

Mighty Chieftains - The American Indians - Time Life Books

National Gambling Impact Study Commission - 1999 Final Report

National Indian Gaming Association - Home Page - Sept. 9, 1999

National Museum of the American Indian - Archives

Once they moved like the Wind by David Roberts

Passing California's Proposition 5 - Campaigns and Elections - Feb. 1999

Paths of Life by Thomas E. Sheridan and Nancy Parezo

San Jose Mercury News - Sept. 8, 1999 (Brandon Bailey)

Survival of the Spirit by H. Henrietta Stockel

Wall Street Journal Editorial - Oct. 18, 1999 (on Alabama lottery)

AN INFURIATING GENIUS

December 13, 1999

Robert Smith

He died in 1950, aged 94, at his home in the village of Ayot St. Lawrence near Hertford, England, where, in addition to Hampshire and Hereford, we have been assured by his wonderful stage creation, Eliza Dolittle, theatre's most famous student of elocution, that "Hurricanes Hardly ever Happen".

When searching for a healthy place for retirement he found in Ayot St. Lawrence a tombstone engraved with "she died at the early age of 75" which struck him as an excellent testimonial for a retirement area.

On the day that he died the world paused a while,
 stilled,
 A great mind extinguished, left a void, not yet filled,
 Presidents, great leaders, sought for words how to
 praise
 A lit'rary immortal who enriched our days

On music, art and politics, hailed as a sage
 Nobel Prize, an Oscar, for years lit up the stage,
 Wickedly witty, but seemed at times like a child,
 For years thought his Oscar was a tribute to Wilde

Took on the Establishment, held views that were strong
 Specialized in being right when others were wrong
 Born in Dublin, not far from the place where I dwelt,
 Infuriating genius, Anglo-Irish Celt

At the time of his death, George Bernard Shaw,
 bestrode the literary intellectual world like a
 Colossus. To the great hosts of his admirers he was,
 quite simply, the most famous writer on the planet and
 the most significant dramatist since Shakespeare. In
 addition to 50 stage plays he was considered the most
 trenchant pamphleteer and satirist since Jonathan
 Swift, and one of literature's great letter writers,
 occasionally sending off a cantankerous one to the
 newspapers, such as one he sent to the editor of the
 London Times. "There is someone on your staff who
 devotes a lot of his time to chasing split infinitives.
 . . . I call for the immediate dismissal of this pendant.
 It is of no consequence whether he decides to go
 quickly or to quickly go or quickly to go. The
 importance is that he should go at once".

He was the most readable music critic and best
 theatre critic of his generation. These extraordinary
 achievements, both artistic and intellectual, are all
 the more remarkable when one considers the very
 unpromising start he made in life with its near
 complete absence of any formal education.

The Shaws, once powerful, rich, were not genteel poor,
 Estates passed to others by primogeniture
 Shaw thought his family "Downstarts", just scraping
 along,
 On the outside socially, just did not belong

Shaw was born in the summer of 1856 and Dublin, the center of the Anglo-Irish world, for a change and for a while, was at peace. Memories were fading of the last rebellion, the short and violent eruption of 1848, precipitated by the famine and easily suppressed by the British who scornfully dismissed the uprising as "the Battle of Widow McCormac's Cabbage Patch". In the poorer Dublin homes smoldering peat fires perfumed the air and in the distance, beyond the church-steepled skyline, the violet Dublin Hills vanished into hovering mists, creating a natural beauty which inspired local poets to rhapsodies. Instead of peat, the Shaws burned imported British coal, a necessary extravagance and a signal to any of the neighbors who might have doubted their class.

Number 3 Upper Synge Street, Shaw's birthplace, was one of a neat row of eleven terrace houses typical of the multitude of middle-class homes spreading throughout Dublin, then part of Britain's United Kingdom, and growing fast like many other Victorian provincial cities. Upper Synge Street was a short distance from the Grand Canal which formed the southern boundary of the city. Nearby Warren Street, where I was born sixty three years later, was built on the open land leading down from Synge Street to the canal. In my childhood the canal still carried its slow moving traffic of horse-drawn barges which Shaw also gazed on as a boy, steadily making their way to the town of Mullingar in Ireland's great central Bog of Allen. There the barges were heaped with mounds of peat, Dublin's main source of fuel, known locally as "turf".

I passed Shaw's house each day on my way to school, never pausing to glance at what has since become a hallowed literary shrine. As his fame grew, Dublin warmed only slowly to Shaw. It was hard to forgive him for his bitter words about Dublin and his boyhood years. In a letter to his actress friend Ellen Terry he wrote "Oh a devil of a childhood, Ellen, rich only in dreams, frightful and loveless in realities". A small group of admirers wrote of their intent to form a Dublin Shaw Society and place a plaque on the front of his old home in Synge Street. They added that a small donation to help cover expenses would not be out of place. His reply, on a postcard, was short and to

the point. "Please do nothing of the sort. I hated the place. I will pay instead for any explosives to blow it up and I have no interest whatever in supporting your society". The plaque went up anyway and a little later a follow-up note was sent. "Dear Mr. Shaw, thank you for your kind postcard. Sure it was a great help indeed! You will be pleased to know that we auctioned it for 25 guineas. Thank you very much". I heard this story from my father who, though a great admirer of Shaw was, nevertheless, a Dubliner at heart, and enjoyed taking a sly dig at the great man now and then. In similar vein was his story of Shaw on one of his rare visits back to Dublin at the height of his fame when he decided to visit his old workplace. As he strode down town, with his flaming red beard making him easily recognizable, people nudged each other saying "Would you believe it! It's George Bernard Shaw himself". At his workplace there was great excitement. Said Shaw "I don't recognize a single soul". "Well, there is ould Paddy Ryan, he was here in your time. He's working up in the attic". Up the stairs went Shaw and there was Paddy at work. "Paddy and how are you after all these years?" "Ah sure I'm fine, thank the Lord, and who might you be sir?" "I'm George Bernard Shaw". "George Bernard Shaw, glory be! Now what have you been up to since y'left here?"

As a boy Shaw went for walks with his father along the canal, as I did with mine. My father always kept a sharp lookout to make sure I did not fall in. Not so with Shaw's father who, on one occasion, pretended to fling his terrified son into the water and almost succeeded in doing so. Shaw wrote, "A horrible suspicion began to crawl into my mind."

He went to his mother and whispered his awful discovery. "Mama, I think Papa's drunk". "When is he ever anything else!" replied his disgusted mother. It was an unhappy household.

In later years Shaw wrote that he felt little parental love and was often sent on walks with the young Irish maidservant, feeling he would not be missed if he never returned. It was on these outings, supposedly to take the air in one of Dublin's gracious

Georgian squares, that the young Shaw was exposed to the dreadful slums of Dublin, an experience which left an indelible mark. There the maidservant's desperately poor family and friends crowded into decaying shells of once fashionable Dublin mansions. Shaw later wrote of the bitter resentment in the glances of the still hungry survivors of the great famine of a few years past. Ravenous hordes of rural poor had then descended on the city and taken over any empty homes they could find, especially those vacated by absentee landowners, who, distancing themselves from the rebellious natives, had moved to their even finer homes in London's Mayfair. To keep the peace and encouraged by the British government they quietly forfeited their Dublin properties.

Shaw first heard words of forbidden Irish Gaelic spoken in those slums. "Cead mile failte". "A hundred thousand welcomes", to which "Eireann go breagh!", "Ireland forever!" would have been the appropriate reply, unknown of course then to the shy little boy, as would have been the meaning of the farewell blessing as he left. "Dia is Muire is Padraigh aguth", "May the blessings of God, Mary and Saint Patrick be with you". He may also have heard the strange sounding words "Baile Atha Cliath".

Baile Atha Cliath is Dublin's ancient name
Town of the ford of hurdles - please let me explain
Darkened peaty waters from Ireland's central plain
Flow lazily towards the sea where they leave a stain

Limbs of trees flung across, river banks were joined,
At the ford a small town grew and so its name was
coined

But wait! How then, please, Dublin's the present name?
No ford, no hurdles, the Liffey's dark that's plain,
A black pool, in Irish, "Dubh Linn", forms in Dublin
Bay

For this stain in Irish Sea, Dublin's named to-day

Shaw, was totally ignorant of Irish language and Ireland's history, apart from his father's tales of the Battle of the Boyne where his forebear, the dashing Captain William Shaw of Scotland, helped re-impose

England's rule on Ireland. For his part in the destruction of the peasant Irish army, Captain Shaw was rewarded with lands in Kilkenny and Tipperary and so, in 1689, the Shaw ascendancy in Ireland began.

To young Bernard the slums were revolting and filled him with dread as well as pity. He was sworn to secrecy about the virus by the young servant girl. He knew something was terribly wrong for people to have to live that way. He could ask no questions at home or at school, especially at his school, Wesley College Dublin. This was modeled on the English public school system of the day. Discipline was harsh, caning was rampant. Shaw hated Wesley and claimed he was always placed at the bottom of the class. He looked upon his teachers as numbskulls. Later he wrote that all he learnt at school was "lying, dishonourable submission to tyranny, dirty stories, a blasphemous habit of treating love and maternity as obscene jokes, hopelessness, evasion, derision, and cowardice". My memories of Wesley, six decades later differ from Shaw's. Sure, discipline was strict. The swish of the cane and the yelp that followed were still sometimes heard and there were the dirty stories and the school bullies, but for most of us, whether we appreciated it at the time or not, our educational foundations were being soundly laid. Although Britannia no longer ruled in Southern Ireland, at Wesley we were still being taught to see the world through English eyes. In traditional English fashion, we were prepared for the rough and tumble of life on the rugby field and, at cricket, learning to play a "straight bat" in our dealings with our fellow men. There is no record of Shaw ever having played rugby or cricket. His one close friend, Edward McNulty once sent a cricket ball through a stained glass window of a nearby church and later described the scene. "For a moment awe-struck silence descended on the playground. Then suddenly came an unearthly scream of laughter, and we saw Shaw rolling on the ground in hysterics of delight." Shaw clearly saw the world in a different light. There is no memorial to him at Wesley, though there is to their other Nobel Laureate, the physicist E.K. Walton, an outstanding academician and scholar, who helped split the atom, and who was for years a school trustee.

Shaw seemed congenitally unable to bend to the molding pressures of school education. Instead of finishing at Wesley and entering Trinity, he was withdrawn from school at age fifteen and sent off by exasperated parents to work for an estate agent as an office boy. A year later his mother and his two older sisters upped and left home for London, ostensibly for mother and sister Lucy, stars in the Dublin Amateur Operatic Society, to further their singing careers, but more likely to get away from papa. The abandoned teenage Shaw was left to fend for himself, mulling over the inconstancy of the female sex, and daily enduring a deadly boring job and the companionship of an ineffectual and secretly imbibing father.

The Shaw home, once filled with music, was now silent. Shaw loved music. He had a fine singing voice and his mother's piano had been left behind. He spent countless hours giving himself piano lessons working, laboriously from self-instruction handbooks. With extraordinary powers of retention and a sharp musical ear, he had learnt most of the great operatic arias by heart listening to rehearsals held at Synge St. To satisfy a strong growing inner need to impress others he gave lessons in operatic performance to the rest of the office staff when the proprietor was not around. He spent long hours in Dublin's magnificent art gallery and in the public library, devouring volumes on the great painters, composers and musicians. He claimed he was the only Irishman ever to enter the art gallery apart from the attendants. He spent most of his meager earnings attending music concerts, opera and the theatre. The powerful Shaw auto-didact inner drive was taking shape; teaching himself with an inexhaustible energy, drive and power of concentration about things that personally fascinated him and then doggedly trying to teach these things to others. This pattern that would remain with him throughout his life. He rose to become the chief cashier in the office, no mean feat for a teenager. But he was at a loss to know what to do with his life. He had no guide or mentor. Instead, progress and direction would have to be self generated, depending on his powerful inner drive which in later life, in lieu of any formal religious belief, he referred to as his "Life Force", a mystical entity

which he believed was central to his role and purpose in life.

Agnes, the younger of his two sisters, died of tuberculosis in 1876 after a long illness. To Shaw this was a signal. He resigned his job, packed a carpet bag, bid papa farewell, and like multitudes of Irishmen before him and since, turned his back on Ireland and went to London in search of a future. He was twenty. He had no particular love for England but London then was the center of the literary world and he knew he wanted to write. There was also a place there for him to stay. Most Irish were leaving to work as labourers. The more adventurous joined the armed forces or, if better educated, became London "Bobbies". None of these options appealed to Shaw. He continued his self-imposed rigorous educational program in the library of the British Museum, moved in with Mama, and lived on a one pound a week inheritance. Life for many Irish immigrants was harsh and lonesome and many a homesick letter was sent back to Ireland. The sentiments of one are caught in an Irish ballad of those times.

"The Mountains of Mourne"

O Mary this London's a wonderful sight
With the people all working by day and by night
They don't grow potatoes or barley or wheat
And there's gangs of them diggin' for gold in the
street
At least when I axed them that's what I was told
So I just took a hand at this diggin' for gold
But for all that I found there I might as well be
Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea.

You remember young Patrick O'Loughlin of course,
Well now he is here at the head of the force
I met him one day when crossing the Strand
And he stopped all the traffic with one wave of his
hand
And as we stood talking of days that are gone
Sure the whole population of London looked on
But for all these fine powers he's wishful to be
Where the mountains of Mourne sweep down to the Sea

There are beautiful ladies here, och never mind
 With faces and figures nature never designed
 With gorgeous complexions all roses and cream
 But O'Loughlin remarked with regards to the same
 That if of those roses you venture to sip
 Sure the colour would all come away on your lip
 So I'll wait for that wild rose who's waiting for me
 Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea

Shaw had no such attachments left behind in
 Dublin. Not that he was entirely immune to feminine
 charms. As he worked away at his books in the British
 Museum reading room, he allowed his eye to wander to
 the lady occupying the seat next to his and he wrote.

Violet Beverley
 No matter how cleverly
 I try to work when you sit beside me
 At set of sun
 There is nothing done
 Only the unwritten page to chide me
 Only your empty chair to deride me

Subsequently he found out that her name was Mabel
 Crofton. Undeterred, he adapted his verse.

Mable Crofton
 No matter how often
 I try to work when you sit beside me
 Etc. etc.

His diary makes only oblique references to lady
 acquaintances. He was mistrustful of women, was self-
 conscious and too poor to pursue his day-dreams in
 reality. He began writing a novel about a clerk trying
 to make his way to London. He poured out his feelings
 and aspirations, into a long and meandering tale, with
 the central figure a somewhat callo youth, providing us
 with a portrait of Shaw before his conversion into the
 fantastic personality he was to become. You may be
 intrigued to know that he gave the name Robert Smith to
 this complete nonentity. He named the novel
 "Immaturity". It was turned down by five publishers in
 a row. Four other novels followed, each meeting with a
 similar level of success. In the thirties Shaw saw to
 it that "Immaturity" was published.

During this period, he also began moving within the social circles of London's left wing elite; working with Beatrice and Sydney Webb to form the Fabian Society, a peculiarly English form of Socialism that considered violent revolution distasteful. Gradually he overcame his self-consciousness, speaking for free at public meetings whenever asked, becoming a spellbinding orator, honing a rapier wit in political debate which was the foundation of what later was to become the gift for writing the marvelous dialogues of his plays. He found himself during this decade of penury. He became a vegetarian, it was cheaper. He grew a fine red beard which hid the scars of smallpox caught during his early days in London and he began to shape a unique public persona, G.B.S.

His first great break came when William Archer, a leading London drama critic, was drawn to the red-bearded young man in the library deeply immersed in studying a copy of Karl Marx's "Das Kapital" in one hand and a full orchestral score of Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde" in the other. Archer found Shaw steady work, ranging from book reviews to art criticism and writing music columns for the London newspapers. In these articles he supplemented his understanding of music with brilliant and witty digressions that gave his columns widespread public appeal and he soon became the most popular music critic in London. He signed himself "Corno di Bassetto", basset horn. He had tried to learn to play one in Dublin and the noise attracted much attention. He meant his column to produce the same effect. He intended his musical journalism to appeal to the non-expert lover of music and to drive melancholy away, as music had done for him at his Dublin home. Years later his words on music were still greatly valued. In 1927 the BBC chose him to write their article on Beethoven to commemorate the composer's centenary, which he did in true Shavian style. It went:

"A hundred years ago a crusty old bachelor of fifty seven, so deaf he could not hear his own music played by a full orchestra, yet still able to hear thunder, shook his fist at the roaring heavens for the last time, and died as he had lived, defying God and challenging the Universe. He was Defiance Incarnate:

he could not even meet a Grand Duke and his court in the street without jamming his hat tight down on his head and striding through the middle of them. He had the manners of a disobliging steamroller - it was indeed a mighty spirit. No other composer has ever melted his hearers into complete sentimentality by the tender beauty of his music and then suddenly turned on them and mocked them with derisive trumpet blasts - he was a giant wave in that storm of the human spirit which produced the French Revolution". To Shaw Beethoven was ungovernable. In spirit, power and individuality Beethoven and Shaw were soulmates. But it was to Wagner that Shaw owed even more. Sent by the newspaper to Bayreuth to review the Ring, he discovered there the dramatic, musical and emotional counterpart of his own maturing religious convictions.

Shaw had begun life as a Protestant and reports that as a child he held the belief that all Roman Catholics were condemned to roast in Hell and that Heaven was exclusively reserved for Protestant ladies and gentlemen. He began to have doubts about this while listening to rehearsals in Synge St. Since music so beautiful must come from heaven, how was it that Catholics, on the whole, sang better than Protestants? This line of thinking, coupled by his feelings about Wesley, led him to atheism. At the age of eleven he said, he gave up atheism, finding it too negative and unable to accommodate the early stirrings he felt within his "Life Force". His religious views were to reach fuller realization listening to Wagner's music and experiencing the Ring. His frightful and loveless childhood followed by years of poverty and social unacceptability in London made him immediately sympathetic to Wagner's view of human history. Human beings in loveless desperation succumb to the corrupt Rhinegold. The tyranny of lust for gold and power could only be overcome by fearlessness and heroism. I am grateful to David Reichert for his help in trying to penetrate the complexities of the Ring. Shaw wrote "what I mean by a religious person is one who conceives of himself or herself to be an instrument of some purpose in the Universe, which is a high purpose and is the motive power of evolution, that is of a continuous ascent in the organization. . .of life and its extension". In this sense Shaw considered himself a

religious person with a clear purpose in life towards which his "Inner Force" drove him relentlessly. As a music critic he could only have a limited impact on society. It was as a theatre critic that Shaw first began his personal crusade against what he saw as the artificialities and hypocrisies of Victorian society. His aim was to use all his wit and power of political debate to change Victorian theatre into a theatre of vital ideas of value to society. His columns on the popular plays of the day infuriated the taid and self-satisfied theatre-going public of London's West End. But the role of critic was not enough to achieve the changes needed. He would write plays himself and the first would be about slums, London's slums and about the notorious scandal of slum landlordism.

His first play "Widower's Houses" flouted the romantic conventions of the day. A well intentioned young man falls in love and discovers his in-law's fortune and his own private income derive from exploitation of the poor. Potentially a tragic situation, but it is the social evil that Shaw concentrates on and not the romantic predicament. Using his wit and rich sense of irony Shaw fashioned his play to reveal a rottenness in the heart of London. No London theatre was interested. Relentlessly he pursued his goal. He would drive the rapier home deeper. Next came "Mrs. Warren's Profession" dealing with organized prostitution. The economics of the situation were dealt with remorselessly, and titillating aspects about "fallen women", so popular in Victorian melodrama, were ignored. The censor, the Queen's Lord Chamberlain, promptly banned the play on the grounds that it dealt with an "unspeakable" subject. When the more broad-minded Edward the Seventh ascended the throne it was given permission to be shown privately. The same anti-establishment sense of humour, which thought church-window smashing so hysterically funny had matured and was now focused on the unfeeling, heartless and at times cruel aspects of life in London as it entered the twentieth century.

Shaw called his first plays "plays unpleasant" because they forced the audience to face unpleasant facts. He followed them with a series of "plays pleasant" in an effort to find producers and audiences

his earlier play had offended. These included "Arm and the Man", "Candida" and "Man and Superman". There followed "Plays for Puritans" which included the "Devil's Disciple", a play set in New Hampshire. The action takes place during the American Revolution with the surrender of the British at Saratoga. The topic had great appeal for Shaw. It was an enormous success in New York and on tour, playing everywhere to full houses. This was the turning point in Shaw's career, bringing him international fame and fortune. His energy and creativity were boundless. Play after play followed and he maintained as well, an incessant flow of essays and political commentaries. He fell ill and was nursed back to health by a Fabian friend Charlotte Payne-Townshend, an Irish heiress. They married and lived in her London flat for eight years and in 1906 moved to Ayot St. Lawrence where they spent the rest of their days, we are told, in a celibate relationship. Shaw apparently satisfied his emotional needs in paper-passion correspondence with the actresses Ellen Terry, Mrs. Patrick Campbell and some other of his leading ladies. He wrote, "The ideal love affair is one conducted by post". His relationship with Mrs. Campbell may have gone further than with pen and for a period placed great strain on Charlotte. Mrs. Campbell kept all his letters and he did hers. When the relationship cooled she would not agree to an exchange. Later in life she became hard-up and informed him she was going to have his letters published. He generously returned hers since he knew both sets would bring her more money. Shaw was never completely satisfied with his work. On one opening night he appeared on stage to the cries of "Author" and when the applause settled there came loud boos from someone at the back of the theatre. Shaw addressed the dissatisfied patron with "I completely agree with you sir. But what are we two against so many".

Then came his great masterpiece "Saint Joan" in 1920. Acclaim for "Saint Joan" led to a Nobel Prize for Literature. He had problems accepting money made from the sale of munitions. He wrote to the Royal Swedish Academy, "I cannot persuade myself to accept the money". He requested the funds be placed in a foundation for the translation of classical Swedish

literature into English and excused himself from attending the ceremony.

To those who shared his political views Shaw was a saint, to others he was a Mephistopheles. Winston Churchill found him an "irresponsible chatterbox", "a continually erupting volcano, but-" Churchill continued, "amid the smoke and ashes there occasionally appears a piece of pure gold smelted from the central fires of truth". Shaw disagreed with his politics but admired him as a man of courage and as a fellow writer. He wrote to him after his fall from political power. "You have never been a real Tory - the Blimps and Philistines and Stick-in the Muds of the Conservative Party never understood and always dreaded you". Churchill filled Shaw's final sick room with flowers and after his death wrote "-bright and nimble, fierce and comprehending being, we are all the better for having had the Jester in our midst".

Shaw's comedic masterpiece and probably his most popular play was Pygmalion. Shaw claimed it was a didactic drama about phonetics, but the play is a touching comedy about love and the English class system. It's male lead and anti-hero, Professor Higgins, is a not too heavily disguised portrait of G.B.S. himself. The scene in which Eliza Doolittle appears in high society when she has acquired a correct accent but no notion of polite conversation is one of the funniest in English drama. In 1938 Shaw agreed to allow Gabriel Pascal to make it into a film with Wendy Hiller as Eliza. Now Shaw became known to a wide public audience, was an immediate box office success and the winner of an Oscar. Wendy Hiller, now Dame Wendy, went onto a highly successful stage and film career which she attributes to the good fortune of being chosen by Shaw to play Eliza. Dame Wendy lives in retirement in Beaconsfield where we have our English home and where she is patron of the Chiltern Shakespeare Society, founded by my wife's sister. She refused to be drawn into the subject of Shaw and letter writing. Six years after his death Pygmalion opened on Broadway as "My Fair Lady" and ran for 2,717 performances over a period of six and a half years. It has been a major success wherever it had played throughout the world. The brilliance of the lyrics and

music by Lerner and Loewe, a quintessential American team, has marvelously preserved the Englishness of the work. In particular Rex Harrison, as Professor Higgins, brought off a histrionic triumph by turning his lack of singing voice into a half-rasping, half-expostulating, patter conversation with his friend Pickering about women, characteristic of the then common anti-feminist attitude of most British males which Shaw so frequently satirized. Their conversation went something like this -

Pickering. . .why can't a woman be more like a man?
I beg your pardon.

Yes. . .why can't a woman be more like a man?
Men are so honest, so thoroughly square
Eternally noble, historic'ly fair
Who, when you win, will always give you back a pat.
Well, why can't a woman be like that?

Why does every one do what the others do?
Why do they do ev'rything their mothers do?
Can't a woman learn to use her head?
Why don't they grow up--well, like their father
instead?

Why can't a woman take after a man?
Men are so pleasant, so easy to please;
Whenever you are with them, you're always at ease.
Would you be slighted if I didn't speak for hours
Of course not!
Would you be livid if I had a drink or two?
Nonsense.
Would you be wounded if I never sent you flowers?
Never.
Well, why can't a woman be like you?

One man in a million may shout a bit.
Now and then there's one with slight defects
One, perhaps, whose truthfulness you doubt a bit.
But by and large we are a marvelous sex!

Why can't a woman take after a man?
Cause men are so friendly, good natured and kind,
A better companion you never will find.
If I were hours late for dinner, would you bellow?
Of course not!

If I forgot your silly birthday, would you fuss?

Nonsense.

Would you complain if I took out another fellow?

Never.

Well, why can't a woman be like us.

Shaw himself could not have done better, except he would never have used the word square.

As already mentioned

We have a home in England, where we stay a while,
Beaconsfield, Burke lies there, beneath the church's
aisle

Ayot St. Lawrence, twenty one miles as the crow flies
We should have known, those carrion are full of lies

A scenic route we chose, happily sallying forth
Avoiding fast motorways from London streaming north
English maps' sole purpose designed to lead astray
Twists and turns down lovely lanes, soon we lost our
way

Ayot St. What? was all we got, as we drove around,
Suddenly in deep countryside Shaw's home we found
Shady trees, gravel path, flower beds and lawn,
Front door open, welcoming, inside we were drawn

Once the local Rectory, modest, tidy neat
Shaw's canes, hats, overcoat, polished hallway seat,
House just as it was the day the great man died,
His books, his desk, his pens, from here the world
defied.

Sloping lawn behind the house with breathtaking view
Copse of trees, flower beds, the roses Charlotte grew
Writing hut, hid by trees, place of isolation,
In this place were produced works of inspiration

Fell down from a ladder when pruning a pear tree
Shattered his thigh bone, a serious injury,
Bad breaks in the aged then could not be mended
For weeks he lay suff'ring and thus his life ended.

Charlotte had died six years before. Both were
cremated and, at his request, their ashes were mixed

and spread over the lawn and flower beds of their beloved garden. My wife and I slowly re-entered the house to have a last look around. We lingered a while in the dining-room with table set as if for dinner. It was last used by Shaw as a sick room, where, surrounded by Churchill's flowers and some chosen memorabilia, he ended his days. In pride of place, in the center of the mantelpiece, was a framed photograph of his home in Synge St., replete with plaque, and nearby hung a framed citation awarding him the freedom of Baile Atha Cliath.

No tirades, no ranting, no longer giving vent,
 Infuriating genius, now mellow old gent,
 Life's wheel had now turned,
 No anger now burned,
 At Life Force release,
 Now Shaw was at peace

Major Sources

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Anecdotes. By my late father William A. Smith (fondly remembered)

BUDGET

December 20, 1999

1 - An Act of Charity. Anthony G. Covatta