

# Here and There

**Bourgeois.**

I am always embarrassed when asked by foreigners to give the definition of the word "bourgeois," which is generally emphasised disdainfully (writes Mme. Pierre de Coulevain). The dictionary defines it as "common, without distinction." It is not exactly that; bourgeoisism, like provincialism, is a mentality. It represents a kernel without the pulp and emanates from the shell of the dinner-pot. It is one of the props of society; props are never beautiful nor graceful. Without it, however, the world could not retain its equilibrium, yet with it alone the world could not progress. It gives to individuals the impenetrability of a shell. One often finds its characteristics in persons who have received a good education; in those who possess superior culture, who have taste and a sense of beauty. It betrays itself by mean and narrow ideas, by implacable intolerance, by stubborn blindness, and, above all, by an incapacity to understand liberty or to accord it generously. This mentality creates a certain atmosphere which is felt at once. The workman, the peasant, the artist are not bourgeois. I could name a king who is much more so than many of the residents of our worst districts. Napoleon I. was bourgeois; Napoleon III. was not. Balzac, Maupassant were not bourgeois; Zola was. England, Italy, Spain are not bourgeois. Germany is, but her Emperor is not—and so one might continue indefinitely.

**Burns and a Chair.**

There is a characteristic glimpse of Robert Burns in a lately published book about the Valley of the Rule, an historic strip of British border country. It is the region in which James Thomson, the poet, spent a large part of his boyhood, and wherein the tradition still survives that his father, a clergyman, was killed by lightning while exorcising a brownie. Guert Elliot, a country gentleman of Wau-on-Rule, invited Burns to visit him. He had known and was a great admirer of James Thomson, and cherished as a sacred memorial the armchair in which that poet sat when composing "The Castle of Indolence." With a laudable impulse of hero-worship he determined that the chair should be occupied by Burns on the occasion of his visit. Mistaken man!—he did not after all understand the ways of poets: "This chair was made of beechwood, with a high back, and one of the arms was charred by a candle falling against it when Thomson was absorbed in one of his profound meditations. Gilbert had several people staying with him who were impatient to behold the ploughman poet. At last he arrived, and his host received him most graciously. He then asked Burns to sit on Thomson's chair, and declared that since it came into his possession never before had a guest worthy to occupy the seat ever crossed his threshold. This compliment was awkwardly and even somewhat ungraciously received by Burns. In fact, Elliot said so much about Thomson that Burns felt he played second fiddle to the author of "The Seasons," and was some time before he would sit down in the chair. The young people present were much amused at the confused manner of the poet, and suppressed laughter was heard. In fact, the visit to Wells was not a success."

**Rain in War Time.**

The late General Joseph Wheeler told his story as illustrating the firm belief which prevailed in Tennessee during war-time as to the efficacy of prayer. There had been a summer religious meeting in one of the rural districts. No rain, it seems, had fallen in a long time; everything was about burned up. Consequently, the preacher concluded his prayer with this appeal for rain: "Oh, Lord, we need a refreshing shower; please to send us the blessed rain, so that the drooping vegetation may be revived—oh, Lord, none

of those light, drizzly rains, but a regular ground soaker! A heavy rain, oh, Lord! But not heavy enough, good Lord, to raise the Cumberland River so that the Yankee gunboats can come in and take Nashville!"

**Odd Use for a Balloon.**

It is said that an enterprising Parisian company has discovered a method of bleaching linen by balloon. A few hundred feet above the earth the atmosphere is nearly as pure over the city as in the open country, and it is in this higher region that the linen is dried by the aid of a captive balloon. The linen is attached to bamboo frames and sent up. There are about six ascents in a day. An extra charge of from five to fifty centimes is charged for each article.

**The Doom of Greek in Schools.**

"For the large majority of boys in public schools the study of Greek is doomed," says Dr. Joseph Wood, headmaster of Harrow. "Greek is crowded out. Science, modern languages, art and music—all take covers in the curriculum—claim, and rightly claim, their fair share of time, and there is not room for all. "If you were to compel a boy to learn all these subjects, you would produce a superficial dilettante; you would not make an educated man," says Dr. Wood. "Moreover, there are but twenty-four hours in a day, and with due regard to the health of a growing boy, you cannot allow more than eight hours a day for hard study. Personally, I should put it at less than eight. There is not time for all, and Greek will have to go."

"Do I regret it? Well, I regard the knowledge—not a smattering—of Greek as a most precious intellectual possession. Nothing can quite replace it as a vehicle for creating accuracy and refinement of thought, for filling the mind with high literary ideals. To be able to read and enjoy the Iliad of Homer and the Dialogues of Plato is to increase enormously the happiness of life. "But it is common knowledge that the vast majority of boys who learn Greek at school do not learn enough to enable them to enjoy, or even to read, the great masterpieces of Greek literature. If they did, perhaps no sacrifice would be too great to make in order to retain Greek in the ordinary curriculum of public schools. But they do not."

"I feel very strongly that it is a criminal waste of valuable time to force a boy to learn just enough Greek to be able to parse a sentence and to read a book of Xenophon (the dullest and most commonplace of authors), when his time might be profitably employed in other things. "The universities exact, as a compulsory subject for entrance, a slight, a very slight, a contemptibly slight, knowledge of Greek. It is of no use to the boys whatever, and takes them from the studies which they prefer. Once admitted to the university, they throw their Greek books away, and forget them altogether. "I speak from forty years' experience as a schoolmaster, and give it as my conviction that the study of Greek, when pursued far enough to appreciate the literature, is the most elevating and stimulating of all studies; but to go just far enough to read Euripides with a crib has no educational value whatever."

**Lindsay Murray.** Lindsay Murray, the celebrated grammarian, was born in Swanton, Pennsylvania, in the year 1745. In 1765, after passing four years in legal studies, he was admitted to the bar, and soon afterward married. When the Revolution began he retired to a cottage on Long Island, New York, and spent four years in fishing, boating, and fowling. Going to New York in 1779, he entered into commercial speculations, made the direction of his father, with such success

that, at the close of the Revolution, he was able to retire with a fortune to a beautiful place on the Hudson. Being attacked, however, with a muscular affection, he was induced to search another climate, and sailed for England, where he settled near the city of York, and died there in 1826. His "English Grammar" was written for the use of a young ladies' school near York in 1795, and its success was immediate and extraordinary. Edition after edition was published in a few years. It was introduced into all the English and American schools, and made his name a household word in every country where the English language was spoken. His later years were devoted to the study of botany and his garden at Holdgate, in the variety and rarity of its plants, surpassed the Royal gardens at Kew.

**A Mute Girl Taught to Speak.**

A striking demonstration of what modern science can do was given recently at the Paris Academy of medicine, when, in the presence of 100 physicians and surgeons, a girl of 20, who, two months before was believed to be an incurable deaf mute, sang a solo and later answered questions asked her by doctors in the audience. She is one of four pupils of Dr. Marage, and exhibits in her accomplishments the good effects of his new system of training deaf mutes to hear and to speak. He uses in his practice a so-called "vowel siren," an instrument commonly used by Paris professors of acoustics to amplify the volume of the human voice.

According to Dr. Marage, cases of absolute deafness are exceedingly rare. By the use of the vowel-siren he says the rudimentary faculty of his patients is rapidly developed, and at the same time they learn to imitate sounds, and thus become able to speak. "Whatever his degree of deafness," said Dr. Marage, "the deaf mute is susceptible of movement if he can repeat what he hears. The young girl who sang and spoke to-day has been under treatment only six weeks."

Dr. Marage for many weeks has been applying his method successfully in the asylums of Paris.

**Steamships' Nicknames.**

You may be booked to steam for Europe on "Billy Two" and not know it, says the "Chicago Tribune." You may know you expect to go on the Kaiser Wilhelm II., but the agents and clerks of the North German Lloyd line know you are going on "Billy Two," for that is what they call that steamship among themselves, if not before the patrons of the line.

So it is with nearly all of the steamships. Their long names are abbreviated, and all sorts of nicknames are used. Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse is "Big Bill." It is considered much shorter and easier. The French line drops all the "Las" and "Saint" is unknown. It is the "Paul," not "St. Paul." St. Louis is turned into "Looie."

Long names are easily shortened, so it is that the Philadelphia becomes "Philly," Minnetonka is the "Tonk" and the Minneapolis and Minnehaha are grouped in the "Minnies." The Mesaba is simply the "Mes," and the Valderland, of the Red Star line, is shortened and translated into "Father." The Kronland, the Finland and the Zealand are decapitated, and are known only by their heads—"Kroon," "Fin," and "Zee."

There is no use for "Prince" and "Princess," so it is the "Irene," the "Adelphi," the "Alice," the "Osaka" and the "Luise." The Victoria goes without the prefixes "Kaiserin" and "Auguste." The Graf Waldersee loses either one word or the other, and the New Amsterdam drops the "New."

**Signs of Character.**

"When a vacancy occurs in my firm I make a point of personally interviewing every applicant," said a successful business man the other day. "At the first glance I can tell whether a young man will be of value to me. "I note his boots, collar, and his hair, hands and hair. These are the chief external signs which tell the man's character. "If the whole effect be clean and neat I know that the youngster is careful and painstaking. If his hair be rough, his

tie put on anyhow, and the laces of his boots broken and frayed, I know he is careless and thoughtless. "Whether the young man's suit is well-shaped or fashionable, I do not care. So long as it is well-brushed, that satisfies me. "It is the well-dressed man who eventually succeeds. He unconsciously inspires respect, and is, therefore, a credit and an asset to the firm. "On the other hand, the ill-dressed man is a perpetual misery to himself and everybody else. "Untidiness is a crime; tidiness is a gold-mine to the man who practices it."

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