

November, 1940.

Vol. 1. No. 11.

The Abinger Chronicle

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Price Sixpence.

The Abinger Chronicle

appears at the end of each month. The chief contributors are Max Beerbohm, E. M. Forster, Oliver W. F. Lodge, Desmond MacCarthy, R. C. Trevelyan, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and others.

The annual subscription is 6/-, post free; 3/- for six months, post free. Subscriptions and MSS. (which are voluntary) should be sent to

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CHERRY COTTAGE

ABINGER COMMON

DORKING, SURREY

(Cheques should be made out to Sylvia Sprigge.

No stamps please)

NOTE :

Previous numbers 1—8 are out of print. A few copies of Number 10 are available.

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END OF SNOWFALL

Draw up those curtains of white snow
That close us in like fall of night,
And let day's shrunken eye-ball glow,
New-purged, from air's remoter height.

A fair, forgetful, noonday ghost,
The earth unearthly shines revealed:
Her birthright woes are veiled, are lost;
Her wars, her wounds, this while are healed.

G. ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

A SHORT BUT TRUE STORY

What's become of Waring? Which do you pity the most of us three? And did you once see Shelley plain? What porridge had John Keats? It was one of the strange and endearing charms of Robert Browning that he was always asking such questions and—headlong man of genius that he was—not pausing for a reply. We cannot all of us be Brownings. And when I ask "What's become of Eustace Alderson?" I really want to know.

I wasn't intimately acquainted with him, for he was—and, I hope, is—more than thirty years younger than I. (How old's Beerbohm? Sixty-eight.) But this disparity of age did not preclude a vague sympathy between us, and mutual goodwill. It did not, oddly enough, prevent him from liking the kind of books I like, or from being cold about the kind I don't. I am afraid that in regard to politics his intellect must have been undeveloped, for his

A PRAYER OF DIVES TO MAMMON

Mammon, great God Mammon, hear me, I beseech thee.
 Thou who of this world art lord and master,
 Hear my secret prayer: have mercy upon me,
 Who all my days have been thy worshipper.
 Very gracious hast thou been to me: my life thou hast
 made rich

With all good things, with honour, titles and wealth and
 power.

Therefore though here within the temple of Christ, thine
 enemy,

I bow the knee in public, yet silently to thee,
 Oh Mammon, with a grateful heart I praise thy name.
 For thine is the pomp of life; man's power and his pride,
 Splendour and wealth and delicacy through thee are
 glorified.

Without thee were no thrones, temples nor palaces,
 Since neither arts nor industry to ennoble earth with these
 But for thy will had been. And 'tis through thee alone
 That from man's slavish breed some chosen few are grown
 To godlike strength and royalty of mind,
 To justify and dominate the base dregs of their kind.
 Such praise to thee belongs, which thankfully I pay;
 Since among thine elect sealed by thy grace am I.

But now, Lord Mammon, listen to my fears.
 For of late upon earth a presumptuous spirit is abroad,
 In the name of pity and justice revolting against thy god-
 head,

Vile doctrines of equality and disennoblement,
 Levelling Man's estate and pulling greatness down,
 That beneath sluggish floods of ease all human worth may
 drown.

Hear then my supplication:
 From the covetousness of the people,
 From the malignity of the righteous,
 From the envy of the poor

A Prayer of Dives to Mammon

Deliver me, good Mammon.
 From exorbitant taxation,
 From obscene confiscation,
 From red-handed revolution,
 Oh just, beneficent Mammon,
 Deliver thou my houses, my possessions,
 My capital, my bank-balance, and my soul.
 For the thing that I feared so greatly is coming upon me :
 With evil dreams my nights are troubled;
 My days with apprehensions are consumed.
 Then arise, Oh my master, in thy might;
 Lest thy worshippers be confounded,
 And thy deity be derided;
 Lest Righteousness become the lord of Right.

R. C. TREVELYAN

October, 1940.

REQUIEM

Lean sorrow walks the woods. There's no more calling
 Of birds through naked boughs. A carpet lies
 Dulling the sound
 Of the dark beads of rain that now are falling
 From the gaunt trees. Or is it by the skies
 These tears are shed
 Upon each crimson mound
 That marks the place where summer's heart lies dead?

No tears are shed for summer. Other sorrows
 Are borne upon this chill November's breath.
 Not only leaves dying.
 For always there is hope that Spring's tomorrow
 Will rise out of the chaos and the death
 Of the old year,
 And swallows flying
 Sunwards now, next Spring will come back here.

All these will come : the 'daffodils' gold wonder,
 And April showers, and crocus' tongues of fire,
 And pale furred leaves.
 Yet those that fall beneath the guns harsh thunder
 Lie, like these leaves, and no prayer or desire,
 or any pain
 Wrung from each heart that grieves,
 Can waken them, or bring them back again.

DOROTHY GIBSON

THE THUNDER STORM

(After the French of Béranger)

Dance, dear children, dance and sing,
 Fear not the darkening skies,
 The storm that strips the wood of spring
 Shall chant your lullabies.

Dance while you may
 On flying feet;
 The grass is sweet
 Where now you play.

Though thunder split tall trees and towers,
 Garland your heads with tender flowers.

Dance, dear children, dance and sing,
 The lightning darts its arrow;
 Nothing can quench your carolling,
 Not all this sad world's sorrow.

Dark grows the glade,
 The birds are still
 On tree and hill,
 Hushed and afraid.

But your young eyes reflect a light
 From skies that have not known our night.

EILUNED LEWIS

THE REFUGEE AND THE HOME OFFICE

AN UNTRUE STORY

Once upon a time there was a Refugee. He was German and his Father had been a Jew by race. He taught music in a little town on the Rhine. He was married and had four children, who were all sent away from their schools and universities and technical institutes in Germany because they had had a Jewish grandfather. Now the Refugee and his wife (who was a kind fat lady with bright yellow hair and friendly blue eyes) said: "So long as this horrible man Hitler rules in Germany there will be no freedom for us or our children. Let us pack up and go to England where men are free and friendly." So they wrote to English friends, who vouched for their general niceness (i.e. that they wouldn't become poor and go on the rates) to the Home Office in London, and in due course the Refugee and his wife and four children came over to England.

It wasn't easy at first; the Refugee had to work hard to get new pupils, but he was a good music master and his pupils liked him and he made them like music. Meanwhile his eldest boy became a garage apprentice and the other three children went to the local council school. People were very kind and when winter came, there was a local refugee committee which helped with gifts of clothing and fuel and arranged social evenings which were gay and interesting.

Then the most dreadful war in history broke out between this same Hitler and all his neighbours including the English-speaking nations. The Refugee and his wife and four children were, by now, just one family among nearly a hundred thousand refugees in England.

When one country after another in Europe had been overrun by Hitler's huge armies and it seemed that the island of England was next on the great tyrant's programme, the Refugee was called to the local Police Station. His wife said "Goodbye Fritz, and good luck. Tell them how much we all want to see the end of Hitler."

The Refugee and the Home Office

At the Police Station Fritz found quite a number of other Refugees, some of them friends from Germany; one was the protestant pastor from his home town who had baptised all his children, another was a doctor from Berlin; a third, a young woman who said she was a cook now, but had been a nurse in a Frankfurt hospital before the Tyrant got hold of Germany.

Well, one by one, the Refugees were called into the Court room at the Police Station. When Fritz's turn came they told him to come back with his wife and children the next day. So he came back and the Judge interviewed them all together and thought "What a decent family. I'll exempt them from internment altogether, and put them in category C."

They all went home and Fritz said "What a funny judge—he really couldn't tell if I was one of Hitler's men. Still, we must be grateful; only I wish England had more sensible tribunals for this purpose."

He was so worried about any sham refugees who might do harm to England that he went to a friend at the Home Office and told him how important it was to have Refugees also sitting on the Tribunals.

The Home Office man was rather impressed and called a higher official, who called a yet higher one, who called a still higher one, who took them all to see the Home Secretary. All these officials were extremely intelligent and courteous, and at least two of them, who were concerned especially with the foreigners' department, were much travelled men who knew a thing or two about the kind of underground opposition there was in the Tyrant's countries. They all agreed that the war was being fought against Hitler (except one who grumbled "I wish we were fighting Stalin—it's the wrong war, the wrong war"—but he was sat on) and that Hitler's enemies were friends of England. They also decided that in order to recognise these Refugee friends (who would always look foreign and funny to an Englishman) tribunals with Refugees on them should be set up all over the country, and the English and Foreign judges, sitting side by side, would then make a success of

The Refugee and the Home Office

what might otherwise become a ghastly disastrous muddle.

The officials also agreed that any Refugee worth his salt should be able to work in one way or another to help win the war against the Tyrant. So the Tribunals were set up and every Refugee in England and Scotland and Northern Ireland, real and sham, came before the new Tribunals. Out of 100,000 about 2,500 were interned*, about 20,000 joined the British Army sraightaway. Four thousand awfully good girl-cooks joined the A.T.S. and were much in demand because their stews were so tasty. Ten thousand men and women went into three big Refugee munitions' factories. Another 15,000 men were absorbed in farming, tree-felling, and fishing, and the rest, who were too old or ill to work, did an enormous amount of odd war-work, translations, broadcasting, knitting and the like.

When the war was two years underway there was another invasion threat and one of the Home Office officials (the one who longed to be fighting Russia) tried hard together with a few very high-up officials at the War Office and in the Press to cry out "Intern the lot." But by this time the islanders had got to know the Refugees: they had been kept informed about the kind of help they were giving, and the official was sat on so hard that he wasn't heard of again until the very end of this story.

Well, the invasion came once or twice and from John o' Groats, where there were a lot of Poles, down to Land's end, where there were a lot of Czechs and Austrians, the Refugees stood side by side with the English and Canadian and Australian and New Zealand and Indian soldiers and sailors and airmen, and every time the invasion began they completely squashed the Tyrant's men. When the final battle was over and every corner of Europe was sending the Tyrant's armies home too, one Refugee (it was Fritz's eldest son, who was nearly thirty now) said to his English friends "We'll make Europeans of you yet. But it's been a tough job. I remember the days when you didn't know the first thing about Europe and I wondered why on earth

* Many of these had lived in England a long time and weren't refugees at all.

The Refugee and the Home Office

you were fighting this war." "So did we wonder that," said Fritz's English friends, "until we met you. The Ministry of Information never told us nor did Churchill except in an odd sentence or two." Another soldier who had never said much during the big Battle piped up suddenly with "Nonsense—what nonsense you do talk. Europe you say. We're not Europeans. We're a cut above Huns and Wops and Dagoes. Wish we could federate with America and be done with Europe—then we'd be able to fight Russia round the other side and that would be fun." "Oh you and your Russia, you're a bore," Fritz said. "Russians don't spread, and as for their ideas they spread just as any ideas do—*they* only got their notions from Karl Marx, who was born in a town on the Rhine called Trier, where I came from."

Everyone sat on the ex-Home Office official (for it was he) so hard, that he left England there and then, and was last heard of somewhere near Seattle, planning an invasion of Russia from Alaska by catapult barges.

S.S.

THAT THOUGHTS ARE A CONTINUAL SURPRISE

Thoughts breaking like ridged waves
out of the unknown darkness of the mind,
a moment all the substance is displayed
and just as fast withdrawn, and left to find
only some small shells lying on the sand
and cold spray salty in an open hand.

As secret as the wind, wider than sky,
shut in this skull my mind will lie
and let thoughts break like waves until I die.
as waves slip through the hands
leave but a curled trace on the sands
and so return to their deep secrecy.

URSULA WOODS

Have you renewed your Subscription ?

Since the *Abinger Chronicle* is not, by its nature, likely to enjoy a sufficiently large circulation to attract advertisers, it remains one of the few, perhaps the only, magazine which lives entirely upon its subscriptions.

All the intricacies of modern publishing are unknown to its small grey pages. No, the *Chronicle* neither advertises nor takes in advertisements. It would be fun to do both, but costly, and precarious. It is so sober that it just pays its way each month and makes no debts.

It cannot be upon the bookstalls (few can, these days), but there it is, nevertheless, in a goodly number of homes up and down the country, and even in the United States.

It will soon be a year old—and what a year! It has had some thirty contributors in these wild and grim months, sixteen of whom are local to this happy corner of England, the others from as far afield as California and Cornwall. About a third had never published before, including men and women now serving with the Forces. That is as it should be and it is, I fancy, what the famous skippers of this little ship wanted. They wanted a sturdy crew who could turn about in the small space available, with all the added hard work that means in the writing of brief prose and poetry from the living heart and head of man, despite “the riving storm that is all around and over us.”

Meanwhile postage went up in the summer (an awful blow); envelopes thinned and jumped a penny; blocks have become a very luxury, and the printer is murmuring quietly about new year new costs. We can, however, survive, if every subscriber not only renews his or her subscription, but brings in two or more new subscribers.

Renew your subscription for a year now and tell friends about the *Abinger Chronicle*, and give a year's subscription as a Christmas present to someone who would enjoy it. Here is the form. Cut it out and post it to:—

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