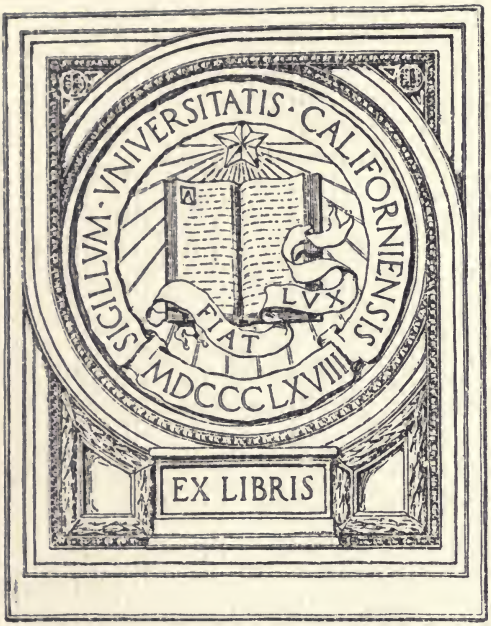
The Bairnsfather Case


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

The Bairnsfather Case

A Cross Marks the Spot where the Body was Found

The Bairnsfather Case

As Tried Before Mr. Justice Busby

Defence by

Bruce Bairnsfather

Prosecution by

W. A. Mutch

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1920

Printed in the United States of America

Dedicated

TO

CEAL

WHO KNOWS THAT IT WASN'T ALL LUCK

PREFACE

It was very soon after the appearance of *Fragments* that the idea of this book was conceived.

Letters asking all sorts of questions began to arrive in such numbers that it became utterly impossible to deal with all enquiries individually and conscientiously.

I, therefore, suggested to Captain Bairnsfather that since there was such a real demand of this sort it ought to be met in some definite way. I was able to persuade him that this should be done, and was still more happy in securing his promise to illustrate the book with original drawings, and to contribute alternate chapters dealing in his own inimitable way with the various subjects demanding exposition.

Hence, *The Bairnsfather Case*, in which I have tried to explain faithfully and analytically how Bairnsfather started as an artist, the enormous obstacles he overcame before he achieved success, and what personal ele-

ments in himself and in his work seem to have contributed most towards making him known throughout the world.

It is my special hope that the young artist will, in these pages, find some guidance and encouragement.

I am greatly indebted to Mr. F. C. Wellstood, M.A., for the account of the historical associations of Waldridge.

WM. A. MUTCH.

LONDON, 3–8–20.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Bairnsfather Case

The Bairnsfather Case

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A WORD TO THE JUDGE IN WHICH I PLEAD FOR MERCY

My Lord, Gentlemen of the Jury:—

In the year 1887 the birth rate in India went up by one—that was me.

The last Himalayan glacial age was drawing to an apex when I was evolved, in other words, I was *Homo Damnuisensis* or Sub-Man.[1]

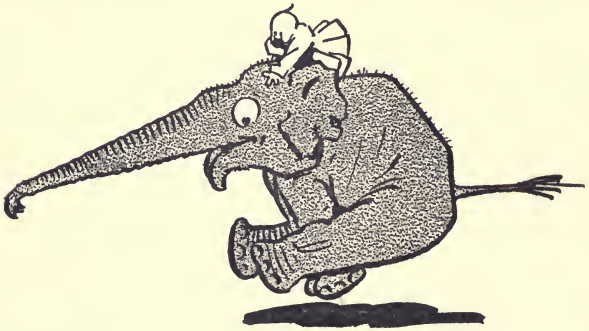
Anyway, there I was, born at an altitude of umpteen thousand feet in the Himalayas.

I think my mother hid me from my father for some time, but my presence leaked out later, and they gave me a name to put at the bottom of my drawings.

[1] "Pub Man," according to some. See *Man the Unwanted Monster*, 6/—.

My father is Scotch on the Scotch side, and my mother is English on the English side, so I am Esperanto. Our Ancestral home is somewhere on the Tweed, so that we can back our trouble both ways.

I remember little of my life in the Himalayas. I can only dimly picture my father leaving our



cavern in search of food; I can scarcely vision my mother beating off the monkeys as they swarmed about me. In fact I must let this nebulous portion of my career pass until I reach those sections of the Dawn, which I can remember. My later memories of India are very strong. I can recall a host of incidents during my life with my parents in various parts of the country, all filled with the sleepy, romantic

and mystic charm of India. Even now, the smell of a bonfire on a summer's evening carries me away with ease to some hot city on the plains of India, bathed in that unique atmosphere which stands for India and nothing else.

In due course I was brought home to England. All white children are brought home at a certain time—if not, the sun affects them—I think possibly I was brought home a bit late, as I followed it up by being nothing but one big nuisance at school.

For many years I was a Skeleton in our family cupboard.

As this disastrous period was the age during which my subsequent profession started to show signs of origin, I will describe what happened. Before I go further, however, I want to state that Mr. Mutch is conducting the case for the prosecution. I am pleading Guilty to this first phase in my drawing career, and therefore (at enormous expense) have persuaded Mr. Mutch to keep his indictment for succeeding chapters, leaving me to plunge boldly and truthfully into the wild disorder of my life at School, in order to show what pain I

caused my parents, how I could scarcely ever sit down in comfort, and how drawing pictures became at once the cause of my father's grey hairs, and my subsequent fortune. (In pleading for clemency, I may say now that for quite a time I have been trying to restore those grey hairs, but of that later.)

My father comes from a Martial family. (The first of the line was on Hengest and Horsa's staff, or something like that.) Old albums have shown me that his father, grandfather, uncles, and cousins were all warriors. My mother, also, has an assortment of Mail-fisted relatives in her family, the result being that I was "destined for a military career."

My Lord, pardon my waking you.

I was sent to an Army College. A school dedicated entirely to manufacturing Army and Naval officers. For this purpose they gave one an entirely Service education, Latin, Chemistry, and Roman history.

There is nothing like chemistry for an Army officer. Think of the enormous advantage of being able to say over to yourself in the middle of a battle, $Zn + H_2S O_4 = ZnSO_4 + H_2$

You can't think what a comfort it is.

Or say the dreadnoughts are all in line, and the rival fleet is putting twelve-inch umbrella stands through the port jib, or the conning tower, think! just think for a moment, the aid you get in this hour of dire need, by being able to mutter,

$MnO_2 + 4HCl = MnCl_2 + 2H_2O + Cl_2$

It's incalculable!

Well anyway I was to get an Army education. I got it. I was sent to Westward Ho!—a school which has been immortalized by an immortal—Rudyard Kipling. It was here that I first began to draw, and it was here that I caught the insatiable desire to go on drawing. A wild and woolly life it was. Full of "Ups" and "Downs." Down at the bottom of the class mostly and being turned up afterwards. I struggled in the Latin tongue with the dull successes of Cæsar. I writhed with unique powders and smells in the laboratories. I sucked sweets in the French class and attended morning prayers in the

gymnasium with the fervour which only a criminal can assume. My total lack of interest in Chemistry, Latin, Algebra, and Arithmetic, etc., led me, ere long, to search for a means of brightening my education. The way was clear. My school books became a mass of scribbles. Cæsar had to stagger, with his dull wanderings, through a mass of rude and abusive illustrations. The margins of all my books became thick with caricature. I fully realized the doom I was pronouncing on my ever passing an examination. I wallowed in degraded and hidden art of an immature kind.

It was a hard school, full of tradition and corporal punishment. (Sensation in court.)

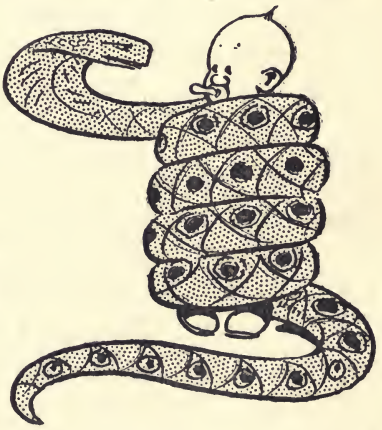
I got quite used to my weekly thrashings and grew to looking forward to the "Star" thrashing on Saturdays for being thrashed during the week. I found my marginal scribbles helped and amused my friends. They somehow lulled them off from worrying about the properties of Hydrochloric acid and the priggish adventures of Hannibal. They dulled them to the importance of the Reformation and the Wars of the Roses. In fact, from a human point

of view (not parental) I was a great success. I won nearly all the drawing prizes, and as a matter of fact, my school books were removed by sundry masters as scraps of amusement in their own tortured lives. (Loud and prolonged groans.)

Well, time went on, so did the drawings. With a large geography book open vertically before me, I drew sketches behind, in my own books, and everybody else's.

Needless to say, I failed ultimately in the army examination.

However, by means of an Army Crammer, and the pathetic sight which my parents displayed, I galvanized myself into the necessary intelligence to pass the second time, and so was launched into a career which "bored me to tears" as they say, but which



was one day to stand me in good stead, when the Great War came along.

As I said before, the sun is not good for Anglo-Indian children, after a certain age. I fear that up to this time my father was convinced that the sun had been at me.

With these words I will now leave the Prosecuting Counsel, Mr. Mutch, to unfold the painful story.

My Lord, I trust I am not keeping you up.

No! Not the postman.
A half Godfather of
mine on the Irish side.
In the Mucpuddle Volunteers
(Family Album)

CHAPTER II

A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

In any true estimate of the genius of Bruce Bairnsfather the Great War occupies a place equal to one per cent.

If every other sentence I write be forgotten and that be remembered, I shall have done the Bairnsfather case a great service and contributed something towards dispelling the many amazing mythologies which have crowded round the name of "the man who made the Empire laugh."

It is one of the penalties of genius that the public look at the fruit—never at the tree.

They do not know of the tending and training which is carried on year in year out before any ghost or glimmer of fruit appears.

The ceaseless days of toil, forethought, and sacrifice are apt to be passed over. The apparently easy victory is too often all that catches the eye.

The development of genius is like the produc-

tion of a play. There is endless endeavour and tear and wear behind that rose-coloured set that looks so beautiful across the footlights.

Don't you believe it easy! The easier it looks, be sure there is all the more sweat at the back of it.

I intend to take you behind the Bairnsfather scenes, and I can say here and now that if the Allies had gone into the Great War with but one tenth of the laboriously acquired equipment for victory that Bruce Bairnsfather took to France in 1914, the whole business of War would have been finished in as many months as it actually occupied years.

Now, get me right once and for all, neither Old Bill nor "Old Bill's Pa" were ever heart and soul in war for war's sake.

It was their joint misfortune that they descended upon the world like a burst of sunshine when things were pretty clouded; and in order

to clear my feet for more important things I propose to examine that phenomenon—the *début* of Bairnsfather and Old Bill right here and now.

At the blackest moment of the Great War, when Britain was really down-hearted about the issue, there appeared in the English *Bystander* a picture over the title, "Where did that one go to?" This picture was followed by another from the same unknown artist, and the title of the second picture was "They've evidently seen me." Soon afterwards a third picture, "We are staying at a farm" made the British public realize that a new star had arisen in the firmament of art.

People sat up and took notice.

This phenomenon was simply incredible.

The story of the Old Contemptibles and the story of the First Hundred Thousand have been told throughout the world. It is well known that whatever else there was in France on the Allied side, there was grit, but this sort of thing was unbelievable.

Day by day, for weeks and months, previously official reports had grown more terse and despairing.

That promised Kaiser banquet at Buckingham Palace was a plain possibility.

Worse—the Allied Armies in France were living through a terrible ordeal, surrounded by mud and gas and machine guns and all the horrible mechanism employed in the modern wholesale slaughter business.

True, there were leader-writers who stayed at home and talked about the invincibility of the Allied cause, and raked out of the past such threadbare platitudes as "Right is Might" and "Justice must Triumph." But all grandiloquence had long since left the front lines, although a goodly remnant might have been cherished by Staffs well to the rear.

But "Up there" sitting in the mud on the edge of No Man's Land it was a hell such as Sherman never dreamt of.

And out of this massacre, from among the cannon fodder itself, came an artist who made the Empire laugh—who restored to the whole of the Allied people the gift of laughter which for months they had forgotten, who made even the neutral nations realize the inner meaning of the War, and who found appreciation even

in the German army. It is a remarkable fact, as showing the universality of genius, that Bairnsfather pictures were found pinned up in places of honour in German dugouts, and I have seen with my own eyes letters of appreciation of *Fragments from France* written by an officer of the Uhlans.

But the point I wish to make here is the highly ironical manner of the emergence of Bairnsfather.

The natural order of things was that the people in Britain, isolated and protected from the horrors of War by a great Navy, should have been sending laughter across the Channel to France in shiploads.

Genius upset all that.

The laugh came from the other side, and people in London, who for months had acted as wholesale gloom distributors, left off their specialty salesmanship of long faces and exclaimed, "Isn't it amazing? How does he do it? He has got the smell of the mud in his nostrils, but who is he, anyway, this Bairnsfather? Anyhow, he can't keep it up."

But the stream of *Fragments from France*, so

modestly begun, swelled into a great river, and Bruce Bairnsfather, the artist, like a perfectly acting machine has been hitting on all six cylinders ever since.

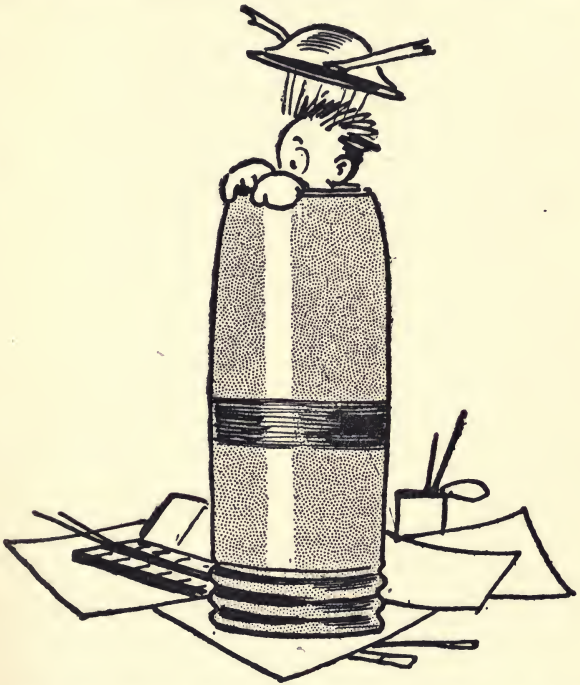
And presently "this Bairnsfather" became a real asset in winning the War, and suffered the crowning calamity of being photographed for the press. And people looked at the photograph and said, "Now that is just what I thought he looked like. Doesn't he smile beautifully. Isn't he handsome! He must be six feet if he is an inch."

And as usual they were all wrong, because your photograph is like the men of whom David spoke in his hurry.

"The man who made the Empire laugh" is not a Douglas Fairbanks. He is not a red-faced giant laughing a care-free way through life. He thinks too deeply to live on the surface of things.

His eyes are the most arresting thing about him. They dance and sparkle. You realize at once that they see all that there is to see in life, and see it square. They are eyes that see because they are the windows of a heart that

feels. They can appreciate tragedy as well as comedy. It is worth while knowing that there is a serious side of his nature because it was in



a fit of profound depression that the first *Fragment from France* was conceived.

Although Bairnsfather comes from a military stock, he is profoundly anti-militarist. His

artistic temperament in days of peace chafed at the imprisonment of barrack life. In days of War his whole being revolted against the horrors of modern battle. To him the whole business was a nauseating nightmare. He hated war as much as he loved the men who were its victims. That was why he never ceased to wonder at the unconscious heroism of the soldier.

To illustrate his attitude to war, I may quote two incidents which have clung to his memory and made a profound impression upon him. The first happened in the winter of 1914 in a small, shell-torn village on the Flanders Front.

Bairnsfather was walking alone through this village in the dusk. The wind was moaning through the broken rafters of the houses. The rain was falling without cease. He was thinking at the moment of the warm billet to which he was returning, and consoling himself with the thought that after all even in War there were material comforts to atone for hardships. Two officers, their caps pulled down to shelter their faces from the rain, their bodies bent against the wind, passed him on the street, and just as he realized that these two men were the Colonel

and the Adjutant of his battalion, his ears caught the Adjutant saying to the Colonel in a matter of fact voice, "That quicklime has not arrived yet, Sir."

The dream of warm billets was by that one sentence swept away in a flash to be replaced by the nightmare of No Man's Land strewn with these shapeless, broken bodies, whose last indignity it was to make life impossible for those who survived. The grim jests of death scattered broadcast on the battlefield are not congenial food for human mirth. Bairnsfather, with a soul which probes deep beneath the surface of emotion, was in point of fact overwhelmed by the mechanical horror of war.

His *Fragments from France* are not in the least inconsistent with this innermost feeling. It is a proud Saxon quality which inspires us to cloak our deepest sorrow with our lightest words. Hence we find in all English-speaking peoples that peculiar macabre brand of humour in which the corpse and the skeleton are held up as the Aunt Sallies of our jest.

The time-honoured figure of cheap fiction—the clown who gambols in the Circus while death

waits in his home—is not an ill metaphor to explain the Bairnsfather psychology at this period, for it was in the midst of a daily cataclysm of ideals and dreams that the first *Fragments from France* were born.

It was not from a contemplation of war, but out of reflection on the unconcern of the soldier plunged within its vortex, that Bairnsfather found his inspiration.

This brings me to the second incident, or rather a multiplicity of incidents I want to emphasize.

He used to watch the British soldier in the front line while the Germans were conducting a *Strafe* and he used to wonder at the attitude of the men who followed the progress of a shell overhead with the utmost indifference and returned unmoved to their task of the moment. They would mark the trajectory of a shell without even a tithe of the wonder with which we still regard the flight of an aeroplane. Their frame of mind was identical with that of a man looking up from a plough to watch the passing of an express train—an utterly everyday incident which left not a trace of thought behind.

This attitude he illustrated in a short play, *The Johnson 'Ole*, where two soldiers in the

line are shown singing that favourite army lyric:

"'Tain't the bird in the gilded cage
Wot 'as the sweetest notes—"

when the music is interrupted by the whizz, whine, and crash of a shell. The soldiers pay not the slightest regard to the interruption. They continue:

"And it ain't the girl with the pretty face
Wot loves 'er 'usband most."

Well, now that I have done something to dispel the preconceived idea of Captain Bairnsfather as a laughing giant, you will say, "Yes, but he did make us laugh! How did he do it?"

That brings us down to brass tacks, because this is exactly the question I have put to myself; and before I finish this Prosecution I hope the question will be answered once and for all.

I shall ask you to return a verdict that deliberately, with malice aforethought, he made

himself an artist—and what is worse, a humorous artist.

First and foremost let me say that success is the outcome of a curious compound of elements.

I should say that of these elements ninety-nine per cent. are self-contained and one per cent. are external.

The self-contained elements are broadly divisible into two sections—gift and grit.

You know perfectly well there is material from which silk purses cannot be made.

Well, you cannot take any man and make him a genius. The gift must be there first, and in this respect Bairnsfather was amazingly lucky in his choice of parents. His father, Major Bairnsfather, comes from a fine old Scottish house with proud traditions, and his mother is a sample of the most splendid type of English gentlewoman.

Bairnsfather himself has acknowledged his debt to his parents over and over again, as in the dedication of *From Mud to Mufti—To My Mascot Mother.*

Certainly we can see in Bairnsfather's parents

the origin of his gift, but the gift would have been useless without the grit.

Through the whole of his life we see grit at work.

From his school days he resolved to be an artist and through adversity sufficient to daunt a hundred men he kept the light of endeavour aflame. All through the years of ordeal he kept the ideal before him. The War gave him his opportunity as it gave an opportunity to every other artist with pen or pencil. Witness the aroma of War around the names of Rupert Brooke, Ian Hay, Boyd Cable, and W. R. Nevinson.

Critics have talked of Bairnsfather as if he had cornered the War. The War was simply the one big thing of the day; but Captain Bairnsfather is not a product of the War and it is one of the misfortunes of the popular conception of his work that it was created by the War. I shall endeavour to show that the War itself has occupied in Bairnsfather's life a very small place—a one per cent. place—as far as his achievement is concerned.

Before the War he spent fourteen years of

ceaseless effort in order to make himself an artist. In doing so he suffered all sorts of hardships before the War was dreamed of, and since the War has ended he has accomplished all sorts of achievements.

With regard to the future I do not need to rely on speculation when I say that it will not be long before he shows the world that he can interpret the feelings of humanity in peace as brilliantly as in war.

In short, the same thing applies to Bairnsfather as to his famous character Old Bill. Old Bill never was a soldier. He put on the khaki and went into battle because the German beast had to be crushed, but all the time he was a civilian in uniform.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the fact of the years of preparation which Bairnsfather spent before the coming of Armageddon. The war in Bairnsfather's life was simply the tide in his affairs which taken at the flood led on to fortune. Genius is not necessarily lucky in meeting such a tide. The tide is not as manna sent from heaven. It is not once, but several times all around us. It is there for any man to

profit by, but only genius has the gift to see it.

Therefore, in the Prosecution I make, there will be merely a one per cent. element of War, because the ninety-nine per cent. element of peace, besides being many times more interesting, is many times more vital to any accurate estimation of the genius of Bruce Bairnsfather.

SUCCESS

CHAPTER II

ANOTHER WORD TO THE JUDGE AND A THICK EAR TO THE COUNSEL

BEFORE this book gets any further I feel sure everyone wants to know exactly *how* I do things.

I know myself I am always bursting to know how other people do things.

If I can get the sight of a "close up" photo of how some other writer or artist works, I'm on it like a gadfly.

So many people have asked how I work, that I know I'm right in explaining this dread secret.

I also have another motive for making this explanation.

As this book goes on, Prosecuting Counsel (curse him) is going to give all my tricks away.

There can be only one verdict by the end of the book, "Guilty of loitering, with intent to commit jokes," so I am going to get in early on the readers, and explain my "Modus

Operandi" (a bit of Latin gives a legal touch to the explanation).

On a certain occasion long ago, in my nebulous artistic period, I somehow or other found myself being shown into Sir Thomas Lipton's office.

I found myself inside trying to sell him an advertisement for Tea. (I can feel the bruises now.) But amongst the things that struck me as I left that office was this: over his desk was a large card on which was written, "There's no fun like work."

It sounds foolish to most of us.

Eight hours in a rubber factory can't compare with eight hours on the river at Marlow, to my mind.

But somehow, underlying that irritating phrase over Sir Thomas's desk, there is a curious truth.

I've worked it out, and have so organized my day's work and my methods, that when I get an office I'm going to have a notice over my desk which will read, "Don't talk, play to me."

I have a studio in a wonderful garden where the sun shines down for ever, and there are no restricted hours.

Across the fields I can see a brewery working overtime. It is the brewery that supplies me with inspiration.

Across some more fields I see a Bank, also working overtime. It is the Bank I get all the money I want from.

It is all nature's garden in which I work.

I rise at eleven and find my breakfast set out in a quiet arbour overhung with luscious flowers.

At twelve I read the murders in my daily newspapers, and smoke a pipe, lulled into a delirium of tranquillity by the droning of the machinery at the brewery, and the murmuring rumble of the barrels as they are lowered into my cellar.

An oriental comes at one o'clock, and leads me to a rose marble cabinet, where he softly and silently massages me to give me ideas.

I then swim in a scented pool at the foot of the lily walk in my garden.

All the while the sun is shining, the brewery is brewing, the Bank is banking, and I am working.

And so the days pass in tranquil joy, and each night I open my mail and extract the cheques from various Editors, with a pair of ivory paper tongs.

I read all their letters as I sit on the veranda late at night under the stars. Their letters help me in my work, they generally read like this:

MY VERY DEAR SIR,

We are too overcome with reverence and delight at your last picture to say more than to positively refuse to pay you the mere £100 (ONE HUNDRED POUNDS) you ask for it. My firm wish me to tell you that they would be only too proud to have merely a rough scribbled idea from you, and insist on paying you £200 (TWO HUNDRED POUNDS) each for them.

We have already placed £1000 (**ONE THOUSAND POUNDS**) to your credit at the Bank in the hopes of future work.

Yours very sincerely,

THE EDITOR.

I understand what Sir Thomas means, but only a short while ago I didn't. I used to rise early after a night spent in thinking. I would fight my moods and temperament at breakfast, and spend the next six hours in silent absorption and concentrated effort. My hours of rest were crowded with the aftermath of mental struggles, and with future themes. I staggered with all the ills that an artist is heir to.

That method is quite wrong, yet in it there is a great joy—to my mind the greatest joy in the world—the joy of achievement: a joy which can make your playtime hours sparkle, and that's why I know that perhaps there is "no fun like work."

I think I shall go back to that method.

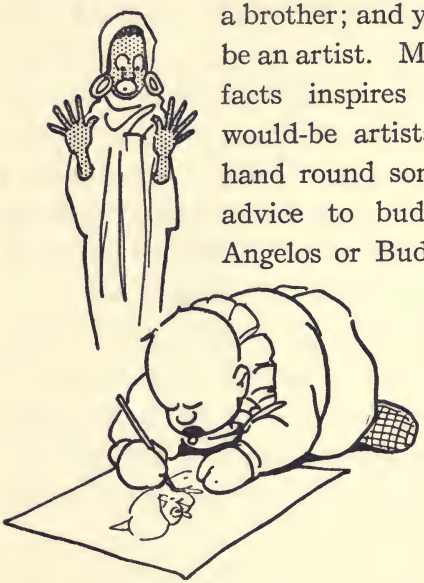
It is not all method and mode of work, though that is necessary.

An overwhelming desire must be in you to be an artist.

There are a terrible lot of nasty things to overcome, but if you have got the complaint from birth, nothing will be *too* nasty. Nearly every family suffers from "an artist."

I know I'm right, for I, too, come from a

family. I have a father and a mother, also a brother; and yet I happen to be an artist. Musing on these facts inspires me to help would-be artists. I want to hand round some well-meant advice to budding Michael Angelos or Bud Fishers, so I am writing from my own personal experience.



I was born with the complaint. My mother little knew the trouble she had brought into the world. I preferred pencils to rattles even as far back as those nebulous days when I crawled about on all fours in our Himalayan home. I mention this fact, because I don't think any one can survive the devastating disappointments, and maintain the kinetic energy needed for success, unless he arrived on the globe almost holding a B B pencil in his hand.

You don't notice what a pain you are to your family, till your father reels financially and mentally under your "Reports" from school, due to having done nothing all the term except illustrate your Homer or Pendlebury's Arithmetic. Then you begin to realize that to follow "Art" is going to be a sticky business. This fact strikes you more forcibly, later, when *you* have been struck pretty forcibly on the part you fold at, by the Headmaster, for having drawn quite a promising caricature of him.

Five or six years of disappointment and pain pass over your rapidly-aging father's head. Your mother sticks to you, and nurses you through all those years with a love that a mother always has for the mentally deficient member of her brood. Then comes the great time when you must choose your "profession." Your father thinks of everything but "Art." (He's heard about "Art" adversely from someone.) Professions such as Civil Engineering, Insurance, and those safe lines, Army, Navy, Bar, and Church are flung at your Artistic Soul as "Suitable." That wretched temperament of yours has to weather this. It will take you

another five years to have tried all the lot and to have been discharged from each on the grounds of being too Artistic—and consequently a failure.

Your relatives now come into full play. They have nothing whatever to do with the

case. They give you nothing, they risk nothing, but have an abnormal desire to write profusely to your father or mother, incorporating in their gratuitous letters, such phrases as "It's a pity he doesn't *do* something."

You stagger on. In the wrong job which

has at least become a necessity, you endeavour to earn a living. In your spare time you must persist with relentless intensity on your hidden vice—"Art." You will be alluded to by the relatives aforesaid during this period as "Oh, you know he draws; it's such a pity." You mustn't mind that, but carry on. Now or never comes your chance. You suddenly will get a picture accepted: a design for a luggage label, let us say. This is the signal for seeing "R.A." after your name within six months. You must now burst all bonds and ties and go for it hard. At this juncture in your life it is impossible to formulate any rules or books of help—it all depends on incurable tenacity, relentless ambition, and some firm being weak enough to accept your first efforts, against their better judgment.

After the sale of your first picture there is generally a sickening and almost stifling pause, during which you become familiar with a little bit of prose beloved of all journals—"The editor regrets he is unable to accept your etc., etc."

You are now at such a nebulous period in your career, that it is impossible for me to

hand out any advice just here; all I can do is to have five stars set in the page. Here they are.

* * * * *

You emerge to success, your pictures are bought with almost tiresome regularity. Your friends increase in proportion to the rise of your income. You have no idea of the number of relatives you possess until this moment arrives. Each one of them "knew you'd be a success some day." With your enormous fortune you can buy your parents out of the nursing home.

CHAPTER IV

AT THE FOOT OF THE LADDER

ADVENTURE is more attractive than achievement. It is more interesting to read how a man made a million than to learn that he has it.

In other words, the How rather than the What is the thing that thrills because, after all, the How is the life and the What is merely the Q. E. D. with which Euclid used to sign his propositions.

I find, therefore, in the earlier part of Bairnsfather's life, when he was striving, much greater interest than in the later years, when he had attained.

From the very outset of his conscious artistic efforts he aspired to the heights.

His first task, at the age of fourteen, was the illustration of what unfortunately for youth is a universal classic.

Certainly the invitation was not a pressing one. There were, in fact, potent arguments against accepting it. The fees were unattrac-

tive in that, instead of being paid for the job, a price was set upon the head of the artist.

Yet, it is well worth while noting that the first consistent artistic effort of Bruce Bairnsfather was the illustration of the First Book of Cæsar.

This, at Westward Ho! as he has already indicated in an earlier chapter, gained him intermittent doses of corporal punishment administered with the true thoroughness of the English Public School in matters of this kind, in addition to the confiscation of all such illustrated editions.

Westward Ho! was in Bairnsfather's day, whatever it may be now, a typical English educational institution, owing undying allegiance to hidebound tradition. It is the fashion to lavish unlimited and even unthinking praise on the English Public School on every possible occasion. The playing fields of Eton are ranked with the slopes of Parnassus.

Perhaps in the end both are equally useful.

English Public School education, and English University Education as well, far too often are merely luxuries, and even discounting this fault,

the English system of higher education invariably suffers from an iron rigidity.

For the most part, it goes on the assumption that its victims are to be officers in the Army or Navy, high Officials in the Diplomatic or Civil Service, or merely gentlemen of leisure.

In some cases, there is no distinction between any of these destinies.

Now Westward Ho! in the Bairnsfather days was given up entirely to the preparation of students for the Army and Navy entrance examinations, and an artist was as welcome in this atmosphere as Mr. Pussyfoot Johnson in a Scotch distillery.

In Bairnsfather's case prodigious efforts were for a time made to "turn him into the right lines," because your English Form Master is nothing if not loyal to an ideal.

Therefore, for a considerable period of his school life Bairnsfather's lot, like that of the Gilbert-Sullivan policeman, was not a happy one.

On his part he was determined to draw, and his masters, on their part, were determined that he should not.

It is a good thing for the world's supply of wit and genius that this—the first great war in which Bairnsfather engaged—ended in the complete confusion of his enemies, for the outcome of the whole affair was that this utterly incorrigible artist was shoved away into a corner and left to work out his own destruction.

For five years Bairnsfather maintained a guerilla warfare with his masters at Westward Ho! and in the end, in 1904, they were triumphantly able to say, "I told you so," when he was ploughed for the Army Entrance Examination.

The subsequent year of torture was spent under an Army Crammer who stuffed him so full of Greek and Algebra that in spite of himself he passed the Army Examination at the second time of asking, and was, therefore, eligible to go at once as a recruit to an army depot, to the

delight of his teachers and parents, but much to his own disgust.

As a result of this unwilling triumph we next find him attached to the Warwickshire Special Reserve for a two months' period of training on the barrack square. This completed, he transferred to the First Cheshires, his father's old regiment, where he was under the command of Colonel Grove, who had gone to India with Major Bairnsfather many years before.

With the Cheshires he was stationed first at Lichfield and then at Aldershot. In both places he speedily became known as an artist with a sense of humour, and samples of his caricatures were in great demand as decorations for officers' quarters.

The final stage in his career as a professional soldier was a return to the Warwickshire Regiment quartered at Warwick.

It is curious to note how much of the earlier Bairnsfather destiny is centred round this historic and supremely beautiful heart of England. English history makes a great appeal to him, not merely because it is English, but because it is history. There is not a hill or

dale in Warwickshire he has not tramped on foot and peopled out of his imaginings with all the great men whose ghosts still haunt the land. The home which out of the earliest part of his fortune he bought for his father and mother is at Stratford-on-Avon, and although his work compels him to live in London he seldom absents himself long from the inspiration of the country. This is essential to his work, and Stratford is so far from London that he has been prompted to purchase a beautiful old Cromwellian residence called Waldridge in the heart of Buckinghamshire. But Waldridge opens up such a vast subject that I must leave it to a later chapter, in which I shall endeavour to show how this residence sums up the quality of Bairnsfather's gifts, and how it is in a measure a prophecy of what we may yet expect from his brush and pen.

We shall return, therefore, to the barrack square at Warwick where we left Bairnsfather occupying his time with military exercises to the least possible extent, and as far as might be by drawing libellous cartoons of his fellow officers.

It was, however, not very long before this pleasant exercise ceased to satisfy his craving to draw pictures. Even the glory of a lieutenancy failed to overshadow the call of art. Life in barracks he found increasingly irksome, and he was soon begging his parents to give their consent to his leaving the army in order to devote himself entirely to an artistic career.

The result of this unrest was that he persuaded his father to make a special journey to London in order to investigate what fortune might there await an artist.

Major Bairnsfather saw a friend of his own, a distinguished member of the British Royal Academy, who said that if his son was determined to leave the Army he ought to sell something to eat.

It was because of this obvious encouragement that in 1907 Bairnsfather resigned his commission and took up art as a serious profession. And very serious indeed it turned out to be!

He was unalterably resolved to be an artist, and at this time he judged that the best way was to devote his whole energies to a course of instruction in art technique which would bring his work up to a salable standard of merit.

This phase in Bairnsfather's life is full of interest to youth resolved to set out upon the thorny path which in this case was to endure for seven years before the least glimmering of success was to make its appearance.

In my association with *Fragments* I am frequently consulted by young artists who send samples of their work and obviously hope they will get a letter in return advising them to throw up everything for art. In no case as yet have I been able to give such advice. The way of the artist is as hard as the way of the sinner.

The world is crowded with men of great experience who can draw just what its magazines want. To attempt to be of their company is more difficult than getting past a pugnacious

tram conductor displaying his "Full Up" signal. It is taking a hundred to one chance for a youth of even the greatest merit to pit himself against the tried and expert craftsmen in the world of magazine art.

Simple human charity demands a clear statement of that caution. It is set down here deliberately because I am about to illustrate and prove it from Bairnsfather's own experience.

This I shall do not to discourage youth. Rather the reverse. I shall show how in Bairnsfather's case he broke inside the charmed circle, and what is more important, I shall show that he succeeded in doing so not while he was receiving support from his parents, but after he was entirely on his own.

Before this lonely furrow period he went to London where he studied under Van Havermat, an instructor at the time in the Academy known as John Hassall's School of Art.

Bairnsfather now for the first time found himself in an entirely congenial atmosphere. There was no Form Master to recall his attention to the days of Julius Cæsar. There were no orders of the day inviting his presence on the

parade ground. It was art all the time—all day and all night if he cared. It was Elysium. He worked without cease and presently began counting the weeks and days to elapse before he would fare forth armed for the conquest of the world of art—a pretty picture, but not so near as he dreamt it.

Still by his ability and industry he soon became Van Havermat's favourite pupil and would remain at night long after less enthusiastic students had gone, in order to pursue his ambition. There was no lack of enthusiasm or hard work on his part. If sheer slogging would have won success in the time it would assuredly have been his.

Neither did he neglect in the midst of study of technique that equally important study of human nature which since has illumined all his work.

He haunted the music halls of west London. Shepherd's Bush Empire and Hammersmith Palace for many months saw him a regular patron, watching, thinking, and pondering over successes and failures on the stage; trying to make out why one thing got across the foot-

lights and another did not, always studying the audiences from the boxes to the gallery.

Even at this time Bairnsfather spent many of his waking hours worrying out the ways of human psychology and not so much having feelings *about* people as feeling *with* them. That is the secret of the soundness and steadiness and sanity of his outlook. He is not an analyst of humanity in the scientific sense of the word. Rather I should sum up his outlook in the most beautiful adjective in the English language—compassionate.

All this mixing with people has played a great part in the development of Bairnsfather's great gift of sympathy which is the brother to understanding.

At the time he was not conscious of it.

He was in a deuce of a hurry to get that bit of training over and he was the happiest man in London when the end came and he asked Van Havermat what sort of a chance he had at making a living with the brush.

He was not so happy when Van Havermat replied, "You ought to be able to make £700 a year, but on the other hand you might make

nothing." Whereupon his optimistic teacher proceeded to emphasize the nothing much more heartily than the £700 with the result that Bairnsfather left the Art School with about the same cheerful frame of mind as that in which a condemned man eats his last breakfast.

Nevertheless, Van Havermat turned out to be an accurate prophet. It was not long before Bairnsfather discovered that his art school teaching was no open sesame to that charmed circle. He tried again and again to get his work and his name into print.

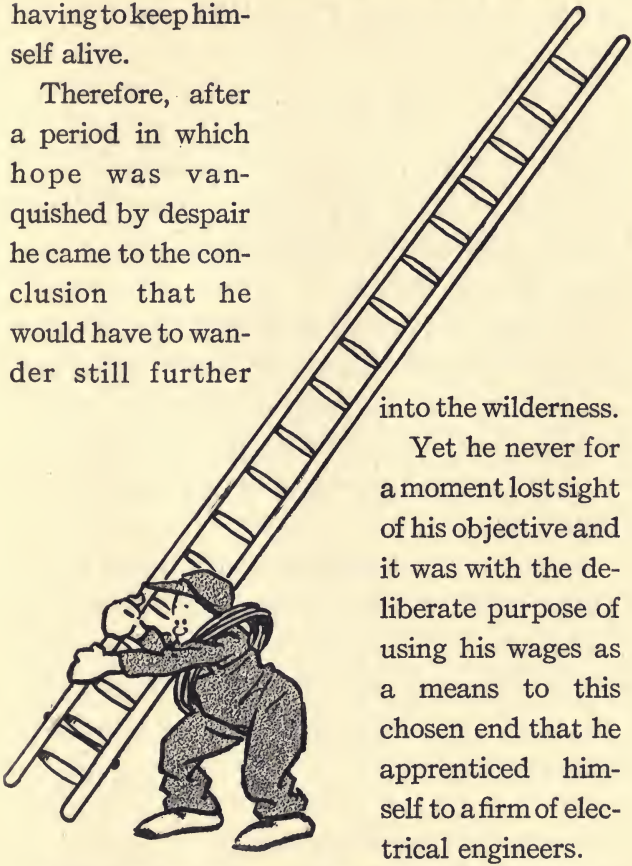
Hopeless!

There was not even bread and cheese, let alone biscuits and jam, to be made out of drawing pictures. He drew until he was sick of the sight of Bristol Boards and ink. He spent his little remaining allowance on stamps for the postage—and invariable return with editorial regrets—of his drawings.

He had got his own way. He had had his training. He had realized his ambition to approach the gates of art to find them rigidly closed against him. He was not required.

And now he was faced with the prospect of having to keep himself alive.

Therefore, after a period in which hope was vanquished by despair he came to the conclusion that he would have to wander still further into the wilderness.



Yet he never for a moment lost sight of his objective and it was with the deliberate purpose of using his wages as a means to this chosen end that he apprenticed himself to a firm of electrical engineers.

Hence we find the would-be artist blossoming out as a full-blown wireman's assistant, posi-

tively wallowing in the luxury of a weekly wage envelope containing every time the sum of twenty shillings net.

He had to dress the part too. Overalls and a bag of tools were as essential as the skull to Hamlet. Armed with these he wandered round the country filling the highly responsible task of holding the foot of a ladder while another man went up to do the job.

The day came, as I shall show in my next chapter, when the wireman's assistant became a wireman, was allowed to climb the ladder himself and endured the dizzy distinction of having an assistant to hold the foot of the ladder for him.

Since then Bairnsfather has climbed a few rungs of the ladder of fame, but it is well worth while for those who have an eye on the top to remember that Bruce Bairnsfather, artist, author, and dramatist, started very much at the foot.

CHAPTER V

WESTWARD HO!

To have one's school-days over again is a longing that I have known many suffer from.

I feel sure that time and dim memories are responsible for this desire, and that in reality, could such a transference be effected, one would willingly part with those school-days after a day of the return visit.

Personally I have not even had the longing.

I was unfortunate in my sentence as to which school to go to, not that any other school would have made much difference.

It was once a very famous college—that I first went to—Westward Ho! immortalized by the mighty Kipling in his book "Stalky and Co."

When I was there it was notorious and un-immortalized by anybody.

I think I was the bar to any immortality—in fact, mortality seems to have set in just about the time I went there.

It was a school for the sons of Army and Navy Officers, with here and there the son of a parson creeping in.

By that quaint reasoning beloved of English families, a son is supposed to go into the same profession as his father, hence the inevitable suction exerted on my parents by the idea of Westward Ho!

I am in full sympathy with this idea, of a hereditary profession, as you thereby get such an incentive in the opposite direction, that it makes for success elsewhere.

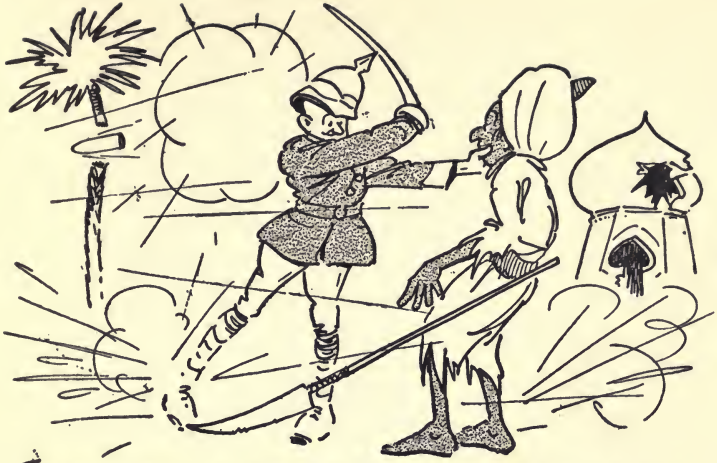
I was a total and miserable failure at school —a great success with my friends in misfortune, but I went rotten with the masters.

To begin with, I am terribly affected by environment.

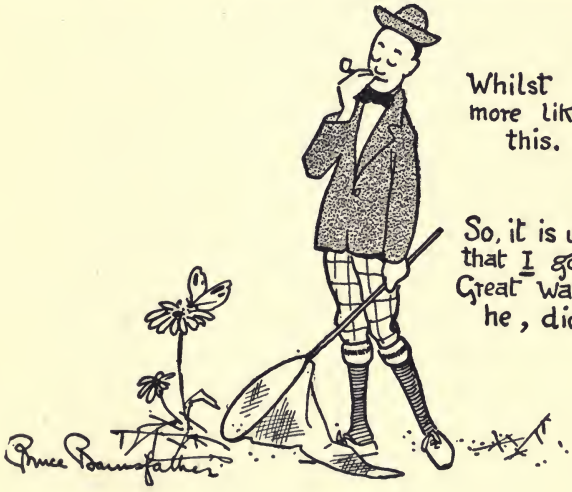
For one who had recently come from the succulent scenery and mystic charm of India, to be bumped into a cheerless waste like Westward Ho! itself was enough to sow the seeds of criminality.

To those who don't know the area, let me describe this land of my scholastic incubation.

It is a wild and desolate portion of North



Temperamentally, my father is, more or less, on these lines.



Devon. The country round about is peopled with boarding-house keepers and the retired and slightly impoverished members of the upper parts of the two services. An Admiral or a General could be found there, but more often Captains, Colonels, and Majors. Their sole occupation is to move dully about the locality in Harris Tweed.

It's all terribly respectable, terribly dull, and terribly English.

The golf links are the great draw there.

I have been chased across them by a prefect, many a time, under the title of "There

will be a paper chase for Form IV this afternoon."

In my thin attire of a "runner," I spurted and darted across this rush-grown wilderness, on most Saturday afternoons. My view of the golf links is, therefore, possibly a little distorted.

The great thing about the college was that they gave you a really sporting education. They fitted one out with that frenzied desire to play games which (as some boob has said) "wins our battles."

If you didn't get the frenzied desire quickly, you were flicked around the legs with a cheap cane until you did. What could be more efficient?

Apart from that, they pumped a really useful education into you, in the form of Latin and inorganic chemistry. I've used Latin once when an Italian waiter spilt a dish of spaghetti over me in Milan, and inorganic chemistry when I had indigestion alone, in the woods of Newfoundland.

However, it was all meant very well. It must never be forgotten that all my relatives

and masters saw in me a future Admiral or a General.

When I come to think of it, General Sir Bruce Bairnsfather, R.S.V.P., doesn't sound at all bad.

We were a wild and woolly group, us failures at the bottom of the bottom half of the school —caned most days, but gloriously happy.

We loved bird-nesting on the cliffs and swimming on our own in the pools amongst the rocks. We hated work and games simply because they were compulsory.

Stealing eggs from local hen houses and cooking them in the bottom of an empty biscuit tin was an amusement of ours.

It was at Westward Ho! that I really commenced to draw presentable pictures, and it was here I began practising hard. I practised all through the

French class, the Latin class, and the evening preparation. On half-holidays I abstained from paper chasing, drew pictures instead, and was caned in consequence, in the evening.

Dear Reader, have you ever been caned? No, then I will, if you will allow me a moment in which to change, give you a slight idea of that screaming absurdity "A Caning."

I know my subject.

I have felt my subject, so you can rely upon the following data.

You are secretly aware that a certain act which you have committed has, in certain quarters, been interpreted as a "gross breach of discipline."

Time alone will prove whether you will escape with writing out five hundred lines of Cæsar, or whether a short, sharp term of corporal punishment will terminate your suffering.

As you are sitting harmlessly feeding your white mice in your desk at the French class, you will feel a light tap on the shoulder.

It is your Form Master who has come to say "Come to my study this evening at six o'clock, after tea."

The blow has fallen, you know you are to be caned.

I am now 33, and I haven't been caned for quite a long time, but my corrugated anatomy acts like a fossil. It is a relic of the past.

"After tea."

What a sarcastic and heartless phrase! How can you eat slabs of bread and butter and drink mud-coloured cold water, with news like that ahead?

The dread hour approaches. You know by experience, the flogging ability of that particular master. Your friends announce that "He

can't biff you for nuts," and your enemies say, "I wouldn't be you for something."

The hour has arrived. . . . You are standing pale and resolute outside the Master's door.

The landing, the stairs, and every nook affording concealment, is alive with your school

I have committed all sorts of games

friends, who have come to hear you through the closed door.

You knock; you enter.

Two souls meet face to face, very soon they meet hand to . . .

It's all over, you've had your head under the table a minute, but it has seemed an hour.

With a nice, warm, prickly, but righteous sensation you are again on the landing—one step further on the road to success in any profession except the one first thought of.

CHAPTER VI

VIA DOLOROSA

WE now descend to the depths.

If hope be sea level, we are at least a thousand feet below the surface.

Nevertheless, the stage is set in an English baronial home.

The door of the awe-inspiring Library opens.

Enter grim-faced youth bearing, as if it were made of unbreakable steel, an expensive half-watt wire-filament electric bulb.

This he throws into its socket as if he were Ty Cobb pitching a fast one over the plate.

He recites his piece, beginning "Thank Heaven, that's finished."

It is to be regretted that the subsequent passages of this speech cannot be quoted here, the dramatic rights having been purchased by the Kaiser for reproduction in his forthcoming treatise "What I think of Marshal Foch," after spirited competition by Bottomley, on behalf of his weekly swan song "Why I love America."

Then he spies a nice white sheet of paper.

Feverishly he glances around him.

Nobody near.

The boss won't know to dock him of his pay. He takes up a pen and now in a fervour of enthusiasm tears it across the paper.

Engrossed in his task he does not hear the door open. He does not see a stout, red-faced aristocrat gaze upon his back with a mouth as open as the door. He does not realize the approach of this parcel of blue blood as it draws near and looks over his shoulder.

"Hello! What's this? Bai jove! Dontcher know! That's jolly good. That's me to the life. Did you draw that? What? Dimmed clever. I should love to have it. Will you have a port with me?"

Dazed, the youth drinks, or rather gulps and chokes, too embarrassed to utter a word, in his own defence, but he feels like murder when his host exclaims:

"You know, bai jove, you should not be messing about with electric fittings, what? You should be a bally artist."

That, exaggerated only in detail, was the

sort of incident which made Bairnsfather see red many a time during the next few months of his career when he had to walk very persistently the Via Dolorosa.

At this point it is worth while for the student of success to note the psychological dilemma in which Bairnsfather now found himself placed.

He had made life a misery for himself and everyone around him until he succeeded in convincing those interested in his destiny that his talents justified his determination to be an artist—a success which was marked by his being sent as a student to the Hassall School of Art.

He had given up a considerable number of months to study.

As far as was humanly possible he had acquired the necessary technique.

He was fitted in every respect to follow the profession of his choice.

Then he found that there was absolutely no opening for him.

It was, therefore, as a recognition of defeat that he took up electrical engineering.

He was a failure. He had proved himself a failure. When candid friends conveyed to

his parents that it was a pity they "couldn't do something with Bruce" he had no answer.

It was strictly in accord with the irony of circumstances that no sooner had this state of affairs arisen—that no sooner had he been compelled to relinquish art for food's sake, than every second stranger discovered in him an artist.

No sooner had he been sternly denied admittance to the charmed circle, than everyone advised him to give up everything else except art. And here I should say that the beginner in art should "gang warily" where such advice is given.

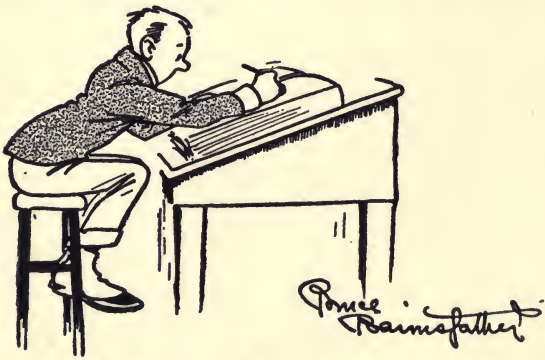
The candid critic who tells the young artist to throw away his brush and sell something to eat is a much better friend.

Bairnsfather at this time was like driftwood at the river mouth—now carried out to sea by the stream—now carried inland by the tide.

But make no mistake here.

Although he was torn between masses of conflicting judgment, Bairnsfather never ceased to follow his star. He kept a stiff upper lip and his motto, even if he did not realize it him-

About 10 years of this intensely absorbing study



Will give you such an impetus for any other profession, that you are bound to succeed

self, was that open sesame to the fairy caves of fortune—"I'll show 'em!"

Never a day passed without his having traversed another mile of that long, long road before him.

Art was seldom out of his thoughts waking or sleeping.

He did not have a lot of money to invest in his ambition, but week after week he bought piles of illustrated magazines and pored over the reproduced drawings of well-known artists, always seeking to analyse the secrets of their success.

There are still plenty of critics of Bairnsfather's work who speak of it as if one day in an idle moment he had picked up a brush and drawn by accident, very badly, a character called Old Bill, whereupon fickle fortune waited upon him evermore.

Possibly these will be astonished to read of days of continuous study in an atmosphere of determination and despair. Possibly they will alter their views about the alleged superficiality of Bairnsfather art.

This charge led by a scathing condemnation

in the London *Times*, I shall analyse later in the proper place, showing that Bairnsfather does not merely in the Meredithian figure, convey truth by means of split infinitives.

But here I have not yet reached the stage of controversy.

I proceed, therefore, with my account of the days of endeavour—with Bairnsfather the engineer, and I ought to lay special stress on the fact that even in this period of trial Bairnsfather continued to work with a stern resolve, that since he had to be an engineer he would at least be a good one.

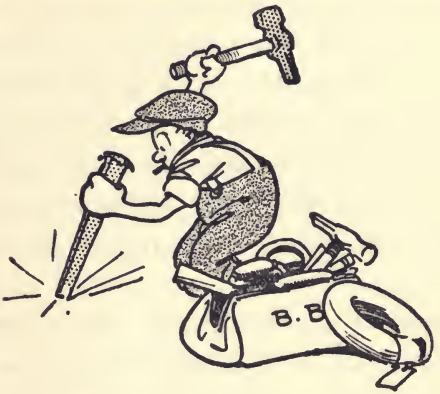
This is very important, because it throws an arc light on his strength of character. A youth of lesser will power would undoubtedly have lost heart in the drawing business, utterly hated and neglected the engineering business, and in consequence have made a mess of both.

Electrical engineering he never regarded as anything other than a means to an end, but he saw very soon that if real ambition was ever to be realized, he had to make the standby a good one.

So we find him working hard at a trade which

was thrust upon him—soon emerging from the stage of wireman's assistant to be a real live wireman himself.

Through industrious application to his work, aided by persistent knocking at managerial



doors for increases in wages, we find him rising successively from £1 a week to the comparative affluence of £2 10s., when he became an inspector of other men's work.

Following upon this we find him emerging into that higher and more delicate sphere of business known as specialty salesmanship.

In this capacity he toured most of England,

winning for his firm a series of remunerative contracts for electric lighting.

The dungaree days were done.

They were succeeded by days of dress and address, when, for example, he had charge of a stand for two successive years at Industrial Exhibitions at Olympia in London, where his task was to convince wealthy buyers that he had the best goods at the keenest prices on the market—a useful exercise in human psychology and a valuable supplement to the music-hall expeditions of the earlier Hassall days.

Before we leave this period it is significant to note, in view of his after association with the stage, the fact that his first real responsible job was the lighting of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon. As I shall show later, one of the very interesting things about the genius of Bairnsfather is his intimate working knowledge of stage conditions, and there can be no doubt but that this practical introduction to the Memorial Theatre in the capacity of a mechanic was the first impulse which turned his mind seriously in this direction.

At this point I might also record that his

very first job as a wireman's assistant was to help in the lighting of a brewery in the Midlands, hence, some will argue, the origin of that particularly anti-Pussyfoot look which appears from time to time on the face of Old Bill.

However, while he progressed handsomely in his trade as an engineer, he never lost sight of his main objective—success as an artist—and it was during this engineering period that he was first able to see himself in print.

It was natural, having come from the Hassall School of Art, that he should devote himself mainly to poster work, and for several years this occupied his sole attention.

Through his efforts at this period the sale of

several brands of tobacco, tea, mustard, pills, cocoa, face creams, and dog biscuits were materially increased.

The first poster he sold was an advertisement for Player's Tobacco. This picture was drawn at a period when "The Geisha" and "San Toy" and various other musical comedies, giving a rose-coloured picture of life in the Far East, were the rage of the British stage. Therefore, there appeared on the hoardings a huge poster of a particularly fascinating row of Chinamen all smoking Player's cigarettes with the words:—

"For they smoke it in the West
Where it's reckoned quite the best,
And you see they've introduced it into China."

This was followed by an advertisement for Keene's Mustard—a poster which represented a boy standing on a chair before a huge map of the world. He had dipped his finger in a mustard cruet and smeared a broad line across the map. Underneath was the inscription:—"One touch of mustard makes the whole world Keene's."

Now, feeling that he had had enough of tobacco and mustard, he proceeded to pills.

Beecham's of that ilk displayed several Bairnsfather posters showing particularly athletic nymphs decorated with teeth, golf-clubs and tennis racquets, and positively bursting with health.

This medicinal duty fulfilled, he turned his attention to tea, and through the good services of Marie Corelli, who wrote to Sir Thomas Lipton on his behalf, he was able to get an interview in London, and as a result was sent home to draw suggestions for posters. A number of these were returned and he had despaired of giving satisfaction to the Tea King when he drew and sold a picture of a Caddie driving off a ball from the top of a Packet of Lipton's Special, with the inscription:—"Liptons make the best tea."

All this happened right in the middle of the engineering period, and it was when he was engaged on a job in Birmingham that he took up a book by George Morrow and found his Lipton poster on the back cover, with the result that he felt like Lloyd George home from Spa.

The book in question was a cheap edition published in those halcyon days at a shilling net, and it is on record that Bairnsfather spent a sovereign on buying copies, which detracted considerably from the two guineas which he had originally received for the picture.

This overwhelming success was followed by a sequence of Lipton and Beecham posters, and the electrical engineer already regarded himself as an established figure in the commercial art.

He studied the magazine advertisements night after night into the early hours of the morning and was next unsuccessful with a poster design for Spratt's Dog Biscuits, which was followed by a rejected picture showing a white man sitting at a table amidst luscious palms. A negro servant standing at the table is represented as asking "Massa w'at Tea?" To which the white man replies, "Yes, Rather!"

The ease with which Bairnsfather the artist could now sell poster drawings did not tend to harmonize with Bairnsfather the specialty salesman.

As often as he saved a little money from drawing and as often as he could get away he

crossed the Channel to Paris, Ostend, or Brussels in order to study the works of the great masters in continental galleries, at the same time acquiring a wide knowledge of the present-

day French and Belgian colour, and black-and-white artists.

It was at this time that he saw an announcement by the Quinlan Opera Company, then on tour in Canada, offering a prize of £10 for the most suitable poster submitted for use as an advertisement.

Bairnsfather submitted a drawing of Orpheus

seated on the world as a symbol of the tour of the Company, and with this picture won the prize.

Hope rose to uncontrollable heights. The thing was done! Success! Fame! Fortune! Good-bye to engineering. Bairnsfather's mind at this moment was a riot of dreams!

But Fate decided that her victim was not to get away with things so easily and forthwith proceeded to prepare an ice-cold douche of despair.

The Via Dolorosa had a big kick left.

Bairnsfather, caught utterly unprepared, was to go down with a thud, and art as the referee once again was gleefully to count him out.

CHAPTER V

£1 A WEEK AND DUNGAREES

I HAVE nothing to say against engineering, but I feel that engineering, if the question was put to it, might have a lot to say against me.

I went into the job with a full-hearted endeavour to do my best at it, but I feel somehow that engineering did the dirty on me, by starting me at a pound a week.

You can't dress well, live, and motor on a pound a week without a lot of care.

It was a terrible pound I got.

It was placed in a little paper bag by the head clerk and given to me on Friday.

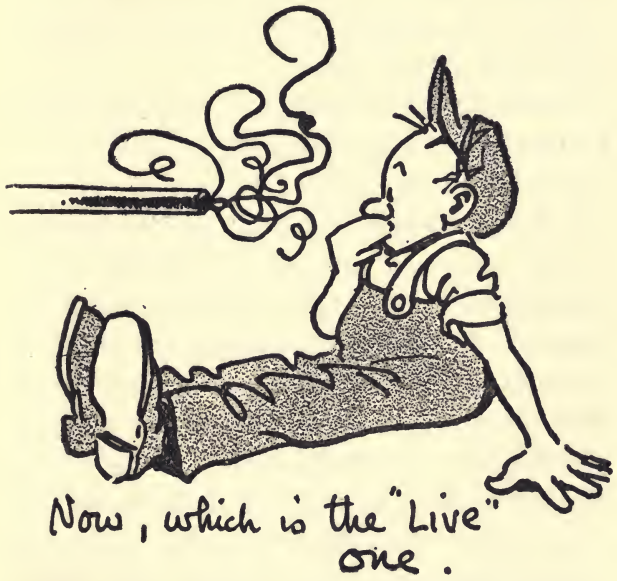
To get more put into that paper bag looked hopeless.

The work which led to this reckless extravagance on the part of my firm was of a curious and mixed character.

I was an assistant in installation work. I helped in the fixing up of electric light and

petrol gas machines in factories and public buildings and private houses.

Now and again came intervals of change, in



which I was in the "Shops" testing, mending, and cursing the aforesaid machines.

Every evening and every week-end I would draw and paint with frenzy, in the hopes of extricating myself into art and more than a pound a week.

As time went on I progressed in that firm, and after those dim elementary days filled with holding ladders, nailing pipes, and pulling wires through tubes, I emerged into a stratum of two pounds ten shillings per week and a slightly different form of work.

It was that of travelling all over the country for orders, and inspecting faulty machinery.

It is of this period that I will speak.

I have got orders out of a variety of people in this realm of England. I became a sort of Sherlock Holmes in the summing up of my victims. I could mentally size up, and knock out anything you like in type. I could almost count on getting a retired pork butcher to light his bungalow at Huddersfield, or an Indian Army Colonel to light his old manor house near Cheltenham. Sometimes I had to swim deep and lure the Dowager Countess of Leatherhead into lighting Crumbling Castle, her summer seat.

All this was weird and wonderful in its way, and interesting to a student of types. I got to know how to act for each part, the sort of conversation for each particular case, and how

much of an installation I could knock out of the poor souls.

I have perpetrated these crimes from Holyhead to Thanet, and from John o'Groats to Land's End. Many's the time I have arrived in a paltry, musty, strange little town on a wet January afternoon, hired a bicycle and pushed off out into the country, got out the scheme for the victim, and gone back into the town to spend the evening with the Commercial Travellers in the local hotel.

What a mass of "Commercials" I have met, bless 'em, who have not the slightest idea that they ever met me! There was one at a town not far from Bury St. Edmunds, who fastened on to me, and explained Commercial Travellers' folk lore, and rules of deportment for a couple of hours after supper one night.

There was another who froze on to me with full details of his travels and reductions on week-end tickets at the Feathers Hotel, Porlock.

I have met, liked, and gained comfort from them everywhere.

I have done two sea journeys with Travellers, both of whom were highly amused to remember

later that the curiosity they once travelled with, turned out to be me, whose pictures, plays, and films they *never* expected to see, and yet which met them at every turn, later on.

And now, to give you an insight into my work I am going to pick out of hundreds one case illustrating my travels, which will, I feel sure, interest students of crime.

Once upon a time there came news into our office that a certain ancient and wealthy Baronet had experienced grievous trouble from his lighting installation at his Castle in the Midlands. By an obscure process of reasoning, my firm decided to send me to see what was the matter, and if possible to try and remedy it.

I took out my best suit, a bag of selected tools, and set forth. It was about January, and when I arrived at the little town which was my nearest point of disembarkation, all was dark, and drear, and cold. I enquired the way to the Castle, and started off that night, Jack-the-Giant-Killer style, to beard the Baronet in his Keep. It was quite a long way that my bag and I staggered through the snow. The walk ultimately brought me to the imposing

gates leading into the drive that led to the Castle.

My bag and I entered, and started pounding off up the drive. On either side dark fir-trees laden with snow shivered in the light night wind. Clouds raced across the moonlit sky. My bag and I went on, up the long and winding drive. At last the Castle came in sight—A giant dark grey building amongst the woods, on one side of which stretched a sheet of water.

The man about the lights or Tarzan of the lamps.

I floundered up to the great front door, put the bag down on the ancient steps, and rang the

bell. (I've got it now somewhere, I keep it as a souvenir). The ponderous front door opened. A butler was silhouetted in the light of the mighty hall behind.

"I've come about the light," I said, expecting to be struck for my uncouth boldness in such surroundings.

"Oh!" said the butler, "well come round to the side door," and he gently closed the ponderous front one in my face.

I went to the side door. Such a small plebeian one. A footman opened it. I entered and was taken to the Butler's room near a pantry. Here, after the preliminary waste of time making friends, I was initiated into the details of all the anguish which pervaded the Castle. Sir Reginald had gout, I think, and his wife delusions. The light was the worst ever and everyone was under notice to leave. In fact, one of those delectable atmospheres which are essentially associated with the idle and historic rich.

The Butler and Footman were hospitality itself in that pantry annex. I was thoroughly primed before passing through the green baize

door to meet Sir Reginald. "All hope abandon ye who enter here" was the invisible legend written on that door. On the other side were Sir Reginald and his Lady living in sombre pain with no light except hurriedly recruited lamps and candles.

It was late now. Sir Reg. was in the Lib. In other words, Sir Reginald was in the Library. The moment came for me to enter. I entered through the green baize door. The Butler announced me in the Library as "The man about the light."

Sir Reginald came out. He clearly explained my firm to me. He shortly enunciated their chance of a future life. He even suggested ungeographical places he would like to send them to. In time he came down to the commonplace fact that I was standing before him, ready to do what I could. He agreed that I should at once try to repair his light. Having given instructions to the butler as to my being shown where the engine lay, he retired into his Library again, there I suppose to seek relaxation in the Literary Supplement of the *Times* or some other mirth provider of that sort.

I retired through the green baize door and getting hold of my bag of tools again was shown through the wild night and the shrubbery to the house which contained the engine.

Now, I'm not writing for the *Scientific American* or the *Electrical Review*, so I will not launch off into the mysteries of what happened in that shed. Suffice it to say that I nearly blew myself up with a dozen tins of petrol, but cured the ailment. In a couple of hours I returned to the house and performed the miracle of turning on the light. I was a Medicine Man in a moment.

The Butler went round the house turning on the lights and every now and again running back to Sir Reginald with the glad tidings.

I ended in the hall on the top of a ladder adjusting the historic chandelier. Sir Reginald

came out to me from his Library. He asked me all about it. He tried some lights himself and then asked me into the Library. I sat down in a giant leather chair. He rang the bell. The Butler entered. "Bring two whiskeys and soda," he said.

We sat and talked for quite a time. I then went back to two pound ten a week and a third-class smoker home.

CHAPTER VIII

DOWN AND OUT

ONE might expect from the various efforts and enterprises of Bairnsfather recorded in my previous chapter, that the time was now come when he could say without delusion that he was tasting of the fruits of success.

But, for the unknown artist working on his own there is perhaps no entry to an art career more difficult than that which is concerned with poster draftsmanship.

In the magazine world the market is comparatively stable. The magazine appears at regular intervals necessitating a steady demand for material. It represents a definite personality and, according to the dyspepsia of the editor, the artist can temper his approach. This in theory may sound a simple exercise in diplomacy. In practice, it is a difficult enough undertaking.

Bairnsfather tried on various occasions to sell stuff to most of the popular English

magazines. At one time he had an extensive collection of "Editor's Regrets."

The difficulties surrounding his poster enterprises, with their much more uncertain and unstable market, can therefore be all the better appreciated.

The aspiring artist may be interested to know that at this period his sales averaged ten per cent. of his output.

Outside poster and magazine work he occupied himself with a variety of adventures. His engineering took him round most of the cities of Britain, and if in any small town he saw an enterprising tobacconist who sold a special mixture of his own blend, Bairnsfather would immediately draw a highly attractive show card in bright colours. This he would offer to the tobacconist for display in his window—the result being that his private store of tobacco was enriched by say a couple of pounds of the self-same mixture plus a hundred cigarettes.

There was no end to the catholicity of his adventure at this time, and it is therefore precisely here that I find him gaining that breadth and sympathy of outlook which is the secret of

his universal appeal. It was during this engineering period that his education was completed by his coming into intimate contact with all sorts and conditions of men.

True he met them again in the comradeship of War, but had he not been able to recognize the civilian beneath the disguise of the soldier, he would never have interpreted the spirit of the trenches, he could never have discovered Old Bill.

We may sum up this period by saying that Bairnsfather was achieving a fair measure of success—a measure beyond which most aspiring artists never advance, and in consequence was considerably supplementing that weekly £2 10s., and gradually beginning to think that after all there would come a time when he would be able to leave the engineering period definitely behind him.

Nevertheless, there were before him several very nasty turns in that Via Dolorosa to be traversed before he was to find the sunlight of fame and fortune shining upon him.

And it is worth while to note in some detail the last great cold douche which was

to shower upon him before success came his way.

Like every other British artist, he had his eyes turned on the great city of London and as ardently as he studied the art magazines, he studied the columns of "Artists Wanted" in the daily press.

One day he read an advertisement in the section devoted to printers and pressmen in the *Daily Telegraph*, the effect of which was that an artist was wanted, that the artist must be accustomed to commercial designing, and that he must send samples of his work along with his application.

Bairnsfather answered this advertisement and waited!

I need not analyse the feelings of the young man who replies to such an advertisement. This species of suspense is well enough known, and it will also be universally understood that the artist's hopes went soaring away into the upper ether when he received a letter one morning saying, "Our Directors have examined your work and would like you to call on us at your convenience."

His convenience!

His first impulse was to smash every electric bulb for miles around and make a bonfire of his dungarees.

On second thoughts more cautious counsel prevailed and he compromised by asking for a half-day off.

This preposterous request by some accident was granted.

Witness, therefore, this perspiring sprinter after fame arriving in London and seeing through the eyes of imagination every street paved with that mythical gold.

He walked on air.

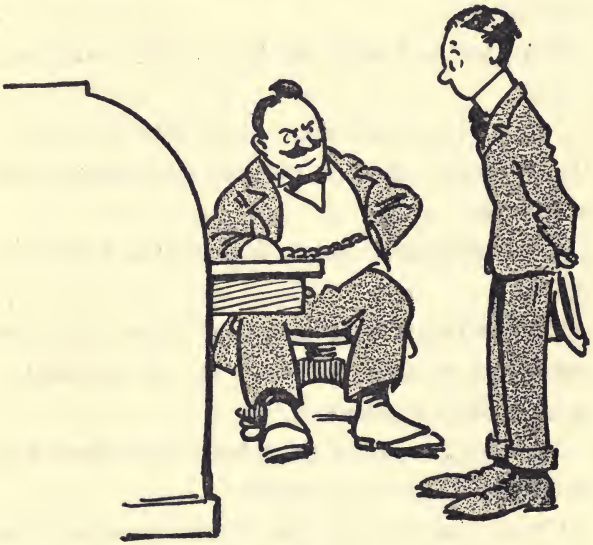
He felt he could progress even without that slender support when he saw on a prominent hoarding a huge reproduction of one of his posters.

It would be but a few days before the head waiters in every West End Restaurant would be bowing at his approach and placing him at the tables reserved for honoured guests.

You will observe how Fate had worked him into just that state of ecstatic anticipation

essential to making him feel the fullest weight of the rebuff in store.

It was in this joyous frame of mind that he made his way to the business headquarters of "our directors."



He was somewhat overawed by his first impression of the great building with its sweeping, cold stone stairs and countless closed and presumably hostile doors.

He was hushed and humbled by the grandeur of this mausoleum of British art and it was in no

fit condition to argue about anything so sordid as wages that he waited in an outer room till "our Mr. Somebody-or-other" deigned to receive him.

Still, the result of the interview was generally satisfactory.

But fate had not yet done jesting with her victim.

"Our Directors," announced Mr. Somebody, "have looked at your pictures and rather like your style."

An inarticulate gulp of gratitude from the victim.

"They think you could be fitted into our organization, and we have at the moment a vacancy for a good artist."

The victim sees a mist before his eyes and threatens to swoon right off.

"Now we should like to have some idea as to what you would expect in the way of remuneration."

At last the charmed circle had been broken! He was actually being invited within, but those stone steps, those closed doors kept blurring his vision. It would never do to be

wanting in gratitude for what the fates had sent. He would be humble.

After all he was being freed from electric engineering. He would ask just what he was being paid. The little extras would have to be sacrificed.

Very timidly he whispered, "I thought perhaps two pounds ten a week."

He glanced up in a cold sweat when no immediate assent was given.

Mr. Somebody was drumming his fingers on the polished oak desk. He was pursing his lips and looking thoughtful.

His fate was in the scales. How would the balance fall? He felt like shouting out, "I'll come for nothing so long as you'll have me."

Just then Mr. Somebody spoke.

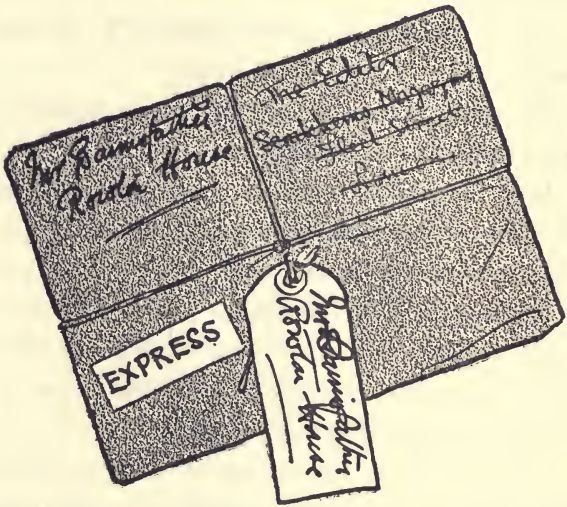
"Well, that is rather more than we are in the habit of paying our artists, but we might stretch a point in your favour if you will send along some further sketches."

The rest of the interview was negligible, and presently the victim found himself on the pavement, not knowing how he had stumbled down those steps.

He had not quite succeeded.

Still he felt like a man who has just missed a bluebottle with a flick of his handkerchief. The next time would get him.

It was, therefore, in a comparatively cheerful



state of mind, that he took the train back to Stratford, and drew feverishly for some weeks.

The result was that he was able presently to dispatch to London, to that ancient and honourable home of art design, some poster draw-

ings expressly intended for the advertisement of Sunlight Soap; their chief ingredients being a particularly athletic type of young woman and some supernaturally green fields.

More waiting.

Still he did not mind that. He knew the drawings were good and he knew the end was assured.

Some weeks passed away. Suspense began to hold him in its grip, but finally the suspense was crowned with joy.

A big, flat parcel, on which the name of the firm was prominently printed made its appearance.

This was the end of engineering at last.

He tore open the parcel and picked up the letter beginning "Dear Sir, We are frankly disappointed with your further designs, which are returned herewith."

And following on after this supremely encouraging beginning, "Our Mr. Somebody" conveyed to Bairnsfather that his services were not required.

Fate had got the blow home at the psychological moment.

In a state approaching suicide he wandered away among the trees of Warwickshire, he drank the cup of defeat to its dregs, deciding that art as a career, as far as he was concerned, was altogether too precarious a business and that therefore he had better reconcile himself to remaining in engineering for life.

It was exactly at this unhappy juncture that his engineering firm required the services of a desperado to go to the wilds of Newfoundland in order to examine an electrical installation at Spruce Brook, which installation was apparently from report, capable of doing anything in the world except giving the radiant illumination it was expressly built to create.

The full and tragic story of the painful expedition is given by Bairnsfather himself in the following chapter; but although I do not propose to enter into the technical side of the journey, I ought to say that even at Spruce Brook the itch to draw pursued him.

Bairnsfather has drawn pictures in perhaps more varied and curious surroundings than any one else in the world.

In New foundland, in a log cabin, he drew a picture which as it happened was to mean a great deal to his future career. It was not a soaring flight of artistic fancy. It was merely a box label, but it gave such satisfaction to the man for whom it was drawn, that he advised the artist to give up all thought of engineering, to return to London and be an artist.

Bairnsfather had tasted a fair proportion of the fruits of success since the day, almost seven years before, when he had become a wireman's assistant.

He was ready to receive sympathy and encouragement and therefore he returned from this expedition still more obsessed than ever with the idea of being a professional artist.

Some may find destiny in the fact that the *Durango*, the old Furness-Withy boat on which he returned carried a load of wood pulp.

But what impressed Bairnsfather most at the moment was that his cabin was directly over the propeller of the ship, and his com-

panions, apart from a commercial traveller from Manchester, were entirely composed of rats.

Being the world's worst sailor, he was, of course, seasick on this voyage, but he found time to make friends with the cook, for which his wisdom must be commended, and he drew a picture of the lord of the kitchen peeling potatoes in his galley, much to the gratification of that potentate.

In view of Bairnsfather's attitude to the sea this picture was probably in kind the most remunerative he has ever done.

He landed at Liverpool, still having the desire to draw, but quite resigned to stay for a short period longer as an electrical engineer, because, in view of his past unfortunate experiences, he discovered that in the stormy seas of art this was the only raft to which he could cling in order to save his life.

Therefore with a high resolve to study electric bulbs with renewed fervour, he returned to Stratford prior to reporting to his employer.

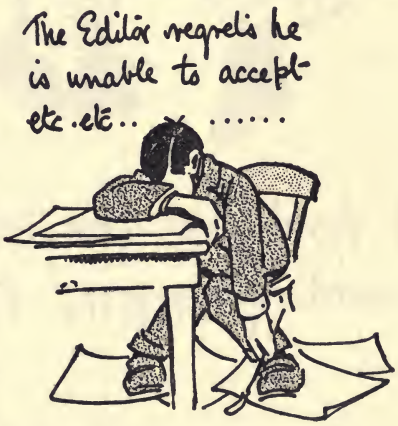
But at home another cold douche awaited him

in the form of a letter beginning, "Dear Sir, Owing to the outbreak of European War, your services are no longer required."

Thus the Kaiser got his first blow in at England, for Bairnsfather, from buying packets of carefully straight-cut cigarettes, had now to roll his own.

He retired again to the trees and poured out the tale of his humiliation and desperation to nature.

He decided that he had been pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp, that in seeking success as an artist he had been trying to do something for which he was entirely unsuited, therefore he concluded that the only concern which would welcome his services would be the British Army, and accordingly he reported to his former regiment,



the 1st Warwicks, with which in a few weeks he was sent out to France, thereby joining the ever-glorious band of the Old Contemptibles.

I dont like the use of the word "BLINKIN" Mr Busby

CHAPTER IX

NEWFOUNDLAND

I HAVE already, in sundry previous chapters, touched upon my obscure life in the engineering world.

I want in this chapter to give all interested an accurate portrayal of a phase of my life which perhaps marked the turning point in my career as an engineer.

The termination of the following adventure happened to be the War. Had the War not been in time to relieve the engineering world of a canker at its heart, my own inward perturbations would have procured this desirable end. However, let me hash this adventure out in the way that it occurred to me.

My firm (that group of capitalists, who from philanthropic reasons, fostered my frail talents) came, one day, suddenly to a conclusion that someone must go to Newfoundland to repair an installation at a

certain remote quarter in that oldest of British colonies. Various members of the firm were approached on this score and everyone except "yours truly" had the sense and balance to refuse.

The job was suggested to me.

I sprang at it like a tiger. Adventure minus slow consideration, is my strong point (subsequent events have almost caused me to call it a weak point).

The plot was hatched. The Secret Society met in a Board Room and decided that the lot had fallen on me to go, forthwith, to Newfoundland to repair this installation. I investigated the case. It appeared that a certain ferocious individual had been rendered almost frenzied by having purchased a lighting plant at enormous expense which had never emitted a spark of light since its transference to the remote wilds aforementioned.

I grasped the extent of his ferocity, from sundry trans-Atlantic letters, and realized that my mission was again very similar to that of Jack-the-Giant-Killer when he started out after Blunderbore.

To those who do not know, I should like to say here, that I joined the War with patriotic fervour on August 5, 1914.

I regretted this act on August 6, 1914.

The same trouble applies to this Newfoundland affair.

I regretted my expedition as soon as I got to Liverpool.

Details herewith:

I left for the famous port with myself, a box of raiment and a fearsome-looking chest containing tools.

I sailed on the Allan liner *Mongolian* for St. John's, Newfoundland.

I am a rotten sailor.

No words of mine can adequately convey what that passage meant to me.

There was one other man in my cabin. He was a shelf below me. He was a lace traveller, or something, from Nottingham. I have never seen him since, and I am sure he wishes he had never seen me then.

The cabin was about the size of a public telephone call box.

The Atlantic had got mumps that week.

My box of weird implements was confined to the depths of the ship.

Half-way across I had about as much life left in me as a dummy at a Gymkana.

I was Home-Sick and Sea-Sick.

. . . . . .

We arrived at St. John's.

The ship glided between a couple of icebergs and came to rest alongside the wharf.

In due course my two boxes and I were put ashore.

My Implement Box had by now taken the main position in the drama. I was merely a sort of clinging crustacean that had the key.

People shrank from this box. They felt that this poor anaemic creature beside the box was in some sinister way guiltily associated with its contents.

I dreaded the day when I should have to open that box and use its metallic contents for the betterment of that plant which I felt was past hope.

I interviewed a potentate in St. John's about the possibilities of my journey and further work in the Island. He looked at me with a studious eye full of scorn and pity.

"Say," he said, "haven't you heard that the only occupation in this island is fishing and flirting, and in the winter they can't fish." I retired crushed, but caught the train for Spruce Brook.

Now Spruce Brook was my destination. It is a station of some note on the main line, by which I mean there are a group of charred stumps at which you alight and look for residents.

A night and day in the one and only train brought me to this metropolis. I said farewell to the negro attendant and let myself and boxes down on to the blasted heath, to be met by three residents.

They seemed to be Anglo-Red Indian with a dash of Esquimau on the father's side.

The mournful procession plunged into the forest. I could clearly feel that my captors were wondering how on earth this frail spectre could be connected with the iron-bound box. "Was he a medicine man?" (He was, if what I took on the voyage can be counted in.)

Suddenly, in a clearing, I came across my destination. It was a very large log cabin. A really fine log cabin, the sort of one you expect William S. Hart to burst out of. Here I was, box of tools and all.

I saw the owners. I also heard the owners. I heard them describe my firm. I was their only hope, so they put off describing me. Luckily for me it was a case of "Veni, Vidi, Vici." I entered and examined the machinery. I saw later in the evening that everything that could be wrong *was* wrong. The owners were most kind to me. They made me forget, as far as possible, that I had been procured at enormous expense to come out and repair their absurd plant. The sins of the firm were not visited on the employee.

I spent a first night in comparative calm longing for the morrow when I could start in, and try and cure that miserable machine outside.

Next morning, my box of tools and I examined the affair. I will not harass readers of this book with mechanical details. I will roughly indicate what happened.

The light emitted by this heavily advertised luxury was at zero. It happened to be a faulty plant. After some painful hours of investigation I diagnosed the cause. I saw that it was absurd to await new parts to rectify the fault, and during the course of the next few days set to work to invent a substitute for these parts, which would have the greatly desired, and already paid-for, effect, "LIGHT."

The criminal side of my brain succeeded in evolving a scheme to procure this end.

With the aid of my box of tools, and a dull half-caste, I manufactured an amendment to the machine. The light shone in the Log Cabin for the first time.

I sat triumphantly inside glorying in the results.

This all sounds a riotous success, but stay! There was a secret in my heart which gnawed at my braces. I had brought about light, but my cure, I feared, was only temporary.

A length of string was one of my ingredients. I felt this was bound to perish, and as I wandered at dusk amidst the silent forests, and beside the silvery lakes, I wondered how long my cure would last.

It was of course necessary for me to stop and vouch for my cure lasting.

This developed into an acute calculation for me.

"Could I keep that light going sufficiently long for me to escape from the island and get home?"

Day after day I watched that light with the eyes of a financier watching the tape on the stock exchange. The day came for me to leave! Still the light was going strong! I said good-bye and with a few dollars in my pocket caught the train back for St. John's.

Now, to relieve the tragedy, let me tell you a little story. One of the joint owners of this Log Cabin was one Captain John O'Neil Power. He knew my weakness was drawing pictures. He asked me to draw the design for a box label. I did it, and after a few other sketches he said to me "You know, you oughtn't to be messing

about with wires, bulbs, and engines, you ought to go back to England and have a go at the papers."

Although several months elapsed, his prophecy was one day to be fulfilled and I never forgot it, for one day as the War progressed, I got a letter from across the sea. It was from John O'Neil Power. In it was written "What did I tell you!"

I stayed in St. John's a week, not because I wanted to, but because there was not a ship going to England. One or two were advertised to be starters, but owing to fogs, icebergs, and delays elsewhere, none of them showed any signs of life for a week. This was most serious for me, as at any moment that piece of string in the intestines of the machine at Spruce Brook might break, after which all the ports would be watched for my escape. "You don't leave here till this —— light is right" was an unpleasant phrase, used by the management of the Log Cabin.

I hung around St. John's. I lurked about the town sniffing at the Cod industries, eating cod for breakfast, lunch, tea, and dinner. You

almost have a cod under your pillow when you sleep there. I stayed at a "hotel" mostly filled with American Commercial Travellers. There we all sat in a row with a floor spittoon in front of each of us, slowly filling the room with tobacco smoke. Now and again a stranger could be seen dimly entering through the haze. He would hook out a spittoon with his foot, and shuffle it across the floor to a nice range from where he was going to sit down. There we sat like birds in the wilderness. I was the only one waiting for a boat for England. How little did I think that in a very few months I would be sitting again like a bird in another wilderness, *i.e.*, the Western Front!

A really good test for patience, I should say, is waiting for a ship in winter time at St. John's.

Days seemed to drag past with infinite slowness. Still the bit of string held. It was a few hundred miles away, but I knew a cable could reach me, when the catastrophe came. I went to the docks every day and peered anxiously into official faces as I asked about the ships.

One morning, in a fit of exasperation, I burst into a new set of offices down by the docks and

asked if there was any other way of getting to England except by a ship, or rather, if there was any kind of raft or something other than the advertised regular boats. There was. I discovered the fact that ships left Grand Falls (the *Daily Mail* paper factory) for England, and sometimes took a passenger or two. I tried to squeeze into this, but found the ship was already full up. So I was hurled back to the "hotel" again. I glared at a spittoon and gained inspiration. I went down to the docks and found a boat that never took passengers, never had, and, in fact, hated the sight of passengers. Luck at last! There were three bunks available, and the officials would stretch a point and take three urgent cases to England. I felt like Robinson Crusoe when he came across Friday's *Freeman, Hardy, and Willis.*

The day came when I got my two chests dragged from the "hotel" to the ship. It was also the day when I first saw the ship. It looked to me as if it had just been salved. It stood very low in the water, and what could be seen of the sides was rusty, streaky iron. It had no proper deck. It all seemed to be one big hold. In fact,

the ship, as I afterwards discovered, was full to bursting point with tinned cod and wood pulp. I went on board over a plank, and my boxes were got across somehow and deposited on top of a lot of wooded planks lashed to the place that ought to have been the deck. The general appearance of this barque was a ship-shaped rusty metal case filled to overflowing with long planks of wood.

I found my bunk. I smelt my bunk. I sat down to think on my bunk. For a student of rat life I can imagine nothing better. For a student of Vibration I felt that it would have been a fund of interest; but for an ordinary and rather bilious mortal like myself, it was a Failure! It was directly over the propeller, at the part where they shave a ship off to a sort of slope over the top of the rudder. (I don't know much about ships, but have an Uncle in the Navy, and he's got on awfully well.)

Rats must have been making genealogical trees there for centuries. What with rats, the propeller, and that quaint compound of smells peculiar to any ship, you can realize my bunk. Don't get thinking it was a cabin. It was more


who told ye that one?
Bruce Rairnsfather

or less a cupboard with one shelf in it. There were two other hovels of this class; mine was the worst of the three.

The voyage began. . . .

This ancient iron case full of wood and cod jerked its way out of the harbour, between the two cliffs, missed the icebergs waiting outside, and headed for the open sea. As to whether I was ill in five minutes from the start, or ten minutes, I do not know. My memories seem to be a jumble of vibration, rats, and anguish. I was lifeless, yet painfully alive. I lay in pallid loneliness on my shelf, trembling like a cheap jelly in an east wind. Bringing a rare Mummy back from Egypt via Cape Horn was about the picture.

That pathetic box of tools was under my shelf. Now and again a screwdriver or a corkscrew would get loose and roll down amongst the hammers, adding to the general disorder of the surroundings.

At this dark moment of my life there entered a fairy godmother in the shape of the ship's cook. He had a kind heart, that man. He would come and sit on the box by my shelf and

try to interest me with sea-faring yarns. He would also bring apples and peel them with a

sea-faring knife, and bring me soup, with a sea-faring thumb holding the bowl, out of sight in the liquid.

Days and nights of anguish passed. We were slowly but surely crossing the Atlantic, and what a vast lonely place it seemed under these conditions.

I really think that if the sea was rough *all* the time it would kill me, but somehow or other

there always seems to be a good patch somewhere during the voyage. Two days off the Irish coast the sea went dead flat. You could have almost sailed a paper boat. I carefully and slowly emerged from my inquisition, and clambered up on to the planks that composed the deck. I spent the long hours drawing sketches. I varied my position by sitting with the cook as he peeled potatoes in the galley. I drew sketches of him at his work. I sat and chatted with various members of the crew who had made a sort of well to sit in amongst the planks. And so the few days passed on the last half of this voyage.

We came round the south end of Ireland at dusk and during the night proceeded up the Irish Channel.

All the joy of life came rushing back into me now—the great tingling joy of return to England. I sat up all night on the banked up wood and watched the flickering occasional lights of other ships. The exciting and mysterious pauses amidst coloured lights off North Wales, as we awaited the pilot. I didn't mind now. Here was England again! Liverpool

lying still and calm under a rosy coloured dawn. The voyage was over!!

The work I went to do accomplished. "I think I shall ask for a rise."

. . . . . .

In a few days I went to the firm. A cable had preceded me. The light had gone out again. That —— string had broken. No rise.

CHAPTER X

THE FIRST FRAGMENT

As far as Bairnsfather's actual achievement as an artist is concerned, the point of greatest interest is, of course, the circumstances surrounding the origin of *Fragments from France*.

Bairnsfather was stationed at this period at a house at St. Yvon, just in front of Plugstreet Wood. This house was a very short distance behind an exceedingly lively front line. It was well within rifle and machine-gun fire, being barely two hundred yards removed from the German trenches.

Like most other houses at the front, it was in a particularly dilapidated condition. The walls and roof afforded little shelter from the rains of heaven, let alone the fire of the Hun.

It was, therefore, as a measure of self-protection, that Bairnsfather and another Lieutenant started to dig a cellar under the floor to

which they could retire when the Germans chose to send over 5.9 shells.

In the midst of this operation he started drawing pictures on the walls of the house.

This was in December, 1914.

When the walls were well covered with sketches he started drawing on odd bits of paper. These were seen by the soldiers and evidently enjoyed.

In the front trench, fifty yards ahead of the house, the men in the line were perpetually being harassed by heavy shelling, and owing to the continual passage overhead of chunks of German iron, the saying, "Where did that one go to?" became a catch phrase with the men.

Bairnsfather, now that his drawing was resumed, had the idea that this phrase might be worked into a humorous illustration, which first of all he drew on a scrap of paper, which now reposes at Bishopton, his Stratford home, with many other relics of the Great War.

His fellow-officers who saw this original liked it, and said he ought to send it to the papers.

He thought very little about this advice because before the War came, he had had rather

an unhappy experience with English magazines. However, a week or two later his battalion was taken out of the line and sent to rest at a farm near Neuve Église.

This was in January, 1915, and during this period of rest he made a wash drawing of "Where did that one go to?" after which he discovered that he did not know where to send it.

It so happened that among the magazines lying at the transport farm there was a copy of the *Bystander*, and it seemed to Bairnsfather that this was the magazine most likely to accept his work. He therefore rolled the drawing up and sent it away.

Very soon afterwards his battalion was ordered to Wulverghen, before the Messines Ridge, where they were in the line for a few weeks, after which they came out to rest at La Plus Douce Farm, on the Momerin Road.

He arrived at the billets at about eight o'clock in the evening in pitch darkness and pouring rain, where everything was miserable, and in the billet he saw a Corporal sorting letters out of a sack with the aid of the dim light of a candle stuck in a bottle.

In this sack was a letter from the Editor of the *Bystander*, accepting his sketch and saying that he would be pleased to see others.

This was his first real victory in the magazine world, and as such it was exceedingly gratifying to him, but his elation did not cause him to have any roseate visions of future acceptances.

There was no such idea in his head at the moment as a series of pictures which would one day be reprinted in book form and sold throughout the world literally in millions.

Indeed, so far was this ambition from his thoughts at the moment, that he turned his attention to poster work again, and drew an advertisement for Beecham's Pills, showing a square-jawed Hercules behind a machine gun with the letterpress, "Beecham's keep you fit."

He himself was anything but fit at the time. Neither physically or mentally was he capable

of proceeding with a sustained series of humorous drawings of trench life.

Following upon a fortnight's rest at La Plus Douce Farm, he returned to the front lines at Wulverghen so broken in health that he was more or less constantly in the hands of the regimental doctor.

His state of depression at this period can hardly be realized. He was overwhelmed by the horror of everything around him. There was a graveyard just behind the Wulverghen lines. To this graveyard corpses were brought back every day, and his face grew longer with the graveyard.

It was in the midst of these circumstances that he drew the picture, "They've evidently seen me," a picture with which he first of all decorated the wall of an old French house, and secondly drew on a piece of paper for Major Lancaster, one of the most courageous lion-hearts who ever went into action, and who was killed in the first gas attack at Ypres.

The third drawing of the picture was made at a small Farm between Wulverghen and the Messines Ridge, and sent away to try its luck with the *Bystander*.

By this time he had become well-known throughout the Army as an artist, and his pictures were in great demand for the decoration of billets.

At Wulverghen he had plenty of time to draw, because the Germans were so persistent with their shelling that the British were compelled to keep under cover by day. He was, therefore, quite at liberty to accept a commission from Colonel Loveband of the Dublin Fusiliers, who asked him to come and do some "Colonel pictures" in his room. These he drew on the white plaster walls.

It was in this neighbourhood that he first saw a reproduction of "Where did that one go to?"

Thereafter he moved to Armentières, and then went to rest at Outersteene, near Bailleul, where he found a letter of acceptance of "They've evidently seen me," and got a commission to draw six pictures at twenty francs each to decorate an officers' mess.

He still followed that catholicity of adventure of which I made note in the engineering days!

His billet at Outersteene was in a small farm, the presiding genius of which was Madame

Charlotte Flaw, whom he afterwards introduced into the play *The Better 'Ole*, in the character of Suzette. The other characters of *The Better 'Ole*—Angel and Bertha—also lived at this farm, and much of the local colour of the earlier part of the play was culled from this period of rest, which was particularly grateful to him in the nerve-shattered state in which he then was.

This calm, was, however, totally broken when the whole of the 10th Brigade were suddenly turned out and marched away under sealed orders.

Very soon, by a study of the map, he discovered that they were marching to Ypres, which at that time to every soldier outside the salient, was regarded as the most fearful quarter on the whole of the Western Front.

That night they got to Locre, where he took his machine-gun section to the Church and fixed them up in the Chancel, having made a barricade of chairs to keep off stray visitors.

Thence, after a few hours' rest, the 10th Brigade were marched from Locre to Poperinghe.

Towards midday they rested on a dust-

covered plain, every man oppressed by a sense of fear and remorseless destiny surrounding him.

In the afternoon they were on the road again, marching through constant showers of shrapnel, and by dusk they had entered Ypres itself. The rain was now falling in torrents, and the Germans, in view of their attack, were shelling with their whole strength.

Barinsfather sat in the middle of a field, with a waterproof over his head, watching the Cloth Hall go up in flames.

Then came the word that the Germans had broken through at St. Julien, and between twelve and one in the morning they left the field, marching into the inferno ahead.

At two o'clock they stopped at St. Jean, again in a graveyard.

Bairnsfather made for a ruined estaminet a few paces away, found a three-legged chair on which he balanced himself against the wall, and slept the sleep of exhaustion.

They were now informed that they were to join the Canadians, and again were on the march through Wileche—a mass of smouldering ruins.

The machine guns were called for, and of

course one had to stick in the mud and be torn out only after Herculean labours.

At four A.M. on this terrible day the 10th Brigade made contact with the Canadians and attacked the Germans.

The battle began at four-thirty. Bairnsfather's company was right in the thick of it.

The story of the first gas attack is one of the most terrible in the whole history of the War.

Bairnsfather, as does every man who was there, remembers it as a nightmare of horror.

In this case the nightmare was ended by his being blown sky-high by the explosion of a shell, and soon after waking to consciousness in a hospital in Boulogne.

As it so happened, this was to be the last taste of War as a soldier in the trenches.

As soon as he was convalescent he started upon his great series of *Fragments from France.*

By the time he was ready to return to France, he had turned these Fragments out in such numbers and with such brilli-

ance, that even the War Office awoke to the fact that his pictures were a tremendous moral stimulus to the soldiers of the line.

It was, therefore, decided that he must be kept exclusively on the making of Fragments, for which purpose he was sent first of all to the

French front, then to the Italian, and finally to the American Army in France.

Of these and other wanderings and of their extraordinary success I shall write in my next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

LUCK

YOU will doubtless have noticed by now the desire on the part of the prosecution to prove

(A) That I am a success.

(B) That I had reasons for becoming so.

Now we all know what Counsel are. We all know how things can go in there at one end and come out quite different at the other. "All is not sausage that grunts," as possibly they say in the Chicago factories.

Well, I want to plead now, and in a short space will endeavour to explain this "Success." I want to be quite candid, and as well as I can, describe, for those who wish to hear, all about the Meteor which flashed into my existence in the year 1915.

I have had so many letters and personal requests that I feel the necessary egoism in this chapter will be pardoned.

I am going to do my utmost to explain the

sensations of world-wide success *and* its drawbacks.

As Counsel has already explained, and as he will emphasize later on, I began at the O in Zero. I feel I can conscientiously say that nobody could exist who had a more frenzied desire to succeed as an artist than I had. I was a sort of "Moody Dane." Back in those struggling, impecunious days I wanted something in art, I didn't know what. As I pursued my sorrowful way through other professions, Hamlet would have been a comedian compared to me. I shall never forget the intense and wonderful joy of my first cheque! To get a real type-written letter from an office that wanted to pay me something for what I could draw!

That first two-guinea cheque contained more soul-stirring thrills of pleasure and achievement than two-hundred-guinea cheques received later.

The fact is, I think, that if you are gifted with a great desire for attainment, you never attain. By which I mean, that having attained there is always another step ahead.

Those *Fragments from France* pictures that

have percolated throughout the globe and made thousands of pounds, left my hands mostly in moods of depression. The greatest pleasure being when I felt I had hammered home a "good 'un," or got an artistic effect which pleased me.

Now, I will skip further harrowing details, and turn to the merry spectacle "Success."

Success is largely known, by those who haven't had it, as Luck. It is, moreover, thought to be the height of desirability. Both these theories are wrong, but both contain grains of truth.

Let me take the first theory of the two.

Luck!

What a small word, and yet how much it contains!

I have had a touch of its meaning, and so has everyone else in the world.

It's a mysterious word, embracing a mysterious and ill-defined reality. Everybody at some time or other has Luck about something.

I know there are morose, disappointed mortals who would deny this, but there is no getting away from the fact that in some degree

everyone has had, at least, a nodding acquaintanceship with Luck.

Now, before we go any further, take only one little instance in your own career. What about the time when the 5.9 went under your arms as you were taking a rum jar off the parapet, and exploded twenty yards away?

Luck wants a lot of thought and study.

Is Luck luck, or is it a definite sequence of ordained chances, which we are given to clutch, and use if possible?

Anyway, whether Luck floats around uncontrolled to be caught and tamed, or whether it forms part of the irrevocable film known as one's life, that does not matter. The thing that counts is that we all know of and look out for Luck, and therefore the thing is how to use it.

Just as there is positive and negative electricity, there is positive and negative Luck.

Good Luck and Bad Luck.

Both can be profitably used.

Good Luck can apparently be good when first you get it, and ultimately turn out to be bad.

Bad Luck can ultimately turn out to be good.

Well, so much for the different brands, but now about using it.

Luck by itself is merely a transient spark—a star shell shooting up into the sky of one's life. It will burst into a bright helpful light, then drop to earth and darkness again and go out.

You must catch it, tame it, and use it.

When Luck does come grasp it, hold it, and do all you can to foster it.

Luck is a tender flower. If put quickly into water and nursed, it may brighten the house for many a day.

People who don't do this invariably allude to other people's Luck as to something undeserved.

On the whole, I think, bad Luck comes off best—which is perhaps natural in a bad world. Many people don't at all mind discussing in subdued exultation somebody else's bad Luck while they cynically mention somebody's good luck with ill-concealed envy.

Very few realize that Luck must be turned to account by the recipient.

There is no doubt of the existence of an invisible and unexplainable grouping of events in everyone's life. Some good, some bad, both invisible till you come on them suddenly. The best combination of these, when they have apparently come without pre-arrangement, is called Luck.

Good, lasting results which come to any one are the results of grasping the spark of Luck which has gleamed, and kindling it into a fire of fortune.

Now, having let off that froth about Luck, let me turn to the resulting complaint, "Success."

Success is the envy of everyone. One doesn't even have to bother about Luck, when thinking of Success. One gets dazzled by its full meaning.

Think of seeing people whispering together when you enter a hotel or theatre, all saying "That's him — that's him over there!"

Think of the joy of getting theatre seats for nothing, and buying everything else at double price!

When maidens come and ask you to sign their autograph albums, well, the joy is excruciating.

This is not all that composes Success, this is merely the Fame part.

It's most alluring. Some people, I know, like porters at railway stations to read their great name on the luggage, and be civil in consequence. (Half-a-crown generally changes hands, but why notice that.) Some like being ushered into a smart restaurant by the Head waiter, as if the Shah of Persia had arrived, but all these little things come under the "fame "side of success. The other side is financial. You will notice an extraordinary and subtle change creep over the demeanour of sundry people you knew, when you have got the right mixture in your success (*i.e.*, two parts of money and one of fame).

That wealthy man, who used to scarcely see you when you passed him, and to whose domain

you were never asked, will suddenly develop an acute desire to speak to you in front of other people, or invite you to a dance—but I disgress.

Success is all right when played carefully and slow. Its greatest drawback is that when arrived at it is not nearly so attractive as it seemed a long way off. It's quite worth aiming for all the same, if only to show the world, and yourself, how to handle it, and after all if you don't like it—it's easy to get rid of.

CHAPTER XII

IS BAIRNSFATHER AN ARTIST?

Up to this point I have tried to convey some idea of the herculean efforts of Bairnsfather to get a footing in the world of art.

It will be seen, if I have succeeded, that he trod no royal road to fortune.

He started at the foot of the ladder. He spent more than the average time given to most of us to dwell in the Via Dolorosa, and nothing other than exceptional determination and will power saved him from passing the whole of his life amidst the shadows of defeat.

His grit never for long lost heart in his gift.

Even when down and out and a wanderer upon the face of the earth, he constantly kept his end and ambition in sight.

Yet, it was not until after seven years of ceaseless effort, that the first glimmering of fame broke through the shadows.

This grateful moment happened in the mili-

tary hospital at Boulogne when he was waiting to be shipped to England.

He had emerged with his life from the carnage of the first gas attack and like every other wounded soldier was thinking only of his amazing good fortune at being alive and bound for Blighty.

The soldier in the adjoining bed heard his name and turned to him and said, "You will be the fellow who drew those pictures in the *Bystander*."

This was positively the first appearance of that strange intangible thing called Fame.

Arriving in England he was taken to the 4th London General Hospital where he remained under treatment for several weeks, with his "Mascot Mother" in close attendance upon him.

It was one afternoon when she was sitting by his bedside that a representative of the *Bystander* called at the Hospital, asked to see Bairnsfather, expressed the pleasure of the paper at having his drawings, and asked him to send along some more.

This probably more than anything else

contributed to the rapidity of his convalescence.

He had not thought very much about the incident at Boulogne until this moment, but the idea of a casual reader's opinion being supported by the opinion of the paper itself, lifted him into the seventh heaven of exaltation. As soon as he was able to draw he got his materials together and started in earnest on the wonderful series of *Fragments from France.*

On reaching the stage when he was able to leave the Hospital, he went to his home at Bishopton, near Stratford, and day in and day out drew pictures for the *Bystander.*

As I have already indicated, these pictures met with some criticism from outside circles.

The reason of this criticism is easily understood.

In England journalism is curiously mixed in its appeal.

The most popular papers in England are, as a rule, sensational in character and they continue to feed their readers—to the gratification of the public and themselves—with a series

A Sketch from Bairnsfather's Notebook Illustrating his Accurate Observation of Detail

of highly coloured accounts of crime and scandal.

It is natural, therefore, that in this atmosphere there should arise a counter feeling intensely hostile to this type of thing—a feeling so hostile that it sometimes does not pause to consider what is common and what is human.

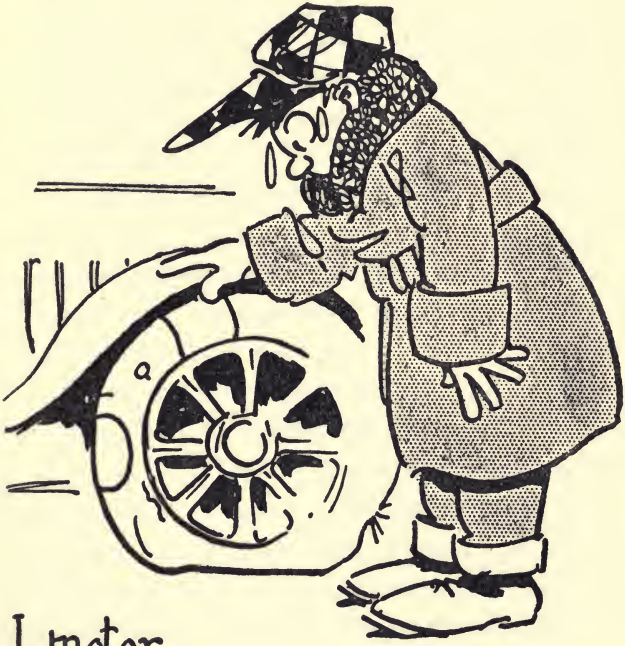
Bairnsfather dealt with everyday types; therefore, before people took the time or the trouble to understand him they classified him with the common, which condemnation is very well illustrated by the writer in the *Times*, who said:—

It is always disappointing to be dull when others hold their sides, to be the only one who does not see the joke. We regret unfeignedly that when the Empire laughs we must remain dumb. Captain Bairnsfather's cartoons have always been looked for with eagerness by the public for many months past, by civilians and soldiers alike, who nearly all unite in a chorus of praise, that "it is so like what trench-life must be," that "it shows our unique British sense of humour," and so on. Mr. Kipling, one may say, "created" the British soldier in

the shape of Private Ortheris and Soldiers Three. What is the result on the public of reading those works? They think no soldier a "real soldier" unless he uses plenty of the worst language; young soldiers model themselves on Private Ortheris, with what result? That they acquire his vices and overlook his virtues.

Readers of Mr. Wells's last book will remember the Cockney soldier of the new Army who could not open his mouth without using the word "bloody," not because he liked it, but because Ortheris, his beau ideal of a soldier, did so, and the disgust that he aroused in his fellow-soldiers who preferred—shall we say Wordsworth's ideal? We know a battalion where a soldier such as Captain Bairnsfather takes as his type would be most summarily dealt with. Nothing so quickly lowers moral as slovenliness, and nothing is more difficult to check than the gradual degeneration due to trench life: and yet here we have an Army Officer who invariably depicts his men (to whom his book is dedicated), as the very type which the Army is anxious to suppress. Can it be wondered at that young soldiers try to look like a "Bairnsfather type"? We can all remember the "Gibson Girl," but do we want our daughters to look like "Eve" in another of our illustrated contemporaries?

Yet "Eve" is delightful, because she is not a degenerate, she is an impossible. Bairnsfather's



I motor,
a story without words

Alf and Bert are disgusting, because they are so possible. It is not with Captain Bairnsfather's humour that we quarrel, for his situations are

invariably amusing. It is because he standardizes—almost idealizes—a degraded type of face. We cannot but enter a protest against so cruel a caricature of the men who endured the first winter in France. The men we knew jested and swore like many other gallant men, but they prided themselves on being the smartest battalion in the Brigade, not the one that most resembled one of Bairnsfather's drawings.

This diatribe you would imagine appearing under some such heading as "The Vulgarity of Bairnsfather." On the contrary, it appeared in the *Times* Literary Supplement of the 21st December, 1916, under the title "The Soldier who made the Empire Laugh."

It is also worth while remarking that although the writer regards Bairnsfather's types as "disgusting," he not only admits their acceptability throughout the Empire, but professes his own utmost familiarity with the Bairnsfather cartoons.

Furthermore, in a final paragraph I have not quoted, he declares that the interest in *Bullets and Billets* lies in the pictures, so that after quarrelling with Bairnsfather psychology for

nine tenths of his space the writer concludes by paying an unconscious tribute to the stuff he sets out to condemn.

This was the sort of thing levelled at Bairnsfather's head in the earlier days of his success.

The contrary of the sensationalism to which I made reference is snobbery, and among the snobs Bairnsfather found no favour.

He was regarded as an offence against good taste and in no place was this attitude more speedily and formally established than in the British War Office.

Yet it was the British War Office which first had forced upon it positive proof that Bairnsfather's drawings caused a tremendous uplift in fighting moral among the men at the front—a fact which has been proved over and over again, although the writer in the *Times* is so blind to human psychology that he flatly contradicts it and proceeds to elaborate his thesis of this contradiction.

The experts whose duty it was during the War to see to the maintenance of Army discipline, not merely encouraged the distribution of Bairnsfather pictures, but gave him special

and extraordinary facilities to do as much work as possible of the same kind.

The writer in the *Times* is so utterly wide of the mark that I can only conclude that he wrote in ignorance of the trenches.

It was a famous general who declared that the Bairnsfather pictures were worth an Army Corps on the Western Front, but possibly the writer in the *Times* knows more about the psychological reaction of such things than a mere General.

It is quite true that Bairnsfather was not very popular with the Staffs behind the Line, but then the Staffs themselves were not very popular with the men in the trenches whom Bairnsfather knew and loved because he was one of them and had stood shoulder to shoulder with them both before and during the War.

It was their point of view, since that was the most vital thing in the whole War, that he chose to interpret.

Throughout the whole of his career his artistic effort has been directed to the translation into picture and jest of the doings of the people, so that on the whole we may conclude that if he

did not find laudation elsewhere, it was because he did not look for it.

The War Office, however, was so sure of the uplifting effect of his art that he was not allowed to return to the trenches as a soldier, but was reserved for a time on special propaganda work in London.

Then he was sent to the French Front at Rosendale, on the borders of the North Sea, and subsequently to Verdun, the result being a series of pictures illustrating the life of the French Army.

This task was undertaken at the special invitation of the French Higher Command, and no sooner was it completed than an invitation from the Italian Headquarters reached him, and he was despatched to the Italian Front, where the Duke of Milan personally conducted him round the battle lines.

The resulting series of pictures met with the

full personal approval of General Cadorna and were published and circulated among the Italian soldiers as well as throughout the world.

It is interesting to note that it is in this series that the great American artist Dana Gibson finds Bairnsfather's best picture—the Fragment which he chose as being the most brilliant thing Bairnsfather ever did in this series was that entitled—"19XX?" The War was over some little time ago, but this man has not heard about it yet, and nobody can get up to tell him. His sniping is, therefore, very annoying to that Austrian village in the valley.

The picture, it will be remembered, represents an Italian soldier lying on the crest of an inaccessible peak and down what looks like miles below are Austrian villages frantically signalling without any visible result.

The Bairnsfather cartoons were extraordinarily popular with the Italian soldiers. Piermarini, the distinguished correspondent of the London *Evening News*, told me that they were displayed everywhere in Italian billets, and that he himself was pressed into service by his fellow-soldiers to write translations in

Italian of the letterpress below each of the drawings.

Following his trip to the Italian Front, Captain Bairnsfather was next invited to the American Front, and did a series of cartoons for the American Army in France.

Following on this, just before the Armistice, he was asked to go to America to lecture on behalf of the Allied cause, and thereafter to proceed to Australia to be the central figure in a recruiting campaign on the invitation of the Australian Government.

These facts, which I record in the briefest possible fashion, are in themselves sufficiently damning contradiction to the statement made by the writer quoted above to the effect that Bairnsfather's cartoons had an undesirable influence upon the moral of the soldiers who saw his work.

Now, another criticism levelled against Bairnsfather's work is that even if he is humorous he is not an artist.

This criticism arises out of the fact that most of Bairnsfather's public work has had a decided, and as I have indicated, a deliberate popular

appeal, with the result that he was compelled to work in a medium which would be widely understood.

Probably if he had followed some of the so-called highbrow schools of art and developed futurism, cubism, or vorticism, or some other of the diseases which are liable to attack artists in their youth, he would have gained a reputation for cleverness and abstruseness.

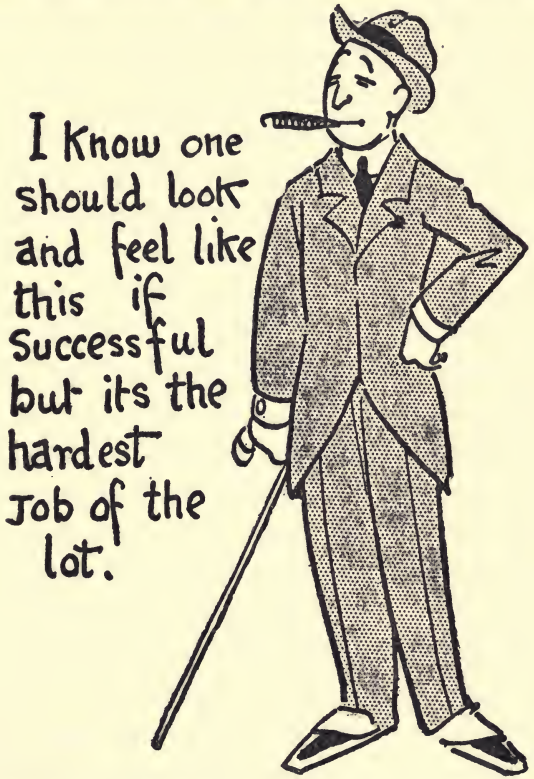
It is one of the curious and fallacious qualities of certain tastes that they are inclined to gaze in wondering admiration on what they cannot understand.

"This man looks like this in the hopes that something will come of it"

The simple style is the only classic style, and eccentricities superimposed upon such simplicity, are often as not mere camouflage for a cleverness which does not exist.

I find, therefore, in the simple, direct appeal, which is characteristic of Bairnsfather's popular cartoons, not a failing, but a virtue.

But it should not for a moment be supposed that Bairnsfather is capable only of drawing



in wash or in black and white what are called joke drawings.

He has, as I have tried to point out, a very

serious side to his nature. As I have indicated, he thinks deeply and correctly on all subjects of the day concerning humanity, and he has repeatedly found himself compelled to interpret such things on canvas and in colour. The many pictures of this description which decorate his homes in London and in the country, would, if they were exhibited, come as a revelation to those who assert that there is little or no artistic ability behind the drawings of Fragments.

In these pictures I find real artistic conception, a true idea of picture composition, an exquisite handling of colour, and a perfect sense of the value of spacing—a complement to composition which is of such vital importance that it can lift any picture where it is successfully applied, from commonplace rank to distinction.

It is, as far as colour work is concerned, in landscape that Bairnsfather is most happy, and it is simply a question of time, bound by the extraordinary demands which have been made upon him since he became famous, until he will be able to free himself to do first-class work of this kind—work which he is very capable of doing and which is entirely after his own heart.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW TO RUN A WAR

SHOULD we ever have the luck to be plagued by another War, why not run it on real business lines? What could be simpler and more satisfactory than to "place" an order for a War somewhere? Anxiety as to the final result would thus be avoided, and the ultimate cost known at the outset. A glance through the correspondence below will show you exactly what I mean.

From JOHN BULL & Co., Owners of the largest Empire in the World. To BILL, BURT, ALFFE & Co., Universal War Providers.

August 4, 1928.

DEAR SIRS,

We are runnning a War shortly, and would be much obliged if you would kindly submit a quotation for subduing an European upstart with a population of about sixty millions.

Please let us have your quotation as soon as possible. Your faithfully,

JOHN BULL & CO.

MESSRS. BILL, BURT, ALFFE & CO., Universal War Providers. Revolutions, Offensives, Massacres; all supplied on moderate terms. Sole Agents in Europe for Mexican Revolts. Capital, £750,000,000,000,000,000.

August 5, 1928.

DEAR SIRS,

We thank you for your enquiry of the 4th, and herewith have much pleasure in enclosing quotation for War such as you mention. We may say that we could begin on receipt of your order, and will give the work our very best attention.

MESSRS. BILL, BURT, ALFFE & CO.
Estimate for War to be carried out to order of MESSRS. JOHN BULL & CO.

To supply and fix complete in mud 20,000,000 assorted troops of best quality, complete with generals, buff slips, and memo forms, and all other necessaries.

To provide 500,000 15-inch Maxim guns complete with Martyrs for firing same.

To provide and endeavour to use 50,000 30-inch howitzers with Tetanus shells.

To advance 500 yards and to efficiently pulverize your opponents by means of explosive asphyxiation.

The whole of the above work to be carried out for the sum of £500,000,000,000,000 16s. 4d.
N.B.—The above figure is exclusive of the supply of Peace Cranks; these can, no doubt, be procured locally.

Hoping to receive your order, which shall have our very best attention, we beg to remain, Yours faithfully,

BILL, BURT, ALFFE & CO.

JOHN BULL & CO.

August 10, 1928.

DEAR SIRS,

We have carefully considered your estimate, and there is one point which we wish to raise with you, *i.e.*, you make no mention of reparation. Will you please let us know as soon as possible whether reparation is included and if not, what your charge for same will be.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN BULL & CO.

MESSRS. BILL, BURT, ALFFE & CO., WAR Providers.

August 11, 1928.

DEAR SIRS,

Reparation was not included. The extra price for this will be £4,000,000,000, which will alter our total figure quoted to you to £504,000,000,000 16s. 4d. Hoping to receive your order, we beg to remain,

Yours faithfully,

BILL, BURT, ALFFE & CO.

JOHN BULL & CO.

August 12, 1928.

DEAR SIRS,

We have decided to accept your estimate. Please put the work in hand at once, but we wish the work carried out exclusive of atrocities.

BILL, BURT, ALFFE & CO.

August 14, 1928.

DEAR SIRS,

We thank you for your esteemed order, and hope to begin the War on Wednesday next. We note what you say with regard to atrocities, and will delete same from our estimate. There is some little delay in getting a sufficient

number of generals from our warehouse owing to the shortage of gold braid, but we are pushing the matter forward to the best of our ability.

Yours faithfully,

BILL, BURT, ALFFE & CO.

JOHN BULL & CO.

DEAR SIRS,

You promised to commence this War last Wednesday, and you have now wasted four valuable days. We went over the ground this morning, and were annoyed to find that you had not yet delivered a single army corps, or a sheet of corrugated iron. All we could see was a pile of barbed wire and red tabs, and an old man mixing mud.

Please give this matter your earliest attention.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN BULL & CO.

(TEN YEARS ELAPSE)

JOHN BULL & CO.

DEAR SIRS,

We herewith send you 80 per cent. of the amount of your contract, which is now due. At the same time we wish to state that we are entirely satisfied with the work. Your advance of 300 yards, five years ago, was most creditable.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN BULL & CO.

(TEN YEARS ELAPSE)

JOHN BULL & CO.

DEAR SIRS,

We herewith remit you the remainder of the amount due on your contract with us. But we can on no account pass the extra amount of £600,000,000 sent in by you for "tips to neutrals." This should certainly have been included in your original estimate. Apart from that, however, we are entirely satisfied.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN BULL & CO.

Apart from the difficulties, which I have now cleared up, of how to run a war—there is another great danger. That is if by chance warfare falls into the hands of the Y.M.C.A. completely. There is a tendency in the world today to modify war.

Having failed to remove warfare from the surface of the earth there is always a movement to carry out wars on "humane lines." That ridiculous absurdity, the Hague Convention, once tried to make war a "Gentleman's game." To my mind you cannot make fine differences in how to fight.

If an Empire is at War, it's a serious thing. You *must* win or pay for it, or lose and pay for it twice. And there is no difference in gentility between gassing a man or sticking him with a bayonet. In order to avoid any anæmic set of rules being set up by a world which seeks to irradicate inevitable future wars let me utter a warning against wars being conducted thus:—

7 a.m. Early morning tea.

7.30 Short walk, then back to breakfast.

8 A quiet hour with Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

9	Battle.
9.30	Coffee and Sandwiches.
10	Battle (continued).
1	Lunch and dominoes.
2 till 3	A brisk walk realizing as much as possible the beauties of the flora and fauna in neighbourhood.
3	Battle.
4	If battle over, tea and dominoes.
6	Bugle call "Back to the Huts."
7	If battle hasn't broken out again, cocoa and caviare.
(Special	Campaign through U.S.A. for funds in aid of this.)
8	A smokeless "sing-song" on ginger ale.
9	All hot-water bottles to be filled.
10	Bed. The Company Quartermaster-Sergeants and Sergeant-Majors to read fairy tales till all go to sleep.

CHAPTER XIV

ACTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT

To any one who has studied the work of Bairnsfather as a humorist artist it will be apparent that a distinctive feature of his drawings is the invariably extraordinarily humorous letterpress attached to his pictures. This is a great gift which he has assiduously cultivated by observing a principle which most artists too often ignore.

You find, as a rule, that the average artist sees in situations, and therefore takes for his guidance, the hopeless rule of thumb, which is responsible, for example, for the terribly poor standard of cinematography.

As a rule the cinema producer knows less about his business than any other expert in trade.

The reason for this is that he pictures situations including action and posture rather than ideas.

A situation is seldom amusing in itself.

It invariably needs a framework to which we might give the name context or atmosphere.

The consequence is that in drawing pictures of the best quality, especially in humorous art, you have to consider what leads up to a situation, or what results from it. Accordingly you find yourself looking not at situations, but behind them, so that what you picture is not a physical fact but a frame of mind.

Take the Bairnsfather picture "The Better 'Ole," the most famous of them all. One man is saying to another, "If you knows of a better 'ole, go to it." I attribute much of the overwhelming success of this picture and its inspirational phrasing to the fact that the whole thing translates a frame of mind. The fact which is so delightfully absurd is the imagining of the argument which must just have taken place before the one soldier obliterates the other with this final objurgation.

Take another example, the Fragment entitled "There goes our blinkin' parapet again." This derives the whole of its laughable quality from the psychological fact that the soldier in the dug-out is not in the least concerned with

I dont mind photographers at all

Yrs truly
Bruce Bairnsfather

Yrs untruly
Bruce Bairnsfather

If they'll Keep on doing this for me

the explosion, but feels a vast discomfort at the prospect of having to fill and place so many more sandbags.

I argue from all this that Bairnsfather's art is more than photographic.

As I have already pointed out, there is a tremendous amount of hard psychological study behind his work. I have shown in various ways how he developed along these lines in his earlier days—how he was always concerned more with what people thought than what they did, and in dealing with Bairnsfather's ventures upon the stage I think that these things are important, not only because they throw light upon this phase of his genius, but because his stage enterprise shows the full fruit and flower of these gifts.

Now Bairnsfather turned towards the stage long before there was any war. His first stage period is contemporary with his engineering adventures, and it will surprise many to know that he was the producer, scene painter, author and principal actor in four pantomimes at this stage of his career.

Three of these were done for charity, *Robin*

Hood, *Aladdin*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. In each of these he took the principal part, and scored a tremendous success, especially as Widow Twanky.

These three pantomimes were so successful that he was inspired to go into the theatrical business seriously on his own, with the result that he produced the pantomime *Ali Baba*, at Stratford and Leamington, with considerable success financially, although physically he was somewhat stripped of his dignity, when on making an entrance he fell down a ladder and had his costume so ripped and torn that he had to make a very undignified exit.

It will be seen, therefore, that when Bairnsfather turned his mind to the idea of writing a play about the War, he was not doing anything which he had not done before. He knew the sort of thing the public liked, and by first-hand experience he had gained an intimate knowledge of the practical working of the stage.

He built a model theatre of his own, complete in every detail, and on this model stage he built the whole of his scenery for the actual production. It was because of his constant study of

A Story without Words

stage conditions in this model theatre that he has been able to master all the intricate details of stage-setting.

In most cases when authors or artists make up their minds to write a play they do so without any of this very valuable technical advantage. Bairnsfather had not only this technical knowledge of how a play is handled behind the scenes, but he had also the very valuable knowledge which comes to an actor who plays a part in his own production and learns from popular approval and disapproval the great gift of humility.

Neither should it be presumed that these four pantomimes and the study of the model theatre were the only training which Bairnsfather had for the stage. He was in constant demand at all sorts of entertainments and concerts, where his favourite stunt was to be either the red-nosed comedian or a female impersonator, in both of which he excelled to an equal extent.

It should be kept in mind, therefore, that when Bairnsfather came up against the War he had trained himself to look at it not only with

the eye of a humorist artist, but with the mind of a dramatist, and it was very early in his career as a soldier that he saw the possibility of dramatizing life in the trenches in such a way as to amuse theatre-goers and at the same time represent faithfully certain phases of soldier life.

The result was the appearance of *The Johnson 'Ole*, which was a short one-act sketch, introduced in the famous and successful London revue *Joyland*. This is the sketch from which I have already quoted the soldier classic about the "bird," and the "girl."

The Johnson 'Ole met with such a favourable reception that Bairnsfather's name became a greater and greater attraction, and his following sketch *The Café de la Paix*, made a tremendous hit in another London revue—*See Saw*.

The reader will observe here again how slowly and systematically Bairnsfather climbed in the world of drama from the foot of the ladder to the top. He started off with singing songs and gagging at local concerts and entertainments. He followed this up by building a model theatre

and making himself fully acquainted with the working of the stage, he then proceeded to produce on an increasingly elaborate scale local pantomimes which met with considerable success, then when his name was sufficiently big to command attention, he descended upon London with two one-act sketches, both of which were received with the utmost enthusiasm, and then, and not until then, he considered the time ripe to make a grand assault upon a West End manager, with a full-length play, which he entitled *The Better 'Ole*.

The trials and tribulations which Bairnsfather underwent before any manager would consent to put this play on any stage, would in themselves fill a book twice the size of this one. In spite of the fact that he had learnt his stagecraft in a hard school, he found the theatrical producer harder still.

The Better 'Ole was read to manager after manager in London and turned down as a "dud," until finally Mr. C. B. Cochran decided to put it on at the Oxford.

The play had before the first night met with so much adverse criticism that on the fatal day

Bairnsfather was in a state bordering on collapse. The greatest encouragement he had was from one or two imaginary friends, who said that he was risking his whole reputation on this mad affair, and that when he had failed he would return to the ranks of the nobodies. Even after the first-night reception, which was simply overwhelming in its enthusiasm, there were plenty of people, including one very distinguished theatrical manager, who prophesied that the thing would last probably a week.

It is quite in accord with the workings of human nature that these friends and prophets now knew all along that it would be a riotous success.

It can be truly said that *The Better 'Ole* took London by storm. It came just at the right moment, and hit just the right note. Every soldier on leave made a pilgrimage to the Oxford, and went back to France in all the better heart because he had seen *The Better 'Ole*.

It was, in fact, so successful in London, that touring companies were very speedily in the provinces in Britain, and negotiations were opened up for the sale of the play in America. American theatrical producers are usually very live men, but on this occasion they were entirely at sea, because *The Better 'Ole* was offered to practically every producer of importance on Broadway, and absolutely turned down. Finally, when it seemed that New York would not tolerate the play in its midst at any price, Charles Coburn decided to try it out in Greenwich Village.

The thing was a riot, and very soon it had to be moved to Broadway, where it remained for many months, as well as touring every State of Canada and America, where even now *Better 'Ole* companies are still playing. In addition to this, the play appeared in Australia, under the management of Mr. Hugh D. Mackintosh, in South Africa, and in India.

Then the story of the play was filmed and shown in practically every picture theatre in the world, from New York to Nairobi.

The play which manager after manager had

refused to produce, proved a tremendous success wherever it was shown, and widened Bairnsfather's audience from Stratford and Leamington to the English-speaking world.

And it should be kept in mind by those who follow Bairnsfather's career, that every chapter in his story goes to show that he is not a one-play dramatist.

In *The Better 'Ole* he caught the spirit of the times and interpreted it with a brilliance and humanity which no one else was able to equal, and it needs very little gift of prophecy to say that he will again catch the spirit of the times and give an equally brilliant interpretation for the stage.

The year following the Armistice was so nebulous and extraordinary that it was impossible to say where the interest of such a play could be found, but more recently the problems which concern all the peoples of the world have resolved themselves into more definite shape, and it is here, I imagine, that Bairnsfather will find the subject for his next play.

His work as a dramatist shows exceptional powers of observation, ability to write epigrammatic English in which he invariably sums up a

whole problem in a single phrase, and a tremendously acute dramatic sense which leads him to use all the stage devices which capture the attention of an audience. His theatrical work like his pictures, combines humour with the serious things of life with the result that while he amuses his audience, he also inspires thought.

CHAPTER XV

"THE PLAY'S THE THING"

NOBODY can get through this world without pain, some less than others. I am assuming that you have been born in agony, in other words, you are a would-be author of plays for the stage (I say "for the stage" in order to mark the important and tragic difference between that sentence and "on the stage"). Well, this is meant as a kindly guide to those who, from an excess either of youth or ambition, are desirous of seeing a play by themselves actually on the stage.

I will treat with this malady from the very earliest stages. We will assume that you have a play written. Your father, mother, sisters, brothers, and cousins have had a great desire that you should part with it soon, or refrain from reading it to them again. Stimulated by this help, you set forth on your travels.

Before arriving in London to sell your play, it is as well to get a manager. A man who is

more or less a cross between Joe Beckett and the United States Treasurer is the sort of one to get, if you can. When you've got him, never go out alone, take him with you—always. Now get a list of Producers; this can be procured from either the Telephone Book or the Criterion Restaurant.

Having selected the one that you feel will be overjoyed to produce your play, get your managerial phenomenon to fix an appointment. Here, I should recommend a trip down the Nile or a little hunting in Thibet, or something of that kind, as waiting wears down your nerves.

Suddenly one day, when you have gone back to poultry-farming, a telegram will arrive that an appointment has been fixed with Abraham Pinchwhiski, the famous producer, and owner of the Olympic Theatre. Now's your chance. You and your Manager must go at once with play and terms to see the potentate in the depths of the grandeur in which he lives. It is very improbable, but we will assume that he has just returned from Paris, New York, or Maidenhead, and is in his office when you are shown in.

Don't be unnerved by the three-thousand-guinea door mat as you enter; don't let the ten-thousand-pound grand piano, inlaid with black ivory, cause you to falter. Put the hundred-guinea damask curtains and the fifty-guinea ink pot out of your mind; they might make you alter your terms. Any altering of your preconceived terms will be done by the Superman in whose presence you now are.

A great silence will fall upon the room as you sink out of sight into the leather cushions of the thousand-pound settee. Now listen carefully. From behind the seven-and-sixpenny cigar wedged amongst the gold teeth of the producer, will come golden words—probably, "Don't read your play, but tell me what it's about." You must do this at once, then wait for further golden words. At this point I am going to assume that the producer likes the idea and wants that play. (Peculiar assumption, this, but it makes my advice stronger.) He will put his seven-and-sixpenny cigar down on a ten-guinea ash tray given him by the leading comedian of his last revue in the hopes of another engagement. He may then say: "Read me the first scene."

Hold your manager's hand and do this at once. If that cigar gets back amongst the gold teeth, look out for trouble.

If the producer, on hearing that scene, wants the play, he will say "In its present form it wouldn't run a week." Let us be exuberant and again assume he has said this. He will then say across your face to your manager, "What do you want for it?" This is where your financial gladiator comes in.

After a twenty-round verbal contest your play will be left behind, and you and your manager, full of despair, will be wafted down a lift into the open street, there to seek a café.

You must now allow the sugarless coffee and cheap music to revive slowly your spirits and nurse you back to a less despairing frame of mind. Try and recall the exact words the producer used, make a rough calculation on the back of a menu card as to the absurdity of the producer's counter-offer to your pre-arranged terms. Your manager will do this for you with a vigour and venom that your artistic soul will be incapable of. Make plans as to your next

P.S. ↑ This is the place where they bring:- The Income tax forms, the water rate, the gas rate, the electric light-bill, and all the other 57 different varieties

move. At this point in this outburst of advice I am giving, I am bound to assume a certain definite course being pursued by your play, in order to arrive at some conclusive help, which is my object. I must, therefore, presume the ridiculous and extravagant theory that the producer, after you left him, turned to his "right-hand man," and said, "we want this guy's play." On this assumption you will not be many years older before your manager will wire you to the effect that a contract has been signed, and that details in connection with the production are being started at once. Get elated at this; don't ruin your pleasure by reading your manager's letter which follows the next day with the amended terms. Go to London if you can and start a relentless guardianship over your play. The pleasurable part of placing your play is now over; from this moment you must look out for every conceivable thing going wrong with it. You will be compensated for this harsh period by being elevated to that charmed histrionic fraternity which refers to all its members as "dear old boy."

The loving softness which lurks in this pseu-

donym will become more and more apparent as time wears on.

Now comes the actual production. The casual thinker might imagine that when a play is sold, it is then put on, by means of everyone connected with it endeavouring to do his best, but here the casual thinker would be quite wrong. All sorts of peculiarities break out the moment a producer has decided to produce a play. Among the leading phenomena which are now apparent are the following:

The producer can't get a theatre. When he has got a chance it is not at his price. When it is at his price nobody likes the locality. The producer never can get the very man or woman for the part, at his price, and, therefore, probably doesn't get him or her at all. This peculiar trouble is due to a very sad occurrence. It is this. No production can take place, and no artist can be booked for it, without an inordinate and grasping interest being taken in it by things called Agents, who are very rarely seen—only felt. These octopi dart out from under cover of the shady nooks and overhanging ledges of the Charing Cross Road, the moment they smell

"a new production." The aforesaid play will only now be produced by kind permission of these agents. Judging by appearances, it is their business to prevent you booking any artist. If they could possibly prevent you getting a theatre I'm sure they would, but don't worry about them, they mean well. After all they've probably got wives and children, and there's nothing that wives and children like better than the results of 40 per cent.

Well, here you are now, on the high road to success. You've got all the types of humanity needed for the project, grouped tightly round you; what more can you want? A day will shortly come when you know what the producer has drawn out of the bran-tub, as regards a theatre and artists. Soon after this the play will begin to materialize by means of rehearsals. One day you will go to an appointed spot to see the first rehearsal; you will wait an hour and a half and find it has been moved to next Tuesday. On Tuesday a sorrowful group will assemble in the semi-darkened and shrouded bar of a theatre. The producer will probably have gone to New York, the leading actor is pre-

vented coming by his Agent, the leading lady has caught such a cold on the river that she can only sit in the stalls in a dark corner with her greatest friend, who is telling her about her own part in another play. The supers and electricians are, however, there, and are all attention.

I will gloss over a long and painful period now, during which rehearsals of all sorts and sizes take place in various parts of London. I will skip all this until I arrive at that great day, "the dress rehearsal." This rehearsal is supposed to represent your play as it will be presented to the public for the first time the next night. Thank heaven, it doesn't. Everyone has come to this, everything is there—except the scenery, which generally comes in at half-time, thus ensuring, say, your "Interior of Library" words being spoken in front of "A wood near Nairobi," whilst at the end your pathetic home-coming-to-the-village-inn, with allusions to the honeysuckle round the window, has to be played in front of a turbulent vision of "Niagara Falls," being rendered still more turbulent by the carpenter making the machine

that does the thunder "loud enough" somewhere at the back. Over the dress rehearsal rests a gloom and a hopelessness such as must have oppressed England prior to Trafalgar. Nobody believes the play can possibly run more than a week. You don't yourself. If you founded your judgment on the dress rehearsal, you would be right.

The producer puts a brave front on his rash enterprise, of having bought your play. A producer smokes most when the outlook is blackest. When you see him light a fresh Corona-Corona, from the stump of the last one, you can know he is not far off tears. Three o'clock in the morning comes, the rehearsal is over, you slink out of the theatre, and as you pass down the chill and empty corridor to the stage-door, you will probably hear

Possible reconstruction of my Great-Grandfather, Andrew MacTrouble

a voice somewhere in the darkness mutter to another, "Call this a play?" or "I'll give it ten days." Never mind, go straight home to your hotel, but not if the way lies over Westminster Bridge. Temptation is a dangerous thing.

A "first night" of a first play is, of course, the Mecca towards which the patient is striving. The dress rehearsal is over; the doctor has stolen quietly out of your room at the hotel, and whispered to the nurse that you are now out of danger. When you wake you will realize with a galvanic start, that this is Der Tag. It is the day of the First Night! You will eat nothing except Pomeroy or Charles Heidsick. This is known in Harley Street as "nerves."

In a starving but liquid condition, you will roam, with your miserable face, up and down the hotel, and down and up streets, looking at every clock you can see, and starting violently as each half hour passes. In your mind you will have acted the play right through to an empty house, at least twelve times. The afternoon wears on, at last the zero hour approaches. You dine early off Moet and Chandon. Now's the time! You have got to go to the theatre

With a feeling much akin to that of an aristocrat in the French Revolution when being taken away in the tumbrils, you will be removed to the theatre in a taxi. It's well to pay the driver to wait for you whilst a first night is on—you may want him in a hurry after the first act, and an angry crowd is a dangerous thing.

Now, as before, I am going on a preposterous assumption, *i.e.*, that your play is going to be a success. This makes the conclusion of this chapter less painful, and more inspiring to the young enthusiast.

You arrive at the theatre. You go inside. The manager, producer, commissionaires, stage managers, etc., etc., will keep well away from you; they don't know whether you are a success yet. (Never mind that, it all helps.) Enter and sit at the back of the pit near an emergency exit (you can get away quicker and safer to your waiting taxi from there). If only you can, of course dress yourself like the manager for this occasion, and risk it. A sort of George Lashwood in black, I mean, with a shirt front like a bleached skating rink. This will help you at the

finish, for the audience will want to see a fair reproduction of an author.

With a crash the orchestra will burst into a tune calculated to drown the buzz of conversation and assorted noises over the crowded theatre. Somebody has whispered to you the ominous information that a lot of the press are there. Now for it. The curtain rises and you see a faint resemblance of the play you once wrote holding a great and enthusiastic audience tightly by its interest. Success!!

The first night is over! The producer, the managers, the actors, the actresses, the man in the box office, all your friends you will now find, "knew it would be a success." For months to follow you will have the carnal satisfaction of seeing crowds going in and royalties coming out. You are now a successful playwright.

It will be as well, before I finish this chapter, if I try to epitomize the production of a play. For this purpose, I am submitting in potted form, under the title of "The Play's the Thing," an impression of how a play is written and possibly produced.

"THE PLAY'S THE THING"

In order to grasp the significance of Shakespeare's announcement, quoted above, I give a few sidelights on production, as a guide to prospective playwrights.

Nothing will serve this purpose so well as a series of letters between producer and author.

THE WEB, SNATCHET, HANTS, April 1st.

DEAR OLD BOY:

Very many thanks for sending me your play to look at. I like it immensely, and feel sure there's pots of money for you in it. Can you come round to my offices tomorrow (you know the place, over the Babylon Grill Room) between twelve and one? We could then talk things over. It's an Eldorado for you Old Boy.

Yours,

ADAM SWINDLE.

HOTEL ECLIPSE, W., April 2d.

DEAR SWINDLE:

So glad you liked the play. Right O! I will come to your place about 12.30 tomorrow.

Yours,

Y. B. H.

HOTEL ECLIPSE, W., April 3d.

DEAR SWINDLE:

I went round to your offices at twelve and waited till 2.30. The office boy then rang up "The Web" and heard that you had gone to Brighton. He thought you would be back any minute but I couldn't wait. So sorry to have missed you.

Yours,

Y. B. H.

THE WHAT'SYOURS HOTEL, PORTSMOUTH, April 10th.

DEAR OLD BOY:

Damn sorry about missing you the other day—thought I said Tuesday, not Monday. Anyway, have seen about the play. I think there's thousands in it and it will run for six years at least. I will put it on in the West End, on the island in Piccadilly if necessary, and have all London's leading actors in the cast.

Yours,

A. S.

(EIGHT MONTHS ELAPSE)

HOTEL ECLIPSE, W., November 3d.

DEAR SWINDLE:

Do you want that play or not? It's now seven and a half months since you had it. You know the terms. I sent them to you over six months ago. Do let me know as soon as you can.

Yours,

Y. B. H.

THEATRE ROYAL, PONTYPRIDD, November 6th.

DEAR OLD BOY:

The terms you ask in that contract are simply ridiculous. One per cent. on the extra matinée gross takings would murder any show. The play is all right, I know, but in its present form it would not run a week. I have been seeing about it, and I find I cannot offer you any more than one and two-thirds per cent. on the gross profits obtained from the sale of the programmes. Now do be sensible, Old Boy, and think of the manager. The expenses of putting on this show of yours are going to be stifling.

Yours,

A. S.

THE WEB, SNATCHET, HANTS, December 1st.

So glad you've signed the contract, my lad. You are going to roll in money over that play. I am going to put it on regardless. I hope to get the Labyrinth Theatre for it, right in the West End. It will be on in a fortnight. Good luck, Old Boy.

Yours,

A. S.

"FAIRDENE," CONVALESCENT HOME, BOURNEMOUTH,
June 18th.

DEAR SWINDLE:

When is the play going to be produced? Haven't heard from you for over six months. Write a line when you can.

Yours,

WHY BE HOPEFUL?

THE WEB, SNATCHET, HANTS, June 22d.

DEAR OLD BOY:

The play will be on next week. Hope you can get up to see the first night. By the way, did I tell you, it's not going to be at the Labyrinth after all—couldn't get the lease. (They have got that revue *Let's All Strike*, booked solid there for two years.) I am putting it on at the Corn Exchange, Pembroke, for four weeks. It's going to be a riot, Old Boy!

Thine,

A. S.

Telegram:

Can't get Corn Exchange, Pembroke. Suggest Pier Pavilion, Hythe, do you agree?

REPLY UNPAID

Extract from private account book:

	£	s.	d.
Profits from Play.....	46	15	0
Hotel Expenses.....	28	10	0
Travelling.....	15	6	0
Specialist's Prescription.....	2	5	0
Balance at Bank.....	0	14	0

CHAPTER XVI

LECTURE TOURS

LECTURE tours hardly enter into my estimate of Bairnsfather either as artist or writer, and, therefore, I propose to deal with this phase of Bairnsfather's activity quite briefly.

At the same time although, except in the furnishing of new ideas and fresh outlooks in which all travel must result, these lecture tours have not materially contributed to his success either as artist or writer, yet they are so closely the outcome of both, that my summary of his work would be incomplete without some reference to his picture talks on the platform.

Bairnsfather had, of course, made his name before he was invited to talk about his pictures and especially about one, William Busby, whom he had lifted not merely from obscurity, but from non-existence, to be the most popular character in that big bother known as the Great War.

Old Bill had been received into every home and household—and some households are not homes. He had, for many months, been a topic of table conversation like President Wilson and Lloyd George, the only difference was that people did not quarrel about him—except in the *Times* Literary Supplement.

Naturally out of this immense popularity there arose immense curiosity, and those invisible beings who pull the lecture tour strings were quick to realize the existence of that same curiosity—their job being to divine where popular curiosity is going, and to get there first—to be ready as a sort of Cook's Guide.

In Bairnsfather they saw an ideal lecturer, because he was not only an object of popular interest, but he had shown he could make people laugh, and that, when a laugh was most sorely needed.

It was because of this that a large number of "Fragments from France" were made into lantern slides and Bairnsfather sat down to what he thought the hardest task of his life—the composition of a lecture that would hum.

He soon found there was a harder job still when he got stuck on a platform before a few thousand people, each of whom seemed to look, if not to say—in Scotland at least—"Now make me laugh if you can."

There is a very old proverb which says "You can lead a Ford to the high road, but. . ."

Lecturing taught Bairnsfather all about the "buts." At first they rather wandered him. Now he can recite them backwards.

His lecture tour in Britain opened in January, 1919, at the Queen's Hall, London, and spread outwards through the whole of the bigger cities of England and Scotland, and the success of this tour is shown by the fact that he was immediately invited to do a similar series of lectures in the United States and Canada, which engagement he fulfilled just a year after the British tour.

The American venture was another splendid success, which is well proved by the overwhelming reception given to Bairnsfather by the American Press and people.

These lectures are of interest from one other point of view.

The acquiring of fame invariably brings with it a vast correspondence, ranging in subject from the most fulsome praise to the whole-hearted abuse, from proposals of marriage to threats of murder.

Samples of the less restrained of such correspondence would hardly look well in these pages, but a few quotations from the more moderate will give the reader fair warning of the sort of thing to expect.

The more recent letters naturally are concerned primarily with the appearance of *Fragments*, and are frequently accompanied by photographs of the writer reading the paper in some remote corner of the world.

One which lies before me as I write comes from Bareilly, India. In this the writer says:

"I should like very much to express my

appreciation of your delightful little paper which I have read almost continuously from its infancy. The enclosed rough snapshot shows that *Fragments* reaches to all the corners of the earth, even to the Lower Himalayas. Having spent a large portion of the duration in our mutual mud-hole of a home, Flanders, I can readily understand the humour of all the Bairnsfather cartoons."

In similar strains is a letter from Sydney, Australia, in which the writer says:

"Will you accept the congratulations of an Aussie soldier with over five years' service with the A. I. F., in Egypt, Gallipoli, and France, and just returned to God's own country—Australia, for your great and entertaining 'Fragments.'

"It is not only a bright and snappy paper, but shows you to be the editor of editors, when you can place such good results on the market after your trying ordeal of active service for your country.

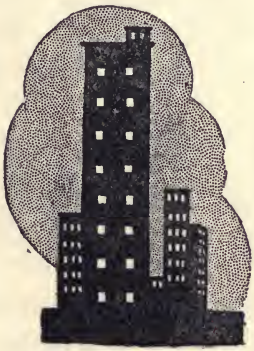
"With regard to Old Bill, I am of course glad to make his acquaintance once more as I always held a high opinion of the Old Bills of the British Army, because without

them we would no doubt today be ruled by the Prussian heel.

"I sincerely wish you every success in your new venture, but a paper with such high qualities is bound to succeed every time, and with you at the helm it is sure to take on."

On the other hand, there is, of course, the occasional anonymous letter in which the writer sets out to express his uncontrolled wrath at some picture which has trod upon a bad corn.

Such letters are very few, but they are usually breezy when they do arrive and show that the sting, which Bairnsfather occasionally gets into his work, hits well home. This has been most noticeable in his pictures concerning Sinn Fein, and it is in this class, generally speaking, that the threats of personal violence make their appearance.



As a contrast, the following from New York is worth quoting.

"I hope you will pardon this intrusion. I only want to thank you for the immense pleasure you gave myself and my friends with your *Fragments from France*, your *Bullets and Billets*, and also that delightful play *The Better 'Ole*.

"And now I will take the liberty of asking you what is to become of dear Old Bill.

"Please don't let him die or fade away, he should live for many, many years to come and bring happiness and laughter into our hearts. Please find him a new rôle in life. I hope to see his face again very soon in company with his old pals, Bert and Alf.

"Our most heartfelt thanks again for the many laughs you have given us.

"Wishing you as much happiness as you have given so many thousands of others."

Then there is the type of letter from the young flapper who is going on the stage and who suggests that Bairnsfather should write her a play.

And in the same class comes the love letter, although the following sample is rather left-handed in compliment.

"DEAR CAPTAIN BAIRNSFATHER: I think

your new paper is just too topping for words, and I think you are the nicest man in existence.

"I really am in love with you—quite. It is rather a good thing I have never seen you, or never likely to, as perhaps my ideal would not come up to what I imagine, and what I picture you as, and I shouldn't like to lose my ideal or think of you in any other way than I do now, just as a darling."

Then on delving further into this curious phenomenon in human psychology, I find "Fairy Maggie" writing to wonder if "darling Bairnsfather" would like to see her every day, and proceeding to give a time table of her day's work with the idea of showing that either her afternoons or evenings are quite free.

Following upon this I find "Gipsy" hoping that if her "dear Captain" is annoyed with "these nonsensical notes" he will be "kind and forgiving," whilst "Julie" who has been "contemplating writing for over two months" expresses the opinion that veneer and deception are the curse of this world, and declares that she is to make a clean breast of everything, whereupon she says that she is longing

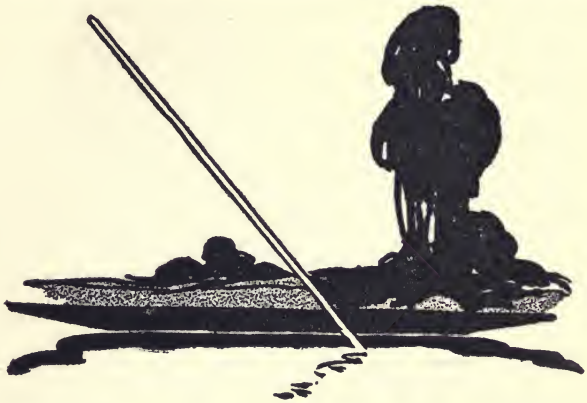
to engage in a friendly correspondence, adding that she is "so fearfully shy, and so shocked at herself for writing this," but concluding: "I assure you that you will be corresponding

Industry

with a perfect lady, and hoping this will be the beginning of a pleasant correspondence."

It may be said that the letters quoted are characterized by the extremes of flattery and hatred to which I have already called notice, but in point of fact, the most interesting thing about the great bulk of them, psychologically, is their immense sincerity—a sincerity which

even in the most extreme of these letters quite outweighs any seeming foolishness on the part of the writer. As I look at it, these letters are not in any instance, with the excep-



tion of what might be called the brazen epistle, a fit subject for jest. In most cases they are very much worth answering if only from the point of view that failure to acknowledge these letters is likely to injure some quite legitimate enthusiasm. As I intimated in my preface, it was, indeed, because of this consideration that the idea of this book was ever conceived or carried into execution.

The great sincerity of the bulk of Bairns-

father's correspondence, and especially the real difficulties expressed in these letters, by struggling artists, is the one thing which seemed to point to the real desire for the existence of such a book as this, and it is to be hoped that by its appearance many such difficulties will be swept away.

CHAPTER XVII

"TONIGHT AT EIGHT"

It is a long cry from drawing one's first picture, to be asked to lecture on one's pictures, yet such a fairy tale came floating past my way. I think there must have been a wicked fairy though, behind it all, for there are few things in life, to my mind, more soul-destroying than a Lecture tour.

To lecture once is all right, but to repeat the performance round fifty cities in England and America becomes a transient hell.

My fee for the next lecture is £1,000 the first hour and £2,000 every half hour after.

An audience could never imagine the anguish that lies behind a lecturer. They only see the lecturer, and a camouflaged edition of him at that.

They don't see the cold and cheerless dressing-room behind, the group of depressing managers, the wild race to the next town in the train.

A Day in the Life of an Artist
A. The Dream
B. The Reality

I have perpetrated lectures from Aberdeen to Toronto and from Washington to Brighton.

Before I sum up and pass judgment on an English tour, let me give you a slight idea of my first lecture in America, and how I got there.

Before being able to lecture at all in America, it is first of all necessary to get there.

Ha! Ha! You'll say of course, how obvious, but stay, gentle reader.

Have you ever heard that mystic phrase "getting a passport?"

Once or twice I have been through this solemn rite, and, therefore, can enunicate the complete catechism.

There are, of course, reasons which lead up to one's wanting a passport.

There must first have been a desire to leave this Realm of England for another Realm. It may be that you are going to France, Germany, or even, if you are weak enough, you may want to go to Russia.

Suppose, for instance, that you are going to Ameronia. This will enable me to give you an accurate idea of the procedure necessary to your shaking the dust of Britain from your

feet, and may also convince you that the best plan is to abandon going and remain quietly at home.

Going to Ameronia begins like this:—You learn from the utterances of weary friends that it is first of all necessary to get a "Passport!" before you attempt to book a passage on a ship.

The idea that you may have, that the shipping people want to take you anywhere, at a price, must be quickly and firmly got rid of. They don't like the idea of your leaving home at such an early age; they don't want your money; they don't, in fact, wish to know you. I suppose they suspect you of wishing to blow up their ship in mid-ocean.

Nobody wants to let you go, and nobody wants to take you. This is the first difficulty of getting anywhere outside England. Whether you are a Lenin, Trotsky, Robert Smillie, or the Duke of Coalumberland, it does not matter. They don't want you to go. You are an object of dire suspicion. In other words, you must conform to the

idea of supporting a Passport Office in their desire to make a legitimate living.

You will find out in due course, that if you are bent on carrying out this nefarious enterprise of visiting another country, you must be photographed.

This is most important, a diagram of that growth of yours above your neck is one of the first principles to be obeyed.

It has to be photographed in plan and elevation, and, above all, harshly.

None of that removing of superfluous hairs by a Bond Street photographer.

A clear and cruel map of your face must be made and pinned to your passport, with a truthful delineation of your father's past. Where he was born, why he dared, as an Englishman, to marry an Irishwoman, and why the —— he then had a son of your age.

After this you must fill in all your facial blemishes—colour of nose, size of mouth, and quantity of hair.

These details are all the more important, as they will be ultimately filed by a Boy Scout in a cloister, which will probably never

be disturbed till an archæologist digs up fossiled Passports in 6919 A.D. If you did not fill up the horrible details posterity would know nothing of its ancestors, and would have nothing to congratulate itself about.

When you have done all this, go home and wait.

Suddenly, a nicely bound volume will come to you by post (two days after the boat you wanted to catch has sailed). It is your Passport!!!

On reading it you will find that the authorities have got over their antipathy to your leaving these shores.

This in itself is not surprising when you look at your photograph pasted inside.

Anyway you've got that Passport, but I feel it's dealt out as a warning not to try and leave the country, but to stay behind and participate in a levy on capital or any other desirable attribute which a grateful country provides.

Having got the passport the trouble in my case is to cross the ocean.

A very important matter for me this.

They don't want an invalid lecturer on the other side.

I struggled with this subject, however, and possibly others may have to struggle too, so I will take you in imagination with me closely on my last daring exploit crossing the Atlantic on a mighty All Star liner *Insomnia.*

Like Sinbad the Sailor, I have perpetually vowed I would never go on another voyage, and yet here I am back after my sixth crossing of the Atlantic, which means having perpetrated about fifteen thousand miles on that sea alone. Add a few other assorted ocean trips to this and you'll find I've spent a life almost exclusively at sea; which, when taking into consideration that I am the World's Worst Sailor (Lonsdale Braces for this), will show you that the adventuresome spirit which got my ancestors into such trouble is still pulsating under my Jaeger.

I have often wondered how they get officers, crews, and stewards in such amazing quantities, all looking and feeling so well. I wonder where they are brought up. I should imagine

there must be a huge college somewhere on rockers or something like that, so that they could get used to the idea before they actually took to the sea. Of course, perpetually attending fairs and riding in swing-boats must be a great help in after life. Oh, isn't it terrible!

The table at which I write seems to be rocking, as I think of the sea. I can walk on any sea front and throw pebbles at the water without being sick, but that's all. Without any joking the sea is no joke to me! It's a very serious matter. I appeal to you (and all those who have ever had really ninety horse-power *mal-de-mer*), to realize that in the following words I am pouring out the heart sobs of one who has worshipped at the shrine of Nausea.

I have been to the War, I have been wounded, I have lectured in Scotland; in fact, I have suffered in many ways, but for real slap-up sob-stuff anguish give me a voyage on the Atlantic. If I catch sight of the tall yellow funnels of the ship, from the hotel windows the night before we start, I

reel. Then comes the great severing with the land. The moment when you take your life in one hand and your suit-case in the other, and walk up the gangway. The ship can be any tonnage for this experiment. I have done it on light-weights and heavy-weights, and the result doesn't vary. There is something unique, strange, and distressing about the architecture of a ship. The woodwork is never straight, but curved, to suit the eccentricities of the ship. In fact, everything is ship-like, and in a few days' time gets associated in your mind with basins, stewards, stuffy saloons, and the doctor.

To get a fine day for a start only aggravates the horror. You can know, almost assuredly, that "this wonderful weather cannot last." (It doesn't.) Then it begins.

A peculiar motion about your cabin becomes noticeable. Things begin to rattle on the washstand. Your clothes are swinging on their hooks on the door. Suddenly your berth seems to recede downwards away from your back, and leaves you to catch it up. Just as you are doing so it comes up again, shudders,

and slides away sideways. You gaze at the room with glassy eyes and watch an orange roll on to the floor. . . . S'truth. . . . Then all that happens over again. A steward enters. It makes you feel worse to see how healthy and happy he looks.

"When do we get there, steward?" you hiss through your clenched teeth.

"Another six or seven days, I expect, sir, that is if it keeps as fine as this, but it looks like a storm coming on." He shuts the port-hole and acrobatically gets out of the room.

"As fine as this. Heavens. Steward!!"

My ship was ploughing and skidding across the Atlantic not so long ago, taking me to a tour of over twenty cities.

I lay in my bunk in my usual nauseated condition watching the days drag past.

My first appearance was to be at Philadelphia. Owing to business reasons a very narrow margin of time was allowed between the theoretical arrival of the ship and the first performance.

The Atlantic plus the ship played me up on

this and three days off New York I realized that I should not get there in time.

It was hopeless, we were a day out from harbour when the date arrived for the Philadelphia outburst.

The next show was to be at the Carnegie Hall, New York.

In due course the ship arrived, and amongst the throng I descended the gangway. I arrived plus baggage, and was met by my American Manager.

He was delighted to see me—enormously delighted, for the Philadelphia show had been moved on to that very day, and I was down to appear at eight o'clock!

One wild stampede ensued at the docks. Customs Officials, boxes, tips, coloured porters, and sea sickness

I was whirled off to catch the six o'clock train (I had arrived at five).

In the rocking and swaying express I changed my clothes in the lavatory and was arrayed in my lecture garments as the train arrived late in Philadelphia.

A large car was waiting into which myself,

manager, and "props" were bundled, and buzzed round to the Music Hall. Three hours before I had been on the steamer. I now found myself in front of a large audience, who had been waiting nearly an hour.

I went through my tricks on what seemed to me to be still the deck of the ship. The show was a great success I'm glad to say, but I was as tired as a bit of chewed string.

The show over, I was unavoidably incorporated in very well-meant hospitality, being rushed off to a jazz supper party at a large hotel.

This was my first appearance in America.

The next night was to be New York, after which I averaged a town a day. There was only one saving grace about this wild hard-working rush through America, and that was the wonderful and persistent hospitality of all and sundry whom I met. I had mighty audiences, which seemed peculiar to me, as chicken pox, phenomenal snow, small pox, influenza, and indigestion seemed to be struggling for first place everywhere in the local amusements.

In one place things were very bad, but

both the members of the audience were most appreciative.

I will now quite shortly give you an idea of a tour in England. I feel it will be a guide and a help to future lecturers, anyway, it is well-meant. It's always called a Lecture Tour, but in order to equip you with a full realization of those words, I must first explain that this form of punishment only befalls those who have the misfortune to have something to lecture about. Fate may have decreed that you have become "someone the public wants to see and hear."

If Fate *has* played this dirty trick on you, then you will sooner or later be up against a Lecture Tour.

It begins like this:—

You become aware by a series of letters arriving that a mysterious individual exists, who is not only able, but will arrange for you to lecture "throughout the country." There are several of these public benefactors; you must choose the one you fancy and come to terms. The terms will come to you pretty quick, so think them over carefully, and fix

accordingly. You will find, when the tour is over, you will think the terms over again very carefully, and probably come to some rather violent conclusions, but we needn't bother about that now.

A tour is arranged, and halls to speak in all over the country booked up. Some people, I believe, have been known to dine at a hotel first, and be sent for in a Rolls-Royce by the management just in time to speak, and be whirled off back to their luxurious hotel afterwards, whilst a group of officials, sent by the Lecture Agency, bring good news and Press cuttings up to your suite of rooms, informing you that the first-class Pullman saloon, to take you to the next town, has been taken and redecorated.

I am not in that group. I am in Class B, where one leaves the Lyon's Popular, on a rainy night in a mackintosh, and can't get a taxi, and therefore walks to the Hall alone, and unloved.

The Hall ! ! !

Dear readers, have you ever realized the dread meaning which underlies that name?

To get a true perspective view, and a comprehensive grasp of the words Lecture Hall, follow me closely.

It is as wet a night in January as has been recorded by Greenwich for years. The Hotel and the Hall are almost invariably separated by a mile of strange streets and slush. On enquiry and observation you will find that apparently nobody at all has heard of the Lecture, but has heard distinctly that the local Amateur Dramatic Society are giving a performance of *Charley's Aunt* the next night, and that every seat has been sold. The night before there was a political meeting which was so successful that they wanted the Hall again for tonight, and in consequence (owing to the lecture) there is considerable ill-feeling in the

town. After the first thirty-five towns you won't mind this.

You leave the hotel and wander off through the lamp-lit mud of your strange city to the Hall. You cannot fail to recognize the Hall if you ever find it, by seeing the only poster advertising your lecture, pasted on a board near the front entrance. Across it will be stuck two oblong labels—one which reads: "Tonight at 8"; the other: "*Charley's Aunt*, tomorrow night."

Enter the Hall, and in the darkness grope for the dressing-room. Also you had better start groping for an attendant, the manager, a fire, and the audience. Sometimes you will find all these accessories there, and your lecture a success, in which case, to conclude this phenomenon, grope for the Lecture Management, which will be a couple of hundred miles away, and thank them. After which you might grope for some money, but you'll probably be too late.

CHAPTER XVIII

AUTHOR AND JOURNALIST

AMONG the major horrors of the War will always be reckoned War literature.

The chief characteristic of War literature, apart from its overwhelming abundance, was that it dealt faithfully neither with literature nor with War.

It was, for the most part, entirely ephemeral in character, as the reader can try out by attempting to recall the names of even a dozen of the many thousands of books which appeared in the days of Armageddon.

Yet, in the midst of this flood there stood out one or two books which, at the time of their publication, attracted exceptional attention, and are still remembered and treasured.

In this class we should, without hesitation, place *Bullets and Billets*, which appeared in the fall of 1916.

By this time Bairnsfather was a name to

conjure with, and the book achieved immediate success.

In *Bullets and Billets* Bairnsfather set down in humorous fashion his War adventures up to the time of his being wounded in the first gas attack at Ypres, and shipped to hospital in London.

The great point about *Bullets and Billets*, which came as a breath of fresh air, is that it is full of Bairnsfather wit and humour.

It is, in point of fact, the exact counterpart in literature to *Fragments from France* in art.

Both make you laugh, but at the same time present a human and intimate picture of trench life.

As far as realism is concerned, Bairnsfather has all the accurate observation of a Zola, but he is not out to shock or harrow your feelings, because he believes that pain and tragedy are generally not half so desperate as they seem at the time, and not a tenth part so deadly as they appear before they happen.

He never forgets, as do the Zola's, that mankind is blest with the gift of humour.

In our little corner of the universe we are

happy in having a cheerful fellow called the sun, and though we have pretty rotten weather sometimes, this sun bobs up smiling every time.

Human nature has much in common with the sun.

It allows wind and fog and cloud to get in the way every now and again, but it always comes back with a laugh.

That is the sort of laugh Bairnsfather gets away with. It is not an empty thing, but a real thing. It is not the hollow mirth of the cynic. It is the expression of the joy of life —and life is a joy. The nuisances of existence only serve to show what a joy it is.

Bairnsfather wrote another book, *From Mud to Mufti*, in which he gave further expression to his philosophy of living—a philosophy which does not fail to see the clouds, but never forgets that behind the clouds there is the sunshine.

But the most remarkable thing of all in this

phase of Bairnsfather's work has been his contribution to *Fragments*, of a weekly article known to all its readers as "Old Bill's Letter."

Fragments, the most popular magazine of its kind in Britain, is now a healthy youngster of over twelve months old. It barged into a field already covered and sailed away triumphantly with a seven hundred and fifty thousand circulation. In spite of the almost insuperable difficulties of paper prices and production costs, it has splendidly kept its hold, and is now a firmly established feature in the British magazine world.

It has, moreover, found its way to every English-speaking country on the face of the earth. I have had letters of enthusiastic praise from readers in the United States, Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, and even from Siberia and Samoa.

A competition was run in the early issues of this magazine under the title "What is Old Bill Laughing At?" I am still, at this moment, getting entries from the outposts of the world—a fact which is worth quoting as

That's the worst of these old country houses.

a testimony of the enormous vitality of Bairnsfather's work, and as a proof that it was not a Verey Light thrown into the world in the darkness of War to flare and flicker out with the Armistice.

To every issue of this weekly magazine Bairnsfather has contributed the front page article, and in order to present a comprehensive impression of his ability as a writer, I cannot do better than quote two contrasting examples of his work in this field.

The first is a humorous description of a day in the life of a King. It goes like this:—

MY DEAR OLD BILL:

Have you ever thought what it must feel like to be a King?

Have you ever allowed your mind to wander from your immediate, honest, and humble surroundings, up into the dizzy heights occupied by Kings?

I often have. I've thought a lot about Kings, and I've come to the conclusion it must be simply rotten to be a King.

Supposing you are just an ordinary chap with an ordinary life, then suddenly switch yourself into a King's job in imagination, and

you'll see what I mean. It cramps your style right along. Let us just imagine a day of the life of a King.

In the first place, Bill, you know how we like a nice, cosy little house and a good kitchen, a tin of tobacco on the mantelpiece, and a nice handy-sized barrel of ginger-ale standing in the corner of the scullery.

Now just look at a King. There he lives in a house about the size and appearance of the British Museum.

His bedroom is about forty feet by sixty-five and eighty feet high. The ceiling is crackled up all over with gold and pictures, like the top of a Christmas cake. He has to sleep in a bed that would fit one of Lockhart's elephants.

When he gets up he can't slip into a pair of flannel slacks and a shirt and pop out into the garden for a stroll before breakfast. He has to be taken down out of that bed and get dressed by a couple of Earls, whilst a third takes his crown down from the hook behind the door and rubs it up with a drop of Shinio.

Before breakfast it's a hundred to one he's got to give an audience to the Peruvian Ambassador. He, therefore, has to scramble into his robes and ermine, get buttoned up

the back by a Duke, put his crown on, put the elastic under his chin, and hurry off down the marble stairs into a room ninety feet by seventy, and eighty feet high.

Already, Bill, I am sure you agree that being a King isn't such a joke, after all. "As happy as a King" is one of the most fallacious phrases ever invented. A King has, to my mind, one of the saddest jobs in the world. It's about as bad as a lion at the Zoo.

Breakfast time comes along, and then none of your cosy warm plates of bacon and egg by the kitchen fire, Bill—oh! dear, no. He'll have to go into another gilded hall and have breakfast with a few Queens, including his own, and a few assorted Princes.

His Queen is leading the same sort of life; she now and again runs across the King in the palace, but not often.

Just think what a King would give to push off after breakfast in a car by himself and go fishing, or pop down to Southend. He can't do anything like that. The Prime Minister is going to come immediately after breakfast (*caviare* and sole's tonsils, not bacon and eggs).

He's going to come bothering round the King about a war he suggests running, or something like that. The King has to hurry

off into another room, one hundred feet by one hundred and thirty, put on another crown, climb up into a throne, fill a pipe, strike a match on a diamond match box, and light up, waiting for the Prime Minister. He's not alone now. No! he's surrounded by a whole mob of Earls, Princes, and courtiers. There's the Lord High Match-Box Bearer, his Grace the Archbishop of Nairobi; the Lord High Fortune-Teller, the Earl of Tottenham Court Road, etc., etc.

He can't be alone for a minute all day. He can't take off his crown, slip on a cap, and pop out of the side door and go round to the Crown and Anchor after twelve.

If he wants to have one, he just claps his hands. Instantly two doors studded with rubies are flung open and the Lord High Keeper of the "What's Yours," comes in on all fours, advancing along a velvet carpet, not with a small Bass (what the King probably wanted), but with a ten-guinea bottle of iced Farr and Farland.

And so a day wears on. By about four o'clock in the afternoon he has seen about three Prime Ministers, knighted a platoon of subjects, signed a mob of proclamations, been taken in a Pullman special train to Birmingham to review the hairpin workers, had lunch with a couple of other Kings, chosen a new crown for the Queen out of a lot Selfridge's had sent up, seen the

Prime Minister again, opened Parliament, and attended the memorial service to Lord Clive.

You might think that after this he could go to the pictures—but no. There is a State Banquet on in the evening. He's going to be there, but now as I have got him to four o'clock I will leave you, Bill, to imagine for yourself a King being hurried off upstairs by three or four Earls, bathed by a Duke, and pushed into his satin evening clothes by a Marquis. Now, then, don't let me ever hear you say "I'm as happy as a King."

. . . . . .

That is pure happiness, yet there is a shrewd philosophy behind it. It gets well below the froth of life, but for those who don't agree with me I shall quote another article written around the memorial erected in Whitehall to the memory of those who fell in the Great War. The article is called "The Cenotaph."

. . . . . .

It was at dusk I found him, a silent kneeling figure in the gathering darkness. I crept quietly towards him to see if I could hear his words. The dear, simple old man was silent, his head bent, an old cloth cap was in his

hand. I moved my feet with noise: he took no notice. Presently he rose and turned towards me. Old Bill's war and life-worn face was stained with tears. "Ullo! Capting," he said, in a quiet hushed voice, "what are you doin' 'ere?" "The same as you," I said. "Capting," said he, "it makes you ashamed to be alive." "What does?" I asked. "This," he said, and he pointed to the Cenotaph. "That's all that remains now, the memory of them blokes out yonder. I can't 'elp it, Capting, but this 'ere monument speaks to me in a way I wish it spoke to everyone. I see the old days, Capting, I see the way these chaps behaved; they didn't know there was going to be a monument. They knew in their 'earts too much about the world to think they was goin' to be remembered long, and yet, look what they did, and remember where they are now."

The poor old chap turned back to look again.

"I feel they are all inside there," he said in muffled tones, "and the outside seems to tell the story.

"Like a great big film it seems ter me. Capting, let me tell yer a story, just a little one, you p'raps knows the same yourself.

"I was in a set o' trenches once, a rotten lot they was, full o' mud, hopelessness, and danger. There was scarce a day when we

didn't see someone or other stretched out on the parapet awaitin' the night when we could bury 'im. Terrible it was. Well, we was a merry crowd in that there trench, makin' the best of it, as the sayin' is. All the young blokes 'ad their gals at 'ome, except old toughs, likes 'o me, who's always got their Maggies. Well, there was a chap in No. 13 Platoon, a pore sort o' bloke, 'e was, red 'air, a bit of a squint, and freckled somethin' 'orrible. 'E used to get a bit of a chippin' at times, 'cos 'e was a bloke as was sort o' lonely—lived in a crowd by 'itself, as it were. Well, one night there came an extra special strafe as it were, a real scrap. It was dark and 'orrible and the machine guns was a-playin' the devil with them trenches. About midnight it was all over. I was standin' by a fire-bucket 'avin' a look at my rifle, and takin' the mud out o' me breach-block. The sergeant passin' says ter me, 'Old 'Arry Parsons 'as copped one. Poor old bloke's mighty bad, 'e's got one just below the 'eart.'

" Arry was the feller I was tellin' yer about. I went off down the trench towards 'is dugout. Poor old 'Arry—they was always chippin' 'im about never 'avin' a gal, and I don't believe, Capting, he ever did 'ave a gal. 'E was that plain and quiet I don't reckon as any gal would 'ave walked out with 'Arry, anytime. Well, I goes along that there old sloppy, muddy, broken trench and comes to 'is dugout. Capting, it's mighty sad when I thinks of it. There on the straw was lyin' pore old 'Arry. 'Is boots a-stickin' out of the entrance. 'E was twistin' a bit from side to side, and as far as I could see, unconscious. I crept along the straw and watched 'is face. . . . Presently 'e died. Died after 'arf a day by 'isself in that pore old dugout, died on that old straw bed near Messines, amongst the water, cold, and loneliness. . . . As you know, Capting, when a bloke dies they 'as a look at what's in 'is pockets and takes 'is identification disc, so as the 'ole lot can be sent 'ome to 'is relatives. Well, anyway, that don't matter now. I liked poor old 'Arry, and 'ad 'alf a mind to write 'ome about 'im, to 'is people, like. P'raps 'e's got a girl, I sez to meself, and perhaps 'e wouldn't let on as 'e 'ad. I 'ad a look at 'is identification disc first. 'H. Parsons, No. 45206, C. of E.,' I saw was on it—yer know,

printed round the red gutter perka medal we all used to 'ave round the neck. Then I looked at 'is pockets. Capting, it most always makes me cry when I remembers, and it takes a bit to shift an old bloke like me. He 'ad got a pile o' letters tied up with a bit o' bootlace, all damp and worn they was, at the back of 'em was a photo, a faded brown photo of an old woman taken standin' by a bit of a rustic seat, with a sort of cutting be'ind, and across the bottom was written:

'To my darlin' 'Arry,
From Mother.'

"It was all that was in 'is pocket, Capting, and this 'ere monument reminded me of it. That's all, Capting."

. . . . . .

That, I consider, out of all the mass of literature inspired by the Cenotaph the most brilliant thing written around this memorial.

It is so, because it is written by one who has seen and felt deeply with a super-sensitive soul.

It is a tragic story that is here told, yet it is not without heroic belief. The clouds are

black and heavy, but there is the great healing, all-encompassing sun of mother-love behind it.

It is one of the biggest things about Bairnsfather that he has taught us to remember the sunshine.

CHAPTER XIX

BEHIND THE SCENES IN MY STUDIO

I FEEL sure that any one who reads this book will have noticed the perpetual and increasing quantity of advertising, relative to Art Schools, which one finds in the papers.

This, to my mind, indicates roughly the quantity of people interested in, and desirous of attaining an art career.

During the publication of *Fragments*, which I have now been editing for over a year, I have had further proof of the thousands who are interested in trying their hand at professional draughtsmanship.

I have examined countless pictures and examined the conditions underlying their possible success, with as great an interest as once I did my own.

I am glad to say that I am still able to look upon the attainment of success in this field as a precarious possibility which can come to everyone providing he has a certain chance

which he can vigorously follow up with certain attributes.

I am now going to ask all and sundry who read this book to imagine me back at the starting post, also to forgive my talking in a manner which of necessity appears to point out my own luck.

I am writing about the intimate affairs of the would-be artist, first of all because I want, if I can, to help; secondly, because I have seen by letters and personal questioning that it is a subject which interests and vitally affects a great many.

To read about somebody else's methods gives help. I know that myself. I am a silent and private encyclopædia on the works of other artists past and present.

Anyway, I can't be bothered doping those who will accuse me of taking up the egoisting position of a teacher any longer. I am just a-going to go right at it and tell you what I do—and what some few others may like to try too.

I have all my life had an insatiable desire to draw, and to draw to see it printed.

I admire and love pictures such as "Cows at Dusk," and "In Twilight's Keeping," and all that Academy stuff—but I am now talking about drawing for the Press.

There is one first principle which must be borne in mind.

Your pictures must have ideas.

Your work must be perpetuated by means of an overflowing stream of ideas, your work must have a literary basis.

No art school in the world can give you ideas.

The World is the best school to go to for them.

Art schools teach you how to draw, and how to draw for the Press; they are a great technical aid, but ideas are still the basis of your future success, or trouble, as the case may be.

Very few editors can draw, and very few

know anything about art, in a true and artistic sense.

An editor takes pictures mainly on the idea.

A presentable drawing surrounding a really good idea, is what he's after.

He's not an artist. He's an editor. He does not profess to be anything else.

The pictures he chooses and puts in his paper will, if studied closely, show you his category.

But now, don't make the mistake that he is wrong.

It's up to him to give the public what it wants, and the public are about one per cent. artists, and ninety-nine per cent. don't care a hang as long as they are amused and interested.

It's up to you to amuse and interest, and there's heaps of room for it.

And now to boil it all down, this is what you want, if you are bent on extracting money from Press art.

(1.) Study the making, and getting, of a flow of ideas. One idea, or two ideas, are useless for professional purposes.

(2.) Learn to draw and paint to the best

of your ability. In time a sufficient vehicle for your ideas will arrive.

(3.) Remember that the world as it lives and looks is your best art school.

(4.) Stick to it like hell.

I haven't done any of these things.

The desire and perpetual thought I have given to the subject has been a birthright with me.

I claim no credit whatsoever for the hours I have spent at work, or for my incessant brooding and pondering on the ever-present theme—ideas.

I have only used a tenth of the ideas that have flooded through my disordered nob.

I can only describe *Fragments from France* as more or less the movements of a pictorial Medium.

The War passed before my eyes in a series of pictures.

The birth of Bill, Bert, and Alf seemed out of my own control. The figures, lines, and laughs seemed to trickle at intervals out of my tired and depressed fingers, like ink out of a fountain pen

I thought hard at the time, and in thinking arrived at my conclusion.

To show what I felt the Front and the British to be, by means of three hieroglyphics, *i.e.*, Bill, Bert, and Alf.

There never has been any *one* Bill or Bert or Alf—I endeavoured to epitomize three distinct groups in our Army, and thus convey scenes, and frames of mind, which by reason of mud and pain, had come acutely visible to me.

CHAPTER XX

BAIRNSFATHER AT HOME

I HAVE tried to show you Bairnsfather at work, and sought to trace the evolution of his art in such a way as to be of the greatest interest to those who are curious about the elements which make for success, and of the greatest assistance to those who are determined to follow the same road.

In this, my final chapter, I wish to present a close-up picture of the Bairnsfather behind the scenes—not the artist, the playwright, the author, or the lecturer, but Bairnsfather, the man.

We are sometimes inclined to forget that behind the public evidences of genius there is a human personality. Sometimes, indeed, we are liable to jump to the conclusion that the individual behind the scenes does not really matter, but this theory of the impersonality of genius is one which holds no more water than an inverted tea-cup. Some people

go so far in this error as to excuse genius the observance of the ordinary rules of humanity. The genius, they argue, is not bound by laws, which, to put it bluntly, is purest bunk.

The genius is not a machine. He does not live outside the rules of humanity, but lives much more inside them, knows a lot more about them, and keeps them much more constantly before him than the average individual.

In fact, it is not a bad definition of the personality behind genius to say that it is most marked by a keeping in perfect tune with humanity. Or to put it another way, one of the biggest things about genius is bigness of heart.

Genius is intensely senitive to impressions as well as being brilliantly capable of interpreting these impressions in picture, prose, or poetry—whatever the medium of interpretation may be.

It is, therefore, essential that the flame of genius should be fed in the right way.

Genius, in any form, is a jealous task-master. It leaves little room for frills and flummery.

There is a great deal to be said for the old

Bairnsfather's Old English Home at Waldridge

ideal of plain living and high thinking. The more I see of Bairnsfather at work, the more I have to say for it.

A youth who wants to be a success merely in order to have a good time, had better get things straight with himself forthwith. If he does not think a job worth doing for its own sake, outside of what it may bring him, either the job is not worth doing, or he is not worthy of doing it.

No one associated with Bairnsfather can fail to be impressed by the manner in which the Bairnsfather behind the scenes supports the Bairnsfather in the glare of the footlights.

He lives very simply, and prefers the country to the city, although he could not carry on without the latter. The many facets of life which shine out in London are full of inspiration for him. I find in his interest in all sorts of humanity, from Mayfair to an East End Music Hall, the secret of his appeal to all grades of Society.

In his habits Bairnsfather has not slipped into any one rut. His sympathies are as wide as life itself.

In the ordinary sense of the word he has little or no private life. He does not work an eight hours' day and hie away to a week-end diversion from business. He works often twelve or fourteen hours a day without the slightest relaxation, because even when he is not drawing or writing he is shaping and re-shaping ideas until he is satisfied that they are in suitable form for setting down on paper.

Business demands his presence in London for several days every week, but it is in the country that he does his best work, and whenever he has a difficult job to finish on time table, he disappears from his house in Knightsbridge to his beautiful old English residence which he has purchased in Buckinghamshire.

This residence at Waldridge is of such great historical interest, that I feel it essential to say something of its associations in order to give the reader a conception of the setting in which Bairnsfather now does his work.

The history of Waldridge, which is situated in the parish of Dinton and the hundred of

Ashendon, about five miles from Aylesbury, can be traced back without difficulty to the time of Edward the Confessor.

After the Norman Conquest the land, containing one hide and two virgates, was granted to the Bishop of Bayeux.

It passed, together with the neighbouring manor of Dinton, in succession to the Munchesneys and the Earl of Pembroke.

After many vicissitudes the Manor of Waldridge came, towards the close of the fifteenth century, into the possession of the Hampdens, who held land there until the death of Sir Alexander Hampden in 1622, although the manor itself appears to have come before this time, into the possesion of Robert Serjeant who

married Anne, daughter of Sir Richard Ingoldsby, Knight, of Lenborough, Bucks.

In the year 1650 Sir Richard Ingoldsby purchased the Manor of Waldridge from the Serjeants and took up his residence there.

The parish of Dinton in which Waldridge is situated is famous for having been the residence of two regicides in the seventeenth century, *viz.*, Simon Mayne, of Dinton Hall, and Sir Richard Ingoldsby of Waldridge. Their joint Secretary, John Bigg, also lived at Dinton, and tradition has it that he was the actual executioner of King Charles I.

After the Restoration, apparently pursued by remorse, he is stated to have become a hermit and to have lived in a cave in the parish, without ever changing his clothes. He died in 1696, and one of his shoes is preserved at Dinton Hall, the other being in the Ashmolean Museum, at Oxford.

Sir Richard Ingoldsby was the second son of Sir Richard Ingoldsby, of Lenborough; his mother being Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Oliver Cromwell, and aunt to the Protector.

This Sir Richard Ingoldsby played a very

conspicuous part in the history of the Civil Wars. He obtained a captaincy in his relation to Hampden's regiment, and performed many gallant services for the Parliament party, and this, together with his family alliances, caused him to be greatly trusted. The City of Oxford, noted for its loyalty, was committed to his care. He was elected a commissioner of the High Court of Justice appointed for the trial of King Charles I. He did not attend any of the sittings of the Court, but he signed the warrant for the execution of that monarch, although he afterwards asserted that he was forcibly made to append his signature—that Cromwell and others, after much entreaty and persuasion, actually laid hold of him in the Painted Chamber, pulled him to the table, and putting the pen in his hand guided his fingers in making his signature. His seal, however, was appended to the document, and it is possible that he made this excuse afterwards to save himself from the fate which overtook his co-signatories. When the Cromwell cause had become desperate he was one of the first to join the friends of the exiled King Charles II., from whose hands he

alone of the regicides, obtained any lenity, receiving ultimately a free pardon and the Order of the Bath.

His family remained as residents in the parish for many years and presumably held also the Manor of Waldridge. In 1849 it was purchased by the lord of the neighbouring Manor of Dinton, since which date it has been appendant to the main manor.

It is the old house at Upper Waldridge which Bairnsfather purchased with the land surrounding it. This house is a picturesque example of early seventeenth century design.

The main feature of the plan as it now exists is a large central stack of chimneys, the shafts of which are set anglewise above the tiled roof.

Round this the rooms are grouped, opening out of each other with no attempt at corridor or suite planning, the staircase being on the south side.

As the house evidently extended farther to the east it is possible that what remains is one wing and half the main block of an H-shaped house.

The original work is all half-timber filled with herring-bone brickwork; but the south and west faces were refronted later in the seventeenth century with a thin skin of brickwork, with stone mullioned and transomed windows set in projecting brick panels with ribbed brick cornices and base-moulds.

The north gable remains in its original state, and has a very pretty projecting gabled window on the first floor of five latticed lights with wooden mullions and a transom.

When Bairnsfather purchased this residence it was in a condition of dis-repair, but he had seen the possibilities of a careful restoration which was immediately undertaken with the happiest possible results.

Waldridge is the ideal home.

It is a place of peace and beauty.

The dusty, traffic-laden main roads are out of sight and hearing.

The approach is through pleasant bye-ways which thread their path between sleepy meadows that seem to lead to nowhere.

The country around is gently undulating, cultivated and beautifully green and gold with

grass and grain in seeming careless patches irregularly divided from one another by low trimmed hedges. This on every side sweeps away for miles, to a distant horizon of blue-tipped hills.

There is no sign of human life except an occasional wisp of smoke curling from above a clump of trees. The country is not heavily wooded, but here and there a tiny patch breaks on the landscape.

Presently you approach such a miniature forest—for everything in Buckinghamshire is in minature, and therefore all the more attractive—and just as you resolve that this is another milestone on your journey you reach the other side and discover Waldridge, nestled to the south as closely as if a swallow had built it against sunlit eaves.

A pond—a lawn—a garden—these are the things which first capture the eye—then the house itself peeps out at you as if it had all the time been hiding there like a happy child, and smiling with a child's gladness because you have found it, and a child's confidence that you would find it.

If any north or east winds blow here the trees see to them.

Your vision is south and west across the

I live in a quaint old house.

wolds of England to high noon and the setting sun.

It is in this old English atmosphere that Bairnsfather does his best work, but it should not for a moment be imagined that he is a recluse.

Waldridge is only the backwater in which his impressions are most easily interpreted, but these impressions are gathered by his keeping in the closest possible touch with the main stream of life.

And this he does not merely for the sake of his art, but because his temperament demands it.

Whatever else may be said about him, he may well be written as one who loves his fellow-men.

CHAPTER XXI

LOOKING FORWARD TO ANOTHER WAR TO GET A REST

Now, before this book is finished I want to put in a word about Wars.

The late one being nearly over (in some places), I want to raise my voice in the land about the next one.

I hate the sight of the darn things myself. I am only interested in a War to stop Wars, and if by any means I could show up warfare I'd do it.

I can't lose my temper enough to be a good soldier.

I hate fighting, particularly with strangers. It's all too rough and dirty for me.

When I have chased (as I have, now and again), one of the King's enemies across a ploughed field at dawn, with a sharp knife on the end of my gun, I feel inclined to stop and stroke him.

I suddenly wonder if he's got an old Mother,

or likes gardening, or something or other, which completely robs me of that venom which has made our Empire what it is today.

Apart from the actual sticky part of warfare I am filled with depression about "Mailed Fists."

The Mailed Fist is dead—or, anyway, let us hope so. Perhaps we had better say, in a state of suspended animation. Anyhow, we are in a position to exult in the fact that the Mailed Fist has not come to stay. I cannot dwell too long and too deeply upon the appalling results, had such been the case, for, with a "Mailed Fist" comes its machinery. A Mailed Fist must have its "Military System." It must have a War Office, and Memo Forms. I want you to imagine for a few moments the stupendous disaster it would have meant to us all, if a Military System had triumphed and had swamped the land with its ponderous and death-dealing Ability. Selfridge's, Harrod's, Hope Brothers, Woolworth's, would all be extinct in a week or so if run on what we have narrowly escaped—a Military System.

I want you to imagine, by way of illustra-

tion, a really large stores being run on these lines; I feel sure you will see where ruin stares it in the face.

The scene is Harridge's Stores. A man has just popped round to buy a packet of pins for his wife.

He enters *via* the swinging glass doors, and is immediately stopped by a one-armed Veteran who fought at Sebastopol.

"Have you an appointment?" he demands.

The Pin Hunter admits he has not.

"Well, then, fill in this form," says the Veteran.

The Pin Hunter seizes a large yellow sheet, and, with the aid of a rusty pen with a split nib, writes in his age, where born, nationality, and next of kin.

The Veteran now grabs this, and in an aggressive voice, says loudly to the Pin Hunter: "You want to see the D. A. D. O. P."

"Who's that?" asks the Pin Man.

The Veteran scornfully replies: "The Deputy Assistant Director of Pins, of course," he says.

"Oh!" says the Pin Man, and awaits developments.

The Veteran now hands the filled-in form to a member of a group of girl guides, and, by dumb show, indicates to the Pin Man the advisability of following her down a forbidding stone corridor. A quarter of an hour's walk brings the Pin Man and the guide to a mahogany door about eight feet high and four feet wide; on it is inscribed in bold, black letters, D. A. D. O. P. The girl asks her victim to sit on a chair and wait.

He leans against a window-ledge, because there isn't a chair. The girl comes out again very quickly and goes off down the corridor.

. . . . . .

Half an hour elapses. Presently a door, fifty yards away, opens, and an official comes out; he passes the Pin Man and remarks in so doing, "Are you wanting for anybody?"

"Yes, I want a penny packet of pins," says the Pin Man. The official looks puzzled.

"Pins, pins," he murmurs in a sort of reverie, staring straight out of the window. "I think, perhaps, you had better see the O. O. S. E. F. D. He's the Official Organizer of Small Essentials for Dressing."

"I see," says the Pin Man.

The official moves on and disappears in the dim gloom of the corridor.

"I can't hang about here any—" bursts out the Pin Man, when suddenly the monolithic mahogany door opens and a head comes out. "Will you come in?" it says.

The Pin Man enters, and finds himself in a room about half the size of Olympia. At the far end, behind a desk as large as a billiard table, sits an old man writing hard.

He looks up, and sits back in his chair.

"Yes?" he says, interrogatively, to the Pin Hunter.

"I want a packet of pins, sir, just a penny packet; that's all," says our hero.

The old man looks at some papers on his

desk, with "impossible" stamped on every feature of his face.

"Can you give any real reason why you should want pins?" he growls, looking hard at the applicant.

The Pin Man explains that his wife merely wants a penny packet of pins.

"Well, you'd better fill this form in," says the ancient in authority. "Fill it in carefully; then, if you go out and get two photographs of yourself taken, one front face, the other profile—I will attach them to this form and place it before the D. A. D. O. P. You see I'm merely the A. D. A. D. O. P., and have no power to do more than recommend you as a suitable applicant for pins. As soon as he comes in I'll place the whole matter before him, but, of course, I can't say exactly what will happen."

The Pin Man takes a bottle of Aspirin Tablets from his waistcoat pocket and swallows four under cover of his pocket-handkerchief.

Meanwhile a long and luscious-looking Rolls-Royce is gliding along the Mall to its destination. It's four o'clock, lunch is just finished, and the

D. A. D. O. P. will soon be back in his mausoleum, ready to give the final word to any application for pins.

And so the great universal stores would roll on in mailed prosperity.

That ought to settle Mailed Fist supporters once and for all, but I suppose it won't. I can see another War coming along somehow, somewhere, sometime.

It's no good keeping armies eating their heads off unless you use them.

I can see myself going to an old cupboard in my room, extracting my old uniform from the tissue paper and camphor bags.

I can see myself taking my old sword and revolver down from their hooks in the hall.

I can see myself sharpening the old blade on the grindstone in the back yard.

I can see (curse it all, I can see everything).

I only have one hope. Just that my three old pals, Bill, Bert, and Alf will be in it with me. My dear Old Bill, I feel you too want a rest before another. . . . "Mexico declares

war on Ireland." I can see the notice now. I can . . . I am sorry, dear and patient readers, I *must* stop. . . . The man's come about the next War.

A Selection from the Catalogue of

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

Complete Catalogues sent on application

By BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER

Fragments from France. Parts I—IV

8°. 143 Full-page Plates, 15 Smaller Illustrations.

The original Parts I to IV bound in one volume.

The pictures that gave to Captain Bairnsfather a world-wide reputation. An Introduction by Major George Haven Putnam.

Fragments from France. Parts V—VIII

4°. 101 Full-page Plates, 65 Smaller Illustrations.

The original Parts V to VIII bound in one volume.

Fragments from France. Part I

4°. 44 Illustrations, Picture Cover in Colors.

The many thousands who have seen *The Better 'Ole* on screen or stage will want the Bairnsfather books, on which the play was founded.

Fragments from France. Part V

4°. 35 Illustrations, Portrait, Picture Cover in Colors.

Further adventures of Bert, Alf, and Old Bill in the trenches.

Fragments from France. Part VI

4°. 32 Illustrations, Picture Cover in Colors.

Enter the American and Italian soldiers in the same humorous vein, but characteristically themselves. Bert, Bill, and Alf have not deserted either.

Fragments from France. Part VII

4°. 41 Illustrations, Picture Cover in Colors.

More of the famous trio, Bert, Alf, and Old Bill, fighting, jesting, enduring up to the end.

Fragments from France. Part VIII

4°. 60 Illustrations, Picture Cover in Colors.

From Mud to Mufti

Uniform with, and a sequel to, *Bullets and Billets.*

There are about forty of the author's inimitable illustrations accompanying the clever text.

Bairnsfather---A Few Fragments from his Life

Large 8°. 26 Full-page, 26 Text Illustrations.

The entertaining and interesting story of Captain Bairnsfather's life, with critical chapters by the editor of *The Bystander,* and amusing pictures by the artist himself.

Bullets and Billets

12°. 18 Full-page, 23 Text Illustrations.

Bairnsfather's own experiences in the war, a story always amusing and often moving.

The Bairnsfather Case

12°. Illustrated.

As tried before Mr. Justice Busby. Defense by Bruce Bairnsfather. Prosecution by W. A. Mutch.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, New York and London