

# After Dinner Gossip

AND

## Echoes of the Week

**Success of the Cash System.**

The methods by which ingenious people make money by playing on the weaknesses of their fellows, and the almost universal desire to get rich quickly and without effort, are legion, but quite the latest and most clever is that adopted by a certain Professor Segno, who has for months past been flooding England with circulars, and who is just beginning to turn his attention to the colonies. As many "Graphic" readers may in due course receive one of these favours, the following amusing and instructive chat on the subject by one Basil Tozer may be of some service to readers of "After Dinner Gossip":—

Within the last few weeks almost every personal acquaintance (says Mr Tozer) I possess; and, therefore, probably also many thousands of persons unknown to me, has received from the headquarters of an enterprising organisation, the Segno Success Club, which describes itself as "a department of the American Institute of Mentalism," a mimeographed type-written letter, dated from Los Angeles, California, which runs as follows:—

Dear (here follows the name of the addressee, typed in separately):—

A personal friend who is a member of this club, and who has a thorough knowledge of your character and ability, has recommended you to us as a person possessing sterling qualities, and as being ambitious, energetic, and very anxious to make a mental and financial success. Acting upon this request, we have taken the liberty of interesting ourselves on your behalf. If you desire to become successful, we can show you the way. If you wish to better your position, increase your business, develop your talents or attain a higher social or business standing, the members of this club can exert their combined mental influence and thoughts in your favour and aid you to gain your desires. Read carefully the printed matter we have sent you, for it explains the nature of the valuable work this club is doing for humanity.

We want progressive people who need assistance to co-operate with our thousands of successful members in the grand work of transforming failure into success. If we have been rightly informed, you, besides needing the assistance the club can render, are just the person to radiate this mental influence to others and help them, while the members are helping you.

That you may satisfy yourself as to the ability of the members of this club to help you and at the same time have an opportunity of demonstrating the strength of your mental force, we have made you a special offer of a two months' membership, including all the instructions and two success treatments daily by the club for only one dollar. To secure this special rate, however, it will be necessary for you to send in your application at once.

We wish to assure you in advance that the information you will receive and the benefits you will derive from a membership during the two months will be worth to you many times the amount of the membership fee.

Trusting that we shall have the pleasure of harmonising you with our members, for your future success and happiness, we are, most sincerely yours,  
Segno Success Club.

Signed: A. Victor Segno, C.D., Pres.  
P.S. Our members are to be found in every country in the world. We have a perfect circle surrounding the earth.

Now, let us consider what this means. I am a member of the large army of men who have failed, of course through no fault of our own, to make our way in the world. But some considerate "personal friend," whose iden-

tity is at present quite unknown to me, though he, or she, has a thorough knowledge of my character and ability, and is aware that I possess sterling qualities, am ambitious, energetic, and anxious to make a mental and financial success (by the way, what is a "mental" success?) has been so good as to write out to California to tell President Victor Segno, C.D., all about me, and recommend me to him very strongly, with the result that the president sends word in all haste to tell me I have only to send him the sum of one dollar "at once" and he will immediately "harmonise" me with the members of his club, and hey presto! without my making any effort, success will be vanted to me from the coast of California, which is approximately six thousand miles away, every venture I embark upon will bring its own reward, the shares I already hold in wild-cat companies will automatically begin to rise, my selections at race meetings will no longer appear in the black list headed "also ran"—in short, the world will turn over a new leaf for me and keep it turned for a period of two months, at the end of which time I shall be asked to pay out a second dollar or suffer my luck to go from me as quickly and unexpectedly as it came.

Enclosed with President Segno's letter are a number of leaflets. Clearly, our president is a philanthropist in more ways than one, for he tells us he wishes "all whom it may concern" to know that the club will give "\$1000 in gold to charity if every testimonial appearing in this circular is not genuine and was not voluntarily written to the club by a regular member." This he follows up with the following "sworn statement":—

County of Los Angeles, State of California: On the 4th day of December, 1902, personally appeared before me A. Victor Segno, president of the Segno Success Club, who, being duly sworn according to law, did depose and say that the above offer is made in good faith. W. R. Hervey, Notary Public in and for the County of Los Angeles, State of California. (Seal.)

We now come to a few extracts from the "hundreds of letters" filed at the office of the club. From a feeling of delicacy on the part of the management the names of the writers of these letters are not given in print, the management declaring frankly that they "do not wish to offend them (the writers of the testimonials) by placing their statements on a level with patent medicine testimonials. . . . our experience being that most people are modest and prefer to keep their affairs private." That, of course, is extremely nice of the management. And now listen to what Member No. 5521, Central, N.M., has to say:—

At the time I joined the club I was sick, but compelled to work, and for very small wages. Shortly after I began to feel better. On the 7th of this month my employer sold me his stock of goods on credit. By the 21st I had paid 100dol on the cost of the stock, and on the 24th I sold the stock for 900dol over the cost, and reserved an interest in the business.

Splendid! He then goes on to tell us that in addition to all this his health has improved, he has succeeded in supporting himself and his "little baby girl," and from being a servant he has risen to the proud position of proprietor. He ends with a sort of gasp, "It is wonderful to me." That one can well believe. It is wonderful also to us who read about it. Member No. 5239, Plymouth, Ohio, has also much to be thankful for:—

Before I joined the club I was nervous and irritable. For the past month nothing has worried me. I see life in a different light. I have also been lucky in receiving valuable and useful gifts—things I had desired for years but never expected to possess.

Member No. 4452, San Francisco, Cal., finds that the influence exerted by the club on his behalf has, in addition to improving his financial position, strength-

ened his moral fibre, for "things that previously I found it hard to say 'No' to," he writes, "are now no temptation to me. . . . My employer has recognised a change in me and rewarded me financially." Member No. 5332, Donatur, Ill., after joining the club, "went through a very serious surgical operation successfully"—probably his subscription was in arrears, or the club would assuredly never have allowed an operation of any kind to become necessary—and the doctors who performed it were so amazed at its coming off all right in plain English, so surprised they didn't kill him—that, to quote again the member's own words, "they (the doctors) say they don't understand what saved me." How unlike our doctors these American medical men are!

But I have said enough. Readers who wish to better themselves financially, socially, mentally, in short in every sort of way, without what schoolboys call "fagging to work," had better send at once a dollar to President Segno. I have omitted to mention that the club allows a discount on success purchased in the bulk, for whereas the usual fee for a month's membership is one dollar, a year's successful treatment can be ensured in return for ten dollars "spot cash."

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**The Actress in Fiction.**

Since George Eliot disgusted Carlyle by making her journeyman carpenter in "Adam Bede" put in the panels of his door after the frame was finished, pictures of callings and professions in fiction have seldom given complete satisfaction. The "arts" suffer especially in this way. The fact is, the most elevated art is principally composed of hard work and devotion to it as a beloved trade; and the greatest artists have no histories. The late Mr Wilson Barrett did once indeed endeavour to throw glamour over his career as an actor by a statement that, at a date several years previous to a certain speech from the stage, he had stood outside the "sixpenny gallery" of the Princess Theatre, and had vowed to act Hamlet in that house some day or other. But, as a rule, the career of the artist is chiefly composed of unconscious, industrious perseverance; and he never looks back upon it as romance or fit for publication in the form of fiction. Even so clever a writer as John Oliver Hobbes has not shrunk from attempting the impossible; and in "A Study in Temptations"—a copy of which, in a new edition by T. Fisher Unwin, has reached us for review—has given an extraordinary picture of a leading London actress. She is a delightful personage, though "not a bit like" any actress we ever heard of (says a writer in "The Era"). In figure she is "tall and gracious," though her hips have not "jut" enough to please everyone. She is staying down in the country with one Lady Hyde-Bassett, and, strange to say, she is secretly married to a Royal Academician, named Wrath. She reads Hegel and, indeed, "everything," and she is "the new Lady Macbeth." This is how she talks: "You must know," she says to a young man named Mauden, who starts an intellectual flirtation with her, ignorant of her being married, "that I come out to gather honeysuckle this afternoon, because I wanted to see whether I would be happier if I were more like the primitive woman. I have been so bored; I longed to be at home reading Hardy, or St. Augustine, or Hegel." Occasionally we get glimpses of her profession. "The polite world," it is stated, "does its best to make her think that her readings are the result of laborious thought." "She found it humiliating to reflect that she had so very little to do with her own ability." "She had served her dreary apprenticeship with the rest." This is all we are told, except that "she had great talents."

Not to put it too finely, Mrs Wrath is a charming simperon—not to say a goose. She analyses and philosophises remarkably. "How," she inquires of the young man who is making love to her, "should one begin if one wished to rebel against existing low standards of morality?" Eventually, she arranges to run away with Mauden; and this is the letter she writes to her husband before leaving on an expedition which turns out a complete fiasco: "I have discovered a new meaning in life and duty. . . . Subjectivity is fatal to

Art; all great Art is objective. And love is Subjectivity in its lowest phase. I use these philosophical terms because they are convenient, and because they are sufficiently comprehensive to cover all subtle—and perhaps agonising—distinctions." As we have indicated, she does not really run away with the young man; but catches cold, has a serious illness, confesses all to the Academician, and is forgiven.

What we may remark in all this is the extraordinary absence of "shop." Association with painters, sculptors, and every class of artists has convinced us of an infallible rule any of them that are "worth their salt" that have "great talents," and have "gone through the mill"—always talk "shop" when at liberty. The only real receipt for success is to have one's mind always concerned in one's especial business; and though actors and actresses have too much sense and tact to talk "shop" in general society, they invariably talk about their art, and think about it, when at ease, as Sophia is represented as being at Lady Hyde-Bassett's. Such an extraordinary absence of interest in her profession, combined with an equally remarkable concentration of her mind on her psychological condition, we never heard of as existing in any actress.

What is Sophia doing down in the country? Presumably, she is "resting." But when a leading actress rests from acting she does not rest from thinking about her profession. And we would like a heavy wager that, if a gramophone record were taken of a flirtation similar to that between Mauden and Sophia Jenkins in "A Study in Temptations," there would be a great deal more discussion of her successes and failures in the past, a great many more hopes and fears expressed, and more of her plans for greater achievements in the future, than there would be allusions to Hegel, St. Augustine, or "the existing low standards of morality."

And Sophia's silliness is a libel on the class to which she belongs. After all, however innocent one may be naturally, one cannot "serve an apprenticeship of dreary drudgery" in a profession without acquiring some amount of knowledge of men and things—some general "gumption." However, it is impossible to acquire "documents" covering the whole question; and we shall be glad to receive information on the subject from any of our fair readers who will give us the benefit of their observations. It may be that there are penitentials of dramatic society of which we have no cognisance; realms in which leading tragediennes stay down in the country married to Royal Academicians "on the quiet," talk about Objectivity and Subjectivity, read Hegel and St. Augustine, and analyse their sweet souls. When Thackeray drew his Fotheringay, and was reproached with caricature, he was able to point to a contemporary actress who justified the portrait in "Pendennis." And so perhaps John Oliver Hobbes's Sophia may exist in real life. Of one thing, however, we feel certain. She has not great talents, and cannot hold the position suggested by the phrase "the new Lady Macbeth." It is only amateurs who observe themselves so elaborately. Artists have their hands full observing other people.

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**A New Style of Printing.**

Books and magazines, as well as newspapers, are printed nowadays after a fashion that is both foolish and unscientific. The words are wrongly arranged, making reading unnecessarily difficult, and a reform movement in the matter is seriously demanded.

Discovery of this prodigious error, and of a means by which it may be corrected, must be credited to investigators connected with the psychological department of Columbia University, in New York, who, for reasons the adequacy of which they say they are prepared to prove, urge that printed words, instead of being arranged in horizontal lines, as is now customary, ought to be launched in some such way as this:

The — the parting The winds the  
cushion kneel day, blowing slowly lean  
tolls of here over

This suggestion is based upon the recent discovery that, in reading, the eyes do not move steadily along a line of print, but in a series of jumps. Half-a-dozen such jumps will be taken in crossing a page in an ordinary book, the