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AT RANDOM

On Bedside, Companions

What Her Husband Said of His Cabinet

There is for each of us, I doubt not, one moment in the day which represents the acme of happiness, the moment for which all the preceding hours are but a preparation. In the Setons (or if not, then elsewhere) there is an old bedridden woman to whom the passage of the Pullman with its dining car was in a sense the event without which the day would have been incomplete, and I have known a household where all the members, precisely at ten o'clock every evening, imbibed a glass of Hotchkiss' milk with such ceremony that to an irreverent on-looker it seemed a benediction on the day's activities. So likewise there are moments which we specially abhor. The first quarter of an hour in the office (especially if the day be Monday) is by some spoken of as the abomination of desolation. To most men who are human, getting out of bed is an inhuman, and, therefore, horrible act. But our present-day national board told us that it's nice to get up in the morning, but it's nicer to stay in bed?

I do not love getting out of bed more than my fellows, yet there is a time which I dread even more. It is not, indeed, any particular hour of the day, and the precise moment of its coming depends on many circumstances beyond my understanding, though doubtless my doctor (if I had one) might enlighten me. Somewhere in the laggard hours of the evening there comes a time when within me desire falls, my occupation, whatever it strikes me (as we used to say in the Latin class), all that man ever did or thought or wrote becomes a weariness. This feeling ought doubtless to betoken no more than that I have come to the close of a perfect day, but by an awkward miscalculation in my construction this moment of nausea arrives before the time when, as experience has taught me I may with safety and assurance of success turn out the lights and seek "sore labour's bath." Then if you ere but "cooped" in my room you might see me take up ten books in as many minutes, and toss each aside with impatience, marvelling alike at the folly of the writer and of all potential readers. The trouble, as I have analysed it, appears to be that mentally I am constructed for a twenty-two hours' day, whereas, physically, so far as sleep is concerned, I am a normal inhabitant of this world. I forget what is the length of day enjoyed by the inhabitants of Venus and Jupiter, but at times Venus attracts me and of Jupiter I think with horror.

No Favourite Authors. While discussing this point recently, I had a remedy prescribed, which, indeed, convicted me of sin. I realized, not for the first time, that I have lived a foolish life, that in fact I have allowed the years to pass over me without making among my books any firm friends. I have long been accustomed to speak of myself as in the great company of the middle-aged—lightly, as one who does not expect to be taken too seriously; yet now at last I am reticent on the point, which doubtless is a portent. I was assured that the solution for my dreaded hour was to take up one of my favourite books (preferably in bed) and carelessly reading familiar words, I should in time find myself asleep. By confining myself to books which I more or less knew by heart already, I should find that whether I paid attention or not would not matter. When I did not understand; when I did not, I would not lose the thread.

Alas, it was then that the devastating truth forced itself upon me, the appalling fact that I have no favourite authors. Unlike Chaucer's student, I have not equipped myself with that small bedside library of well-thumbed books which, open them where you will, you straightway fall on a familiar phrase. And suddenly I felt lonely, envious of the man who at night habitually reads six pages of Boswell or even (Heaven forgive him!) a few stanzas of "In Memoriam." I thought of all the glorious books I had read, which in their time had enlarged the narrowness of my ways, and I was amazed that I had even been spendthrift of my best friends. I had enjoyed many many hours of good and easy fellowship; I had retained no enduring companionship against the fury of misfortune. But it was not too late. Though much is taken, much remains, as ever a good motto. I myself, would set about

The Selection. That very night I would begin. I would take up, even at haphazard a few likely candidates for the high honour of resting permanently by my bedside. One of Scott's was essential. Scott, if not exactly exciting in these days, is at least soothing and soporific for those no longer young. I chose Redgauntlet. Boswell went, for of all writers he is surely best adapted to my mind. My eye caught the autobiography of Jupiter Carlyle, and remembering the pleasure he once gave me, I accepted him as at least passing the qualifying examination. Then—perhaps a strange choice—I took down Mansie Wauch, but my heart has ever warmed to his memory. The "Path to Rome" was, for no reason that I could give, my fifth selection, and as I felt that my first list of candidates must contain something in the way of poetry, I added, while awaiting the poetical anthology, the Edinburgh Book of Scottish Verse.

Voice of a Stranger. Thus fortified, I retired. While undressing I spoke to the assembled volumes, who listened in the

The Moments Before Midnight

"Margot's" Sidelight on the War

The instalment of Margot Asquith's autobiography in the "Sunday Times" yesterday concerned itself with the declaration of war in 1914, and the "intimate" happenings of that great hour.

The resignations from the Cabinet of Lord Morley and Mr. John Burns "were unimpeachable and in deed to their credit." In a letter to Mrs. Asquith, Lord Morley wrote:— "Why do you tax me with a squeamish conscience? It was not conscience at all, but common sense. What use should I be in the Council of War, into which unhappy circumstances have transformed the Cabinet?" I've run my course and kept the faith." That's enough.

THE ULTIMATUM

Describing how she sat "with face glued to the grille of the gallery" while Mr. Asquith made the grave announcement, which concluded—

We have asked that a satisfactory reply to the telegram (to the German Government) of this morning should be given before midnight.

Mrs. Asquith gives a sketch of the scene beneath.

"THROUGH MISTY EYES"

I looked at the House, which was packed from gallery to floor while my husband was speaking, and through misty eyes the heads of the listening members appeared to me as if bowed in prayer. A satisfactory answer before midnight. . . . These fateful and terrible words were greeted by wave upon wave of cheering, which continued and increased as Henry rose and walked slowly down the floor for the House.

ONE "HAPPY FACE"

I looked at the children asleep after dinner before joining Henry in the Cabinet room. Lord Crewe and Sir Edward Grey were already there, and we sat smoking cigarettes in silence; some went out, others came in; nothing was said. . . . The clock on the mantelpiece hammered out the hour, and when the last beat of midnight hammered it was as silent as dawn.

MORE "CREWES AND GREYS"

On the evening of August 9 Mrs. Asquith had a conversation with her husband about the Cabinet. This from the Diary:— I could do with less cleverness; and should feel no anxiety if I had a few more Crewes and Greys. In public politics, as in private life, character is better than brains, and loyalty more valuable than either; but, he added, I shall have to work with the material that has been given me! Dictatorships generally end in disaster.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BED-SIDE LIBRARY, AND BY A PROCESS OF WINO-WING PERHAPS IN TIME I WOULD ARRIVE AT A SMALL COMPANY OF FAITHFUL FRIENDS, WHO WOULD NEVER FAIL ME

THE SELECTION

That very night I would begin. I would take up, even at haphazard a few likely candidates for the high honour of resting permanently by my bedside. One of Scott's was essential. Scott, if not exactly exciting in these days, is at least soothing and soporific for those no longer young. I chose Redgauntlet. Boswell went, for of all writers he is surely best adapted to my mind. My eye caught the autobiography of Jupiter Carlyle, and remembering the pleasure he once gave me, I accepted him as at least passing the qualifying examination. Then—perhaps a strange choice—I took down Mansie Wauch, but my heart has ever warmed to his memory. The "Path to Rome" was, for no reason that I could give, my fifth selection, and as I felt that my first list of candidates must contain something in the way of poetry, I added, while awaiting the poetical anthology, the Edinburgh Book of Scottish Verse.

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Christmas Gifts

--for every member of the family

We were never so heavily stocked for the Christmas trade. We have a wonderful variety of dainty things for remembrances and in fact we can solve practically any Christmas gift problem. If its a gift for sister, mother, sweetheart, friend, for the boys or Dad you'll find it here. Every department is bedecked with articles which immediately commend themselves to the discriminating Gift Seeker. The most appealing thing about the beautiful gifts secured at this store is that they are all useful and besides expressing a true Christmas spirit express good sense. Look over the lists below then come and see for yourself at the store. Come to "S. A.'s" and you and your's are sure of a Merry Xmas.

For LADIES
Of All Ages

MANY IN CHRISTMAS BOXES

- Handkerchiefs
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- Fancy Cuffs
- Handbags
- Boudoir Caps
- Fancy Belts
- Silk Gloves
- Wool Gloves
- Kid Gloves
- Gauntlets
- Silk Hosiery (Fur trimmed)
- Silk Hose
- Ribbed Hose (Heather and plain)
- Fancy Linens
- Stamped Goods
- Silk Umbrellas (With fancy ring handles)
- DRESS SILKS
- WASH SATINS
- Dresses (Canton crepe, silk and Ribbed serge)
- Ladies coats
- Fur coats
- Fur neck pieces
- Pleated skirts
- Silk kimonos
- Silk undershirts
- Satin Bloomers
- Corset Covers
- Satin Blouses
- Night gowns
- Silk Kimonos
- Silk gimonas
- Negligees
- Sweaters
- Silk vests
- Hug-me-tights
- Bed shawls
- Bed Comforts
- Tea aprons
- Band aprons
- Fudge Aprons
- Bungalow aprons

For MEN

- Silk ties
- Silk mufflers
- Wool mufflers
- Fancy arm bands
- Xmas hosiery
- Bath robes
- Smoking jackets
- Silk handkerchiefs
- Linen handkerchiefs (Initialed)
- Mocha gloves
- Silk gloves
- Fur lined gloves
- Xmas shirts
- Fancy cuff links

for the KIDDIES

(A splendid coasting sleigh will be given away free with every boys suit or overcoat.)

—KIDDIES OVERCOATS

(In blue and brown, red flannel lined are exceptionally nice.)

—ARMOUR CLAD SUITS

(Give the boy something better for Xmas.)

Our clerks join with us in saying—SHOP EARLY

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We have a Christmas gift for you and yours

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Beecham's Pills act as a splendid tonic to the digestive organs. They remove acidity and fermentation and excess of bile from the stomach and bowels and promote the secretion of the gastric juices. In thus correcting morbid conditions and stimulating the digestive processes Beecham's Pills naturally have an excellent effect upon the general health. If you have lost your appetite or are suffering from nausea, sick headache, constipation, or giddiness

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gravest manner, without betraying the least sign of impatience. I told them that they were chosen for a high end, and that if they gave satisfaction they might be read and re-read till their backs broke (Mansie, whom I have never known other than second-hand, visibly winced). It was Mansie who was nearest to me as I tucked myself in. For ten minutes I read assiduously. Poor that I was, it was almost to me as a new book. Not one spoke to me with the true sense of familiarity. I realized that friends are only to be gained by long service, and that now I must suffer for my selfishness in ever seeking new acquaintances.

I rose and looked out of the window. The wandering moon and the wheeling stars were alike cold and friendless, and the remaining lights in the windows served but to reveal a world from which I was cut off. I thought of women with whom I had laughed, and men with whom I had drunk, who now, for all I knew, might be dead. And in my hand I held a book which once, too, in my way I had loved, but which now spoke to me with the voice of a stranger.

F. E. S.

BAN ON NEW DANCES

NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—Dance hall proprietors of New York City will meet at the hotel Astor tomorrow afternoon to form an organization for the limitation of the "Chicago," "balconading," slow dancing and "parking" from the public dance halls of New York City. The agreement of the principal dance hall proprietors to form an organization to bar objectionable dances was brought about by Mrs. George W. Loft, Deputy Police Commissioner, who called them together.

Mrs. Loft told those assembled that slow and tight dancing was permitted in many dance halls that complaints from mothers were flooding the police department, and that Commissioner En-

right was prepared to take drastic measures by way of arrests and the cancellations of licenses and put a stop to it. She said that Commissioner Enright had suggested as a possible alternative, the voluntary purification of public dancing by the dance hall proprietors.

All the dance hall proprietors agreed that voluntary action was desirable and promised to be present at the meeting on Monday, at which regulations will be adopted and possibly a dance dictator after the "Ladies' Days" Thomas pattern may be selected.

"The worst dancing is at the best hotels," one of the dance hall proprietors said at the meeting of proprietors after Mrs. Loft had outlined her views. She is said to have agreed with this, but to have contended that such dancing was not so pernicious because it affected comparatively few, while thousands were trained in various styles of dancing at the public halls. It was said to be impracticable, from the police standpoint, to regulate closely what took place at private affairs.

One of the dance hall proprietors said that no form of dancing was so bad as the failure to dance which is now said to be becoming popular on many floors in New York City. This abuse was technically described as "parking" by the man who denounced it.

"Parking," he said, "is when a couple takes the floor to dance and then stop dancing. They simply stay on the spot all through the dance. There are any number of variations to this."

"The 'Chicago' was described as a slow step belonging to calisthenics rather than to the dance. "Balconading" was described concisely as "rough."

A. A. U. of C. Meeting

SYDNEY, N. S., Dec. 13.—At a recent meeting of the A. A. U. of C. in Toronto it was decided to hold the track and field championship in the Maritime Provinces next year, probably on the Wanderers ground in Halifax, the latter part of next summer. Manitoba got the boxing and wrestling championships at the same time. The tug of war was awarded to the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. Vice-Pres. Millie of Nova Scotia, spoke against the reinstatement of West Wellington, a former professional hockey player in the Maritime Provinces but lately of Port Arthur, whom the western delegates desired reinstated. The East carried the day and a card was refused Wellington.

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