

Shaw on the Clerk



GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, in his sweeping criticisms of things in general, has now attacked the clerk. Develop the qualities of sheepishness, docility and cowardice to their utmost and you have the clerk, says Shaw, in an article in the Illustrated Sunday Magazine on his own career as a clerk. Mr. Shaw believes that the average Englishman and American falls the easiest prey to the drudgery of clerkship. Basing this upon his own experiences, he says:

My father was a man of business. The particular way in which he did business as a corn merchant and mill owner is now extinct, and was becoming extinct in his time, which means that he was getting poorer without knowing why; for, like ninety-nine out of a hundred men of business, he pursued a routine which he did not understand, and attributed his difficulties vaguely to want of capital, the sum he started with having gone in the bankruptcy of one of his customers. But though he had no capital to give me, it was assumed in the usual helpless way that I was to become a man of business, too.

Accordingly, an uncle who, as a high official in a government department, had exceptional opportunities of obliging people, not to mention obstructing them if he disliked them, easily obtained for me a stool in a very genteel office; and I should have been there still if I had not broken loose in defiance of all prudence and become a professional man of genius—a resource not open to every clerk. I mention this to show that the fact that I am not still a clerk may be regarded for the purposes of this article as a mere accident. I am not one of those successful men who can say: "Why don't you do as I did?"

One of my colleagues was an ancient bookkeeper. He had kept the books in a piano warehouse until he was an elderly man, when his employer retired, burned all his ledgers, and cast his bookkeeper adrift. Nowadays that bookkeeper would not find another job at his age; but in the early 'seventies in Ireland he drifted into the office with me. One day he told me that he suffered so much from cold feet that his life was miserable. I, full of the fantastic mischievousness of youth, told him that if he would keep his feet in ice-cold water every morning when he got up for two or three minutes he would be completely cured.

Some time afterwards he told me that he felt a great affection for me because I had cured his cold feet. He had followed my advice; and his toes now glowed all day with a cheerful warmth. Perhaps they really glowed; perhaps it was only by contrast with the agony of the morning's freezing that they seemed warm. Anyhow, he supposed that I had cured him, and regarded me as a benefactor for the rest of his life. Being on these easy terms, we often had little discussions, in the course of which he would put to me such delicate points as whether he was justified in accepting a five-pound note which had reached him in an unaddressed envelope, and which had been placed there, he suspected, by a parliamentary representative of the city of Dublin for whom he had voted.

One day he mentioned his son; and I asked him was his son also a bookkeeper. He suddenly became vehement to the verge of positive fury (I should never have supposed him either physically or morally capable of it) and declared that rather than see his son a clerk he would have let him die in his cradle. I concluded from this that he had made his son an Arctic explorer or something heroic of that kind, and was considerably let down on hearing that he was only a chemist's assistant.

I wondered whether there was any clerk alive who really liked being a clerk, or who would choose that occupation for his son if he had any choice in the matter. When this old bookkeeper friend of mine died, which he presently did (possibly in consequence of putting his feet in cold water every morning), it was proposed that I should become bookkeeper. I flatly refused, to the astonishment of my excellent employer. His reason for making me the offer is worth mentioning. He wanted the position which I then held for a relative of his own. That is one of the things that happen to a clerk. He gets supplanted by a son or other relative of the firm. In my case there was nothing to complain of. The arrangements made, and my friendly relations with the relative in question, left me no grievance in the matter; but the thing does not always occur in that way, and the likelihood of such supplantation gives an insecurity to clerkship which does not menace a warehouseman or a porter.

I was sober and respectable; and I bowed to my fate by assuming that when work was put into my hands I had to get it done one way or another. But there are lots of youths like that. There must, I should say, be an almost continuous supply of docile, respectable, lads in their teens who in return for a business training and perhaps rather more social consideration than the ordinary clerk enjoys, are ready to do the work of an adult for the salary of a youth.

Office work is so largely routine that there is no reason in the nature of the work itself why they should not do it quite as well as men, if not better though there may be every social reason for giving every youth a higher training, both physical and intellectual, than

he can possibly get at an office desk. The effect of the competition of youths on adult clerks is disastrous. I cannot recollect the exact figures, but I know that the man whom I replaced was no better off than most clerks who have the handling of a good deal of money; that is to say, he had about enough to keep himself and his family on in the ordinary clerical way, and no more. I, being only seventeen years of age, accepted a rise of salary which brought my emoluments to about one-third of what he had been receiving. This was a crime much worse than most of those which are punished with two years' hard labor.

WHY PEOPLE DROWN

One of the oldest and most painfully familiar facts of human history is that we drown whenever we fall into the water and sink. And the explanation of this distressing result is equally ancient and familiar: we die because our lungs fill up with water. So obvious and self-evident was this explanation that, like so many other universally accepted and self-evident things, it was never, until lately, put to an accurate, scientific test.

The not unusual result of the test was to show that the ancient explanation is almost entirely wrong. A few years ago a scientific commission was appointed by the English government, headed by Professor Schaefer of Edinburgh, for the purpose of determining the best method of resuscitating those apparently drowned. The first thing that confronted this body was the fact that we were entirely ignorant as to exactly how death by drowning was caused.

A thorough and elaborate series of experiments on animals were carried out, with some distinctly interesting and valuable results. First of all, it was found that death by drowning is not due to the filling of the air passages with water, as many of the animals experimented on were found, upon examination immediately after death, to have drawn into their lungs water in amounts ranging from four to eight ounces only (from one-third of a cupful to a cupful). In some cases, death occurred when only two ounces of water had been drawn into the lungs.

The chief cause of death appeared first to be a curious inhibiting or paralyzing effect upon the heart. This was quite apart from the direct effect upon respiration, so much so that it could actually be prevented by administering a drug (atropin), which stimulated the heart, and prevented the transmission of this curious reflex paralyzing effect. As Professor Schaefer dryly remarked: "If you are quite sure you are going to be drowned, it is a good thing to take a dose of atropin in advance."

The second chief cause of death appeared to be a profuse pouring out of mucus, which occurred from the throat, windpipe, and lining of the bronchial tubes. This, by the violent efforts at inspiration, rapidly becomes churned into a froth, plugs up the smaller air-tubes and air-cells, and renders it almost impossible to get air into the deeper parts of the lungs. This accounts for those puzzling cases in which individuals were got out of the water in a very few seconds after breathing had ceased and yet ultimately died, in spite of everything that could be done to resuscitate them. They were literally choked by their own secretions, drowned in their own mucus. Even the small amounts of water taken into the lungs were found to either be coughed out again directly, as soon as the passages were cleared, or to be promptly absorbed into the blood vessels.

This gives us the important practical knowledge that there is no need to waste any time in standing the victim on his head, or rolling him over a barrel, or shaking him, head downward, in order to "get the water out of his lungs." Such procedures are a sheer waste of invaluable time. Next, experiments were made as to effective methods of performing artificial breathing, and it was soon found that these were of such a character that they could be carried on upon a living human subject. Volunteers were found who would put themselves in the hands of the experimenters, draw three or four full breaths,

then completely relax and make no effort at breathing while the experiment was carried on.

It was found that out of the three generally accepted methods of artificial respiration, the so-called Marshall Hall, the Sylvester, and the Howard, the first two were utterly inadequate, and the third dangerous. By no possible vigor and skill at manipulation could the volunteer subject have enough breath pumped in and out of his lungs by either the Marshall Hall (which consists of rolling the body from the side over on to the stomach and back again in rapid succession) or the Sylvester (the well-known pulling the arms up over the head and then pressing down firmly again on the chest) to keep him in any degree comfortable. The Howard method, which consists of compressing the sides of the chest with both hands at regular intervals, allowing it time to expand, while it would effect a nearly sufficient interchange of air, was found to be fraught with some danger to both the ribs and the liver, on account of the force necessary to be used, while from the fact that the patient lies upon his back the tongue is almost certain to fall back and produce suffocation; or such fluid, water and mucus as may be present in the throat will prevent the entrance of air.

After many trials a method was hit upon which avoids all the dangers of the old methods and is so strikingly effective that perfectly healthy individuals submitting themselves to it can be kept comfortable for not merely minutes but hours at a time, without having to make the slightest voluntary effort of their own at breathing.



ABDUL THE SPONTANEOUS.

Young Turkey: "My Bowl, I think?"
Sultan: "Quite Right. I was only minding it for you."

The individual whom it is desired to resuscitate is promptly, and without a moment's delay in either loosening clothing, drying, warming, or shaking the water out of the lungs, turned upon his stomach upon the shore, or other level place, the face being turned to one side so that the nose and mouth are clear of the ground. Then the operator kneels, either by the side of or astride the patient's hips, facing towards his head, places both outspread hands upon the small of the back, just over the shortest ribs, and pitches his body and shoulders forward so as to bring the whole weight heavily upon the body of the victim. This downward pressure should take about three seconds. He then swings upward, lifting his hands off suddenly and quickly. The elasticity of the ribs and of the contents of the abdomen cause the chest to expand. In three seconds more the process is repeated, and so on, indefinitely, making ten or twelve of these movements per minute. The position allows the tongue to fall forward, and any mucus or water which may be present in the lungs to readily escape through the mouth. By simply swinging backward and forward, throwing the weight of his body upon the waist line of the victim, any operator of modern intelligence and of most moderate strength, even a delicate woman or a child, can gain a sufficient inflow of air, flowing in and out through the lungs of the patient, to supply him with as much air as would be taken in if he were able to breathe voluntarily. Promptness in beginning the pumping operation is imperative. Professor Schaefer's experiments proved that conclusively.

This method, which has only recently been thoroughly worked out, has been adopted by the Royal Humane Society of England, the Royal Life Saving Society, and the Coastguard Service.—Woods Hutchinson, A.M., M.D., in Collier's.

The South Coast



IN commenting on Clive Holland's book on "From the North Foreland to Penzance," the London Times says:

The southern coast-line of England is so varied in scenery, and so replete with historic associations, that the author who attempts to survey it in a single volume is faced with the necessity of very careful selection and arrangement of his subject, if he would escape being altogether overwhelmed by it. Mr. Holland has attacked his problem on lines which at first sight appear hopeful. He follows the coast-line in a yacht, and thus secures a more connected and comprehensive outlook than is possible to the traveller on land who attempts to cover the ground by train or by road, or even by the coastguards' cliff paths. He resolves only to describe such of the coast towns as are also ports and harbors; and by treating mainly of the more important and picturesque of them, and including only an outline description of the features of the intervening coast-line, it might appear that the task should be reduced to manageable proportions. But it is not until

we begin to look a little below the surface of contemporary history and landscape that we realize the extraordinary picturesque and eventfulness of the annals of the southern English coast. Towns and villages that today have no shipping, or are even abandoned by the sea, are discovered to have had centuries of history as seaports, and to be rich in associations of lawful commerce, of smuggling, and of war. By concentrating his attention on this aspect of the subject the author adds to his task with one hand while he reduces it with the other. As for the scenery of the shore-line, which is diversified by all the chief geological formations of the island, he is forced to accord it exceedingly cursory treatment, which is not always even accurate in its broadest features. The scantiest acquaintance with Hastings is enough to impress the visitor with the fact that its cliffs are not formed of chalk, as Mr. Holland asserts, but of the yellow sandstone often known as the Hastings Beds. The abutment upon the sea of the Wealden area, from which the chalk has been denuded, is one of the most interesting natural features of the Kent and Sussex coast. The eastern junction of the chalk and the sandstone occurs immediately to the east of Folkestone Harbor, and is plain to the eye of every passenger on the Channel steamers. The western portal of the chalk is formed by Beachy Head; but there the contrast of two formations is not so noticeable, as the ground immediately beneath the head is low and rather featureless.

The vicissitudes which so many of the towns of this coastline have experienced are well shown by the history of the Cinque Ports. The five original ports were Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, Romney, and Hastings, to which Winchelsea and Rye were very early added with equal rights. There were also a number of subsidiary members, or "limbs." Of all the seven Dover is the only place today which is a port in any full or important sense. Hythe and Romney have been abandoned by the sea; to Rye and Sandwich only a few small vessels can now creep up the channels of the Rother and Stour. Winchelsea has suffered both kinds of despoilment from the sea; it was more than once destroyed by the waves in storm, and now lies two miles inland. Hastings has now no harbor, and its shipping consists of small fishing boats. Dover, on the other hand, has become more important of late than ever before in its history; its relics of antiquity are now half obscured by works of modern defence and commerce, and the whole town forms the most striking contrast with the mediaevalism of Winchelsea and Rye, on their twin hills that front each other across the marshes. As we follow the coast westward we see how Newhaven has waxed to considerable modern importance by filching the mouth of the Ouse from Seaford, which was once a port of some note. Eastbourne and Bournemouth have sprung up within living memory; but Brighton had a history, in a modest way, long before it attracted the notice of the Prince Regent. Mr. Holland quotes

from Holinshed the account of how, in July, 1545, "the Admiral of France, Mons. Donnetbatte . . . came forth into the seas, and arrived on the coast of Sussex, before Bright Hampstead, and set certain of his soldiers on land to burn and spoil the country; but the beacons were fired, and the inhabitants thereabouts came down so thick that the Frenchmen were driven to their ships with loss of divers of their numbers, so that they did little hurt there."

The whole coast of the English Channel, from the North Foreland to the Lizard, is full of the memory of historic landings and embarkations, of fights with the French on land and sea, and of tales of smuggling. The men of Looe or Fowey in Cornwall kept up the illicit traffic with Roscoff and other Breton ports as actively as the smugglers of Kent and Sussex across their narrower waters to eastward. The Kent and Sussex smugglers bore the worst reputation for the lengths to which they were prepared to go in armed resistance to the law; and Mr. Holland accepts the tradition that deliberate wrecking was also prevalent along this part of the coast, though some investigators of local Cornish traditions are now inclined to believe that if the practice ever existed at all in that country it had died out much earlier than the early years of the last century, when smuggling was in its prime.

Mr. Holland has applied conscientious and profitable study to many original writings, which are quoted in fragments more usually than they are read, as well as to modern authors. He does not appear, however, to possess the rather exceptional powers of sifting his material which are required in writing a book which covers so wide a field. In a survey of this kind, for example, he might well have omitted his fragmentary recapitulation of the story of the Battle of Hastings. Words are used in wrong senses, and there are too many literal inaccuracies. "Astrophe" is the name of no poem of Mr. Swinburne's, and the name of the late Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford was not Montagu Borrow. Mr. Randall's illustrations give a vivid sense of the sea, as well as of the shipping and the shore in its many aspects between Ramsgate and Land's End.

A RARE BIRD

Of late visitors to the Zoological Gardens have enjoyed unique opportunities of inspecting more species of birds of paradise than were ever brought together there before, says the Standard. Most of the recent arrivals, "as has been already announced in the Standard, were obtained by a collector sent out to New Guinea by Sir William Ingram, in conjunction with the Zoological Society. Nearly all belong to a group distinguished by flowing side plumes of golden yellow or vivid red, which can be erected at will, and form an important feature in the love displays of these birds.

More than a quarter of a century ago a German collector, named Hunstein, visited New Guinea, and in the Horseshoe Range obtained a magnificent bird of paradise, which proved to be new to science. The skin was forwarded to Europe, and in describing the bird two famous German ornithologists named it in honor of the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria. The prevailing color-note of the plumage is blue, for though the upper surface and the breast shield are black, the sables are glossed with reflections of green and blue. There are two series of erectile plumes on each side, that nearer the tail being the larger. The two central tail feathers are greatly elongated, and terminate in racket-shaped tips.

This species has always been looked upon by collectors as a great prize. Dr. H. O. Forbes, the director of the Liverpool Museum, was only successful in procuring females, and when Dr. Sharpe published his great work on the family there was no skin of a male in the Natural History Museum. Sir William Ingram's collector, who is now in New Guinea, has been more fortunate than those who preceded him, for he has obtained a fine male.

As it is a generally recognized rule to speak only kindly of the dead, the hero of this story, who long since joined the political dead, namely, the Senate, will remain nameless. He was in his day a useful worker in Western Ontario, and his party made a good deal of him, for he possessed enough money to finance the elections in his constituency if funds were scarce. He had become wealthy on much less than it takes to make an ordinary man rich, for he was thrifty and saving. Everybody in his home earned his or her keep, so when the future honorable's father joined the household, he was expected to do likewise. The old man pottered about the garden and looked after the horse, and as the exercise kept him in good health, he attended to these tasks for many years. In the meantime, the son was rising to prominence and possessed many friends in all parts of the country. At last the father finished his allotted span and passed away.

Shortly afterward the bereaved politician was in Toronto, and an acquaintance, who had heard of his loss, met him on the street. Sympathy was offered and accepted in the usual conventional terms. Then the man remarked: "I'm sure that you will miss your father very much."

"Oh, yes, I shall miss him," replied the son. "Indeed, I'm down here now to get a Barnado boy to take his place."—Toronto Saturday Night.