

JANUARY 29, 1968WILLIAM G. WERNER

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A Sort of Preface

Although prefaces are kind of out-of-date, nowadays, except for textbooks, government publications, anthologies, and the like, this budget, for several reasons, I have decided should have a preface. A preface, my elder brother told me years and years ago, should be like a porch on the front of a house; it should at once welcome entry, but at the same time should warn the enterer what he can expect and what he should not expect, when he steps through the doorway.

Because many budget papers are instructional in nature, it seems to me that it may be fairer to the authors of such papers to warn the audience a bit, as well as to invite them inside, so as to speak. The reading of a budget in several ways is a unique experience, not quite paralleled in other known forms of literary athletics. The reader, perhaps, on the evening before budget-paper date, may be sent via special delivery, 28 pages of double-spaced typing upon a subject deep in the heart of a mighty nice fellow -- and the subject one which requires surgery that only an inspired author can do justice to. So the budget reader asks himself, "Shall I attempt to slaughter this magnum opus, or shall I just read this paper last, and permit my lubricated friends to doze and dream peacefully, until the

traditionally loud applause at the finis awakens them to an embarrassed, feeble clap and a knowing nod to their more hardy neighbors?"

Or, as naturally is bound to happen, the subject of one of the papers is one, say, concerning which the budget-reader has not the faintest knowledge--well-schooled literator though he may be. The extremest example of this comes from my own experience. Some years back, on a snowy January Monday, as I sat at evening meal, the phone rang and the voice of my neighbor, wife of a university president, said, "My husband just phoned me from Boston, where his plane is grounded. He asks me to ask you if you would be so good as to read his paper tonight at the Literary Club. His secretary will deliver it down there." Of course, I said yes; but I did a lot of worrying, lest my "small Latin and less Greek" would be able to survive the test of a university president's paper. Luckily the work turned out to be a quite harmless account of a vacation. No doubt the author knew that it would be safe even in my hands.

So much for my preface. It was, I concluded, a wise precaution for this meeting, because our first paper tonight is on a subject concerning which I know practically nothing at all -- horses. It is true that I know that everything about them, particularly advice, is expensive. I do admit to knowing three more things about them: They are nice to pat, on the front end; they are difficult to stay with, around the middle; and they are most helpful to my rosebed, from the other end.

The title the author gave me for this horse-paper is "Recollecting", but I confess I should have preferred something like "As to Ascot".

Recollecting

The leading participant sport of old age is reminiscing. Bill Ramsey called it anecdotage. This game is designed to bolster the sagging ego and depends on corralling an audience which is subjected to big stories of our little triumphs. There are a few people who will listen without coercion and our dependents will laugh at our thrice-told tales as long as we delay their patrimonies.

A guest at the Union League Club asked his host why a certain young man seemed so popular. "That's Jim Jones", was the reply. "He always helps the old members get on with their recollecting!" For the same reason, the Literary Club prefers to elect younger men to the membership. They provide a fresh captive audience for the worn cliches of the old members and the older we get, the more we cherish this tolerant environment. It may be wishful thinking but it does seem that certain stories, boresome in conversation, are acceptable as part of a paper.

With this hope, I offer the account of my trip to Royal Ascot, without apologies for wholesale name dropping. True names are used with calculated premeditation, in the interest of truth and to make the author seem more important.

My entree to the Royal Enclosure was indirectly due to my incomprehensible election to the Jockey Club, founded in 1890 by Jock Whitney's grandfather, to elevate American breeding and racing. Among the fifty members, including the Whitneys, Phipps, Mellons, Wideners and Duponts, I am the only poor man. Only two others, Warren Wright and George Humphrey had lived west of the Alleghenies and there was one other doctor, Admiral Carey Grayson, adviser to Woodrow Wilson.

In 1956 at Chairman Widener's annual dinner for the Club at Saratoga, sitting between Jock Whitney and Paul Mellon and emboldened by champagne, I jokingly said, "Jock, now that you are Ambassador, how about getting us into the Royal Enclosure at Ascot?" "I'll arrange it", he replied and to my astonishment a few months later along came the official documents, signed by the Queen.

Next June we arrived in London and hurried to the Embassy where we found there was more protocol. To obtain badges each new guest had to appear at the office of the Duke of Norfolk, ceremonial head of the Empire. The Master of the Royal Buckhounds handled the Ascot meeting from the time of Queen Anne to 150 years ago, when the official office took over to insure the Royal security and the proper amenities. However eligible by birth or station, no previously failed or controversial figure is invited to the Royal Enclosure, and, in deference to the Church of England, divorced people are also excluded.

The visit to the office of the Duke of Norfolk in St. James Palace was worth the entire trip. The receptionist guided me through endless corridors of this ancient building, beautifully furnished in the period. On the walls were works of art of the same vintage, the floors were covered with red velvet carpets and there was complete silence. It was like an unused museum. I saw one other person, the Secretary to the Duke, who gave me our badges.

We then proceeded to Moss Brothers, who have rented thousands of Ascot outfits for 200 years. Though the store was crowded, our clothes, ordered by measurements and 10 pounds sent in advance, were ready. They fitted perfectly but when I self-consciously looked in the mirror, I had to confess that no matter how far you take a boy out of Carlisle, Kentucky, you can't take Carlisle out of the boy.

A car and an efficient chauffeur soon guided us through all official preliminaries and with the Ascot meeting still two days away, we drove up the great North Roman Road to Newmarket, the world capital of racing, where the important breeders stand their stallions and the leading trainers have their yards. We stayed at the 500-year old Rutland Arms, next door to Nell Gwynn's cottage, home of Charles II's famous mistress.

We had come by invitation of Capt. Cecil Boyd-Rochfort, now (1967) 80 years old and still trainer for the Queen, Jock Whitney and Mrs. Iselin. I had met the Captain previously, both in Kentucky and England, had entertained his sons and nephews at Forest Retreat and he had shown my children around Newmarket. A six-foot-

four Irish Englishman of noble Norman descent and reminiscent of A Sir Thomas Beecham, he is the most imposing man I have ever met, either in or out of his Ascot outfit. Years ago a leading New Yorker had warned me that the first time he met the Captain he had a social inferiority complex for six months. Too ignorant to be over-awed, we found him a charming host and later most helpful at Ascot. Equally impressive was the other dinner guest, Sir Alfred Munnings, in residence to paint the Queen's great horse, Aureole, and we found the Captain's establishment, Freemason Lodge, consisting of a rectangular Georgian building surrounding a half acre of neat turf, grander than anything like it in America.

The next morning, after a brief tour of Newmarket and lunch at Lord Derby's Stanley House, we were back in London, impatient for our first view of Ascot.

The scenes of it in "My Fair Lady" were true reproductions. The two and a half mile roughly oval turf course is in the park-like surroundings of Windsor Castle. Along on side of the course are fenced-off private enclosures, operated by age-old organizations that lease the land from the Ascot authority, erect their own stands and are so exclusive that most memberships are legacies. Everyone in all the private enclosures, including the bookmakers, wears the formal costume, but they comprise only a fraction of the total crowd. There was an estimated 200,000 people in the vast infield with their caravans and refreshment tents.

Everything was immaculately white except the perfect green lawn of the Royal Enclosure which was about 100 feet wide and sloped down to the rail opposite the finish post. The Queen's box was the partly enclosed, elevated porch of a narrow wooden three-story house with porches off the second and third stories for use of the servants of the Royal household.

There was a small stand on each side of the Royal building, one for English Jockey Club members and the other for guests, occupied, if at all, only during the running of a race. The rows of narrow graduated platforms, with hand-rails, were literally stands, a word we have corrupted to mean large seating

structures. Most people stood around on the lawn or wandered back to the dining-room and bar where, on this one occasion, champagne is the traditional drink. I saw several people whom I had met in their travels to America or on my visits to Newmarket. Sir Eric Ohlson, from whom I once had bought a mare, invited me to have champagne and I asked how his stable was doing. His answer illustrated the Texas-like provincialism of the Yorkshireman. "I can't win a race here", he said. "I think I shall go back to England!" (meaning Yorkshire).

The whole place was like a freshly vacuumed drawingroom. Absolute tidiness prevailed even after four days. As I smoked my first cigarette, I noticed other men (and no women) smoking but there were no discarded butts lying around. I put mine in a toilet bowl and later learned that little receptacles were carried for this purpose.

The ladies, dressed in conservative, colorful elegance, stood with the men on the lawn, engaged in almost whispered conversation. Even the bookmakers, outside, hawked their odds in subdued tones and the only sound emanating from the great throng was a low pitched buzz.

Promptly at one o'clock each day, absolute quiet descended as all eyes were directed down the race course to watch the arrival of the Royal retinue in four-horse carriages, the Queen, her consort and Princess Margaret in the first, the Queen Mother and others in the second, and the Duke of Norfolk and his family in the rear. The Queen remained in her box each day for the six races, all important stakes fixtures. In the four days she had five entries and won two races, to the delight of the big crowd. There was no vocal demonstration of any kind, even during head and head finishes, but when the Queen's horse won, there was general hand clapping as all in the Royal Enclosure faced toward the Queen's box and bowed.

Before each race in which the Queen had an entry, the resplendent Captain escorted her and two or three of her party to the saddling paddock about a block away from the Enclosure. Police were not needed to control the crowd which left an aisle just broad enough for two people to walk abreast. Captain Boyd-Rochfort

instructed me to follow closely, hoping to find an opportunity for a casual introduction. One day the propitious moment arrived and the Captain said, "Your majesty, this is _____, member of the American Jockey Club. He bred Determine". "What a pleasure", she said. "And you bred the little grey that won your Darby. He was by our Alibhai, wasn't he?" I barely had time to say, "Yes, Ma'am".

Originally the Ascot races were contests between horses of the Royal Hunt. Later they were confined to horses owned by members of the Shites and Brooks Clubs but for the last 150 years any qualified thoroughbred whose owner had paid the proper forfeits, was eligible. Prince Aly Khan had the favored entry in the Ascot Gold Cup, the highlight of the meeting, and had flown from Paris that morning with his current mistress. We were having lunch when we heard the only loud words in the entire four days. The Prince and his girl friend were denied admission to the Royal Enclosure and he was mad.

Reporters and photographers also are barred. One day an usher told us a man outside the gate wanted to see us. He was a photographer and he walked us two blocks to reach an area where photos weren't prohibited. Our pictures appeared in the London Illustrated News and the New York Herald Tribune, all because we happened to be the only Americans in the Royal Enclosure except the semi-expatriates John Fortune Ryan and Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin. I had clippings from friends in Australia and the picture was run locally by the Times-Star, the second one of the trip, Bob Copelan having sent a photographer to Idlewild to snap us as we boarded the plane.

Everything about Ascot illustrates the English love for tradition and ritual which goes on whatever the government in power. I asked a number of working people their opinion of the swells at Ascot and the doings of Royalty and the aristocracy. The average reply was, "Good show. If we didn't have them, everyone would look loike me and how would you loike that?"

The upper class pulls its weight and if to us their manner seems snobbish, to them it is natural and well-earned. From the Magna Carta to modern times they

extended the freedom of the individual, they que'd up and observed rationing like everybody else, their sons won the air battle of Britain, and when the impoverishment of wars demanded it, the Lords helped incorporate the Welfare State into the Democratic Process. I am sure that if Communism had prevailed, a Lord Derby would have been Chairman.

The British are still a disciplined people. A butler tries to be a good butler, the Queen cheerfully undergoes daily boresome public functions and the boys at Eton and the Dukes at Ascot wear their uniforms without complaint. The hard topper and heavy outfit would have been uncomfortable to me in cool weather but during my Ascot meeting it was warm. Whitney's clothes were made of especially light material but even he couldn't avoid the hard hat, remarking that next to shaking hands with about 300 visiting firemen a day, his hardest job as Ambassador was wearing the formal outfit.

With all their formality, I find the English engagingly polite. In the crowded diningroom at the rear of the Enclosure, I sat across from a very old man with clipped white mustache, wearing a coat dated by the black piping on the lapels. His badge read, "General Sir Thomas Nicholson". Before lighting a cigarette, he said, "Do you mind, sir?" "Certainly not, General", I replied. "I use tobacco in all forms. I even chew when there are amenities for it". He smiled weakly, "Ah, you Americans! I dare say you would".

The zenith of my trip was an invitation to high tea by Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin, who, in 1968, is 100 years old. A Royal favorite since Edward VII was Prince of Wales, she never missed Ascot in 70 years. As usual, she had taken a temporarily vacated nearby cottage for the meeting. The only other guests were the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk, John Fortune Ryan, Sir Humphrey and Lady DeTrafford, and Captain and Mrs. Cecil Boyd-Rochfort. It was still daylight at ten o'clock when Mr. Ryan drove us back to London and as we passed through the beautiful countryside I recalled the serendipity that made possible an event money couldn't buy.

The day after Mrs. Iselin's dinner was the last day of the meeting and I wished to settle my betting

account before leaving. My credit had been established with a bookmaker whose cockney speech and my Kentucky accent belied our Ascot dress. They settle only on Monday and he didn't have the record of my previous days' bets but when I insisted on paying 5 pounds which I figured I owed, he reluctantly accepted. Next January I received this communication: "Year end review of our books reveals 7 pounds overpayment of your account for which we enclose our draft and best wishes for the New Year".

That cinched it. There will always be at least one Anglophile!

Eslic Asbury

The next paper commences with a popular bellyache about the long-windedness of lawyers and courtroom procedures; but presently and without warning turns off on a sideroad into the history of more-or-less ancient examples of this sort of professional long-windedness; and it winds up with a sermon. Quite appropriately, it is entitled

3 We Pause to Cite Precedents

Nowadays, about 99 and 44/100 per cent of we common folk, who are unlearned in the convolutions of legal procedure, find it most difficult to understand why it takes so long for our police, our bar and our bench to convict and sentence a lawbreaker whose misdeeds, as reported in the news, seem transparently plain to all of us. The necessity of delaying motions, the citation of favorable precedents and an array of zig-zag courtroom tactics are obviously quite understandable and proper to those of our respected members here who are trained in the law. But to us ordinary mortals, who hardly know an affidavit from a subpoena, they usually seem to be only exasperating, unpardonable and often plainly flagrant escape-hatches for those who in all fairness and decency should be punished promptly for their crimes.

That complicated, procrastinating procedures of this kind are not just a symptom or product of today's decaying age, however, may be proven from the pages of dusty legal records. They tell us that not only in court trials of human beings, but even in those involving lower animals (though often in absentia) the machinery of the law was, as today, frustratingly slow and complicated. For in the yellowed records of court proceedings from the 12th into the 18th centuries, we find to our surprise that domestic and wild animals often were charged with infractions of the law; furthermore, we discover that they were granted the privileges and blessings of a formal defense in court in the hands of quite competent legal advocates, with learned jurists hearing their cases. We discover furthermore that in those days much of the same kinds of delaying motions, citations of favorable precedents, and other effective courtroom tactics were relied upon by advocates for the defense, even as they are used in the cause of human beings today.

In Europe, down through much of the 1700's, lower animals were held in all respects amenable to the laws. Charges against domestic animals were tried in the common criminal courts, where punishment on conviction usually was death. There are accounts of antiquaries of 92 processes in French courts against domestic animals between the years 1120 and 1740, at which time the last decision reported, as against a cow, was handed down. The records indicate that these trials were conducted with the strictest formality.

However, just as today our laws and customs reflect a greater leniency toward minors and the weak-witted, so the courts in those early days took the position that, whereas domestic animals should be considered as more responsible for their actions, because of their daily exposure to the disciplinary guidance of their owners, the crimes and misdemeanors of the wilder animals -- insects, rats, snakes and the like -- should be assigned to the more reverent and considerate ecclesiastical courts.

Here the procedures, as might be expected, were exceedingly complicated and lengthy. The Church had assumed the power of God, David and Our Saviour, to exorcise, anathematize and excommunicate all animate

and inanimate creatures. However, because the wilder lower animals were historically the first-born, created before man, it was felt that they, consequently, should be treated, even when charged with serious crime, with the greatest clemency, consistent with justice. Punishment, in their case, was banishment, excommunication or death by exorcism. The awfulness of such punishments may better be appreciated when we remember that St. Patrick exorcized the reptiles of Ireland into the sea. Indeed, it was said of St. Barnard that, annoyed one day by a fly that persisted in buzzing about his ears, he exclaimed, "Be thou exorcized!" whereupon all of the flies in the district were destroyed.

Most ecclesiasts of those days claimed that there was ample justification for trying animals in court to determine their guilt or innocence of alleged crimes, in the ordinances proclaimed by Moses in Exodus XXI - 28:

If an ox gore a man and woman
that they shall die; then the
ox shall surely be stoned, and
his flesh shall not be eaten ...

Here, however, just as would be likely today, there were serious doctrinal disputes. Some learned canonists argued that this assumption of authority by the Church to try and punish these helpless beings, who had no knowledge of man-made laws, implied a contract or delegation of authority from Above which did not exist; hence, they maintained these poor animals were being tried unjustly.

Nevertheless, the general course of such trials continued, according to a pattern along the following lines: Say; for example, the inhabitants of a district, annoyed by certain noxious animals, would appeal to the authorities for help or redress. The ecclesiastical court would appoint experts to survey the facts and report the damage, if any, committed by the accused. A competent advocate would be designated to defend the creatures and to show why they should not be summoned. They would be cited three times, and when, as we would expect, they failed to appear in court, judgment would be rendered against them by default. The court then would issue a proclamation, warning the offending animals

to leave the district by a stipulated date. If they did not obey, an exorcism against them would be ordered to be pronounced with greatest solemnity.

But at this point, just as in our day, techniques of legal delay and obfuscation came into play. Not the least important of these was the fact that often the ecclesiasts took advantage of every available means to delay the consummation of the sentence; for they had learned from experience that in many instances, the noxious animals instead of withering off the face of the earth, after being exorcised, in fact became more fecund and more destructive than before. Poor, patient Satan, in those cases, of course, was blamed for this arrant display of defiance. He was the ever-available, convenient excuse to explain away such puzzling and all-too-frequent lapses in the efficacy of solemnly proclaimed, lawful ecclesiastical penalties. In one notable case, in Basle, Satan was blamed for having induced a cock to lay an egg -- a heinous crime for which the poor rooster was tried and condemned to the ax. The cock, it was maintained, should have known better than to give ear to the advice of such a depraved rascal as Satan!

Let us refer to the yellowed records for an example of an actual proceeding of this kind that was followed in a typical agricultural district--where such troubles were more frequently the cause of legal action. In the province of St. Julien, a species of locust had plagued the farmers for several long years, and finally a resort to the law was proposed. After fruitless hearings and extended court wrangling, the locusts, in utter defiance of the prayers and threats of the clergy, were impudently continuing their troublesome practices. Just as we might expect, at last the harrassed hizzoneer suggested what today we would call a "compromise". The farmers agreed to donate a part of their district as a sanctuary for the use, in perpetuity, by the troublesome insects. The area to be set aside was well-watered and fertile--in fact, what was proposed was the creation of a veritable sylvan Liberia for the persecuted locusts and their unborn descendants.

But, of course, just as in our day, the advocate for the defendants demurred; and, naturally, the court overruled the demurrer; ordered the land to be surveyed

and staked out, and required that a document of conveyance be drafted. But again the able advocate for the insects was prepared with a new reason for delay. He pointed out that the land in question was rich in certain minerals that might some day prove valuable in the manufacture of paint; that a man, long since dead, had once possessed a right-of-way through the proposed sanctuary; and that his heirs and descendants, as a result of the publicity elicited by the trial, might come forth and demand compensation from the new owners for mineral rights.

This case dragged on from 1445 until 1487, and research fails to unearth even a faded record of the final settlement. It is fair to conclude, however, that the poor farmers of the district, taxed year after year with legal bills and oppressed in addition by grave delinquencies in their church tithes, ran out of money and dropped the case. Or maybe the locusts, disgusted, moved on to another district, where they felt that they would be more fairly treated and safe from further litigation.

Another case that is famous enough perhaps to have come to the attention of some of our lawyer-members is notable because the advocate for the defendants--in this instance the rats in the diocese of Autun--was a man who later became a great French juriconsult. He was Chassanee known in the profession as the Edward Coke of France. The case of The People of the Diocese of Autun versus The Rats of the Diocese of Autun was Chassanee's springboard to fame. In the complaint, in the nasty words traditionally characteristic of such documents, the defendants were described as "dirty animals in the form of rats, of a greyish color, living in holes".

Duly cited, the defendant rats failed to appear in court. Chassanee, their appointed advocate, argued that the summons was quite too local and individual in character; that because all of the nearby rodents must perforce be considered interested parties, all rats, wherever domiciled in the diocese, should be summoned. This plea being admitted, every curate in the diocese was instructed to order every single rat in his parish to appear in court on a set day. The day came, but no rats.

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Chassanee begged the court for an extension of time, to be sure that all of the necessary preparations were in order for taking care of the old, the infirm and the very young rats who would thus be summoned. Furthermore, he maintained stoutly, such a summons should obligate the court to insure the safety of every one of his clients, not only during the trial but on their way to and from the courthouse. His clients, he insisted, were most willing, as law-abiding citizens, to obey any court summons, but they did not dare to stir from their homes because of the large numbers of quite unfriendly cats, owned by the plaintiffs, residing throughout the diocese. Let these people, he argued, be required to give bond, under heavy penalty, that his clients would not be molested by the plaintiffs' cats. The court acknowledged the validity of this plea; but the owners of the felines refused to be vound over for the good behaviour of their alert, well-trained household pets. So the period for the rats' attendance in court was adjourned sine die. Thus, through a judgment by default, in defending the rats of Autun, Chassanee gained the notoriety which smoothed the path to his later great professional fame.

Today, we ordinary citizens, unlearned in the maze of legal procedure, are likely, frequently, to throw up our hands in despair when we learn how most of the members of an unsavory group or gang are haled into court, only to be discharged as "not guilty" of a crime in which all plainly had participated, leaving one luckless member to be the "fall guy" to be sentenced. That this sort of court problem is not unique to our day is illustrated by an amusing case heard in 1457, in Lavegny. It involved the trial of seven animals for acts of moral turpitude. A sow and her six piglets were charged with having murdered and partly eaten a child. She was found guilty and was condemned to death; but the little porkers were acquitted--because of their youth, because of the bad example set by their guilty mother, and because of the absence of any direct proof that they actually had partaken of the feast. (These excuses for non-conviction sound quite up-to-date to our ears, do they not?)

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This short paper, I regret, must now close,

but not before pointing out that it offers a pat excuse for a sermonette to our members:

When next we are about to indulge in the popular indoor sport of chiding our lawyer-friends about unconscionable legal delays, Perry Masonry and similar courtroom jiggery pokery, let us pause for a moment. Then let us, in all fairness, recall from history how very, very much this sort of skillful interference has done for the defense of friendless dumb animals. And let us remember, too, how very grateful our lawyer friends must be for the impressive contributions that cases such as those cited have made to the vast store of that priceless ingredient of successful courtroom pleading--the indispensable ingredient of PRECEDENT!

William G. Werner

Our last paper was submitted by its bashful submittor with nary a jot or tittle of a title. Quite possibly this omission was simply the result of the lifelong habit of a trained newspaperman never to write a heading over any story turned in at the desk. Then, too, I remembered that he had indeed arisen from a sickbed to comply with my request (thanks to our excellent cold beer, he had forgotten it). But I realized that the Club's typist would be sure to phone me about that missing heading, so without bothering him further, I did the sensible thing: I lifted a phrase from his last paragraph as a caption for his paper. But I warn you all that, like the flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la, the improvised headline has nothing to do with the case. It is

4

Please Buy My Cornflakes

I consider my membership in the Literary Club, with my dues luckily paid up, my greatest literary achievement since I was taught to cross all of my "I's" and dot all of my "T's" in my third year of high school -- about par for the educational course in the area that

sired me.

My instructor in English apologized later for his error, explaining, "Hell, anybody ought to know that I meant the "I's" should be dotted and the "T's" crossed!" But the explanation didn't write work, and I shall be fortunate if there isn't a crossed "I" or a dotted "T" in this budget paper.

I shall attempt tonight in a cursory study of the Literary Club to describe how its operation affects a new member---a member who has been on the rolls for less than ten years. Also, I shall present a plan for what I consider a necessary change in the presentation of its weekly essays, those gems of composition that flow (or drip) from the pens of Cincinnati's modern-day Lafcadio Hearn and Harold Bell Wrights.

I suppose that the first impression the Club gives to a properly-elected neophyte--confronted probably for the first time by older hands looking down their noses at him--is the impression a man feels when he has the mysteries of motherhood explained to him, or sees Old Glory go by in Macy's Thanksgiving parade.

In any event, the newcomer soon knows that the older hands are running things--that the status quo is as sacred as the Bill of Rights and the Gettysburg Address combined. I doubt whether the status quo is so honored, so revered, in any other Cincinnati group, even among the alumni of our venerable, ivy-clad Workhouse.

To be sure, the status quo cult does create a number of problems, some serious and some trivial, but none beyond the Literary Clubs ability to provide solutions.

Last Spring, I recall, arriving early for a Monday night meeting, I noticed ahead of me at the club's Fourth Street entrance, two gentlemen, who shall be nameless, but who were elected to membership at the same business session, with all guests locked in the club library.

"How", I asked myself, "are these characters going to determine who enters the club's foyer first?" Under the club's time-encrusted customs, the senior

member had the right of way, but here was a couple, neither one of whom had hardly enough seniority in Literary Club affairs to shake a stick at, so I decided to bide my time and wait to see.

The solution, as I recall, was a credit to both men, as well as a credit to the oldest literary group east of Mill Creek. As the night in sable dress wore on, each man reached for the door knob, turned it slightly, and then stepped back, permitting his companion to go through the same routine.

I could not take oath that the duo spent the evening stepping up and stepping back, but when I left the club at 10:30 p.m. I seem to remember that the pair was still going through its motions, the victims of status quo if there ever were victims.

Some weeks afterward I heard that the two members had settled their entrance qualifications amicably. They detailed a mutual friend to inspect the minutes of the business meeting at which they were elected, and discovered there that the gentleman who was elected first had seniority for all time to be, both at the front door and elsewhere.

I presume that one of the worst cases of non-seniority, or lese majeste, in the Literary Club's recent history came about earlier in the autumn when the guest of one of the club's more faithful members was deposited temporarily in the club's reading room, close by an unabridged dictionary, in whose pages our arguments regarding pronunciation are settled, or unsettled, as the case may be.

Studying the far wall, which was ornamented by tin-types of not a few club members who had answered Mr. Lincoln's call for volunteers in 1861, the visitor, while impressed by the uniforms, obviously became somewhat confused.

Unaware of the pall of silence that customarily hangs over the reading room, the visitor was determined to make conversation or break his larynx trying.

"Yeah", he remarked to no one in particular, "Cincinnati's policemen must be better read than any

other cops in the world. My, I've never seen so many cops, in a Literary Club or out of it."

Luckily, it was early and there were no regular members of the club, excepting the fellow's host, close at hand.

The visitor was told in a whisper that the photographs were not photographs of the Queen City rackets or vice-squad but likenesses of certain ones of Phil Sheridan's troopers and U.S. Grant's foot soldiers.

"I wonder how I made that mistake?" the guest asked after the confusion had died away somewhat. But there were no answers. An attempt was made to have the club's civil war heroes properly identified and their photographs properly labeled. I do not think that anything came of the attempt, however.

There must be those among the members of the Literary Club who recall the great to-do of a year or so ago when Charles Adams, now the Literary Club president, rode down what may have seemed to be the plains of northern Kentucky and southern Ohio, breaking a lance here and there for those of us who did not care too much for tepid beer.

It took Mr. Adams at least sixteen months to have approved for purchase a galvanized laundry tub, and I cite the instance only to prove that the Literary Club, confronted by a modern revolution, in beer icing, or otherwise, can be plenty tough.

On this subject I have to report that the Literary Club's beer icing problem still has not been worked out in every detail, Mr. Adam's efforts notwithstanding.

Those who live in the vicinity of Lytle Park have frequently seen, as the dusk closed in, a gentleman not engaged in shifting the Lincoln statue or swinging under the railing by the Ricketts' Marine memorial fountain.

Instead of taking something away, the fellow is bringing something---a package that contains neither

bronze nor marble. It is alleged that the gentleman is a Literary Club trustee. And his precious cargo, which may drip a bit on the club's floors, contains the Monday night allotment of ice.

If the trustee is late for his rendezvous with the wash tub, the beer that evening may not be all that a beer connoisseur might desire. Indeed, it might be simmering.

But if the trustee is early---if he arrives at the club say about 2:15 in the afternoon---then real trouble rears its head. A couple of times when the trustee has delivered the ice too early, some bottles of beer have been frozen. And once, according to a never-verified canard, a member, starting to sip his beer, bit down on the frozen beverage instead and fractured his dentures.

Generally, I am happy to report to the Literary Club membership, such a tragedy is not likely to occur again.

The trustee, with his ice, alarmed by the dental accident said to have been brought about by the frozen beer, now is a good deal more meticulous in keeping to his arrival schedule.

At this point, I pass over the frequent---the club, obviously, considers them too frequent---attempts to have a loud-speaker system plugged into the readers' desk.

Nothing has ever come of this idea, either. For, while it always is approved by those weaklings who need ramification of their voices, the members who used to get "A" plus in grade school for reciting "Mazeppa's Ride" and "Telling the Bees" always feel that they can struggle along on their own.

So now, if you will forgive me, I return to a proposal that is mine alone. It is not a suggestion that current members ought to try to consider while flecking cracker crumbs from their vests. Rather, the idea appears to be worthy of the thought of a future

Literary Club---that of the next century, say, the follower of this club with its august traditions.

It has long been my opinion that the present speaker's podium at the north end of the Literary Club auditorium, runs the wrong way. Or rather it doesn't run at all, thus providing a dangerous disadvantage to any reader who happens in his paper to have embraced an unpopular, if not unedifying, subject.

What is a man going to do after he has uttered a paragraph opposing motherhood, or stating that he would prefer a flag of red, white, and walnut, to a flag of well-established red, white and blue?

In the present surroundings that custom forces upon him, the poor reader will be trapped as prettily as an unsuspecting butterfly that has winged its way into a collector's net, thinking it a flower.

If the reader seeks escape by running to the front, he will have to thread his way through his critics.

If he turns to the rear, he will find his path blocked by a wall as thick as that of the Colosseum; and if he turns to the small door to his right he will discover it to be a booby trap indeed, fine for storing documents and voting-boxes perhaps, but a complete loss so far as a graceful or even hasty exit is concerned.

I have stressed so far in this paper the Literary Club's acceptance of the status quo---the acceptance of things as they are. And it would be folly to claim that the club has not come a far piece under status quo philosophy. And yet, even the Literary Club members no longer vote for Abraham Lincoln, nor would they stand at attention, with heads bared, if a band should start to play "Lorena".

Matters do change. And I am only suggesting---prove that my tongue is in my cheek if you can---that the north wall behind the reader's desk should be knocked out and replaced by a moveable curtain, operated by push buttons.

Then, if a careless, absent-minded author

happened to admit that he was a Jeffersonian Democrat, he could throw a switch and flee toward Canada before his audience had completely digested the gravity of the affront he had voiced.

The escape route would be open to Goldwater Republicans, also, and to those members who, away from their grandchildren, read papers claiming that nobody believes in Santa Claus anymore, and that Christmas is getting out of hand.

Please---I was going to say, Please buy my corn flakes"---but I ask you to please consider tearing out the north wall of the Literary Club auditorium.

Nixon Denton
