

# The Club Smoking Room

By HAVANA

THESE enormous breaks at billiards," said the sporting member, "will lead to some alteration in the rules. It is not likely that the public will pay to see over a thousand consecutive cradle cannons; it would be more tedious to watch than the spot stroke. If billiard matches are to retain their hold on the public, the play will have to be more of an all-round character. I remember the outcry against Ives for making a long run by getting the balls jammed in the top pocket and running off a thousand cannons. Big scores at either billiards or cricket become monotonous when they are often repeated."

"I was at the Aquarium," said the journalist, "when Peall made his spot stroke break of three thousand odd. The monotony was only relieved by the enormous amount of betting that went on. Fry, the great bookmaker, was betting in thousands, and the scene was anything but edifying. Peall was playing against the Scotchman, Hugh MacNeill, who, of course, was left hopelessly in the rear. A fellow scribe was so demoralised by the whole affair that he wound up a delicious description of the match by stating that Hughie didn't 'macneilly' enough. It is a curious thing that Peall could never make a break of even a hundred without putting his tongue out."

"A good many breaks," observed the cynic, "might be avoided in this world if people could keep their tongues still. I hear that there is likely to be a very pretty little entanglement in a certain quarter through an indiscreet revelation made by an employer in one of our large drapery establishments. I fancy the whole affair is capable of a quite simple explanation, and one of the parties had been the victim of a most untoward combination of circumstances, but just at present relations are a bit strained in that particular household."

"The particular revelation to which you so enigmatically refer," replied the doctor, "has been matter of common talk for some time. When a certain person is known to have—"

"I say, you fellows," said the dominie, "don't you think you have talked enough scandal for one time? The whole affair has been patched up, and I saw the parties chiefly concerned sitting together in the stalls the other night, apparently the best of friends again. To change the subject, I see from the English papers that the Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge has published a book which has fallen like a bombshell into the camp of the Ritualists."

"I am a bit interested in that," said the journalist, "as I see he makes a very eloquent defence of the Evangelicals, and yet maintains that though they had depth, they lacked breadth and height. We have been so deluged with High Church theology lately that I had begun to think all other schools of thought were dead. Perhaps our pasonic friend can tell us what the book is about."

"I am afraid I should only bore you," said the parson. "I have certainly read the book with the greatest interest and fancy it is the best exposition we have had of what I cannot but regard as the coming school of thought; but it is not

an easy matter to discuss in a club smoking-room."

"No, no, my dear fellow," observed the lawyer, "you won't bore us one bit. Believe me, we all feel an interest in these things, and if we don't go to church as often as you might wish, it is mainly because the modern sermon does not seem to help us much. You must admit that the average preacher is apt to be a bit wearisome."

"Gwatkin," said the parson, "is one of our most distinguished philosophical historians, and he has never done anything finer than his last book. He traces the history of religious thought from the earliest times, and his main conclusion is that every work which is done on the face of the whole earth for love or duty is true communion with God. From the Spartan Three Hundred to the child in the slums, who gives his last penny to one who needs it more than he does. It is the common duties done with a true heart that show the true light that is lighting every man. And he contends that the personal religion of the Evangelical was a deeper and truer thing than the return to authority of the Neo-Anglicans."

"And yet," said the philosopher, "in reading the book I felt that he had missed the need of corporate life to secure permanence of thought. What we really need is not less organisation, but more thought within the organisation. A man's real religion is that which he never talks about, but we need a society formed on well-defined lines to bind individuals together. The church is the cover which holds together and preserves what might else be merely scattered leaves of private opinion."

"I could not agree with the Mayor's housing scheme," said the land agent. "Not but what something ought to be done for our workers. We really want four-roomed cottages that would let for six shillings a week, and with the present price of land in the city and suburbs, not to mention the price of labour, even three-roomed cottages could hardly be let at the price. If you go out to the country to build you get the cost of transit added to the rent, and the cost of transit cannot be reckoned at the bare fare for one person for one return trip a day. You would have to adopt some system of family tickets, and that would probably entail financial loss. The main cost of houses in the city is the cost of the land, and that difficulty can be best overcome by some scheme of residential flats. We want to cater for the men who earn under 50/ a week, and I can see no other means than the model dwelling, where several families are housed in flats."

"The real difficulty," remarked the parson, "lies in the fact that everybody nowadays wants to live in the town. I frequently have visits from new arrivals who want me to find them work. I could get them any amount of employment in the country districts, but they all say they don't want to go away from the city. They like to be under some union, and resent the idea of farm work. I was visiting only the other day in a country place, where the conditions of life were easy and healthy, and I found several of the settlers were anxious to sell their places, and move nearer Auckland. They talk of greater advantages

for their children, though I cannot see what greater advantage they could want than the pure air and delightful scenery of the country, coupled with an abundance of good wholesome food."

"The women folk," ventured the dominie, "are chiefly responsible for the exodus from the country to the town. They like to be 'near the shops,' as they put it, and to be in the fashion. I know some people whose sole amusement is walking up and down Queen-street. To them that represents seeing life. It is sad to reflect that after all the millions we have spent on education we have not yet been able to teach our people the real meaning of life and character."

"The only real solution of the housing problem is the freehold," said the political member. "Let every family own its own house and you would see an end of slums, and steadier labour conditions. People are naturally careless of other people's houses, and landlords are not anxious to waste money on repairs that are not likely to mean increased rentals. The model flat or model dwelling, or whatever you like to call it, is an abomination to the working man, and it is destruction of the best family life. We want to encourage a feeling of independence amongst our workers; and that can never be done by providing them with what are little better than charity houses. I believe the whole question will shortly be brought before the House, and something in the way of advances to householders will be attempted."

"I heard a strange yarn the other day," said the doctor, "from one of my patients. He had a curious mark on the upper part of his left arm, and at first I thought it was an old vaccination mark. But on a closer examination I saw that it bore the shape of something very like a Hebrew Aleph. He told me that it was a private mark of a certain Society, which in the early days had been formed for the purpose of extending the influence of a foreign Power in certain directions. He told me that the Society was still in existence and daily growing in influence, but that the members were now known to each other by other means. It may have been all a yarn, as the mark could conceivably have been left as the result of some skin eruption; but it struck me as curious."

"Now you mention it, doctor," said the lawyer, "I remember seeing a similar mark once on a man's arm, but I put it down to some freak of vaccination. Considering the way in which a certain European nation is working towards colonial expansion, I am inclined to think there is something in it. There are two or three men I know well whom I more than suspect of being in the pay of a foreign Government. They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet they are always well provided with funds. If it were not for the fact that my lips are sealed by professional etiquette, I could tell a very queer story in this connection."

"South Africa," said the journalist, "is honeycombed with foreign intrigue, but I must confess I thought we were fairly free from that sort of thing. When I was in Wellington I remember one of the detectives there hinted at something of the kind going on in New Zealand, but I thought he was only talking. I have heard rumours, now I come to think of it, of approaches having been made to China by a certain Government as an off-set to our Japanese alliance, and it has been whispered that the recent native troubles in India have not been purely spontaneous. As far as I can understand the object of the whole affair is to entangle England in some Eastern complications. Perhaps the Yellow Peril is more of a danger than we think."

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At Wandlerbus, in Norway, the day lasts from May 21 to July 22 without interruption; and at Spitzbergen, the longest three and a-half months. At Tornea, in Finland, the longest day has 21½ hours, and the shortest 2½ hours. At St. Petersburg and Tobolsk, the longest has 19 and the shortest five hours. At Stockholm and Upsala, the longest day has 18½ hours, at Hamburg, Danzig, and Stettin, the longest day has 17 hours, and the shortest seven. At Berlin and London, the longest day has 16½ hours, and the shortest about eight.

**HAVE YOU A**

**HEALTHY**

**LIVER?**

**ARE YOU TROUBLED WITH**

**FEELING OF SICKNESS**

**DULL HEADACHE**

**DEPRESSION**

**DIGESTIVE TROUBLE**

**LOSS OF APPETITE**

**CONSTIPATION**

**IF SO, or if you have any of these symptoms, depend upon it your liver is anything but healthy. MRS. ELLEN MOORE, of 13 Bray St., Erskineville, Sydney, says:—**

**"Some seven years ago I was troubled with very severe pains in the small of my back, accompanied by constipation, a poor appetite, and a worn-out feeling, making me feel very miserable and unfit entirely for my household duties, and in time my system became completely debilitated. For some time I was an out-patient at the hospital, but I was told that I could only be patched up, as I had a congested liver. It was then I decided to give Bile Beans a trial, having heard of their efficacy for liver disorders. The first few doses made a great improvement in my condition, and continuing with the course, the pains quickly left me, I regained my lost appetite, and was quickly restored to health and vigor. I will never be without such a valuable medicine in the house, and always recommend Bile Beans to fellow-sufferers, and will be glad at any time to answer any queries in regard to my statements, which might prove of value to others."**

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