

Brotherhood

WHEN I was in Tunis a good many years ago I made the acquaintance of a wonderful brotherhood, the White Brothers of the Sahara. The late Cardinal Lavigerie had organised them. They were a kind of revival of the Knights Crusaders. Recruited mainly from the best families in France these young men were a military force of Monks, missionaries prepared to fight in defence of the peaceful folk of their faith if need be. Their territory bordered on that of the Senussi, a race of armed fanatics. Thus, like was set to meet like. The fact that they were warriors as well as monks gave them a double bond of brotherhood where they gave themselves voluntarily, in an ascetic law and dangerous life, to the service of others and to the service of each other. They were a living example of what is possible on a small scale in the direction of goodwill and co-operation, which we want to bring about more generally in the world to-day.

The White Brothers, like the Scouts, were a movement rather than an organisation. That is, they came into it of their own desire to do something for their kind without thought of reward. So long as that spirit is there the Brotherhood is all right. But, mind you, self slips in unexpectedly sometimes; maybe it takes the form of a feeling that one is blessed with a gift for making a specially fine troop, or one is keen to show one's patriotism to be greater than one's neighbour's; or one rather fancies oneself in a backwoodsman's kit, and so on. Harmless weaknesses, but giving expression to Self.

Search yourself and see that you are free from it. Otherwise there is bound to follow some little sense of rivalry, some little difference of ideals with your neighbours, from which springs, if not envy or dislike, at least aloofness. In other words, not quite the right spirit is engendered.

Brothers we are to our boys, brothers to each other we must be, if we are going to do any good. Only the other day I saw a letter from a Scouter who had been having a hard struggle to carry on his Troop single-handed in a poor slum, and his spirit had been depressed not by his difficulties but by his "utter isolation and the very little spirit" of fellowship "shown by those around him who might" have given a helping hand.

Whose fault it was I don't know, but such aloofness or jealousy could not exist where there is the true ideal of brotherhood. What we need, and what, thank God, we've got in most places in our movement, is not merely the spirit of good-natured tolerance but of watchful sympathy and readiness to help one another. We not only need it but we've "got to have it" if we are going to teach our boys by the only sound way, that is through our own example, that greatest of principles -- goodwill and co-operation.

March, 1926.

Duty to the King

I HAVE been asked exactly what this part of the Scout and Guide Promise implies, especially for those overseas.

We have heard of the disintegration of the British Empire that is going on owing to the different Dominions becoming entirely self-governing nations. I think this thought is generally fathered by the wish of some disgruntled foreigner.

One foreigner at any rate saw otherwise, namely the American writer, Emerson, when he prophetically said of Great Britain: "I see her not dispirited, not weak, but well remembering that she has seen dark days before, indeed with a kind of instinct that she sees a little better

in a cloudy day, and that, in a storm of battle and calamity, she has a secret vigour and a pulse like a cannon."

In place of becoming disintegrated by decentralisation, the Empire is becoming closer knit through mutual interests and by improved communications. Every day its distant parts are being brought nearer together through modern developments, so that where it took months to communicate by sea, it now takes days by air and less than seconds by wireless.

My own belief is that we are seeing only the beginning of the Empire coming into its full strength and power as a beneficent organisation for ensuring peace in the world.

We see around us small countries, encouraged by nationalist sentiment, claiming their independence and self-determination, with what result remains to be seen; but in many cases their jealousy or fear of their neighbours demands their being ready to defend themselves at any moment, and no common tie exists between them to bring them to peace and real power.

But with the British States it is different. There is no such jealousy. Though independent in their administration, they are interdependent in commerce. Wars in the past have put to the test their self-sacrificing loyalty to one another, and to the mother country. That mother country fostered them until they could run alone, so that now, while able to manage their own affairs, and to make their own life like sons in a family, they still preserve the bond of blood and still look to the King as their joint head.

So long as they do this they will be a commonwealth of federal nations distributed over every part of the globe and having a joint power such as never before existed in history.

But it is a power of which the races of the world need have no fear. It will be a power for the peace and prosperity of all. As a "nation of shopkeepers," war is not in our line, so "to do our duty to the King," as enjoined on Scouts and Guides, means that Scouters and Guiders should inculcate this idea of the British Commonwealth into the oncoming generation in our respective countries, and what is more, we should urge them in their turn to impress it on their children for the good of all.

If we look forward we can realise that our million Scouts and Guides in existence to-day represent probably another million who have passed through the training, and that they are the prospective fathers and mothers of the next generation and will be bringing up some two or three more million boys and girls within the next few years on the same line of thought and action as their own.

Thus we have a wonderful opportunity and a great responsibility. Therefore we must so shape our training with the right vision that we shall not be content merely to have smart Troops and temporary success, but we must be sure that the highest ideals have been actually inculcated, and that the boys and girls really bring a Christian spirit into their daily life and practices; that they overcome selfishness with service, and that they substitute goodwill and co-operation for the two prevalent states of narrow patriotism and jealousies.

August, 1926.

Campers

ALMOST every night for the past few weeks Scouts and Rovers in twos and threes have been camping at my home in their hikes about the country. It is a real joy to me to see them and to note their various forms of camp kit and cooking, and their ingenious gadgets which show the true backwoodsmanship that is developing more widely among them.

When one looks back twenty years there was no such thing among our boys, and now already it is becoming widespread. If we Scouters did nothing else than promote this side of Scouting it would be worth while. Look at the open air, the health, the enjoyment of life, the happy friendships, the appreciation of Nature, the knowledge of our country, the self-reliance and resourcefulness, and the many other attributes that camping brings in its train.

I have noted more than one Troop camped in the neighbourhood as sending out two boys at a time to practise hiking and camping for the night on their own, away from the standing camp.

I have lately had with me Scouters from other countries who so far had believed that nowhere could their perfectly organised camps be surpassed. It has been amusing to watch doubt creeping over them as they saw these sturdy, keen-eyed youngsters set to work to put up their little tents, to make their cooking fire with a very few dry sticks, and to rig up their various little camp brooms, pot-hangers, plate-racks, grease pits, and so, on, with nobody to direct them and ignorant of all idea of contractors doing their cooking and tentage for them.

It has been an eye-opener to our friends, and they have gone away with a new impression of the British boy and of Scouting.

Go on with it, Scouters, it is a grand development.

September, 1926.

Personal

I AM afraid I must appear to many Scouters to be very stuffy and unresponsive to their various requests, but I believe they would appreciate my difficulty and sympathise with me if they took over my postbag for a day.

As an example I jotted down this morning the subject of each letter in turn as I opened it. The list may amuse you.

1. A former Segt. in my Regiment asks me to help him get work.
2. The Grammar School at R. invites me to give an address.
3. 48th Hussars want me to preside at Dinner.
4. A correspondent claims to have originated Scouting.
5. Request to advertise the S.A.C. Dinner.
6. An author wants a "brief account" of my life.
7. County Commissioner wants me to approve a step that has been turned down by Headquarters.
8. Govt. Museum wants me to organise visits of Scouts and Guides.
9. Girl Scouts of America want my opinion on a Memorial.
10. Communist writes derogatory remarks on me.
11. Sporting Journal wants an article of 1,000 words.
12. Invitation to visit Rosemary Home.
13. Drawing of a Wolf Cub wanted for making a statuette.
14. Editor of the *Scout* wants an article on Hobbies.
15. Blind Institute wants me to fill up a Questionnaire.
16. Newspaper wants an opinion on Military Procession for Armistice Day.
17. Suggestions wanted for raising funds for South African Scouts.
18. Rover asks advice about getting work.
19. School at A. wants me to present prizes.

20. Two requests for Autographs.
21. Chief Commissioner Wales suggests ten days' motor tour of Scouts.
22. Invitation to join in forming an Arbitration League.
23. Request for four drawings for Art Gallery.
24. Article for *Scouter* wanted to-morrow.

(So I send this in.)

November, 1927.

Going Up

I HAVE lately been renewing my youthful experiences in seeing my boy pass up from his Preparatory to his Public School, and it brought back memories of half a century ago when I left my happy nest in the small school where I was a somebody to find myself a stranger and a worm under the foot of a mass of bigger boys in the big community at Charterhouse.

The Master and Dame whom I had left had been father and mother to me; the new masters were many, and in an orbit far above me, overlooking a crowd of boys, assisted by energetic but unsympathetic monitors.

Had my translation to the bigger school been optional to me I should never have gone there, or at any rate I should not have stopped there long.

Well, I can't help thinking it is rather like this, in some cases, where Wolf Cubs go up into their Scout Troop.

For very similar reasons too often they have no desire to go up, or if they go they slack off and leave the Troop.

It is a point which Scoutmasters and their Assistants and, particularly, their Patrol Leaders should study; and they should aim to make things easy for the young Tender-foot. A little extra sympathy and help to him just at first repays itself in stopping leakage, and is after all part of their job as brother Scouts. I only make this suggestion as a reminder, for I have heard of cases where it is needed.

January, 1928.

Drawing

I REMEMBER how my education in Greek was a dead washout because they tried to teach me the grammar first, with all its intricacies and uninteresting detail, before showing me anything of the beauty of the language itself. In the same way a youngster who is anxious to draw is often put off by having to go through a course of making straight lines and curves up to the required standard and drawing blocks and cubes, etc. Whereas to the young mind eager to express itself one can do better, I think, by encouraging a boy to paint a volcano in eruption, if you want to encourage his colour vision, or to draw any incident that interests him.

The inclination to draw lies there in every human mind, as one sees from the Bushman drawings in caves all over South Africa. Wonderful pictures, full of life and colour, drawn by wild creatures so near to animals that they have neither dwellings nor coherent language of their own.

But self-expression is one of the results that can be got by encouraging drawing, however crude, on the part of the youngster. With a sympathetic critic or instructor, he can then be led

on to recognise beauty in colour or in form, to realise that even in sordid surroundings there may yet be light and shadow, colour and beauty.

A further stage in his education can be brought about by getting him to practise mental photography, that is to notice the details of a scene or incident or person, and fix these in his mind, and then to go and reproduce them on paper.

This teaches observation in the highest degree. Personally I have found by practice that one can develop a certain and considerable power in this direction.

Apart from the quick observation or snapshotting details, I learned from a Japanese artist the idea of sitting down and gazing at, say, a view for a considerable time, noting colour and form, in general and in detail, and having got it fully impressed on the mind, of taking it home and developing the picture.

This I termed "time exposure."

If this art of snapshotting and time exposure is encouraged without any idea of making artists, it can have great success in developing observation, imagination, self-expression, sense of beauty and therefore a heightened form of enjoyment of life.

February, 1928.

Sunday in Camp

THERE are few who can deny that Sunday is the most viceful day of the whole week. In the Scouts we have it in our power, when in camp, to make it the most uplifting day.

If camp is within reach of a church we naturally take the boys there in the morning, or have what most of us Scouters and Scouts enjoy -- a Scouts' service on our own.

After that, not a loafing afternoon, please. That is where the harm comes in. Let us have a definite Nature hike by Patrols or otherwise, followed by a general pow-wow, a description of what they have observed, giving an opportunity for a Nature talk by the Scoutmaster to wind up.

In the evening a jolly camp-fire sing-song, winding up on the right note with a good popular hymn or two.

I heard this week from a clergyman complaining that Scouting on Sunday takes boys away from church and Sunday school.

We must avoid doing this, but provided that care is taken to give an adequate substitute, I am not sure that a boy does not imbibe personally and more directly a clearer impression of God where the wonders and beauties of Nature are pointed out to him, and eventually he gains a better conception of his duty to God and to his neighbour.

While observing Sunday we have to remember that there is always the danger that if we make it too totally unlike a weekday, the boys are apt to think that religious thought and action is for Sundays only -- a fatal error.

A bishop -- who, by the way, is also a keen Scoutmaster -- was recently asked his opinion about people playing golf on Sunday; and he said that in his church he was always glad to see men come in flannels or sports clothes, ready to go and take healthy exercise after they had attended their service. He held that God's day was not intended to be a day of idleness nor of mourning.

On the whole, a Troop camp is where the Scoutmaster gets his real chance of training the boy. He can have led up to it through the winter season by taking the different practices and activities that go to make up a successful camp; but when in camp he gets into closer touch

with his boys individually, and they with each other; they get into touch with Nature, too, in the happiest way, and there begins the real school of the out-of-doors, where all the best in the future man's character can be brought out and developed.

Responsibility and initiative in practice, two of the most important points in character and the most difficult to teach, have here their fuller opportunity.

June, 1928.

A Scout is Thrifty

I THINK we are happier people now than we were a few years ago. We are more generally getting enjoyment out of life, largely thanks to the development of transport in increased railway facilities, motor 'buses, charabancs, cars and bicycles, which have brought garden-cities and the country and the seaside within reach of town workers. And the workers are getting better pay than they used to.

Moreover, a great amount of the enjoyment consists in out-of-door activities which are healthful to body and mind.

But the fly in the ointment that I am afraid of is that with the rush of people to this enjoyment many may be frittering away their savings on their pleasures without looking forward and preparing for the pains that come later with age.

Thanks to a newspaper having stated figuratively (and rightly) that I am one of the richest men in the world, many people have taken it literally. Consequently I am saddened by a flow of appeals for monetary help.

The women who apply are to a large extent retired governesses and sick-nurses, while the men are almost invariably old soldiers or constables.

It is perfectly impossible for one to help them to any material extent. The evil is hard to cure.

But we Scouters and Guiders can do a great deal to prevent the recurrence of this unhappy condition in the next generation if we only preach and get them to practise economy and thrift.

I gave a lift the other day to a young seaman of the Royal Navy, whom I overtook on the road, and in reply to my questions he said that he had served for six years and had enjoyed the service; had travelled all over the world at Government expense; had had a taste of active service in China; and was putting by a good sum to set himself up in civil life when he left the Navy.

He confirmed of the Navy what I already knew of the Army, namely that an ordinary seaman or trooper can usually save £30 a year and upwards during the period of his service - - if he would only think of it.

So, too, in very many walks of life. If a man would only determine while yet young, and with a good earning capacity, to save every penny and not fritter away money on things that won't help him afterwards, he would be able to set himself up in life with a fair provision for old age.

Going into camp and (among three hundred Troops this year) tours to foreign countries, have happily now become a general practice with Scouts. To do this they have learned the art of earning and saving up funds for the purpose.

This is a great step and can be made of greater value still if it teaches them the art of similarly earning and saving up for their personal well-being later on.

No general rule for doing so could be laid down, but Scouters could get it practised according to local conditions and it will mean a great deal for the future of their boys.

September, 1928.

Some Ideas on Scouts' Owns

FOR an open Troop, or for Troops in camp, I think the Scouts' Own should be open to all denominations, and carried on in such manner as to offend none. There should not be any special form, but it should abound in the right spirit, and should be conducted not from any ecclesiastical point of view, but from that of the boy. Everything likely to make an artificial atmosphere should be avoided. We do not want a kind of imposed Church Parade, but a voluntary uplifting of their hearts by the boys in thanksgiving for the joys of life, and a desire on their part to seek inspiration and strength for greater love and service for others.

A Scouts' Own should have as big an effect on the boys as any service in Church, if in conducting the Scouts' Own we remember that boys are not grown men, and if we go by the pace of the youngest and most uneducated of those present. Boredom is not reverence, nor will it breed religion.

To interest the boys, the Scouts' Own must be a cheery and varied function. Short hymns (three verses are as a rule quite enough -- never more than four); understandable prayers; a good address from a man who really understands boys (a homely "talk" rather than an address), which grips the boys, and in which they may laugh or applaud as the spirit moves them, so that they take a real interest in what is said. If a man cannot make his point to keen boys in ten minutes he ought to be shot! If he has not got them keen, it would be better not to hold a Scouts' Own at all.

November, 1928.

Play-acting

I AM sure it is a good thing to do a bit of play-acting when you are young. At school I was encouraged to do a lot of it and I have thanked my stars ever since that I did so.

For one thing it taught me to learn yards of stuff by heart; also it accustomed me to speak clearly and without nervousness before a lot of people: and it gave me the novel joy of being someone else for a time.

It led one to know the beauties of Shakespeare and other authors, to feel, while expressing them, the emotions of joy and sorrow, love and sympathy.

Above all it gave one the pleasure and happiness of giving pleasure to other people at times when they needed it.

For instance, in the deadly hot season in India when cholera was about, the Colonel of my Regiment saw that something was needed to cheer the men against the nervy depression which came of seeing their pals suddenly snatched away by death. Therefore he encouraged the officers to keep getting up theatricals, concerts, and varied shows of that kind in order to get them to laugh and so to take their minds off the terror.

Someone has written: "When I become Archbishop of Canterbury I shall insist on every candidate for Holy Orders going through a course of acting, and acting a performance before the examiners prior to being ordained. In this way I should ensure his being able to grip his

congregation, to sense their thoughts, and to put such deeper meaning into his words as will move their feelings and be an inspiration to them."

The practice of acting undoubtedly helps you tremendously in the event of your having to speak in public, and this is valuable to every man. Even if you don't go into Parliament you will at any rate have to return thanks one day at your wedding breakfast.

Play-acting ought to form part of every boy's education.

So for these and many reasons I am glad to see that more and more Scouts are earning the Entertainer's Badge. More Troops are giving entertainments in the winter months and are thus not only earning satisfactory additions to their hinds, but are giving good training to their boys and, moreover, are giving pleasure and happiness to other people.

December, 1928.

Happifying

AT the risk of being a bore I would like to point out once again a direction in which we want to progress. Provided we don't aim too high or go too fast or too damn seriously, there is one job which we CAN do through our boys.

It is the great little service of *happifying*. This old English word is one to carry in our minds in training our boys -- more especially at this Christianising season of the year. If a boy only makes himself wear a cheery countenance in, the street it is something. (Don't forget he gains it from the example of his Scoutmaster.) It happifies or brightens up numbers of his passers by, among the depressing hundreds of glum faces that they otherwise meet. The glum or the bright is equally infectious. To get the boy to do this as a step to greater happifying services is a thing worth trying for. The desire to happify once instilled into the character of the boy is going to make all the difference in his relations with his fellow-men, and in his attitude to the community in after-life. It will make him the "happy, helpful citizen" whom we need, and this, after all, is the real aim of our endeavour in Scouting.

January, 1929.

"I'm Out of Patience with You"

THAT'S a good old English phrase when you come to analyse it -- seldom heard nowadays except when Mrs. Washtub is smacking her boy. But it means a lot -- and patience is a bad thing to be out of.

If you're "out of" food you starve; if you're "out of" temper you make a fool of yourself; but if you're "out of" patience you may ruin your career.

I have known lots of men who ruined their career through drink, through deceit, through wine, and through women; but I have known more who have done so through want of patience.

For instance, it is just as difficult to be patient in the army under a nagging commanding officer or non-commissioned officer as it is in civil life to keep from giving a pucker under the ear to a sneering foreman or a cynical boss. But it has got to be done if you mean to get on.

So, too, with your own neighbours, or with the fellow working under you, or your stupidest Scout. In dealing with such characters the best step to gaining patience with them is to act on the old phrase, "See the worst but look at the best." Don't expect to find any man perfect -- he is bound to have defects. Any ass can see the bad points in a man. The thing is

to discover his good points and keep these uppermost in your mind so that they gradually obliterate his bad ones. If you can make this your habit it will enable you to stand a lot from your foreman, you will be able to suffer the fools and bores more gladly among your acquaintances, and you will be able yourself unmoved to stand the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

August, 1929.

A Jam-Roll Holiday

THE Chief Guide and I, with our youngsters, took a delightful holiday In August in Jam-Roll (the Jamboree car) and "Eccles" (the caravan) with six lightweight tents.

We wandered and camped in Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset and Devon, and we realised once again that England has beauties and interests quite as good as any you can find abroad.

Those splendid open downs of Mariborough and the Mendips with their wonderful ancient British relics, like Silbury and Avebury and Stonehenge; the cliffs and crags of the Cheddar Gorge and its stalactite caves, the lovely old-world villages like Sandy Lane and Lacock; the splendid Elizabethan great houses like those at Corsham, Montacute and Cranborne, with their treasures in pictures and furniture of bygone days; cathedrals like Wells, Exeter and Salisbury; and ruins like Glastonbury with all their glory and history; then the setting of the whole, in typical English scenery in August, could not be surpassed in any land.

Of course the weather wasn't all sunshine -- it seldom is in the English August; but it was like shell fire, when you see it from indoors it looks bad, but when you are out in it you don't notice it so much.

And then when, after a few days of gale and rain squalls under leaden clouds, you get a glorious cloudless day how much more fully you appreciate the sun and all his warmth and glory -- especially when he dries your sodden dishcloths.

Indeed the glorious air of the Mendips was all the more exhilarating because it was not deadly hot.

The whole outing was perfect, and what added to my particular enjoyment of it was -- well, it is like the story of the two American ladies (N.B. told to me by an American) who motored through the country, both of them chewing gum heartily the while.

One of them, pouching her gum for a moment in her cheek, exclaimed, "This scenery is perfectly lovely!" To which the other responded: "Yes -- it sure *adds* so."

But it was the gum which mainly appealed all the time.

So while I admired and enjoyed the scenery the thing which "added so" to my enjoyment was the frequent sight of Scout or Guide Camps, and, best of all, of hefty sun-tanned Rovers in ones and twos hiking through the country.

One couldn't help feeling that if Scouting had done nothing else, it had, at any rate, encouraged the development of the out-of-door healthy man.

But these fellows were all going a bit further and evidently drinking in the beauties and wonders of our country, developing clean healthiness of mind as well as of body, together with happy comradeships.

It was very good to see. Yes -- "it sure added"!

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I am confident that you Scouters and your Scouts little realise what a great good turn you were doing to me when you gave me "Jam-Roll" and "Eccles."

September, 1930.

Music in a Beauty Parlour

I WRITE this in a nursing home. I call it a "beauty parlour" because I am in it for a tiny operation to my face, namely, to remove a little pimplet from my nose. Sounds ridiculous, but let me warn you against following in my footsteps.

Have you ever thrown your thoughts back to recall what period in your life you would like to live over again? In my case, when I do so, "memory keeps on a-takin' of me back to the days" (as Bill Hugley in *Rosebud of Stinging Nettle Farm* used to say) when I was serving in Rhodesia against the Matabele. Not exactly a Club armchair by a blazing fire was that experience! All one possessed in the shape of change of clothes, toilet apparatus, food, cooking utensils, maps, office correspondence, bedding, tentage, arms and ammunition, was carried on your person and your one horse; therefore, it was considerably limited.

For instance, my tent consisted by day of my coat poised over a thornbush; by night it was the blanket which had served as a "numnah" under the saddle of my horse's back during the day, and was therefore both wet and horse-scented (strongly) when I came to wear it at night. The nights were cold and frosty, though the days were baking hot under a blazing sun in a parched and waterless land. Yet, I LOVED IT ALL. Thereby hangs my story.

In that climate lips and hands got badly chapped, eyes bloodshot, and those bits of face which failed to secure the shade of your hat-brim -- namely nose-tips, cheek-bones, and earlobes -- got flayed into sores by the sun. The common remedy for this would have been cold cream or vaseline, but, as we did not carry many such cosmetics in our kit, we had to content ourselves with a finger-load of axle grease out of the wheel of the nearest wagon. This stuff, little distinguishable from boot-blackening in appearance and consistency, did not tend to make beauties of us, though it may have alleviated our sufferings. It was bad enough to suffer then, but it does seem hard luck that in our old age those who thought they had successfully come through the sun-burning ordeal should now find themselves liable to its after-effects !

A quite harmless-looking little spot appears on one's proboscis. Grog blossom? No, just a little spot which on closer inspection displays a tiny pinprick of a hole in the centre through which from time to time every drop of blood in your body seems anxious to make its escape.

Sometimes but a few drops ooze out: at others there is quite a little rivulet, generally when you are dressing for a dinner party or are in a hurry to catch a train.

But enough of this disgusting story, which I only quote to explain my reason for being here in this nursing home. A little operation upon my nose (akin to inserting a cork-screw into a cork) is the only way to cure the infliction. When you remember that every nerve in your body seems to have a rallying-place in the tip of your nose you can realise that the operation is not one to be sought after without an anaesthetic. So I have had all the fun of a first-class major operation for merely a tiny pimple, but it was interesting to taste the terrifying experience which this involves. Arriving at the home on the previous evening, I was shown my bed and told to undress and get into it -- at six o'clock in the evening, I trouble you! Then came a nurse who took my temperature and pulse and recorded them. Then another who wanted the name and address of my nearest of kin and, as if that wasn't bad enough, in case of urgency their telephone number! Then entered a surgical nurse

warning me that at 7.45 the next morning she would inject morphia into me, and place me on the trolley ready for removal to the operating theatre; the operation would be carried out at 8.30. Gosh! She had scarcely turned her back before in came a doctor who again examined my pulse and heart, lungs and blood-pressure. Another knock at the door, and I was quite prepared to see the undertaker with a yard measure, but to my great relief it was the night nurse with hot-water bottle and a glass of milk, to tuck me up for the night.



It was only when left to myself that I began to hear the music incidental to this beauty parlour into which I had let myself. I soon realised that, besides having a front room in a narrow but much-frequented street, the home was at the junction of a cross-street; consequently every car approaching from each of the four directions made its presence known by letting fly its hooter, siren or horn. I had never known before that such variety of these existed in our motor trade.

There were, moreover, other sounds to swell the chorus in that echoing street. There were horse-drawn vehicles with rickety wheels and clappity-clopping horses; there were motor-bikes popping along like machine-gun fire; there were steam-lorries puffeting along with a thundering rumble that shook the house.

At a moment long after midnight when I thought all was still there came the sounds of revelry by night. A party of roysterers came singing down the street, and then paused for an hour or so below my window to argue some such point as the possibilities before the Round Table Conference. On breaking up with all loyalty they made an effort to sing "God save the King," but it trailed off into "We won't go home till morning." And morning was already at hand, for the market carts came clattering by, and the milk vans with their rattling cans proclaimed the day.

Soon followed my promised itinerary -- but the blessed slumber which had been promised as the result of the morphia injection did not materialise, because by that time the orchestra outside had been supplemented by a pneumatic drill or a riveting machine on a new building hard by. Then the trolley ride through passages and up in the lift, till it ran alongside "the table" in the theatre with the doctors and nurses to welcome me.

The speeches were neither long nor interesting. "Hold this between your teeth and breathe quite easily" -- and the last thing I knew was a hand gently stroking its way over my forehead, as instinct told me, to lift an eyelid and see if I was safely off. A lovely sleep!

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Somebody is pulling my feet into a more comfortable position in the bed. Someone else had evidently hit me his hardest bang on the nose; I didn't care, I would just go on sleeping -- though my mouth was dry as a kiln -- and pop-pop-pop, the sweet music was at it again. Yes -- I was back in bed again -- very sleepy -- all was over -- just have another doze. "Burb-purp" goes a motor horn; don't care! "Oompah -- ompah -- pahp!" Eh? Yap-ping dog -- carpenter sawing -- horse cloppity-clop-clop -- two boys carrying on a conversation as they go along opposite sides of the street -- Keek-keek (motor whistle) and the whining groan of a starting car -- kop-kop of a carpenter's hammer; these are the chief soloists in an orchestra of roaring, whirling traffic noise. BANG, BANG (Pistol? No, back-fire!), and so to sleep again.

But all things come to an end. Human nature can stand a good deal. The good-natured negro who lay on his back in the sun and allowed flies of every description to come and walk about on his tummy was at last aroused out of his complacency by an exceedingly discourteous wasp who came along, landed on him, and without any provocation stung him. The negro thus roused sang out -- "That lets you out! Get along the whole lot of you. I'll have nothing more to do with you." And he got up and went about his business.

Well, my lethargic enjoyment (?) of *my* concert came also to an abrupt end. I thought I had heard about every kind of noise that could arise in one street when suddenly there blared out with a crash the sound of a loud piano-organ, with a drum and tambour accompaniment, playing jazz-music for a raucous-voiced vocalist. This put the lid on. I sprang up and rang for the nurse to put a stop to the whole concert; and from that moment I started into life again.

Though I had only a limited field of view owing to the bandages over my face I took up my pen and paper with the intention of writing my Outlook. But I have already used a lot of space in telling you all this, so I can only add this moral to it. Use safety first, and when in the tropics give your nose a "sheltered occupation" if you can. And, if you MUST go into a nursing home, Be Prepared for terrifying preparations but blessed results. Also be content, if not insistent, to take a back room in a cul-de-sac.

December, 1930.
