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C., M.P.

Prior—FRIAR CLEMENT K. SHORTER.

Topic—"A TALK ABOUT BOOKS."

NOTE.—*Owing to the great inconvenience caused by existing war conditions, the Committee decided to invite Mr. Birrell as the*

Club Guest at a lunch instead of the customary dinner. The attendance of Members and their friends was unusually large, and Mr. Birrell was in his happiest vein. Below is Mr. Birrell's " Talk."—EDITOR.

THE PRIOR (FRIAR CLEMENT K. SHORTER.)

HAVING accepted your invitation to share your war rations, I find that in exchange I am to inflict a speech upon you. That seems the height of irrationality. You have given me war bread and now you ask me for a stone. All this must be changed after the war. The word " must " reminds me of the popularity which the word has enjoyed ever since that fateful day, August 4th, 1914.

Soon after the war began, as a relief for intense feeling, I got a copy book and began inserting in it all the occasions on which the word " must " was used, but I soon found out that this, instead

of being a means of employing my leisure, would become a whole-time occupation.

I remember two special occasions when this word was used. One was when the President of the United States said that after the war the brotherhood of man "must" become a reality; the other was when a certain divine said that after the war religion "must" be reconstructed on a new basis, otherwise our gallant soldiers when they came back from the front, would pay no attention to it. My use of the word will be to say that after the war after-dinner speaking "must" be abolished. But I don't believe it will be.

I see that I am put down to give "A Talk about Books." That is an invention of your Prior. He has so many books that he can neither find room for them on his "shelves," nor keep them out of his letters. I have no intention of talking about books.

What are you to do if you don't read? Many of you will be ready with an answer "Why write, you fool!" That seems an easy way out of the difficulty. Dr. Johnson, however, on one occasion declined to dine with Hugh Kelly, giving as his reason that he would not willingly sit down to dinner with a man who had written more than he had read. I wonder whether there is anybody here who has written more than he has read, and, if so, is he ashamed of himself? Lord Foppington, in the play, said he was quite content with the sprouts of his own brain. But then he neither wrote nor read. It is different to-day.

Then, as to the ancients. Quite fifty per cent. of their works have been lost (expressions of regret are not invited). But great numbers of their works have come down to us. These ancients must have written more than they read. They lived before the invention of movable types and even before the era of the multiplication of manuscripts. Yes, I cannot help thinking these ancients must have written more than they read.

Then there is the great question of style! Style! If we could only manage to write like honest men, the whole secret of style would be solved. Everyone is agreed that the only good style is the style of honest men. That is easy to say. It is easier to be an honest man than to write like an honest man. There are very few books of absolute good faith from beginning to end. The writer

has as his raw material, words, words, words. Unfortunately words have become saturated with falsehood and humbug. You use a word and it suggests something quite different from what you intended, owing to the accumulated filth and greasiness. We must defecate words, but that is extremely difficult. A greasy £1 note is horrible, but there is one thing that is worse, and that is a greasy phrase that has been handed about from one writer to another until it has become soiled with the usage to which it has been exposed.

How does this come about ? One reason is that the constitution of society is visibly moral, and not even a conscious rogue can get on without using honest and virtuous words to conceal his nefarious schemes. Bishop Butler preached a sermon on humbug, but, as he was preaching to the House of Lords, he described it as hypocrisy. He says :—

> For tyranny and faction and unjust wars and persecutions by which the world has been laid waste, all this has all along been carried on with pretences of truth, right and general good. So it is, men cannot find it in their hearts to join in such things without such honest words to be the bond of the union though they *know* among themselves that they are *only words* and often though they know that everybody else knows it too.

Was there ever such a bishop as Bishop Butler before or since ? A writer to be honest must use honest words, and use them honestly. He must not hurl words at random at an often foolish and an often angry world. If he does, he only stirs up already infuriated men. I often have in mind Saint Beuve's piercing criticism on the writings of Camille Desmoulins :—

> " What a longing we feel after reading these pages encrusted with mire and blood, pages which are the living image of the disorder in the souls and morals of their times. What a need we experience of taking up some wise book whose common sense predominates and in which the good language is but the reflection of a delicate and honest soul reared in habits of honour and valour. We exclaim " Oh for the style of honest men ! "

Honest men must be allowed to hold strong opinions, and if they possess strong opinions they are perfectly entitled if they think the moment opportune, to express them strongly. Perhaps after all the only advice I can give to writers, particularly to writers on public affairs, and particularly at moments of enormous importance, when they are incurring great responsibility by writing at all, because after all there is no obligation on any of us to express our opinions, but if it is necessary to publish your opinions, why

then—take care before you send them forth to defecate your language from all the foul impurities of the time and the passions of the hour. Do not use words as flags, but use them with the full force with which they were intended to be used by honest men.

I now approach a dangerous subject. I should like to say a word on a subject connected with the expression of opinion. As to the formation of opinion, no one has as yet thought fit to interfere. No machinery has been set in motion even by a Coalition Government, to prevent people forming their own opinions. But, having formed an opinion, how far are we at liberty to express it in print? I am a reasonable man. I cannot get excited about a thing until I understand it. I am ready to admit that in war time we ought to endure reasonable rations. Burns says: "Liberty is a glorious feast." But so is the Lord Mayor's banquet. The Lord Mayor's banquet has been rationed, then why not "Liberty's glorious feast?" But the Lord Mayor's feast has been rationed carefully after great consideration; people gave hours to its consideration; and as a result of this consideration, some courses were knocked off and cigars introduced for the first time. Now, a short dinner with a long smoke, and a modicum of wine is the last word of culinary perfection and felicity. The Lord Mayor's banquet has not only been rationed but improved.

Now, about the rationing of thought and opinion. I think as much care and attention should be given to that at least, as to the Lord Mayor's banquet. First of all, can it possibly be done? No one can clap a padlock on the tongues of men and women. Talk of all sorts, foolish, dangerous, unpatriotic, goes on everywhere, always and by all. Forty years ago, I was in Russia, and I was appalled by the freedom of talk I heard at every dinner table. Religion, politics, ethics, everything was discussed. One day I received a copy of *The Nineteenth Century*, and I found that the Censor had been at the pains to read it through and cut out the whole of one article. I had *Punch* by the same post, and on looking through it for the one good joke which, like all Englishmen, I had been brought up to believe is always to be found there, I found that the Censor had wholly obliterated four lines. And yet all around I heard the wildest talk! What futility, what simplicity! But Russia, of course, is not England. That was

Russian folly, Russian futility. Can you suppress freedom of thought by cutting leaves out of books? You may say it can be done by the Censor. Who was the first man who read "Paradise Lost" right through? I do not ask who was the last man. It was a clergyman of the name of Tomkins—Thomas Tomkins, deputy of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Charles II revived the Censorship. He divided books into classes, and handed poetry over to the Archbishop. The Archbishop could not be expected to read "Paradise Lost," and he handed it over to Tomkins. Tomkins took a long time over it, and he did not like it. Tomkins was in doubt about "Paradise Lost." There were lines to which he objected. In particular he did not like the lines:—

> "As when the sun new risen
> Looks thro' the horizontal, misty air,
> Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
> In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
> On half the nations and with fear of change,
> Perplexes Monarchs."

These lines are, so some think, magnificent. Tomkins was not concerned with magnificence, but with treason—the lines puzzled Tomkins. To suppose Monarchs can ever be perplexed by fear of change, savoured of sedition. But at last "Paradise Lost," with a few alterations, was licensed. We laugh at Tomkins, yet Tomkins was an educated man and a bit of a poet himself—he had written some sort of verses—and he was as every whit as competent to decide whether a poem or a book or a pamphlet or a letter should be licensed as the present Home Secretary or any possible successor.

No, the thing cannot be done. If it is to be done, who is going to do it? Is Lord Lansdowne's letter to be licensed as a leaflet? If so, is it to be submitted to Sir Edward Carson? Carson is as good as Tomkins. Ought the Prime Minister's speech at Paris to be censored? If so, should Mr. Asquith be asked to act as censor? There is the Attorney-General, who can always prosecute anybody for anything at any time. I think it ought to be left to the Attorney-General. If anyone writes anything wrong, let him be prosecuted. Let him be brought before a jury. There are no pacificists among jurors, and judges can always be relied on to share the dominant emotions of the times. Therefore the Attorney-General need have no fear.

Freedom of thought can never be suppressed. If you suppress it in print, it becomes all the more dangerous in common talk. By what machinery can you suppress opinion? The Inquisition has failed, the fires of Smithfield have failed, the headsman's block has failed, the guillotine has failed, and I do not think that Regulation 51 will succeed much better. It is the tyrant's plea to say, "We want to lay by the heels 20 or 30 foolish creatures who are intoxicated by the exuberance of their own verbosity."

I was brought up to reverence Fox's "Martyrs." I wonder how many citizens of London would burn to-day for the difference between Transubstantiation and Consubstantiation? I am sure I would not. I don't think it was worth burning for, but I still reverence Martyrs. The spirit of Liberty is a jealous spirit and unless we are alert, when the war is over we may find it has departed from us—and if so, the war was not worth winning.

ANNUAL REPORT AND BALANCE SHEET, 1917

NOTWITHSTANDING the effect that the war has had upon Clubs generally, the Committee are able to report that the membership of the Whitefriars has during the past year been more than maintained. The number of Dinner engagements has again been few, but the vitality of the Club has been manifest in the attendance and the interest in the events. It was inevitable from the circumstances of the time that some invitations to Club Guests had to be declined by them, and that several of the gatherings had to be arranged on short notice. The Dinners, as usual, have had far more than a social interest, inasmuch as they have been in a peculiar degree informative. In addition to the Christmas Dinner, which was associated with the Vestiaire Marie-José, four Dinners and one Luncheon have been held. The Club Guests were Colonel John Buchan, Mr. Justice McCardie, Mr. F. L. Grilly (who very kindly took the place of Mr. T. P. O'Connor), Lord Rhondda, and Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., M.P. The topics were "The Press and the War," "Journalism: Its Influence and its Pitfalls," "The Cinema and the Censor," "The Troubles

of a Food Controller," and " A Talk about Books." The Luncheon was for the Whitefriars a departure, but had the successful precedents of societies in America and of several clubs in London to support it. It was introduced with especial regard for Friars who, owing to extra duties arising from the war, are unable to attend evening functions. The muster, including private guests, was close upon a hundred, thus reaching very near to the record of the Club for any gathering at Anderton's. The Committee feel that the experiment will justify more of these gatherings.

Five Members have been elected during the year, viz. :— Dr. Leslie Burgin, Mr. Paul Creswick, Mr. Cecil Palmer, Mr. Crawford Price, and Mr. Sydney C. Turner. Mr. Creswick was formerly a Friar, and is welcomed back after an interval of a few years. Three Members have resigned, and the Committee have to record with deep regret the death of Friar William Archbald, of one Honorary Member, Friar Henry Frith, who joined the Brotherhood in 1885, and was for a period Honorary Secretary.

Hearty thanks are again due to Friar Burgin for his editorship of the *Whitefriars' Journal*. It conserves and distributes the spirit of the refectory, and is a particular joy for Friars who are in distant fields and are thus kept in touch with the circle.

It will be seen from the Balance Sheet that we started the year with £93 7*s*. 7*d*. in hand, and finished with a balance of £72 5*s*. 10*d*., showing a deficit of £21 1*s*. 9*d*. on the year's working. as compared with £32 13*s*. 11*d*. deficit in the previous year. The reason for the continued loss is, of course, the halving of the Club subscription for war time. The decision not to hold a Christmas Dinner this year will, in all probability, incidentally enable the Committee to balance accounts in the coming months.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS, 1916-1917.

RECEIPTS

	£	s.	d.
To Balance at Bank	93	7	7
,, Members' Subscriptions	120	4	10
,, Entrance Fees	14	14	0
,, Interest on £300 London County Council Stock	6	15	0
,, Christmas Dinner	23	10	6
	£258	11	11

EXPENDITURE

				£	s.	d.
By Rent (*less* Rebate, £15)				65	0	0
,, Christmas Dinner ...	£23	11	0			
,, Artistes—Christmas Dinner	14	14	0			
,, Special Printing do.	12	16	3			
				51	1	3
,, Club Journals				27	5	0
,, General Printing				10	11	8
,, List of Members				4	15	0
,, Waiters and Toast-Master (21)				5	18	6
,, Incidentals—Club Guests, Newspapers, etc.				4	6	9
,, Postages				8	5	0
,, Typing and Sundries				3	18	9
,, Special Gift to Daughter of Old Friar ...				5	0	0
,, Cheque Book					4	2
,, Balance at Bank				72	5	10
				£258	11	11

EDWARD CLODD,
Hon. Treasurer.

CLUB LUNCH AND ANNUAL MEETING.

Chairman—FRIAR JOSEPH SHAYLOR.

IT was a happy idea of the Chairman's to combine the Christmas Lunch with the Annual Meeting. As a result, the meeting was far more numerously attended than usual. The Friars present were Sir ARTHUR SPURGEON, J.P., Dr. J. MORGAN DE GROOT, WALTER JERROLD, G. B. BURGIN, CECIL PALMER, W. H. HELM, W. N. SHANSFIELD, W. GURNEY BENHAM, —. TURNER, G. H. NORTHCROFT, W. FRANCIS AITKEN, WALTER B. SLATER, ROBERT SOMERVILLE, HENRY J. BROWN, G. H. PERKINS, THOMAS CATLING, CLEMENT K. SHORTER, ALFRED EDMONDS and WARD MUIR.

MENU.

Roast Turkey and Sausages.
Potatoes and Brussel Sprouts
Mince Pies.
Cheese and Biscuits.
Vin de Guinness.

The Chairman congratulated all those present on having survived the hardships and anxieties of the current year, and expressed his pleasure at meeting so many old friends. Then, like the practised hand he is, put through the business meeting directly lunch was over, and said that if Members knew of any just cause or impediment why the Annual Meeting should not pass off without protests, now was the time to give sorrow words.

FRIAR EDMONDS arose and majestically intimated that he was not satisfied with the existing arrangements for speeches at the Club dinners. What, with brutal disrespect, he called "the old gang," were called upon time after time to speak, whilst he, the speaker, who had been bursting and pining to hear his own voice at these meetings, never had a chance. He had

come to the conclusion, and he spoke more in sorrow than in anger, that a new Member was expected to look on and listen to the speeches for ten years ; for another ten years, he was privileged to throw things at the speakers ; and after the expiration of a further ten years, he was allowed to speak in the faltering accents of a man broken by old age and disappointment.

FRIAR SIR ARTHUR SPURGEON gently, firmly, yet pityingly, explained to the discontented Friar that the experiment had been tried of throwing open the meetings to everyone present, and the result had always been—silence. The Secretary, going from chair to chair, had been met by the same bashful silence, and the Committee were forced to fall back on the old methods. Stricken by remorse, FRIAR EDMONDS penitently explained that he had not meant to be taken with such solemnity, and FRIAR BURGIN told of one Member who bitterly complained that he had not been asked to speak for the past twenty years. He was asked, and indignantly said that he never delivered an impromptu speech without a week's previous preparation.

Then came the great event of the day, the presentation of official gratuities to the Club staff. Sounds of anguish were heard in the passage as the various members of it endeavoured to arrange their speeches. "Hall," the head waiter at Anderton's, opened the ball with :—

"Mr. Prior and Gentlemen.—I thank you for the appreciation you have shown of my poor attempts to serve you, and hope soon that we shall all be having a happier time than we have at present."

The cook (he was chastely attired in clean white cap and apron) :—"Gents. all, I wish you the compliments of the Season and I thank you very much for remembering the usual custom of not forgetting us. I am very sorry I've not had so much to do for you this year as I've had in former years. I hope that will soon be altered and that I shall be able to do for you as usual."

Chambermaid (a new one—with blushes).—"Thank you very much, but I don't know what to say. I can't say anything." (Encouraging cries of "Speech, speech.") "Please what am I to say" (In desperation.) "I wish you a happy Christmas." (More blushes and an anguished bolt for the door.)

Robert (with his customary courtly and Chesterfieldian politeness).—" Mr. Prior and Gentlemen of the Whitefriars' Club. I am very much obliged to you for your kindness, as cook says, ' for remembering not to forget us.' I have served you many years, and am very grateful to the Prior for his wish that I may go on serving you for many years to come. I wish you all a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year—when it comes."

After the staff had disappeared, the Prior felicitously proposed a vote of thanks to the unhappy editor of the *Journal*, and said many complimentary things about it until that bashful official turned purple. FRIAR CLEMENT K. SHORTER, in seconding the resolution, narrated how on a recent visit of his to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hardy, the veteran novelist and his wife said how regularly they read and how much they appreciated the *Journal*. The editor devoted a great deal of time and thought to what the Prior had feelingly called " a curiosity in literature." Then came more compliments, and the editor displayed symptoms of apoplexy as he was dragged on his feet. In a few lame and halting words, he acknowledged how much he deserved the compliments which had been showered upon him. He was greatly indebted to FRIAR AITKEN and many others for gratuitous contributions to the *Journal*, although it usually took about sixty applications to obtain a dozen little articles out of Members for the Friars' Club. The great aim of the *Journal* was to get every Member to be interested in it and to do something for it and his brother Friars. Everything that Members did was of interest to the Club and he tried to get them to tell all that could be reasonably told of their doings. Of their own merits, modest men were dumb ; and he proposed to imitate them rather than launch out on so ample a subject. Then he shivered into his overcoat and tottered to the door.

The proceedings terminated in the customary friendly fashion and no one departed the sadder for the fact that he had been living through the stress and strain of air raids, financial worries, sorrows caused by the war, and all those other inevitable accompaniments to the fateful times through which we are now passing.

G.B.B.

CLUB LUNCH.

16TH JANUARY, 1918.

A TALK ABOUT RUSSIA.

Club Guest—MR. HAMILTON FYFE. *Prior*—FRIAR G. B. BURGIN.

The Chairman, in proposing the health of Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, described him as being one of the most distinguished and eloquent journalists of the day. When revolvers were first introduced in the wild and woolly West, a young lady, who saw her lover shot before her eyes, exclaimed, "These yer little self-cocking guns has played hell with my prospects." A similar remark might truthfully be said about the weather, for it had prevented many elderly and delicate Friars from leaving their cells do to honour to their guest. For some years their ears had been deafened by the martial beating of the war drum. To-day, it would be their lot to listen to the thrilling and more musical strains of *the* Fyfe. Mr. Fyfe would address them on the internal and perhaps the infernal conditions of Russia.

Mr. HAMILTON FYFE said that if he were as cautious as Scotsmen were usually supposed to be, he would not be there, and if he wanted to establish a reputation for foresight and sagacity, he would not talk about Russia again. He had the good fortune to make a prophecy which was fulfilled and it was an established axiom that he who had done well once in that line of business should go out of it. He really wanted to speak about America, but was told that the Members preferred to hear about Russia. He would commence, therefore, with the Bolsheviks.

Some people said that the Bolsheviks were angels and saviours of society; others said they were devils and raving lunatics. As to recent occurrences in Russia, some people said that such things had occurred before and that eventually all would come right and things would settle down. He was not at all in favour of the view that things were always going to settle down. People before the Flood said that, but they were disagreeably surprised. Lot's wife said it with regard to Sodom and Gomorrah, but she was turned into a pillar of salt; people, before the war began, said things looked black, but they would settle down.

The Bolsheviks, as their name indicated, were people who wanted more; they were whole-hoggers. They were followers of Tolstoi, whose teaching had had far more influence in Russia than most people here realized. It was a mistake to imagine that all Russian peasants were illiterate. One of our M.P.'s had said that 70 per cent. were illiterate, but that was incorrect, as before the war only 22 per cent. were illiterate. Tolstoi was a teacher who had a new way of looking at things. The revolution in Russia did not break out as it was planned, but simply by chance, because the people had been goaded into it by hunger and also because the authorities wanted to shoot folks so that they could turn to their Allies and say, "You see, we have a revolution to deal with, so you must not expect anything from us."

When the Revolutionary Government was set up, the Bolsheviks set up a Council of Workmen and Soldiers, who made things uncomfortable for the Government. Kerensky was able to swing these people for a time, but he could not hold them together very long. Finally, Kerensky was chased out of it. The principal people now were Lenin and Trotzky. Lenin was a member of a noble family and Trotzky was a man, very able, who had studied these problems all his lifetime, and the other leaders were mostly of the same type. People might call them fanatics, but they were not hooligans. They were thinkers and prophets. They had only advocated violence in the past because they could see no other way of attaining their objects. The friends who had just returned from Petrograd told him that order was better there after the Bolsheviks came into power.

The Bolshevik leaders were very able diplomats, as Members would see if they read carefully the account of the negotiations with the Germans. He did not think we should lose anything by these people negotiating with the Germans, instead of the official type of diplomat. They had a great hold on the mass and the Russian people. The respectable people were said to be against them, but if that was so, then, so far, they had done nothing to show it. If the respectable people had been against them, they would have tried to do something to put them out. He read a few days since the report of a meeting of a City Company in which the Chairman of the Company referred in very feeling terms to

"the benevolent autocracy," and yet in times of peace they goaded the people into revolt and in times of war behaved so badly that they goaded the people and the army into a revolution.

The Tsar was weak, obstinate and ignorant, henpecked by his wife and humbugged by his Ministers. He was now down and out for good. The original idea of the revolution was to keep the Tsar as a constitutional monarch, but that proved impossible, and there now seemed no chance of his coming back. Three things had greatly stirred the people, namely, the Army scandals, when only one rifle was supplied between three men, the Rasputin scandal, and the belief that the Tsarina was pro-German. Some people said that a sort of second Napoleon might arise, but there was no sign of one at present, and the Russian people were not inclined to make heroes of soldiers, but rather of thinkers.

As to Russia settling down to becoming a Republic like France and America, the Bolsheviks were out for a form of government as different from that of France or America as it was from that of Germany or of our own type of constitutional monarchy. The Bolsheviks were attempting to make a general peace, but not a separate peace. He did not think there was any chance of them making the latter. They were trying to drive a wedge between the German autocracy and the German people.

Mr. Fyfe further believed that posterity would say that this attempt of the Bolsheviks was the most important thing that had happened in the history of the war. These men were trying to introduce new ideas. Lenin and Trotzky were neither angels nor devils, but they were men of culture resolved to try to carry into actual operation Lincoln's formula, "Government by the people, of the people, for the people." They said it was not possible to attain that ideal until countries got rid of their old gangs of politicians and until governments judged every measure not according to its value from a dynastic or party point of view, not as a move in the political game, but according to its bearing on the interests of the people as a whole.

That was the Bolshevik's ideal and they contended that no country had as yet approached it. They contended that the people in democratic countries were humbugged just as the Tsar was humbugged. The reason for humbugging was that many of

the governing people had axes of their own to grind. The more powerful a country became, the more powerful and important its governing people became. That was a point missed by Norman Angell in his book. The foreign policy of all countries had been based upon tradition and old ideas, not upon the interests of the country.

The Russians were a very kindly and tolerant people, although they might be stirred up sometimes. One of the soldiers who had been fighting the Germans was asked what he thought of them. His reply was that the only difference between the Russians and the Germans was that the former wore brown while the latter wore grey. " They are made to fight just the same as we are. There is no difference between us." The only people hated by the Russians were the English because they had been taught that we wanted to prolong the war. A long-haired student, speaking at an open-air meeting, attacked the English. He was interrupted several times by the crowd, but the chairman, a huge red-faced Russian, insisted on them giving the speaker a hearing, saying he must have fair play and there must be freedom of speech. At last the crowd became very impatient and the chairman urged them to hear the speaker out, adding " There will be plenty of time afterwards to bash his face in."

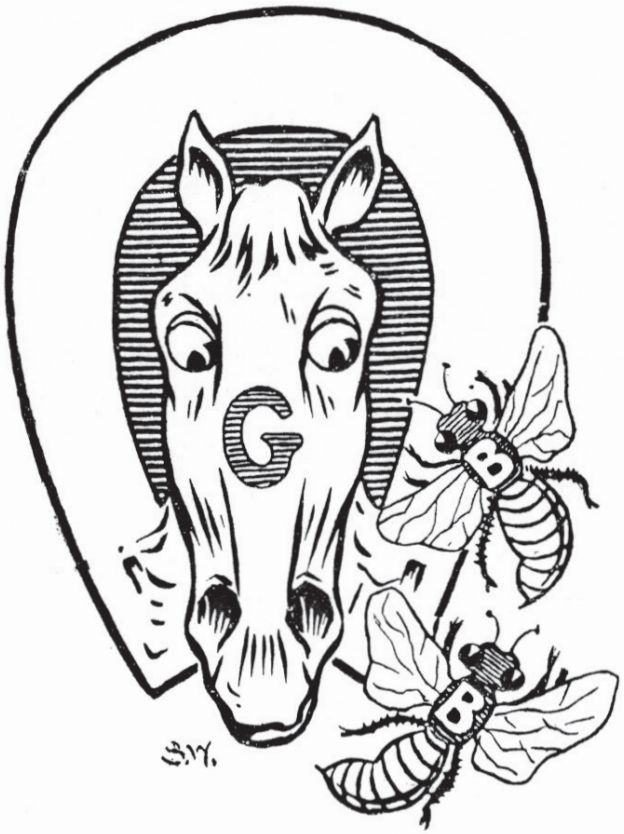
The Russians thought that we ought to have declared ourselves more emphatically in favour of the Revolution than we did. We said they had let us down, but they thought we had let them down over the Dardanelles and in Mesopotamia, where our troops which should have met theirs, had had to surrender.

The Bolsheviks had discovered and published secret treaties shewing that France and Italy still adhered to the old idea of " to the victors the spoils." Their idea was that territories should not be annexed. It was also President Wilson's idea. The old idea was government by the ruling classes for the benefit of the State without reference to the people. The Bolsheviks were opposed to that and it was this that secured a large measure of sympathy with them, which was growing. The old gangs seemed to have very few friends left. Britain had at last declared its war aims which would have a good effect, but had this been done six months earlier it might have kept Russia in the war.

The Russians not only believed in democracy, but they actually tried to put their belief into practice. In a letter from a friend of his, there was a story of a Russian battalion ordered to attack a German position. They advanced boldly, their lieutenant-colonel watching them through his glasses. After they had gone some distance he saw them halt and a lot of hands were held up. He thought they were going to surrender, but after a minute or two they advanced again. When they had gone some distance, further this performance was repeated. Eventually they drove the Germans out of the position, and the colonel riding up to them questioned the sergeant-major as to the hands up incident. He was informed that a vote of the men was being taken as to whether they should continue their advance!

The Russians should not be judged too harshly. They had suffered terribly in the war. Their prisoners were numbered by the millions, the number of their killed was at least four millions, and their casualties were 12 millions.

The Chairman, thanking Mr. Fyfe for his brilliant, charming, delightful and exhaustive address, said that after listening to it he was inclined to say, "Verily, thou almost persuadest me to be a Bolshevik." On the Club's behalf, he thanked Mr. Fyfe for coming to them and wished him God-speed in all the numerous and sometimes perilous activities to which his journalistic path inclined.



CLUB NOTES.

It is a far cry back to last July when Friar Joseph Shaylor hospitably entertained the habitués of the lunch table at a "Rose Lunch." The "Rose Lunch" has developed into a very cosy and pleasant annual festival.

"Among those present," as the reporters say, were Friars Joseph Shaylor (host), his son, Harold Shaylor (Vice-Chair), Sir Arthur Spurgeon, W. N. Shansfield, H. J. Brown, William Senior, Clement K. Shorter, Dr. J. Morgan de Groot, and G. B. Burgin. Friar Aitken was away holiday-making, and Friar Sir John Foster Fraser was unable to come.

For "war time," the meal was an ideal one:

Salmon Mayonnaise,
Roast Lamb and Mint Sauce, New Potatoes, and Peas (also new).
Ice Pudding.
Cheese and Biscuits.

The table was decorated with eight great bowls of different kinds of "Ramblers," from those who sat around them. Most of the guests went away with a bunch, Friar Sir Arthur Spurgeon, the pillar of Cassell's, naturally taking the pillar cluster. Friar William Senior, whom every one greeted with affectionate warmth, carried a bunch of Dorothy's, and Friar Burgin, with the zeal of a rose grower, sampled the remaining flowers. All of them were grown by our host.

It was a genial, nay more, a loveable meal. Our host beamed upon the guests from his end of the table and in a few kindly sentences, wished us all happiness. Friar Sir Arthur Spurgeon proposed Friar Shaylor's health, and then we—

"Folded our tents like the Arabs,
And as silently stole away"

as many of the remaining flowers as we could conveniently carry.

* * * *

Talking of Arabs, reminds me. At one time, the American Consul in Tunis had a very swarthy-complexioned son, who was lying on a divan in the hall, struggling with an attack of malaria, when some American visitors were announced. As they went away, one of them pressed a medjidieh into the hand of the malaria-stricken son of her host, saying, "Take that, you poor sickly A-rab," with the emphasis on the "A." He was known as "The sickly A-rab" for ever after.

Friars were anecdotal the other day at lunch concerning that unrivalled delegate of the Clarendon Press, Ingram Bywater. Bywater, a great smoker, was accustomed to tell of a rather neat repartee of Pio Nono to Cardinal Antonelli. Pio Nono, when in conversation with Cardinal Antonelli, lit a cigarette and handed the case to the Cardinal, who said, "You know, Holiness, that I have not that vice." "You know, Eminence," replied the Pope, "that if it were a vice you *would* have it."

Friar Shaylor reviews Friar Ward Muir's "Observations of an Orderly" in another part of the *Journal*. It is a book where the laughter is sometimes very near akin to tears. In its writer you have an accomplished man of letters who is more than content to endure the drudgery of hospital work and all its hardships. Sometimes he appears at the Club lunches as if the old life irresistibly called him back to us. But punctually as the clock strikes two, he gives us a cheerful military salute and returns to Wandsworth Hospital.

The book interests me so much because of its moderation and restraint, its descriptive power and intense sympathy. It is about time we knocked on the head the foolish tradition that because a brother Friar writes a book we ought not to say how much we like it.

* * * *

For the extravagant sum of sixpence, the other day I bought in the Charing Cross Road (3 Vols., 1860), Anthony Trollope's "Castle Richmond." On the second page he says :—

> Irish novels were once popular enough. But there is a fashion in novels as there is in colours and petticoats ; and now I fear they are drugs in the market. It is hard to say why a good story should not have a fair chance of success, whatever may be its bent ; why it should not be reckoned to be good by its own intrinsic merits alone ; but such is by no means the case. I was waiting once, when I was young at the work, in the back parlour of an eminent publisher, hoping to see his eminence on a small matter of business touching a three-volume MS. which I held in my hand. The eminent publisher, having probably larger fish to fry, could not see me, but sent his clerk or foreman to arrange the business.
>
> "A novel, is it, sir ? " said the foreman.
>
> "Yes," I answered, "a novel."
>
> "It depends very much on the subject," said the foreman, with a thoughtful and judicious frown—" upon the name, sir, and the subject—daily life, sir, that's what suits us ; daily English life. Now your historical novel, sir, is not worth the paper it's written on."

And then the historical novel came into its own—and everybody else's own.

* * * *

Friar Richard Whiteing, who is still young at 77, has been living for several years at Bournemouth but, in spite of air raids, finds the call of London irresistible and has returned to it. It is very pleasant to see him again at our dinners.

Friar Walter Jerrold has forsaken Hampton Court in favour of the classic precincts of St. John's Wood.

What Friar does not remember the late George Wyndham's eloquent address to us at one of our dinners? I have just been reading "George Wyndham: Recognita," by C. T. Gatty. Here is one of the stories with which Wyndham was accustomed to delight his friends:—

A couple of Irishmen were going to Ballinasloe, and after two hours' steady trudge along the road, one of them enquired of a man breaking stones, "Are we on the right road to Ballinasloe?" "You are, sorr," was the reply. "And how far might it be?" he asked. "It will be just fourteen miles from here to Ballinasloe," responded their informant. On they went again for another two hours, and then stopped and shouted to a woman hoeing turnips in a field, "Are we on the right road to Ballinasloe?" "You are, sorr," says she. "And how far is it from here?" he demanded. "Well, from the corner there," says the woman, "we call it just fourteen miles from Ballinasloe." Upon which the enquirer turned to his companion and said, "Thanks be to God, Mike, we are holding our own."

The Whitefriars' Committee explained to Friars that the Birrell lunch was a departure from Whitefriars' custom, but it was arranged because, though the attendances at the occasional dinners were as large as ever, war-time exigencies prevented some Friars from being present at evening gatherings; and because it was also believed that the briefer delectation would be welcome to other Friars. The whole proceedings occupied not more than an hour and a half. In Canada and the United States such luncheons are immensely appreciated and they have particular recommendation for war time.

On account of war conditions, the Christmas dinner was omitted from last year's functions.

* * * *

The attendance at the Birrell lunch was very large, and Mr. Birrell "talked about Books." Incidentally, he talked brilliantly and incisively concerning several other things.

As Mr. Birrell talked, I jotted down a few characteristic Birrellisms :—

"After the war, post-prandial speeches must be abolished."

Apropos of Dr. Johnson : "He would not willingly sit down to dinner with a man who has written more than he has read."

"A man who neither reads nor writes, is outside of our magic circle."

"I will omit style altogether. The one and only good style is the style of honest men."

"It is much easier to be an honest man than to write like one."

"Words through the course of time have become soaked and saturated with humbug."

"Not even a conscious rogue can get on without using honest words to conceal his nefarious designs."

"An honest writer must use honest words honestly."

"Strong men are entitled to express, if the time be opportune, strong opinions strongly."

"A short dinner with a long smoke and a modicum of wine is the perfection of culinary felicity."

"No Archbishop of Canterbury could ever be expected to read 'Paradise Lost' all through."

* * * *

I am indebted to Friar Browning for some further particulars relating to the late Friar Henry Frith :—

The death of Friar Henry Frith, which occurred on 12th October last, will bring back to the minds of the older Friars a cheery companion, beloved by all, and one ever ready to give his time and energies unsparingly to the welfare of the Club.

Friar Henry Frith joined the Club in 1885, the same year as Friars G. A. Henty, William Westall, Colonel Percy Groves and Robert Leighton. Four years later he succeeded Friar Heath Joyce as Honorary Secretary and continued in that office until November, 1895, when he was taken seriously ill and was obliged to give up work of every description. In 1894 he presided over the Annual Dinner. As a slight recognition of his great services to the Club, a testimonial was subsequently presented to him on behalf of the Friars. Since his retirement, owing to continued ill-health, he has but seldom been able to attend the meetings, and during the past four years has been a confirmed invalid.

Born in Dublin on 2nd May, 1840, Friar Frith was educated at Cheltenham College and Trinity College, Dublin. From there he went to the War Office, and afterwards took up literary work. He wrote chiefly for boys, and among his numerous books may be mentioned "On the Wings of the Wind," "For Queen and King," "Aboard the Atalanta," "Captains of Cadets," "In the Yellow Sea," "Ascents and Adventures," "Schoolboys all the World over," "Through Flood, through Fire," "A Race for Life," "The Mystery of Moor Farm," etc., etc. In addition, he wrote several popular works on engineering, electricity, palmistry and graphology, and translated various books from the French, including many of Jules Verne's works.

Friar Heath Joyce also writes me:—

I knew poor Frith as a writer of boys' stories and an expert in palmistry and character in handwriting, and as having written a clever little handbook to the latter. He was a charming companion, exceptionally well-informed, and never out of temper. He succeeded me as Hon. Sec., and won all hearts by his unfailing courtesy and good nature. He resigned owing to ill health, and I regret to say the Friars saw very little of him afterwards.

The moral of this little story is—never invent anecdotes. At the Rhondda dinner, I was suddenly called upon to speak and, on the spur of the moment, improvised a story about a little girl who was saying her prayers: "God bless father and mother and make me a good little girl and thank Lord Rhondda for giving me plum jam on my bread and butter for breakfast." It was trite enough, but two days' later Lord Rhondda used it in a speech. For a month after, every fond mother I met said, "What a kind-hearted man Lord Rhondda must be. Have you heard that touching story of how he gave the little girl plum jam for her breakfast?" And I had to listen to it!

"To this complexion (most of us) must we come at last." Friar Alfred Miles, after a gallant struggle against the vicissitudes of Fleet Street, has found a haven in the Charterhouse, where, as he so bravely and pathetically puts it, he is "without the anxiety incident to personal provision." His letter to Friar Sir Arthur Spurgeon, who took a great deal of trouble in securing his election, speaks for itself. I hope when my own time comes to join him, that I may accept my fate with the same cheerful philosophy. The good wishes of all Friars will, I am sure, be with Friar Miles in that comfortable and historical retreat "where never winds blow coldly."

THE CHARTERHOUSE,
LONDON, E.C. 1.
13.12.17.

MY DEAR MR. SPURGEON,

I am sure you will be pleased to hear that the application I made for admission to the Charterhouse, to which you kindly contributed a testimonial, secured for me a pension on the Foundation of the Institution, and that at the hands of no less a Governor than His Majesty the King. On the completion of formalities, I entered into residence last week and am now rejoicing in the security that I can still follow the work I love without the anxiety incident to personal provision, more free than heretofore. I hope to do better than in the past and to justify the good fortune that has befallen me.

The testimonials I presented were worth the effort even if they had been unsuccessful, and, apart from the success achieved, were worth living for. I had intended to send you a copy in printed form, but at the moment I cannot tell in which of my packed or unpacked luggage parcels they are. They included testimonials from Sir Herbert Warren, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, Edmund Gosse, C.B., Austin Wilson, LL.D., Hall Caine, Lieut.-Col. Sir Hamer Greenwood, M.C., Lieut.-Col. Toogood, M.D., etc., etc., Canon Langbridge, The Rev. Crole Ward, Samuel Luffman, E. J. Swain, Esq., J.P., and your good self. Please let me remain as ever,

Yours in sincere friendship and regard,

ALFRED H. MILES.

FRIAR SIR ARTHUR SPURGEON, J.P.

Friars will be much interested to see the following extract from the New Year's Honours' List and add their congratulations to mine on the Knighthood conferred :—

Arthur Spurgeon, Esq., J.P.
Managing Director of Messrs. Cassell & Co., publishers. Chairman of the Croydon County Bench of Magistrates. Chairman of the *Western Daily Mercury*, Plymouth.

Can any Friar oblige our Secretary with Nos. 4, 8 and 9, Vol. II, of the Club *Journal* in order to complete the Club set ?

A great sorrow has recently befallen Friar Clement Shorter in the death of Mrs. Shorter. Knowing how much she was to him and all of us who have partaken of her charming hospitality, I feel that any words of mine can hardly do justice to one of the most striking and interesting personalities of literary London. And, in spite of the following criticism from *The Times*, I am certain that much of the late Mrs. Shorter's poetic work has "the inevitableness which marks great poetry." When I think of her graciousness, her wit and overflowing sympathy, her readiness to help every lame dog over a stile, I deeply deplore the untimely cutting-short of a life so brilliant and productive of all that goes to elevate and help humanity.

AN IRISH POETESS.

The death took place yesterday in London, of Mrs. Clement Shorter, who as a poetess, writing under her maiden name of Dora Sigerson, was known to a wide public both in England and Ireland.

Mrs. Shorter was born in Dublin, and inherited literary tastes and abilities not only from her father, Professor George Sigerson, who survives her, but also from her mother, Hester Sigerson, the author of various poetical pieces. She was married to Mr. Clement Shorter in 1896, and had since then lived in London. Her earliest poetical compositions were published in various Irish journals, and her first volume of poems came out in 1894. It was followed by a number of others in fairly rapid succession ; and with the years it may be said that her powers developed steadily. She was most at home in the purely Irish ballad, and always she seemed to write naturally and without painful effort, though she exhibited certain pecularities, even in her simplicity, which gave her utterances a slightly exotic tinge. There was no mistaking her Celtic origin. In 1907 she collected her poems, and George

Meredith gave the collection an introduction; "she was," he wrote, "an Irishwoman writing from her heart of the legends of her country," though, as many of her pieces testify, Irish legends by no means exhausted the subjects of her muse; and many may think her quite as successful in various simple little pieces which could point to no particular national, or spiritual, ancestry. She attempted no very ambitious flight; most of her poems were quite short; and though but few, if indeed any, have that inevitableness which marks great poetry, she will certainly occupy for the expression of emotion, genuine and unforced, an honourable position in the history of the Irish literary revival.—*The Times.* January 7th, 1918.

* * * *

It is with the deepest sorrow that I record "the passing" of my dear old friend, Friar William Archibald, after a severe operation under which he sank. At the last Club dinner he was among us, full of life and fun, abounding with anecdotes and reminiscences and asking to "be put near Burgin." No Member of the Club was more warmly esteemed and liked. A man of great sweetness of character, with a positive genius for friendship and the biggest of hearts, he will be greatly missed by all of us. I mourn him greatly.

* * * *

Friar Sir Arthur Spurgeon was to have taken the Chair at the Club lunch to that brilliant orator and journalist, Friar Hamilton Fyfe. At the last moment he sent the following message, and, to use an American locution, I "deputized" for him:—

"Please express my deep regret to Hamilton Fyfe, Friars and Guests assembled at our board, that I am not able to be with them to-day. The doctor absolutely forbids my leaving the house, and I must perforce obey lest a worse thing happens. All good wishes."

* * * *

I still "hold the Cup" for the recital of the Club ritual. The last time I officiated, Sir Arthur caught me with his glittering eye, and I was nearly lost. Only a miracle saved me.

Friar Sir Francis Gould has been kind enough to send a charming heading for "The Friars' Club." He is sitting musing on a lonely mountain top, with a contemplative deer in the background. Will any Friar suggest a subject for the next issue? I had thought of "Ration-al Life," but by the time the next number appears, there may be no necessity for it. And will Friars kindly bear in mind that unless they aid me with suggestions for the *Journal*, I shall be like Lord Burleigh's lady and sink beneath the weight of an honour unto which I was not born.

* * * *

Friar Albert Kinross writes "From Somewhere in Egypt":—

"Should any of the Friars remember me, please give them my warmest regards and tell them how much I would like to rejoin the Brotherhood and sniff once more the delicate air of Fleet Street and the Strand. I am, thank God, quite fit and well."

G.B.B.

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