



CONTENTS

Introduction

1. The Royal Literary Fund, May 9th 1904 (Hotel Metropole)
2. Critics Circle, May 26th, 1922 (Savoy Hotel)
3. To the Printers' Pension Corporation, November 12, 1924 (Connaught Rooms)
4. Freedom of Stationers' Company, July 3rd, 1925 (Stationers' Hall)
5. To the Australian Cricketers, Institute of Journalists April 20, 1926 (Criterion Restaurant)
6. Worcestershire Association Dinner , Feb 29,1928
7. Society of Authors, Nov 28th, 1928 (Hyde Park Hotel)
8. To the Royal Scottish Corporation, St Andrews Day Nov 30th, 1928 (Holborn Restaurant)
9. To the Newspaper Press Fund, April 23rd , 1929 (Mayfair Hotel)
- 10.To the Royal Literary Fund, May 9th 1930, (Hotel Victoria)
- 11.Great Ormond Street Hospital Dec 3, 1930 (Guildhall)
- 12.Authors Club Dinner, Dec 12, 1932 (Grosvenor House Hotel)

Introduction

Our goal for JMB160 is to raise awareness of his significance in literary and cultural senses beyond *Peter Pan* and we hope to do the following:

- 1) Include reflective or analytical articles in our 2020 Journal on specific speeches, or those drawing comparisons. (Deadline for proposals Dec 2019, and delivery Feb 1st, 2020)
- 2) Engage with the organisations and institutions mentioned in the speeches to see if there is some commemorative activity, linked to the speeches and/or their themes which might be undertaken during 2020.
- 3) Promote these articles singly and as ‘collections’ online at the society website and look for opportunities to create and include them in other relevant collections.

Please note: We do not have funding for any projects, and so we are looking for clever collaborations where we supply information and expertise as part of events organised by the partners.

For more information and to share feedback contact Cally Phillips at jmbarriesociety@gmail.com

1. The Royal Literary Fund

AT THE 114TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FUND, AT THE HOTEL METROPOLE,
May 9, 1904 (Sir James Barrie's 42nd birthday.)

Mr. Barrie, as Chairman, gave the toast.

My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honour to ask you to drink two great Toasts in one — the health of 'His Majesty the King,' and the health of our munificent Patron, who is again the King. The King has done this Society two noble services. As Prince of Wales, he chose it as the occasion of his first appearance in public life in 1864, when he took the Chair; and at our Centenary Dinner he again took the Chair, thus, as I understand, for the only time in his life presiding twice at meetings of the same Society. I ask you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to drink, in all enthusiasm and loyalty, the King!

The Chairman then gave:— 'Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Other Members of the Royal Family.' We who follow the most romantic and picturesque of callings must be in a special sense the servants of our picturesque, romantic Queen. The Prince of Wales, as Duke of York, has followed the example of his father and grandfather, and taken the Chair at one of the meetings of this Society. I give you 'The Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Other Members of the Royal Family!'

My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, in rising to propose the toast of 'The Royal Literary Fund' — I suppose it comes of following this trade of imagining things, but, indeed, I am not certain whether we are really here or whether this is only a chapter in a book; and if it is a chapter in a book I wonder which of us all is writing it; and whoever is writing it, Heaven knows, I wish him well through the opening sentence. On an occasion such as this, which is no longer for men only — a Chairman's first thought is naturally how to get round the ladies; indeed, gentlemen, even though you are not a Chairman that may be still the problem. Just think how much time and ability you have devoted to it. Yes, and what a mess you have made of it. That ought to make you sympathise with what is about to happen to me.

Nineteen hundred and four will be known henceforth in the history of this Society as the beginning of ladies. Up to now they stole in after dinner or they came and peered over the gallery, if there was a gallery, the idea being that the men below, growing restive under the speeches, might look Heavenward at times and see the ladies already part of the way up. When this Society came into being 114 years ago there is abundant evidence that authors were considered a very alarming people. It was said that no one would meddle with authors. One crafty suggestion — I think I can give you the exact words — was:—' That authors should be mixed with

artists or any other kind of objects less obnoxious to the general apprehension and terror.' For my part, I am proud to know that we terrified them, and I hope we terrify them still; but is it not remarkable that, when they were looking for attractive objects to mix us with, they never thought of the ladies? It makes eerie reading of the old records: you begin to wonder whether 114 years ago there were any ladies, or whether they are a modern growth. Be that as it may, we have the ladies at this function at last, and I hope, ladies, you will allow me, in the name of the Society, to welcome you to your first dinner with men.

As for the Society itself, during those 114 years it has given away £140,000 — always privately — all its grants are private; no one outside the Committee, except those who may be interested in particular cases, knows who applies or who is relieved. In any other conditions we should be unable to help those whom it is our greatest pride and honour to help, sometimes going to them without waiting for them to come to us. They would prefer to 'straight up shut for the long dark.' We have now, invested, about £50,000, and if the subscriptions at the Annual Dinner are liberal we give away about £3000 a year. Thus, this is a prosperous Society, though during the last twelve months we have lost, we may say, the flower of our office-bearers: Our President, Mr. Lecky; Sir Leslie Stephen, the Master of the Temple; and Mr. Julian Sturgis. Such men as these were willing to take upon their shoulders the practical work of this Society.

No one, I think, outside the Committee can know how many authors there are of whom, as it has been said, their stage darkens before the curtain falls. It often lies with this Society to decide whether the curtain is to fall. In the history of the Society there have been at least four cases of immortals whose stage has darkened prematurely, and, ladies and gentlemen, this Society has re-lit that stage and kept the curtain up. All the world is richer by that. On the other hand, no doubt there have been some — one or two — who might have winged their way to immortality but that the darkness was never lifted for them. There are many others whom we have been able to help to 'chase hence the ugly night,' names not of the magnitude of those I have referred to, but still among the very eminent men and women of letters of their day — and in their day I include our day, with its many branches of literature, among the most useful and the most delightful, to which scarcely any monetary reward goes at all.

Of course, most of our cases are not those of persons of great literary distinction. Throughout their life they may but have 'fed a flame to torment them.' Better perhaps for them

'to try what further art could do

To make them love her and forget her too.'

But all our little successes are so trivial, scarcely known outside our own street; this meeting tonight, a great meeting as such things go — after all, what is it but a very little street in London? But we make believe that this street is the world, with our newspaper organs, and our dinners and our speeches, and no one to give heed except ourselves. But those ones may never have had their hour even in this street, and perhaps they began half a century ago and are still at it, long after they are dog-weary of it. One would expect many to weary of it, but that is not the experience of the Society. After fifty years of ‘dreams to sell,’ they are still fascinated, still following ‘the beams that have scorched them,’ still full of schemes for the future; and all this they explain to the Committee in letters which are often very difficult to read, it is so plain that the fingers could scarce close round the pen.

To account for such faithful service, there must have been surely some days of inspiration, one pretty thought; the linnet, you know, has only one pretty thought, but then he is such a ‘stylist.’ And everybody who has had one pretty thought for literature has soared once to the vaults of Heaven, and breathed for a moment the air the immortals breathe; perhaps their faces were not turned from him as they ‘waltzed by with the evening star on their arm.’ Perhaps the evening star has wet eyes for those of her lovers who fail most hopelessly. Perhaps she can’t abide the geniuses, though she has to go with them. Perhaps she has formed a romantic attachment — it is a pleasant fancy this — for someone down here, someone like Mr. Mason, or Mr. Seaman, or Captain Marshall. We can all conceive these three gallant bachelors, just as they were about to hook on to the evening star, being hurled from the vaults of Heaven, and falling straight down into the Literary Fund where they immediately begin to make the best of their new surroundings.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, whether we are in the sky, or here at dinner, or perhaps rather hungry outside, we of the pen — the loathly, lovely pen — are all very much brothers and sisters, and there is a large amount of good fortune and bad fortune parcelled out between us, and though our deserts are various I think we all know very well that the good and the bad are not justly distributed. I do not envy the author in any branch of literature who questions that. I wonder at him. This, of course, is a dangerous subject for a Chairman. For to-night I prefer to follow the amiable division of all books into two classes — books that one reads and books that are very able.

Ladies and gentlemen, those of us whose books are read, when we consider what is the fate of some of the best books of every year, must sometimes wonder a little uncomfortably why our books sell; if we don’t, others wonder for us. But perhaps we don’t sell. Perhaps it is only the publishers who pretend we do, so as not to hurt our feelings. In an imperfect world the awards must be often unfair; but there are occasions when we may meet to try to make them less unfair, when we give ourselves the opportunity of saying, ‘I have had too much of the luck, and I want to cut a piece off and give it to someone who has had too little.’ This is such an occasion, and I am afraid I have been saying so at horrible length. Well, I don’t

know what it has sounded like to you, but all the time I have been speaking I have seemed to hear my own voice trotting behind me, like some dreadful beast in a story by Mr. Wells. However, I am sure you will all forgive an unpractised hand for the sake of the cause, and I now ask you to drink the toast of the evening, 'Prosperity to the Royal Literary Fund.'

Replying, at the end of the dinner, to the toast of 'Our Chairman' proposed by Lord Tennyson.

Lord Tennyson, Ladies and Gentlemen: I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the way in which the toast of my health has been proposed and received, and I can assure you that the thing I should most value in life would be the goodwill and a little of the affection of my fellow-writers. But I have no intention of making another speech. I feel, to-night, very like a cab horse that has been trying to run in the Derby and, as you know, a cab horse is always reluctant to pass its stable. Ladies and gentlemen, I at last see my stable in front of me, and nothing would induce me to go past it. I am very much beholden to you all, as is the Literary Fund also, for the splendid way in which you have responded to our appeal. And now I think you can all go away and be happy again. Strictly speaking, I understand we are going only into the next room, where the pleasantest part of the evening is to begin. We shall have the opportunity there of hearing whether the other bachelors think that Mr. Mason did justice to his toast; we shall hear from the ladies what is their candid opinion of his speech; we shall ask him man to man what he thinks of it himself. Lord Tennyson has wished me many happy returns of the day, and I thank him sincerely, but alas, ladies and gentlemen, I am afraid my birthday no longer brings to me the thrill which once it did, and I have a mind to make an offer of my birthday to any person present, preferably to any lady, who may feel that her birthday comes round with insufficient frequency. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for bearing with me so long.

2. To the Critics' Circle

SAVOY HOTEL — May 26, 1922

Mr. A. B. WALKLEY, President of the Circle, was in the Chair. Proposing the toast of 'The Drama and Barrie,' he said: —

I fear I am going to disappoint most of you at the outset, though I hope to bring unlooked-for relief to our honoured guest, Sir James Barrie. I am not going to address him as M'Connachie. Since you raised that Frankenstein's Monster, sir, at St. Andrews — you were once a journalist yours elf, and will not have forgotten those journalistic favourites, Frankenstein and his Monster — since you raised that monster, you have been powerless to lay it. You have been M'Connachied here and M'Connachied there; M'Connachied with damnable iteration. Sir, let us drop it to-night. It is not, for one thing, the easiest of after-dinner words. And then, I fancy, it was an article intended for local consumption, for the people of Fife and Forfar. You told them in Fife how some of their queer words amazed you people in Forfarshire. Well, sir, we are Southrons and are apt to be — I won't say amazed — but rather puzzled by the queer words of both Fife and Forfarshire. We are like Mr. Micawber, when he quoted Burns about the 'gowans'—'I don't know exactly what gowans may be,' said Mr. Micawber.

So I will not address you as M'Connachie but simply as Sir James Barrie — and say that we have welcomed you to our board to-night as the best beloved of our dramatists. I avoid the word 'great,' still more the word 'greatest,' because those are idle words, characterizing nothing. Also, I am warned by a story I lately came across about Mr. Booker Washington, the great negro philanthropist. A Southern gentleman of the old school met Mr. Washington and said to him— 'Well, sir, I guess you must be the greatest man in these United States' Mr. Washington modestly thought there must be some greater man, and instanced President Roosevelt. 'No, sir,' said the Southerner, 'I did think him a great man, until he asked you to dinner.' Well, sir, after that, as we have asked you to dinner, I feel that to use the word greatest would be an ambiguous compliment both to you and to ourselves.

It is peculiarly pleasant to me to have this privilege of toasting you as a dramatist, because I carry my mind back many, many years — let us say to a moment in the reign of Queen Victoria — when you walked with me through a little Surrey pine-wood (I remember it was a pine-wood, because you told me the fir-cones were called 'needles' in Scotland) and you confided to me how very much you wanted to write for the stage. Well, sir, you have had your heart's desire! Heaven forbid that I should attempt at this moment to appreciate, even in a bird's-eye view, the work you have done for our stage. This is not, I am sure you will all agree with me, an occasion for dramatic criticism; we have enough of that on other nights in

the week; this is an off-night. Yet it would perhaps be just a little paradoxical if, in proposing the toast of 'The Drama and Barrie,' I should be entirely silent about the relation between the two. One word, then, on that relation I must say.

You seem to me, sir, to have transfigured our drama. I mean that, under the most familiar and homely features, you have revealed to us unsuspected shapes of beauty. I am not thinking of your lighter moods, when 'Queen Mab hath been with you,' your fun and whim and quaint impish fancies, your 'Barrieisms,' as we have to call them, because they are unlike anything else. I am thinking of your graver moods. But I do not forget that this is a festive occasion and I must not be out of harmony with it. You remember Dickens's story of Cruikshank at the funeral. He was on his knees, when the parson said something that annoyed him, and he whispered to his neighbour, 'If this weren't a funeral, I'd punch his head' If this weren't a festive occasion, sir, I would say that you have wrung our hearts, almost beyond pardon. If this weren't a festive occasion, I would say that you have given us glimpses into the mysteries of life and death and time that have sent us away strangely taken, almost beside ourselves. There, I think, is your magic, your fascination. It is a fascination. Our oldest veteran of the stage — he was with you at St. Andrews — told me he had been some dozen times to 'Mary Rose'; he simply couldn't tear himself away.

Sir 'James Barrie said in reply: —

Scum! Critics to right of him, critics to left of him, critics upper entrance at back leading to conservatory, critics down stage centre — into that Circle some one has blundered. How I wish I could keep it up, dealing blows all around in this author's well-known sledge-hammer style. 'Barrie gives them Beans' — Evening News. 'A Roland for an Oliver' — Daily Chronicle. 'Swashbuckler Barrie swashes on his Buckler' — Mail. 'Barrie spells Walkley with a small w' — Morning Post. That is the kind I should like to give you. But, alas! in the words of the poet Pevelli of the blessed isle, so familiar to you all, Poga, mema allalula, which means that your chairman has spiked my guns....

I remember once going the length of very nearly telling a critic that quite possibly he was mistaken. It was many years ago, before I had written any plays, when red blood boiled in my veins. It is not a bad story, though unfortunately the critic comes rather well out of it, indeed I would not repeat it here except that I come rather well out of it also. It marks the night when I decided upon a rule of conduct with regard to you gentlemen, which, so far as I can remember, I have never broken. A historic occasion for me, therefore, and I am sorry I cannot remember what the weather was like. The criticized was one of my first books, a Scotch novel, and the critic was a man to whom I suppose every one here would take off his hat in homage and in proud memory — Andrew Lang. He not only slaughtered my book, but attacked my Scotch and picked out one word in particular

as not being Scotch at all. To be as particular as that is perhaps always a mistake in criticism, and I thought I had him. I wrote a brief letter to that paper saying that this word was not only good Scotch but was in frequent use in the Waverley novels, that I could tell Mr. Lang in which, but that as he was at present editing them he would find them all worth reading. I then put the letter in my desk and went exultantly to bed. But there was something wrong about it and I could not sleep, and somewhere in the early hours I made up my mind to tear up that letter and never in my life to answer criticism. These two vows I have kept, and in both cases with a happy result. A few days afterwards Mr. Lang wrote in that same paper — and you are good men if you can do what Lang did — saying that he was rather unhappy about his review because he considered, on reflection, that he had not been quite fair to the book. Well, that led to a friendship much valued by me, though the word was never, never referred to between us. As for the other half of my vow, I like to think it is part of the reason why you have done me the honour of asking me here to-night.

Not, of course, that there is anything objectionable in our arguing with one another, but the other way seems to suit me best. Sometimes I must admit it has been rather a close thing. Several times I have indicted a reply saying ‘Oh indeed!’ or something stinging like that; but my post-box is at the far end of the street and there is also time for reflection when one is putting on one’s muffler. So the retort is never sent, though if the post-box were nearer or the muffler were not one of those that goes round twice, there is no telling. I have never even answered Mr. Shaw, though in the days when he was a critic he began an article on a play of mine with some such words as these, ‘This is worse than Shakespeare.’ I admit that this rankled. I wish I could think, gentlemen, that my forbearance towards you is owing to deeply artistic reasons; but no, it is merely because I for ever see the fates hanging over you and about to stretch forth a claw. However you may ram it in — I refer to the rapier — I have a fear that something disastrous is about to happen to you in the so much more important part of your life that has nothing to do with the pen — bad news, ill health, sudden loss; and so I forgive you and tear up. I am even letting you off cheaply to-night in case one of you is run over on the way home, as I have a presentiment is going to happen. How easy it would be for some incensed author to follow a critic or two to their office on a first night and give them a sudden push as a bus came along. But I dare say you are all rather nippy at the curbstones.

So you see it is no use my attempting to talk to you about the drama of to-morrow. That secret lies with the young, and I beg of you not to turn away from them impatiently because of their ‘knowingness,’ as Mr. Hardy calls it in his new book. The young writers know as much about nothing as we know about everything. Yet they suffer much from the abominable conditions of the stage. Through them only shall its salvation come. Give them every friendly consideration, if only because they belong to the diminishing handful which does not call a play a show. ‘Have you seen our show?’—’ I call that a nice little show.’ Heigho! Has the time come, gentlemen, for us all to pack up and depart? No, no, the drama will bloom again,

though it will not be in that garden. Mr. Milne is a very fine tulip already, and there are others for you to water. Miss Dane has proved that the ladies have arrived. For my part, anything I can suggest for the drama's betterment is so simple that I am sure it must be wrong. I feel we have all become too self-conscious about the little parts we play — they are little parts even in our own little lives. If we talked less about how things should be done there might be more time for doing them. Suppose we were to have a close season, in which we confined ourselves to trying to write our plays better, act them better, produce them better, criticize them better. But it can't be so simple as that.

I wish I could write mine better, and I presume I am revealing no secret when I tell you that the only reason I don't is because I can't. If there were any other reason I should deserve the contempt of every one of you. I remember my earliest lesson in that.

For several days after my first book was published I carried it about in my pocket, and took surreptitious peeps at it to make sure that the ink had not faded. I watched a bookshop where it was exposed on a shelf outside the window, and one day a lady — most attractive — picked up my book and read whole paragraphs, laid it down, went away, came back, read more paragraphs, felt for her purse, but finally went away without buying. I have always thought that if my book had been a little bit better she would have bought it. 'The little more and how much it is.' In that case a shilling. But what should be written up behind the scenes is 'The little less and how much it is.'

You have all in the course of earning your livelihood applied adjectives to me, but the only criticism that makes me writhe is that observation of Mr. Shaw's which I have already quoted. I wonder if he has changed his mind. He has changed all sorts of things. Here I must begin to be gloomy. None of your adjectives gets to the mark as much as one I have found for myself— 'Inoffensive Barrie.' I see how much it at once strikes you all. A bitter pill; but it looks as if on one subject I were the best critic in the room.

Your word for me would probably be fantastic. I was quite prepared to hear it from your chairman, because I felt he could not be so shabby as to say whimsical, and that he might forget to say elusive. If you knew how dejected those terms have often made me. I am quite serious. I never believed I was any of those things until you dinned them into me. Few have tried harder to be simple and direct. I have also always thought that I was rather realistic. In this matter, gentlemen, if I may say it without any ill-feeling, as indeed I do, you have damped me a good deal, and sometimes put out the light altogether. It is a terrible business if one is to have no sense at all about his own work. Wandering in darkness.

To return to cheerier topics. I don't often go to the theatre though I always go to Mr. Shaw's plays, not so much for the ordinary reasons as to see whether I can find an explanation for that extraordinary remark of his. But I will tell you what I

think is the best play written in my time. My reason for considering it the best is that it is the one I have thought most about since; not perhaps a bad test. I mean Pinero's 'Iris.' One more confession — I will tell you what has pleased me most about any play of mine. It is that everything included and the dresses coming from the theatre wardrobe, the production of one of them, a little one, it is true, 'The Twelve Pound Look,' cost just under £5.

My not going often to the theatre is not because I don't like it, but because the things I like best about it can be seen without actually going in. I like to gaze at the actors, not when dressed for their parts, but as they emerge by the stage-door. I have never got past the satisfaction of this and it is heightened when the play is my own. The stage doorkeeper is still to me the most romantic figure in any theatre, and I hope he is the best paid. I have even tried to dart past him, but he never knows me, and I am promptly turned back. I wait, though, in the crowd, which usually consists of about four or six persons, not of the élite, and when the star comes out they cheer and I hiss. I mean just the same as they do, but I hiss. This sometimes leads to momentary trouble with the other loiterers, but in the end we adjourn inoffensively to a coffee stall, where I stand treat, and where we were caught by a cinema machine a few months ago.

You may sometimes wonder why I write so much about islands, and indeed I have noticed a certain restiveness in some of you on the subject. There are more islands in my plays than any of you are aware of. I have the cunning to call them by other names. There is one thing I am really good at, and that is at slipping in an island. I dare say it is those islands that make you misunderstand me. I would feel as if I had left off clothing if I were to write without an island. Now could there be a more realistic statement than that. At present I am residing on an island. It is called Typee, and so you will not be surprised to hear that my companion's name is Fyaway. She is a dusky maid, composed of abstractions but not in the least elusive. She is just little bits of the golden girls who have acted for me and saved my plays. There is not one of them whom I have not watched for at the stage-door and hissed ecstatically. She moves about my coral isle with the swallow-flights of Ellen Terry, and melts into the incomparable Maud Adams. She has Irene Vanbrugh's eyes to light the beacons to scare the ships away; and there are bits in her of many other dear sirens who, little aware of what I have plucked, think that they are appearing complete to-night in London.

'With here and there a Peter Pan

And here and there Fay Compton,

And everywhere Trevelyan.'

Forbes Robertson retired so that he could lend to us, on the island, his silver voice, and du Maurier pulls in with Bancroft to make sure that we are not acting. There is no theatre as yet, but Charles Frohman is looking for a site. For the dead are here also, and you can hardly distinguish them from the living. The laughing Irving boys arrive in a skiff, trying to capsize each other; and on magic nights there is Sir Henry himself pacing along the beach, a solitary figure. If Shakespeare were to touch upon our shores he would offer to sell us Fame at a penny the yard — no bidders. Sometimes a play is written and put into a bottle and cast into the sea. I expect it never reaches you; at any rate if it is whimsical that is not it. Fyaway has a native name for me which means ‘The Inoffensive One.’ Come to our island when you feel you have been sufficiently mauled by the rocks of life, and we will give you grassy huts. You can still write your criticisms. Bring your bottles. As I may not pass this way again, I may say that A. B. W.’s hut stands waiting him, a specially attractive one with palms and a running stream. We had a long discussion about Mr. Shaw, but we have decided to let him land.

I thank you heartily, gentlemen, for the high honour you have done me. Mutual respect is, I am sure, all we ask of each other. It must be obvious to you that in making such a long speech I had two main objects, to try a new title on you—‘The Inoffensive Gentleman’; and to watch whether I thought you could stand one more island.

3. To the Printers' Pension Corporation, November 12, 1924 (Connaught Rooms)

MAJOR ASTOR, your Royal Highness, gentlemen — especially Mr. Churchill¹ — what worries me is those two suspicious objects that have been put upon the table in front of me. (Two microphones had been placed on the table to broadcast the speeches.)

¹ Major J. J. Astor, M.P. presided, H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester (then Prince Henry) was present, and Mr. Winston Churchill had just proposed the toast 'Literature and the Press, coupled with the name of Sir James Barrie.'

I do not know what they are, but I presume that one of them represents Literature, and the other the Press. I think we should all feel very beholden to an eminent politician for coming here and talking to us so delightfully about literature and the Press, especially at a moment when the country is on the eve of a General Election — I mean to vote this time. But, though Mr. Churchill has been very nice about it, I know the real reason why I have been asked to reply for this toast. It is because I am the oldest person present. Many years ago I saw, in an American 'Whitaker,' my name in a list, headed 'Interesting Octogenarians,' and I think therefore that the best thing I can do is to give you some literary recollections of far past days. I dare say I may sometimes get a little muddled between past and present, between father and son, but then I notice that you have done that also to-night. You have been congratulating Mr. Churchill on being Chancellor of the Exchequer. Of course, it was his father who was that. I will tell you a secret — I know quite well what has been happening to Mr. Churchill, and I think that he is only wearing the laurels that he has so splendidly earned. But let us couple with him to-night the father, who must be proud of his boy.

Those of you who are at present writing your reminiscences, and that must mean the greater number of you, I warn you that there is not much use having reminiscences nowadays unless you can remember Robert Louis Stevenson. The only time I met Stevenson was in Edinburgh, and I had no idea who he was. It was in the winter of '79. I well remember the wind was 'blawin' snell' when I set off that afternoon with my notebooks to the Humanities class of the University of Edinburgh. As I was crossing Princes Street — a blasty corner — I ran against another wayfarer. Looking up, I saw that he was a young man of an exceeding tenuity of body, his eyes, his hair, already beginning to go black, and that he was wearing a velvet jacket. He passed on, but he had bumped against me, and I stood in the middle of the street regardless of the traffic, and glared contemptuously after him.

He must have grown conscious of this, because he turned round and looked at me. I continued to glare. He went on a little bit, and turned round again. I was still glaring, and he came back and said to me, quite nicely: 'After all, God made me.' I said: 'He is getting careless.' He lifted his cane, and then, instead, he said: 'Do I

know you?' He said it with such extraordinary charm that I replied, wistfully: 'No, but I wish you did.' He said: 'Let's pretend I do,' and we went off to a tavern at the foot of Leith Street, where we drank what he said was his favourite wine of the Three Musketeers. Each of us wanted to pay, but it did not much matter, as neither of us had any money.

We had to leave that tavern without the velvet coat and without my class books. When we got out it was snowing hard, and we quarrelled — something about Mary Queen of Scots. I remember how he chased me for hours that snowy night through the streets of Edinburgh, calling for my blood. That is my only reminiscence of R. L. S., and I dare say that even that will get me into trouble.

It may interest Major Astor to know that I was the man who bought the first copy of *The Times* containing the news of the victory of Waterloo. I happened to be passing Printing House Square at the time, and I vividly remember the Editor leaning far out of his window to watch the sales, and I heard him exclaim exultantly, 'There goes one copy, at any rate!' Waterloo! I never knew Napoleon in his great days, but I chanced to be lodging in the same house that he came to, as you remember, as a stripling, just for a week, when he was trying to get a clerkship in the East India Company. The old connection between France and Scotland brought us together. I remember well taking him one evening to Cremorne Gardens, then at the height of its popularity, and introducing him to a stout friend of mine, whom some of you may remember, Jos Sedley. What fun we had in the fog driving Jos home in his coach to Russell Square! Napoleon was singing gaily, and Jos was bulging out of both windows of the coach at once. This is perhaps only interesting as being the first encounter between these two figures, who were afterwards to meet on the tented field. Napoleon, as is now generally known, did not take up that clerkship in the East India Company. I dissuaded him against it. Looking back, I consider that this was one of my mistakes.

Gentlemen, the unenviable shades of the great, who have to live on here after they have shed this mortal tenement! Not for them the dignity of dying and being forgotten, which is surely the right of proud man! Who knows that where they are fame is looked upon as a rather sordid achievement? The freer spirits may look upon those immortals with pity, because they have to go on dragging a chain here on earth. It may be that the Elysian Fields are not a place of honour, but of banishment!

'Literature and the Press!' It is a noble toast, and never can it be drunk more fittingly than in honour of the best friend that literature and the Press ever had — the printer. All seems well with the Press. We are gathered to-night round a chairman not unconnected with a journal of which we can perhaps say, without vainglory, that it is a possession which all the nations envy us. The Press nowadays, as Mr. Churchill has said, takes all the world in its span. I cannot look at Mr. Churchill, because I have been told to look at these two things (the microphones), but one who was very lately a Lord Chancellor, and now another, a Chancellor of the Exchequer, have both — I do not know whether Mr. Churchill is beginning to look a little nervous about what I am going to say next — all I am going to say is in

glorification of the Press — when it is garbed in its Sunday best — they are the two brightest jewels on its proud bosom.

Literature, when it can be heard at all above the syrens — Mr. Churchill has had a good deal to say about literature and the Press, and has found that they are very much the same thing. He used an expression about there being no arbitrary dividing line between literature and the Press. I should like to give a definition of what I think is the arbitrary dividing line just in half a dozen words. It is this — Literature used to be a quiet bird. All, I think, is very well with literature, especially with the young authors. From its looms comes much brave literature, devised by cunning hands, women's equally with men's. There is no question whether a woman is worthy of a place in our Cabinet. Those young authors!

All hail to them! Happy they! Multitudinous seas incarnadine boil in their veins. They hear the thousand nightingales which we once thought we heard. They have a short way with the old hands, but in our pride in them we forgive them for that. Perhaps they sometimes go a little to excess, treating even God as if He were, shall we say, the greatest of the Victorians. I thank you for listening to me so patiently.

4. Freedom of the Stationers' Company

(Mr. Richard Bentley, as Master, presided, when Lord Balfour, Sir James Barrie and Mr. Rudyard Kipling were enrolled as Honorary Freemen and Liverymen of the Stationers' Company.)

IN THE STATIONERS' HALL, July 3, 1925

I am very proud to be a Freeman and Liveryman of what I see was long ago called the Mystery of Art of the Stationers, but that you should care to include me seems to be yet another of the Company's mysteries. I notice you say Balfour in England. In Scotland we say Balfour, as if the name was one we loved to linger over. I like to think that I am among the chosen because I am a master of hard facts. Eloquence, philosophy, poetry from Lord Balfour and Mr. Kipling, but from me to-day you naturally look for facts.

The most valiant name in your records is, of course, Shakespeare, and my first fact is that I propose to ask you to enter at Stationers' Hall one more edition of his works. The other sex — if so they may still be called — have long complained that his women, however glorious, are too subservient to the old enemy for these later days, as if he did not know what times were coming for women. Gentlemen, he knew, but he had to write with the knowledge that if he was too advanced about Woman his plays would be publicly burned in the garden of Stationers' Hall. So he left a cipher, not in the text, where everybody has been looking for them, but in the cunning omission of all stage directions, and women, as he hoped, have had the wit to read it aright, with the result that there is to be another edition, called appropriately, 'The Ladies' Shakespeare.' For the first time on any stage some fortunate actress, without altering one word but by the use of silent illuminating 'business,' is to show us the Shrew that Shakespeare drew. Katherine was really fooling Petruchio all the time. The reason he carried her off before the marriage feast, though he didn't know it, was that her father was really a poor man, and there was no marriage feast. So Katherine got herself carried off to save that considerable expense. On that first night in Petruchio's house, when he was out in the wind and the rain distending his chest in the belief that he was taming her, do you really think with him that she went supperless to bed? No, she had a little bag with her. In it a wing of chicken and some other delicacies, a half bottle of the famous Paduan wine, and such a pretty corkscrew. I must tell you no more; go and book your seats, you will see, without even Sir Israel Gollancz being able to find one word missed out or added, that it is no longer Katherine who is tamed.

Shakespeare has heard that he is to be understood at last — another of my facts. They say that a look of expectancy has come over the face of his statue in Leicester Square. If the actress who is to play the real Katherine has the courage to

climb the railings, while the rest of London sleeps, she may find him waiting for her at the foot of his pedestal to honour her by walking her once round that garden, talking to her in the language not of Petruchio but of Romeo. Who is she to be? Dame Terry, please come back and get your long-deferred reward.

Alas! some say that Shakespeare was like the cuckoo, which gets other birds to lay its eggs for it — my last fact. Few in this company but have heard of the ghost of Stationers' Hall, at once your glory and your terror. As I understand, all of you who are members have seen it. It is what gives you the look that is to be found on no other faces. Lord Balfour, Mr. Kipling, and I, we don't have the look — not yet. But I learn that we are presently to be led by the Master to another place and shown the ghost, so you may now survey the three of us as we are for the last time. The ghost is a scrap of paper which proves that Bacon did not write the plays, and so far good, but — I get this from 'The Ladies' Shakespeare' — but Bacon was not the only author in that household. The document is signed by Shakespeare, and is in these words: 'Received from Lady Bacon for fathering her play of Hamlet — five pounds.'

Ah me! But, gentlemen, there is a brighter side to everything. For instance, let me sit down. After all, that old liveryman was the wise one who said to Ben Jonson — was it?— 'I know not, sir, whether Bacon wrote the works of Shakespeare, but if he did not it seems to me that he missed the opportunity of his life.'

5. To the Australian Cricketers

AT A LUNCHEON GIVEN BY THE LONDON DISTRICT OF THE
INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISTS AT THE CRITERION RESTAURANT,
PICCADILLY

April 20, 1926

How much sweeter those sounds (of loud cheers for the speaker) would be to me if I had got them for lifting Mr. Mailey over the ropes. If I were to say one-tenth of what I could say about cricket, especially about my own prowess at it, there would be no more play to-day. Once more I buckle on my pads. I stride to the wicket. I take a look round to see how Mr. Collins has set his field — and, oh horrible! I see Mr. Gregory waiting in the slips. What can he be waiting for?

I get one consolation from Mr. Gregory's name — he is obviously a MacGregor. I have no doubt that he inherited his bowling from his ancestor, Rob Roy MacGregor, who, as the books tell us, used to hurl rocks at the stumps of the Sassenach.

Mr. Gregory is now joined in the slips by Mr. Hendry and Mr. Mailey. Three to one! I don't know what they think they look like, with their arms stretched out imploringly, but to me they look as if they were proposing simultaneously to the same lady. Even though one of them wins her, what can he do with her? I hope they will remember this in the first Test Match, and that it will put them off their game.

The first Test Match! Fancy speaking that awful mouthful in words of one syllable. All the awful words this year are to be in one syllable. The three T's — Test, Toss, Tail. The first Test Match is about to begin. We are all at Trent Bridge. The English captain wins the toss — and puts the Australians in. I think he must have something up his sleeve. I don't quite catch sight of his face, but I saw him having a secret conversation with Mr. Warner's old Harlequin cap, and I believe they are up to something. Maurice Tate takes the ball. You know his way. He then puts his hand behind his back; an awful silence spreads over the universe. The Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, in the middle of his speech is bereft of words. It has been said, probably by Mr. Gregory, that drowning men clutch at straws. On a balcony in the pavilion nine members of the Australian team pick up straws and clutch at them. Mr. Noble pauses in the middle of drawing up the complete Australian averages of the tour. Mr. Hill in Australia is suspended between Heaven and the inkpot. Maurice Tate takes a little walk, which is to be followed by a little run.

My lords and gentlemen, pray silence while Maurice Tate delivers his first ball. There is now nothing to be heard except Mr. Gregory letting fall his straw. Tate comes rushing forward and sends down, not the ball, but the seam. What does that mighty roar from the onlookers mean? Have the Australians already made four, or does it mean, in journalistic phrase, "The next man in is Macartney"? Much good that will do us! Then there is Ponsford, who, I am told, has only been out twice in the last five years.

I suppose I am the only man in the room who knows what is to be the constitution of the English XI. Mr. Warner and his committee don't know — at least I haven't told them. On such an occasion as this it may seem a little cruel to damp Mr. Collins, but I suppose the truth is best, and I am afraid I must tell him that this year there is no hope for his gallant but unfortunate company. Our team is mostly new, and is at present hidden away in cellars. Our fast bowler — I mention this in confidence — is W. K.

Thunder, who has never been known to smile except when he hears Mr. Gregory referred to as a fast bowler. Of our batsmen, I shall merely indicate their quality by saying that Hobbs is to be 12th man. Of course, things may go wrong. There is the glorious uncertainty of cricket. But even though Australia should win — this time — I have a rod in reserve for Mr. Collins. In that case I shall myself choose the Scottish XI. My first choice is MacGregor, with him Macdonald, Macaulay, and Macartney. Two other names as Scotch as peat are Hendry and Andrews. A. W. Carr is my captain, M. D. Lyon my wicket-keeper, and there are still Douglas, Nigel Haig, MacBryan, and Armstrong. With this Scottish XI. I challenge the Australians. The game not to be played on turf or matting, but as always, on our native heather.

In conclusion — for I was out long ago (caught Gregory) — in conclusion, as Mr. Grimmett said when he went on to bowl in the last Test Match — let us pay our opponents this compliment, we are sure that if we had not thought of cricket first, they would have done it, and whether we win or lose, O friendly enemy, you cannot deprive us of our proudest sporting boast, that it was we who invented both cricket and the Australians. And let us not forget, especially at this time, that the great glory of cricket does not lie in Test Matches, nor county championships, nor Sheffield Shields, but rather on village greens, the cradle of cricket. The Tests are but the fevers of the game. As the years roll on they become of small account, something else soon takes their place, the very word may be forgotten; but long, long afterwards, I think, your far-off progeny will still of summer afternoons hear the crack of the bat, and the local champion calling for his ale on the same old bumpy wickets. It has been said of the unseen army of the dead, on their everlasting march, that when they are passing a rural cricket ground the Englishman falls out of the ranks for a moment to look over the gate and smile. The Englishman, yes, and the Australian. How terrible if those two had to rejoin their comrades feeling that we were no longer playing the game! I think that is about the last blunder we shall make. I ask you to drink to the glorious toast of cricket, coupled with the name of one of the greatest of all cricketers and one of the greatest of cricket captains, Mr. Warner.

6. Worcestershire Association Dinner

SECOND ANNUAL DINNER, LONDON

February 29, 1928

Sir James Barrie, in reply, began by following Lord Beauchamp's example of speaking in dialect, affecting the Scotch, but resisted, saying: It would take too long. He went on: What a lot of people seem to live in Worcestershire. I do not know whether you can hear me away over on the South Wales' district (indicating the far recesses of the hall). I shall try to speak up, but if you don't hear me you can be sure you are having much the best of it.

I have got a terrible statement to make to you. I do not know whether you noticed that Earl Beauchamp spoke of 'the visitors.' At the same time a strange malevolent look might have been seen passing across the face of our Chairman, (The Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin) whose name, I regret to say, I failed to catch. Sir James said that he was asked to speak for the guests, and he had prepared a speech about the guests. What is to be done? he asked, rolling a cigar round his mouth. Its name is 'might have been.' With that he tore up some pieces of paper purporting to be the prepared speech, and then remarked that it was a terrible position. I can only think of two people who, placed in such a terrible position, would be able to rise to it — two members of His Majesty's Government. I am sure that you can think of the same two. They could have responded to that toast of the visitors without a moment's preparation even on the Day of Judgement.

Sir James Barrie then pieced together the torn bits of paper and suggested that perhaps that speech would do after all, and added: I do not know why none of you thought of that. Appearing to read from the notes, he went on: We are especially proud to be here because of the presence of our most beloved Prince of Wales. And yet no one of us can be quite sure that if he had known we were to be here he would have come. I am particularly proud to reply for the women visitors. What does the poet say about woman? Well, what does the poet not say about woman? Here Sir James stopped, lit his cigar, and went on as dreamily: Years ago I remember one who is here to-night sitting down to prepare a toast to the ladies. I won't mention names, and I do not see why Lord Ednam should be blushing. He sat down at his desk.

I happened to be there. He was looking very confident. I went for a walk and when I came back I found he had written, 'O woman.' He still looked confident. I went for another walk, and when I came back I found it was 'Oh, woman oh.' He was no longer looking confident. I tried to reassure him by saying that that was everything one did know for certain about woman.

Sir James then purported to read from the tattered notes again: 'Worcestershire's darling son, his dark secret,' and then said: The Premier has a dark secret. For fear that you might think it is worse than it is, I think that I had better make a clean breast of it. That dark secret is that he absolutely abominates

pipe-smoking. Have any of you ever seen him smoking a pipe — trying to smoke a pipe — not even able to hold the thing properly? It all arose out of an unfortunate newspaper mistake, which the public liked, and rather than disappoint them he went on smoking ‘this horrible thing.’ But if you want to see the Prime Minister at his best, it is when he hears the hundred nightingales and when he has thrown that rank thing aside and lights his beloved cigarette.

Those, commented Sir James irrelevantly, are the views of the visitors upon the vexed questions of the day. In a speech it is not the words that matter, it is the face. You all have dark secrets, all the men among you, and even I. I should like to tell you my dark secret. When I was at school in the south of Scotland — it was a mixed school — one day the girls took a plebiscite about which boy had the sweetest smile. It came to my ears that I had one. Think of my elation. But the tragedy is that it made me self-conscious, and I have never been able to smile since.

7. To the Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers

AT THEIR ANNUAL DINNER, AT THE HYDE PARK HOTEL — November 28, 1928

(Sir James Barrie was elected President of the Society in succession to Thomas Hardy, who had died in the spring of that year.)

I wish I was famous, I mean just for this one night, so that I could do you credit. Even then I would not take it on, unless I had a return ticket. A friend of mine once said to me, 'Everybody is famous for something, and you are famous for living opposite Bernard Shaw.' And now Mr. Shaw has gone from across the way, little recking what he has taken away of mine. Could I bring an action against him? In Scotland (I knew we should soon get there) at social functions the great problem of a hostess is which of the clergymen present she should ask to say grace. There must be some apparently good reason, or the feelings of the others will be lacerated. I have heard her ask without a quiver, 'Will you say grace, Mr. So-and-So, as you are the nearest the door?' Ladies and gentlemen, I see now why you elected me your president; it was because I was nearest the door. Quite a nice reason, but nothing grand about it. Is there no inspired playwright present who can give me a better entrance? Yes, there is. Suddenly everyone in the room, including myself, realizes that I shall be famous in the hereafter as the last male president of the Society of Authors.

Interest in your president at last springs up in the Society. What manner of man is he? you ask; and, indeed, I have sometimes wondered myself. How did he begin? What was his first work? He began by replying to an advertisement for a leader-writer on a Midland daily paper, and somehow they took him. Result, transport, followed by a sinking. He remembered that he had not only never written a leader, but had never read one. The time was summer, and the chimney was stuffed with newspapers. He pulled those newspapers down the chimney by the dozen, did that brave heart, and blew the soot off them with the bellows, and sat down and studied how to become a leader-writer. First published book. It was a shilling one, and he remembers, like yesterday, the only person he ever saw reading it.

She was a stranger to him, and it was in a box outside Denny's bookshop in Holywell Street. The drizzle of an autumnal day had ceased, and from the busy Strand near by came the roar of a great city. He stood watching her. She was a brunette, willowy, but the chief thing about her was that she was reading his book. Several times she tried to go away from it, but she had to return to it. Her tapered fingers strayed again and again to her purse. The sun was now sinking in the west. At last she went off without buying, but he felt that if the book had been ever so little better he would have got her, and it is undoubtedly owing to her encouragement that that poor struggler is here to-night.

Would you care, ladies and gentlemen, to have a few words of reminiscence about our illustrious pair, Meredith and Hardy? The one of them has told me how he used to rush round Hyde Park three times on end, flying from his misery, and I know a gate on which the other sat and wished he had never been born. When I came to London I bought a silk hat to impress editors, and with the remainder of the sovereign I took a ticket to Box Hill, where Meredith lived. I sat on the grass mound opposite his cottage and by and by I saw a face at a window, the finest face I have ever seen on a man. I was to become well acquainted with both him and Hardy, and I don't know which was the greater; but the most satisfactory thing in my little literary history is that the two whom as writers I have most admired became the two whom as men I have most loved.

Hardy I met first at a club in Piccadilly, where he had asked me to lunch. It is a club where they afterwards adjourn to the smoking-room and talk for a breathless hour or two about style. Hardy's small contribution made no mark, but I thought how interesting that the only man among you who doesn't know all about style and a good deal more is the only man among you who has got a style. Style is the way the artist paints his picture. No, it can't be so easy as that. All sorts of things seem so easy to me until I read clever works about them. Hardy could scarcely look out at a window in the twilight without seeing something hitherto hidden from mortal eye. That must have helped his style. He has been called a pessimist. Surely pessimists are just people without any root to them. Was he that?

Once when I was at Dorchester he showed me a letter from a firm which had presented him with a broadcasting set. They said they were delighted to hear from him that it gave pleasure, but that they were rather damped to learn from another source that it was not he who listened but his dog. This was quite true. We went that afternoon to a local rehearsal of the play of 'Tess,' and the dog, who was with us, behaved beautifully until the time came when he knew the wireless would be putting on 'the Children's Hour.' It was his favourite item. He howled for it so that even Tess's champion had to desert her and hurry home with him. The dog afterwards discovered that a weather report, or something of the kind, was issued in the early morning, and I understand his master used to go downstairs in the cold and turn it on for him.

Hardy could easily be hurt by not ill-intended pens. He had things to do, and without meaning to they got in the way of his doing them, but he never desired his fame. If it could have been separated from his poesy he would have given it to any beggar at the door. When he published 'Tess' I warned him that he was heading straight for glory — and he winced. When 'The Dynasts' came out I said, 'Now you've gone and done it,' and I expect he said, 'We won't have that man at Max Gate any more.' Whatever angel guards the portals of Elysium, he must have had to push Thomas Hardy in. Most of them there are too dashing for that quietest figure in literature, with their Olympian revels and their boisterous talk about everything — no, not about everything — not about style. He was not quite as others are.

Everyone knows that he had an intimacy with trees surpassing even that of Giles Winterbourne; but there was an eerier element in it than that. The trees had a similar knowledge of him, and when he passed through their wood they could tell him from all other men. Perhaps that was the price he paid.

I suppose many of you have been reading the noble biography of which half has just appeared. There is a passage of two or three lines in it that may be more revealing than anything else in the book, that in which we are told how from his earliest years he disliked being touched by anyone. I believe I can say that outside a relative no man alive, much as Hardy drew affection, ever put a hand on his shoulder. It could not have been even on the day when he sat so unhappy on that gate. In his youth he used to carry in his pockets two dumpy volumes of verse by one whose sympathetic shade perhaps pressed so close to him that day that there were two on the gate. There are a hundred, a thousand, pencil marks on those two volumes that look now like love messages from the young poet of one age to the young poet of a past age. What in human experience can be more stainless? I think Hardy's first words in the Elysian Fields were, 'Which is Shelley?' and that then the hand fell upon his shoulder for which he had so long been waiting. Perhaps those pencil marks on the books are the scrapings of a skylark, trying to bring those two together, and succeeding at last —

*'the lark that Shelley heard
And made immortal through times to be,
Though it only lived like another bird
And knew not its immortality,
Lived its meek life, then one day fell,
A little ball of feather and bone;
And how it perished, when piped farewell,
And where it wastes, are alike unknown.'*

A little bird, twice immortal, and in its end more fortunate than they.

I have only one complaint to make of Hardy. He never read 'Wuthering Heights.' The reason he gave will make you like him more than ever. He said he heard it was depressing. Well, ladies, don't worry, I guess he will find a copy there. Our greatest woman.

Before sitting down, just a word of warm greeting to those with whom the future lies. Your motto, I suppose, is 'Whatever was is wrong,' and though it is

possibly wanting in perfection, I am sure it is better than the one that I now see did for me, 'Whatever is, is right.' Be bold. May you scale Parnassus, if you think it is pleasant up there. Hail and farewell. Is it true that some of you recently climbed a mountain to see the sun rise, and when it rose you didn't think much of it, so you hissed? Well, a magnificent gesture. At any rate, be forbearing, won't you, with the old 'uns, though we may occasionally forget our missions and steal out to smell a rose? I suppose the roses were shown up long ago. Perhaps Shelley and Hardy were all wrong about the skylark. Let us keep it dark. And so, ladies and gentlemen, your servant. However reprehensible it may be in novels, all speeches have a happy ending.

8. To the Royal Scottish Corporation

PRESIDING OVER THE 264TH ST. ANDREW'S DAY FESTIVAL OF THE CORPORATION, AT THE HOLBORN RESTAURANT

November 30, 1928

IN Mr. Moncrieff's delightful sketch of the history of this Corporation — I wish, though, we were still called, after the Box in front of me, the 'Scots Box'; do you mind if, instead of proposing the Corporation, I now sit down and write a play entitled 'The Scots Box'? — in Mr. Moncrieff's sketch he tells us that in the year 1567 there were only 40 Scots in London. That is all he seems to know about them, but I can tell him more. I can assure him that most of the 40 met in friendly reunion on the St. Andrew's evening of that year, that they partook somehow of haggis, afterwards said by the southerner to be boiled bagpipes, and that speeches were made which left the company in no doubt that the Scots are the greatest people on earth. When James I. came here he was followed by many compatriots, each carrying his little Scots Box, but with no Corporation to speak of. Like Mr. Moncrieff they lost the one and found the other. Ever since then we have forgathered on St. Andrew's Day in London, and everywhere else, to second the above motion.

It has struck me that now and again, say every hundredth year, we might make a memorable attempt to discover whether the Scots have any deficiencies. That is what I am after to-night. It might give a sensational fillip to the thing if the gentlemen of the Press would kindly put down as their headings, 'Flaw found by a Scotsman in the Scottish Nation.' Or would it be cannier to wait till I have found it?

Perhaps I have set myself an impossible task. Even if we can rake up a fault or two, is it advisable, at a time when the Scots in England are having a lean year? I refer, of course, to our having only one Scotsman among the two Archbishops of England, when we have been so long accustomed to having both. Mind you, I am not defending Archbishops. We have none in my Church, and that settles the matter. There, that is one of our faults — arrogance! In my native place, which is superior to your native place — there is another of our faults! — there was an English church, which we always called the chapel, and as a child I always ran past it, holding my breath. So did the other nice boys. I think I taught them. When I came to London I tried to keep up the practice, but there were too many churches.

(Looking at the Box.) You know, ever since I said the Scottish might have faults, a curious rumbling has been going on inside the Box. It objects. It is up to something. Don't listen to me. Watch the Box.

I suppose most of you know a certain emporium in Geyanqueer Lane, E.C. At least, those of you who make speeches know it. It provides speeches. Speeches can be got there of every kind according to price, and warranted new-laid. You tell them what you want, and how far you are prepared to go, and usually they can hand the speech across at once. So I went there about this speech. Of course I went to the Scots department. There is also one for the English, but the heads of the departments are Scottish. I hadn't chosen a good day for it, because, Parliament

having met lately, there was a great rush of Cabinet Ministers and Opposition leaders for speeches, and I was rather crowded out. I met Mr. Winston in the passage buttoning up his coat and smiling. It was clear that he had got some good ones.

When my turn came I explained that I wanted a speech for a Scottish banquet, and they immediately pulled out a drawer and handed me a speech. I said, 'Will this be original and also like all other Scottish speeches?' They said, 'Certainly.' I said, 'But what I want to dwell upon is the faults of the Scottish people.' They said, 'What faults?' I said, 'That is what I am up against.' (The Box liked that.) They sent me forward to the Speciality Department. This department's line is not speeches, but what are technically termed 'Brighteners,' little stories to make the speech bearable, and they recommend one brightener for every five minutes. They pulled out some brighteners for me and began to read me one—"There was once an Englishman and a Welshman and a Scotsman..." I winced and said, 'Stop, does the Scotsman win?' They said, 'Certainly.'

'But,' I said, 'I want a brightener where the Scotsman loses.'

They gaped, and sent me down to the workshops, where I found about a dozen young men in their shirt sleeves busy turning English stories into Scottish ones, and the word 'Shakespeare' into 'Burns,' and so on. Giving them a Scotch twist, they called it — which meant always making the Scot come out on top. They showed a specimen about the difference between some English and Scottish soldiers in a convalescent home. It said, 'The English are sober and intelligent while the Scots dissipate what talents they possess in strong waters.' That was before it got the twist. When twisted it read, 'The English are sober and read penny numbers, while the Scots get drunk and read standard works.' I assure you the emporium was no help to me, though I did buy two or three of their brighteners to — well, just in case. That about the Archbishops was one. Seven and sixpence.

Seriously, we must have our faults, whatever may be the opinion of the Box. We are undoubtedly a sentimental people, and it sometimes plays queer games with that other celebrated sense of ours, the practical. The wild dances these two have had as partners, making everybody dizzy but ourselves! I say this with feeling.

Perhaps a certain self-satisfaction is another of our failings. Just at banquets. Are we inordinately pleased with that rather tawdry thing, getting on in the world? It can be accounted for largely by early hardships. If I remember aright, George II. in the '45 put £30,000 on the head of Prince Charlie, who replied by putting £30 on the head of King George II. I have sometimes wondered whether that was irony, or just the largest sum he could raise. It has been said that the Jacobites came to grief at Derby because as soon as they found a treasure, such as an old saddle, they departed for their mountain fastness, feeling that they had acquired a competency.

Life in the north has become very different since those days, but with a good many of us still the first marvellous sight that awaits us in England is people having a meat dinner every day. Even after we can afford that delirium we go steady. This is canniness, and we admit the soft impeachment; but if the word is changed to 'nearness' we do not admit that we are near. There never was a more

hospitable people. And again, experience has taught us that one of the best ways of being hospitable is to throw lifebelts into the seas we have scrambled out of. That was the origin of the Scottish Corporation.

A week or two ago I looked on at 'Pay Day' in the chapel of the Corporation, when some hundreds of aged and worthy Scots were receiving the monthly help that I have called their life-belts. Not alms; they take it as their right, and as such it is given, their right and ours. So many lifebelts were a proud sight for any Scotsman. As most of us know, these people were housed in past ages in a 'Hospital,' but long ago it was decided that this was too like a poor-house, and since then the life-belts go to their own homes. I think the day that resolution was passed was the best in the history of the Corporation.

These people are ourselves. A turn of the wheel, and we might be there and they here. Of course, among the thousands who seek succour yearly of this society there are black sheep as well as white, and our secretary and his assistants know how to deal with them. There must also be a larger number who are neither white nor black; and those, I am afraid, are ourselves also. So many follies, and worse, committed by all of us, that we perhaps have not had to pay for, and they have. God gives the bad birds places in which to build their nests. What a hole we should be in, you and I, if we had got only bare justice from life, and some of them have not got even that. Starved of the necessities of life, of which the chief is love. Ah, gentlemen, the saddest thing in the world is the waste of love. There is so much of it squandered, thrown away because we do not know what to do with it, or forlornly because no one seems to want it. If it could be stored it would be a greater heating power than electricity. The Scots Box has stored a little of it.

Yes, but in conclusion, the Scots Box has also spoilt my speech. What has become of those Scottish faults and flaws I was to parade before you? All gone whistling down the wind? No, but while our attention was elsewhere the Box must have got hold of them, and it has them now locked up inside, so that I cannot parade them. It would not let me give away the old country. This Box (as you will learn when my play is ready) is as Scottish as peat, and so am I, and so are you, and I ask you what is to be done about it except to dree our weird?

And now I sit down at last, thanking you for your forbearance. The toast is the Royal Scottish Corporation, coupled with the name of its oldest member, the Scots Box.

Responding to the toast of his health, proposed later in the evening by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Sir James Barrie said: —

Lord Balfour of Burleigh has wondered how some of my Scottish phrases translated in other languages. He mentioned 'The Little Minister.' When this was going to be produced in America I said to the American manager, 'What will the Scotch be like?' He replied, 'Don't you worry about the Scotch. You would not know it was Scotch, but the American public will know.'

Now one little matter about the Box. I think you will like to be told that the Box and I have made it up and we are now the best of friends. When the Box heard

what sum had been collected it whispered agitatedly — several of us heard it—' I hope it does not mean scots.' (A silver coin worth 13 and eighth d.) This is interesting because, I should say, it is the only occasion on which the Box could think anything could mean better than Scots. I have taken a great fancy to this Box. It has been lost twice. I warn you that it may disappear again.

9. To the Newspaper Press Fund

AT THEIR ANNUAL DINNER, AT THE MAYFAIR HOTEL, LONDON —
April 23, 1929

MY one desire to-night, and I am sure it is yours also, is to be nice to Mr. Baldwin. It is not his fault that he is a Worcestershire man. After all, Shakespeare was very near being a Worcestershire man, but his mother nipped across into Warwickshire to give the boy a chance.

If Shakespeare had come to London nowadays I suppose he would have become a journalist. No signed articles for him. You know I don't think he would have written plays; he would have turned them into novels, thrillers for which Mr. Baldwin, and perhaps most of us, admits a dark partiality. 'Hamlet,' if written in these days, would probably be called 'The Strange Affair at Elsinore.' How hard on me to have to make a speech when I know that the Prime Minister would far rather I told him a detective story.

At that moment the telephone bell rang (said Sir James, using his wineglass as a receiver).

Hallo, hallo, hallo. Yes, I'm here. I'm speaking. Who are you? — It's Scotland Yard — The Yard asks you as a favour, ladies and gentlemen, not to wipe your glasses, as the waiters are plainclothes men taking finger-prints. Who? No i? Oh! (Looking at Mr. Baldwin.) Yes, he is here — He is in great danger. They want to know if he has a gun — They say it is the most astounding case the Yard has ever had to call me in to help them with — A complete change has come over London since we sat down to dinner. — The streets are seething with men in masks and princesses with daggers in their stockings. — They have broken out of every detective story No i has ever read, and all of them are after him. — He will never return to Downing Street alive unless I can bring him. — He and I must leave the hotel first and alone, and, as soon as we two leave, it is to be blown up. — End of Chapter One of 'The Strange Affair at Chequers.'

When I was interrupted — by Lord Byng — I was about to say that... Some Pressmen have discovered that I am an old timer, and asked me to speak a little about my own journalistic days. For a year only was I a real journalist, that is to say, on the staff, and then on a provincial daily, when I wrote — oh, so many leaders. Curiously, I can remember only one of them, and that the first one, and only the first sentence of that one. It was 'Is Sir Thomas Somebody, we wonder, a Conservative?' Who Sir Thomas was I have no idea, and even less can I understand why I wondered whether he was a Conservative. But I find myself wondering still whether I began all my leaders with those words, whether indeed there is any other way of beginning a leader, and I have sometimes thought of looking at leader columns to see.

Of course London was in my eye. I had sent a few articles to the most glorious editor I have ever known, Frederick Greenwood — if it had not been for him and for another later, Robertson Nicoll, I suppose I would have had to go back and become a clerk. I indited to Greenwood a prose sonnet, saying that if he thought I could make

a pound a week in London I knew I could live on it, but that, whatever his advice was, I should follow it. He replied promptly, 'For Heaven's sake, stay where you are' — so I came up next week. Synopsis of the next ten chapters — The Scotsman in the Iron Mask. Gradually I made my only noteworthy discovery, that I myself had no mind, but that I could enter for the space of a column into the minds of other people. This continues. For instance, I could not for the life of me tell you what I am thinking just now, but I could tell you what our Chairman was thinking when he shook hands with all this large company, and I could tell you what Mr. Baldwin is thinking now. He is thinking, 'The coffee is good, and the tobacco is good, and so let the man maunder on.' In my multitudinous articles, I assumed characters as varied as the envelopes in which I got most of them back. My experiences as a medical man — I can still smell the dispensary I was never in; I have been a member of the House of Commons, and a policeman at its doors — see my article about how I was locked up in the Clock Tower; I was vagrants of all sorts, and as many men of property; I have been the last blacksmith of Gretna Green, and deans and bishops, so that it is a wonder gaiters did not grow on my legs. I could have filled an anonymous 'Who's Who,' if you can conceive such a work. I was even every kind of lady. I suppose you are now looking upon the first woman journalist. There was a fascinating series you should not have missed about my life as a civil engineer in India, where I threw a bridge across the Irrawaddy. I forget how many thousand coolies I employed, but even now I can look over your heads and see the rickshaws being trotted across the bridge I threw....

I noticed to-night, gentlemen, that quite a number of you, when offered succulent dishes, waved them aside. How now, sirs, what has come over you? Have you forgotten certain cookings by a lodging fire — and an adjacent shop? That shop used, as if the scene were Verona, to open its casements to the dewy night, so that its Juliets, the chops, might more alluringly address us. Oh, Romeo, Romeo, wherefore has thou but half a crown in all the world, which as thou turnest it in thy fevered hand begins to feel like a two shilling piece. It is the little sixpence-halfpenny chop that is speaking.

There was also the still more provocative seven-penny. Have I not joined you at that window, gazing at its contents threateningly? There were even some marked ninepence, haughty things that looked disdainfully through the likes of us, as who should say 'Go to, you dogs, I am not for such as you.' There are no such snobs as chops. I don't know who were the swells that bought the ninepennies — perhaps our chairman — some evening when he was giving a party. But the sixpence-halfpennies and the sevenpennies, aha, gentlemen, we have lived, you and I, whatever we may look like to-night!

Those tremulous days — were they as happy as they seem through the smoke of this banqueting hall? If the smoke were to clear away too much, which of us would not be the first to shiver? The street of lodgings that we used to pace, waiting hungrily for the postman with the proofs, which are editors' love-letters — would we, even for the prize of living our lives differently, writing our works differently,

would we, if we could, resume those pacings on flagstones that are perhaps still indented with our shoes? Yes, for that prize I know one of us who would.

‘Time, so complained of,
Who to no one man
Shows partiality
Brings round to all men
Some undimmed hours.’

Undimmed hours! Yes, let us hope so. And yet, could memory so beguile, if in the present that shivering fit were on us? It is on a good many in Fleet Street to-night. That is why we are here. But so comfortably here. Perhaps the gifts we give are just dope to ourselves so that we may not shiver.

I can't sit down without expressing my surprise that a previous speaker went out of his way, as it seemed to me, to say something derogatory about Worcestershire. Worcestershire is not only one of the fairest of our counties, but I am sure we here agree, in all sincerity, it has given to England, and to us to-night, the happiest thought any county has had for a long time, our No. 1.

The Press, it is true, have sometimes dissembled their love, but you see he is such a very independent gentleman. Nothing gets in the way of the Press so much as that, though there is nothing I venture to say which in their hearts they more admire. The undimmed hours that he has given to me can only — perhaps I am praising him too much. I should like to hedge a little. There are ladies here, and when it comes to the matter of undimmed hours, we must all admit that, in comparison with woman, even the Prime Minister cuts but a sorry figure. He is more truthful than they, but yet — . And even woman, can she stand the test when one recalls the undimmed hours of sixpence-halfpennies and the sevenpennies?

The whole thing is very difficult, we are getting out of our depth. I leave it to you, with gratitude for your forbearance — and I am sure with the warm thanks of everyone in the room to our much loved No. 1.

10. To the Royal Literary Fund

Presiding over the 140TH Anniversary Dinner of the Fund, at the Hotel Victoria May 9, 1930 — his 70th birthday

I AM afraid that in the circumstances we are to have a very gloomy evening. I don't mean what you mean. What depresses me is that the men around me all look so old. The toast, of course, is the Royal Literary Fund, but I have been instructed before I come to it to-night to be reminiscent. The story of my life. This brings us with startling quickness to Woman. Ladies, take heed to yourselves, for the devil is unchained. That, I think, was the warning sent out about himself by Richard Coeur de Lion, the character in history whom I feel I most resemble.

I made my speech from here a quarter of a century ago, and so this to-night is just the postscript. I am elated by your asking me to take this chair again, and still more surprised at your finding me. It was our president, Lord Crawford, who found me, but he has promised not to say where. He dusted me and brought me back.

Not for years and years have I written anything, and it is rather sad to know that nobody seems to have noticed this except myself. Of course, I don't notice things much nowadays. I can't find my way about even among my own characters. Instead of talking postscripts to you I should like to wander round these tables of half-familiar faces, putting my hand on a shoulder here and there, and asking the kindest looking ones to tell me who we all are. I hope you are all important persons, if that is what you like.

This is all leading up to Woman — and here, says the Press, he struck a more sombre note. I am not bringing any charge against women in general — ladies, how could your godfather do that? It is at most a charge against 70 of them, the 70 women, yes, and children and fairies, who between them have done for me by coming into my works absolutely uninvited and giving themselves qualities the very opposite of those with which I had labelled them. The characters we think we 'create.' That is surely the most comic word in an author's vocabulary. The heroine, of course, is the worst one. Very obedient until she gets into your book, but you are a lucky writer if in a week thereafter you know her by sight. You may have taken the greatest pains with the woman, tearing her open, and then find her being quite civil to her father. It's heart-breaking. You meant her to be a real woman. Those were the women in my note-books, stern exposures of themselves, Jill the Rippers. It would scarify you to hear what I intended my Jills to divulge about their rhythms. But did they do it? No; they disregarded me and remained — respectable. It isn't that I don't understand women. Heavens, no! Someone here who has never written a novel may say, 'Why don't you lasso them out of your pages?' Oh, my good man, do you think I have not tried?

Let us treat children and fairies in a more summary manner. I never could abide them. Mothers of one, take heed that I have made it a rule of my life to consider any three children of them as two. I leave you to work that out. Nowadays if in reading a book I come across a word beginning with 'c' or 'f' I toss it aside. Have you ever seen a lion at the Zoo unable to chase from his cage a mob of sparrows? I

have sometimes thought that children and fairies are my sparrows, and that I am that badgered lion. I came to the decision, and it is also open to you, that no author should ever write anything. I tried the drama. I felt that there might be some chance in it for my beloved Modernism. But the more I was behind the scenes the less Modernism did there seem to be. Woman — excuse me if I do not use that word again — the Ws and Fs and Cs — came pouring down on me as if from an excursion steamer. I disappeared from literature, and for a pocketful of years I have lived serenely in my new delightful calling. Then Lord Crawford dragged me back into the hurly-burly, making me a solemn promise that at last, at this dinner, I could stick to facts.

That was several weeks ago, and, baffling and changed as I have found the world, the air you breathe brought exhilaration; and an amorous hankering came over me to be one of you again. I searched out the first lodgings I had ever had in London — in Bloomsbury, at this corner, No. 6. I even found my old table there and the hole my feet had made in the matting. There once more I settled down in the old blissful way to fight it out with the stars. I think the days and nights that followed were the happiest of my life, except, perhaps, the other days and nights I had spent in the same place. You know the feeling — so many of you know it. The shabby room, as the night advances, becoming smaller and hazier and kindlier, the inkpot hoping to goodness it won't give out, the candle stealing closer to help your poor eyes, all of them on your side, all peeping at your pages and whispering, 'You are doing it this time — listen to the nightingale,' and all ready to drop a lodging-house tear when it turns out to be a sparrow in the morning.

My subject, you can't think how sordid it was, and best of all, the story was to end with dots — a thing they had never let me do. And then, one night — I don't know if I can go on with this — one night I heard a female voice, the cooing voice that they make me give them, and that I so hate. I said, with a sinking, 'Who are you?' and she replied, 'I am your Seventieth Mistake.' She said — and I think she was a little sorry for me — she said, 'It's no use your thinking you can get rid of me, for I am inside you.' I clung to my manuscript and cried, 'At any rate, it is going to end with dots.' She said, 'Yes, darling, dots.' I saw she meant that she was going to be a mother. And this is 1930.

I went to Lord Crawford, dripping with disillusionment, and said he had better let me go back to the place where he found me. But in the interests of this Society he is a demon. He is quite a nice man when you know him. I don't know him very well. I warned him that they might even try to get into my speech, and he said that if they did he would hand them a certain slip of paper to fill up. On that understanding, ladies and gentlemen, I am here to plead with you for the Royal Literary Fund. We all know that, whether you are members or not, the claims upon you are constant and heavy, but we also know that the likeliest to respond to our appeal are those who may for this and other causes have already given much. That is a knowledge which all benevolent societies share with God. The papers lying beside you — I should like you to look upon them not humorously — but rather as holy sheets.

Our work of relief is given privately, so that whom we can help is known only to us and to themselves. We hope you think it is the better way. Yet I may mention, out of the long ago, that it would once have gone hard with Coleridge if there had been no Literary Fund. We came to the aid of the widow of Robert Burns. I remember a case of more than 30 years ago of an old lady. I won't mention her name, but she was considered in her distant youth to be a serious rival of George Eliot. When she heard what the Society wanted to do for her she ran away in her pride and hid herself. She was found with difficulty, alone in a poor apartment — forgotten, you know — winter time, no fire, a rug round her knees, writing away at another love story in a hand no one could read. We have many cases of much distinction in which we can help valiant souls to breast the hill again with triumphant results, and we have other people, always perhaps destined to be in the cold because they write other things than novels, who are sometimes the best of the lot of us. We don't seek help, ladies and gentlemen, except from those who care for literature. We should look after our own, and we can do it. But to you who are of us and to all you who do care, and are not absolutely snowed under — as the boy in the street says — a boy! — now, how did a boy get into my speech? You see how it is! But after all, I should like to think that a London street arab was my last fairy. You know what he says: 'Come on, guv'nor, come on, nice lady!'

11. For the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children

AT THE GUILDHALL — December 3, 1930

I notice that I am being called the chairman this evening. If you don't mind I should prefer to follow the old custom and be called the chair. I feel that children would be more interested in me if they thought I was the chair.

Children! You know, the marvel of the world to me is that you can pick out your own. Do you really think when you take them to a party that it is always the same ones you bring back? It should now be evident to you that I am the chair to-night owing to an extraordinary blunder made by the hospital. I can't abide children, never could. It was merely pretend on my part to get round their mothers and so spend an idle hour in dalliance. I know a boy of four who, when he wakes up and sees the sun, calls out 'Good morning, God.' His own idea. Horrible.

I saw the eclipse of two or three years ago. There were hundreds of thousands of us on a Yorkshire hill, reverent, appalled; but there was also, of course, the inevitable child. What was he doing in the one thrilling moment of his life? He was trying to catch earwigs in the part of a soap-dish that has holes in it.

It is said that mothers like best the children who give them most trouble. I suppose Cain was Eve's favourite. Wordsworth says that children arrive trailing clouds of glory. I question this; but if so, it is probably the very worst ones who come that way. Mind you, I don't blame them. It is every one for himself in this world, and no one knows that better than a child.

Be thankful that you have me to protect you to-night, for they are to make a fierce assault upon your already depleted pockets. This assault will be conducted by unprincipled representatives whom they hoodwinked long ago. The rules compel me to ask those suspects to address you, but before doing so I feel that it is my duty to warn you against them. Perhaps the most sinister figure in the Guildhall to-night is Lord Macmillan. Attuned by his calling to make the worse appear the better reason, he will stick at nothing in his championship of the Children's Hospital. One of the most artful things he is likely to do this evening is to invite you to come to that hospital and judge for yourselves. That sounds fair, but don't you do it. If you do that, he has got you. It would be impossible for any Bigly, which is what children call you, to go round those wards without writing in a Wobbly, which is what they call your cheque-book, or producing a Crinkly, which is their name for a fiver. While Lord Macmillan is getting at you, you hold my hand, and I'll pull you through.

Those patients in the hospital beds — I don't know whether they are following the instructions of Lord Macmillan, or whether it is just their own natural depravity, or whether in some moment of aberration I have put them up to it myself — but small as they are, as soon as you enter they will immediately look smaller.

You may take it from me that this is a deliberate design to melt you. They know that there is a degree of smallness a sick child can reach which is beyond putting up with. There they are, lying broken in their cots, making the most of their illness, their bandages, their shrunken forms, the girls listless, with dolls beside them, neglected, as if they needed someone to teach them what a child does with a doll. Don't let go my hand. They are just playing a game with your long faces. They are so happy in those cosy beds that soon they burst into merriment because you are pitying them, and they hug their dolls as if they knew all about them, and they dive beneath their blankets and kick with joy and peep at you mischievously over the coverlet — all because they are the lucky ones who have cots in the Hospital for Sick Children in Great Ormond Street.

Now perhaps is the time for you to cut and run. Don't look out at the windows or you may see some emaciated little face staring up at them wistfully. He is carrying a tiny bundle, containing, I suppose, his night things, but he can't get in because we are already far too full. He and his like are a sadder sight than you will find inside the hospital. The little fools think it is a sort of Heaven.

Don't ask Lord Macmillan for statistics. He might show you some child who had been carried in a few weeks before, fevered, done for, and is now going out romping with her exultant parents. He might tell you — and it would be the truth — that this is a sight which has been witnessed a million times or so since our hospital was opened. A million children saved. It is something to set against even the ravages of the War.

We have now pulverised Lord Macmillan. But instead of throwing up his brief he calls as witness no less a person than Mr. Justice Eve.

You see from the programme that Mr. Justice Eve is to speak about the Medical and Nursing Staffs, and I know he will have such fine things to say of them that I am rather alarmed. I fear that when his turn comes it won't be any good your holding my hand. At this moment I merely ask him to say 'Yes' or 'No' to two or three questions.

Kindly conceive Mr. Justice Eve stepping into the witness-box, and looking around him curiously, as if he had gone into the wrong compartment. Now, Sir, I say sharply to him, do you dare to stand there and tell me that much of the work of the medical staff of this hospital, nobly helped by famous physicians and surgeons from outside, consists of investigations into the causes of children's ailments which are thus in time modified or even banished from the world? His damping answer is 'Yes.' Take care, witness! Because of their devotion do these eminent physicians give up all the accommodation that is rightly theirs to the children, and carry on their researches in the very holes and corners of the hospital? Yes, again! One question about the nurses. Are the nurses sacrificing themselves? Are they, in order to save a few more children, living in such discomfort that it is a shame to every one of us who lives in comfort? He asks if he is compelled to answer that question. I say

hurriedly, 'No'; but Lord Macmillan says hurriedly, 'Yes.'

Things are not going too well with me now, and I had better let go your hand. I can do no more for you. Yes, I can. I have seen enough of our medical and nursing staffs to know that, however hard-heartedly we refuse our succour, they will disregard their own worldly interests and go on fighting for the children. So let us take advantage of that devotion and sneak out of doing our part. The hospital will still go on, because they will never forsake it. For long so great, our hospital will have, of course, to fall gradually from the front rank, but it will continue to shine from Great Ormond Street, beckoning to that emaciated little face carrying a bundle who is still staring up wistfully at the windows. Perhaps the bundle does not contain his night things. Perhaps he has no night things. It would be funny, wouldn't it, if the bundle turned out too late to be full of trailing clouds of glory? Well, the light from Great Ormond Street will still burn, but it may have in the future to be a smaller light, instead of the glowing beacon it could become if you and yours, and others like you, would say it shall.

12. Authors' Club Dinner

AT GROSVENOR HOUSE, LONDON; December 12, 1932

Sir James, as Chairman, proposed 'The Ladies and Literature,' and said that he had decided not to talk to them about love or ladies or literature, but to make a will instead.

Wills are usually disappointing things, especially authors' wills, but it might add a friendly glow to the proceedings if I were to announce, as I do announce right away, that all of you who are gathered here to-night are to be my sole beneficiary legatees.

As for myself, I leave to the Author's Club the most precious possession I ever had — my joy in hard work.

I do not know when it came to me — not very early, because I was an idler at school, and read all the wrong books at college. But I fell in love with hard work one fine May morning, and I continued to woo her through a big chunk of half a century. She is not at all heavy jowled and weary. She is young and gay and lively.

I found her waiting for me at a London station. She marched with me all the way to Bloomsbury, and on the way we bought a penny bottle of ink to sling at the Metropolis, and a silk hat with which to impress editors.

Hard work more than any woman in the world is the one who stands up best for her man. I have lost her now, but younger people who want to look for her will find that she is willing to be theirs.

She is the prettiest thing in literature, and when you and she think that you have been working pretty well, and you spend an evening having a blow-out, you will think how splendid she looks in her crêpe de chine, but she looked even prettier in her rags.

I leave to you everything connected with science and machinery; I leave you broadcasting, though I do not believe for one moment that there is any such thing.

I have a feeling that all those inventions of this age we owe to Mr. H. G. Wells. He has a million motors that chase me through the streets every day, and which are sure to get me in the end. I hold that this age in which we now find ourselves will be known in history as the 'Dark Days of Wells.' Mr. Wells is, of course, one of the great men of our calling, and I leave him to you in my will with pride but with misgivings.

I leave to the younger men the control of the ladies, but breath to keep up with them, the dauntlessness to accept their challenge, and some of their spirit to make

up for that rib. In the calendars and almanacs of the future they will read such entries as— 'December 12th, 1932 — woman begins.' It will be such a momentous statement at that time that perhaps there will not be a mention of bars of gold.

I am not in touch with Ministers, but my Christmas supposition about the whole thing is this. I think our friends across the seas discovered that we intended to send them a Christmas gift. They were afraid we might not send them the right thing, and so they sent a suggestion. Let us pray solemnly that the efforts of our representatives and theirs will be conducted so wisely that the United States and we may still remain staunch friends. May our two countries, as so often in the past, go on giving to each other, they to us and we to them, the three best things either of us has — our love and our ladies and our literature.

Relevant organisations and contact details

Society of Authors

<https://www.societyofauthors.org/>

Royal Literary Society <https://rsliterature.org/>

Authors Club <http://www.authorsclub.co.uk/>

Critics Circle <http://criticscircle.org.uk/>

Stationers Company <https://stationers.org/>

Institute of Journalists <https://cioj.org/>

Worcestershire Association ??

Newspaper Press Fund (Journalists Charity) <http://www.journalistscharity.org.uk/>

Great Ormond Street Hospital <https://www.gosh.org/about-us/peter-pan>

Places

Hotel Metropole <https://www3.hilton.com/en/hotels/united-kingdom/hilton-london-metropole-LONMETW>

Savoy Hotel <https://www.thesavoylondon.com/>

Connaught Rooms <https://www.devere.co.uk/grand-connaught-rooms/>

Stationers' Hall <https://www.stationershall.co.uk/>

Criterion Restaurant closed, now <https://ristorantegranaio.co.uk/>

Hyde Park Hotel (not sure which one)

Mayfair Hotel <https://www.themayfairhotel.co.uk/>

Hotel Victoria (not sure which one)

Guildhall <http://www.guildhall.cityoflondon.gov.uk/>

Grosvenor House Hotel <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/longh-jw-marriott-grosvenor-house-london/>