CAREFUL DOES IT

By Dudley Hoys

All sorts of extraordinary people called on Messrs. Prein and Soransen. they brought jewellery to sell, dental plates, and sovereigns. Among them was Virrell, who came along with a massive gold cigarette case, because the price of gold was attractive.

Virrell, who had never seen Prein before, was reminded of a stoat. True, a stoat does not have sandy hair parted in the middle, and a smooth white face. Neither does it wear a black coat and waistcoat and striped trousers. But there was that flat, stilly, dangerous look about the man behind the counter.

Prein, in turn, had summed up his customer. There was a certain shiftiness and false swagger in Virrell's manner that suggested a line of action.

"A very nice case, sir."

"Pretty good."

Prein examined it, placed it on the scales, and suddenly shot out a question.

"Your property, of course?"

"What the devil d'you mean?"

"No offence, I'm sure." Prein smiled by drawing back his upper lip and showing two teeth. "We have to be careful. Mr. Soransen is so particular. We have to safeguard ourselves."

"Oh, do you?" grunted Virrell.

"We do." Prein weighed the case, and said: "Seven pounds."

"Rot!" There were red patches over Virrell's cheek bones. "There's ten pounds' worth of gold in that case if there's a penn'orth."

"We have to be careful. Seven pounds.'

"Here, pass it back. I'll take it somewhere else."

Prein did not pass it back. He had taken a long shot, but by now he was convinced he had hit the target. He placed his elbows on the counter, leaned across, and spoke in a quiet, silky voice.

"Wouldn't it be better to accept seven pounds and save yourself further trouble?"

"Damn you! I'll——"

Mr. Prein's hand moved toward the telephone. He smiled again, and those two teeth of his might have been preparing to bite.

It was enough. Virrell guanced at him murderously and nodded.

Prein said' "Thank you, sir." He called out: "Mr. Soransen, seven pounds."

A bald man with a long nose emerged from the office at the back. He passed something across, and Prein took up a pen and wrote.

"There you are, sir—seven pounds."

"Here! What's this?" Virrell took one glance at the cheque, signed by I. Soransen and M. J. Prein, and flung it on the counter. "I want notes."

"My dear sir, the cheque is made out to bearer, and this branch of the London and Wessex Bank is not five minutes' walk away. We never pay in notes. In these rush times it would mean too much ready cash on the premises. With the epidemic of smash-and-grab raids, we have to be careful." Once more that sneering smile. "Take your cheque, sir, and rest assured."

Virrell folded up the cheque and put it in his pocket. He would have liked to shoot out his fist and knock out those two protruding teeth.

He said, rather thickly: "You've done me out of three quid. One of these days, by——! I'll make you pay for it."

"We have to be careful, sir. Good morning."

Virrell went out.

Prein sniggered, amused by the threat. There was as much likelihood of anybody doing him as of himself letting any chance slip. Thus he seized on the opportunity prompted by a 'phone call he received one day, about a week later. He seemed to recognize the voice that spoke.

"I want Mr. Prein."

"Speaking."

"I have a very fine gold cup I wish to sell. I have a bad cold, or I'd call on you. Could you come round to the Red Lion, Colchester Street, and inspect the cup?"

Colchester Street was only half a mile away.

Prein said: "Certainly, sir. I'll be with you in twenty minutes. What name shall I ask for?"

"Virrell."

It conveyed nothing to Prein. He popped into the private office, told Soransen, and set off for the Red Lion. In his pocket was his personal cheque book. It had struck him that he might make a private deal, scoop the profit, and then come back and tell his partner that the client had stuck out for too high a price and there had been no business done.

At the Red Lion he was shown up to a bedroom. To his toothy surprise, Mr. Virrell turned out to be the shifty man of the cigarette-case deal.

"Good morning," said Prein, and sniffed. The room reeked with eucalyptus.

Virrell loked at him moodily. "I've got a gold cup to sell.."

Prein's pale blue eyes twinkled maliciously.

"We like to retain our customers. The last time we did business, you were a trifle dissatisfied, I believe. This proves you've appreciated that—we have to be careful."

Virrell dabbed his nose with his handkerchief.

"Curse this cold . . . Here's the cup." He opened an attache case and produced a really superb gold cup, about ten inches high. One side of it had been scratched by some sharp instrument, plainly to erase the inscription.

Prein took it, and fondled it.

"Your property, of course? I only ask because we have to be careful. Remembering our small difference, I was rather wondering why you have approached me again—unless you appreciate that we have to be careful."

Virrell said nothing. Prein took a pair of scales out of his own attache case and weighed the cup.

"Thirty pounds."

"You dirty robber! It's worth fifty."

"Really?" Prein spoke in the silky, purring voice. "Then why not take it to somebody who will give you fifty?"

Virrell's fists clenched.

"Why not?" repeated Prein. "I think you know why. Oh, yes, my dear sir, I think you know."

Prein sniggered, and wrote out the cheque. Virrell took it, then deliberately tore it to pieces, and threw them into the empty grate.

Prein was startled out of his silkiness. "What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, you're not palming off any dud cheques on me. The other one I had was signed by your partner as well,—and——"

"You're a fool," said Prein, exasperated. "This is a private deal. So I gave you a cheque on my own personal account, that's all."

"Nothing doing. I wouldn't trust you an inch. Give me a cheque on the firm."

Prein was venomously irritated. Here was a chance to make twenty pounds ruined by this crook's stupidity. He debated whether to argue with him, and decided it might be too risky. You could drive this type to a certain point, but beyond that it was a mistake.

At any rate, if he bought the cup for the firm, it would mean a profit of ten pounds for himself.

"All right. Come along and I'll get Mr. Soransen to sign a cheque."

"Cursed if I'll come out with this cold! If you can't bring the cheque back, then——"

Prein got up. "Very well. It's a nuisance. My time's worth more than yours. But in the circumstances. . . You've thrown twopence away—a wicked waste. Your cheque from the firm will be for thirty pounds, but I shall insist on you giving me twopence."

"Oh, shut up!" said Virrell, dabbing at his nose. The cold had put him in a vile temper.

Prein returned about twelve o'clock. Virrell examined the firm's cheque, and nodded his approval.

"That's better. Doesn't seem any duck-shoving about this."

"There wasn't about the other," said Prein, stowing the cup into his attache case.

Virrell grunted ungraciously.

Back at the shop, Prein displayed the cup. Soransen slapped him on the back.

"Good value for thirty pounds, my boy."

"Yes," said Prein, with not so much enthusiasm. That lost private profit was galling. As he was going out to lunch, the phone tinkled. The voice was Virrell's.

"You again!"

"Just once more, Mr. Prein. Many thanks for your present. The extra thirty will come in useful."

"What on earth are you——?"

Virrell's chuckle came floating along the wire. "Your bank will tell you. But you daren't tell your partner. I banked on your trying to do him when I staged things. G'bye."

Prein, pale with a sudden horrible fear, shouted into the transmitter. But he had been cut off.

From the Exchange he managed to elicit the fact that the call had come from a private box. That was no help. In panic he rushed round to the branch of the London and Wessex Bank, not a quarter of a mile from the Red Lion.

"Oh, yes," the manager told him, "there were two cheques cashed this morning, each for thirty pounds, one on your private account, and one on your firm. They were quite in order. Nothing wrong, I hope, Mr. Prein?"

Prein groaned. They allowed him to see the cheque on his private account. It was the one he had written out in that bedroom.

He raced off to the Red Lion. The landlord informed him that Mr. Virrell had paid his bill and gone. A maid was just clearing up the room.

"I believe I left something there," said Prien, feverishly, and ran up the stairs.

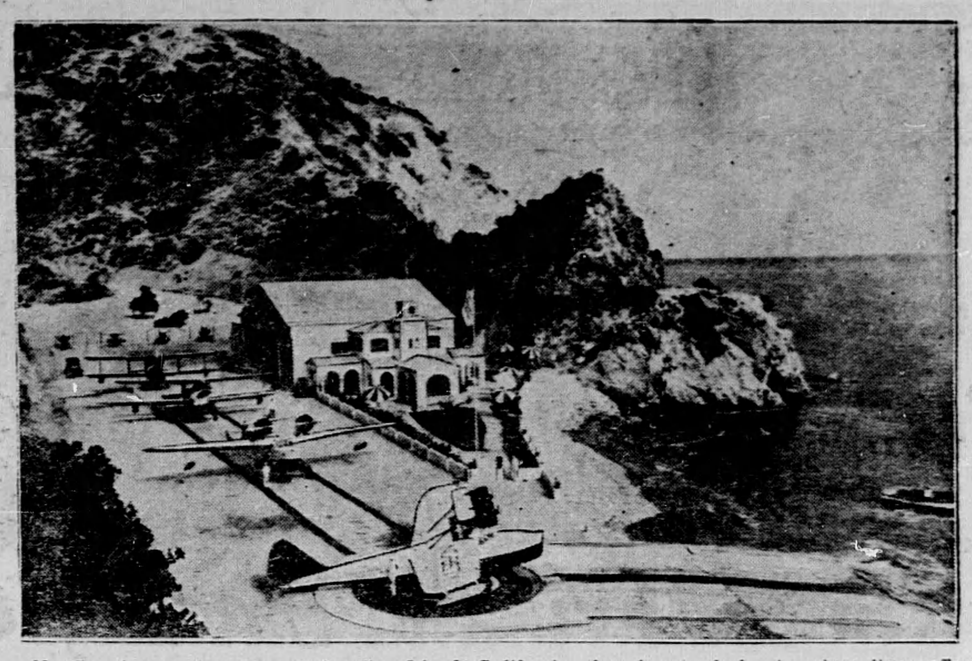
The maid at that moment was actually brushing some shreds of paper out of the grate into a dustpan. Prein snatched the dustpan from the astonished girl.

Those shreds were part of a cheque, sure enough—a blank cheque on some other bank, which Virrell must have had up his sleeve, ready to be torn up in place of the London and Wessex cheque.

Prein imagined him hurrying along to the branch, collecting the cash, and returning in time to receive the second cheque. He felt ill. — London "Tit-Bits."

The upward measure of the value of a deed is always reflected in the downward measure of its cost.

Unique Air Station



Nestling in a rocky glen of Catalina Island, California, the airport of the American lines affords a novel and picturesque view from the air.

Lights Lure Bugs Away

Insects bothered Prof. H. W. Matlack of Grinnell College, Iowa. He has a broad, comfortable, screened porch, with subdued lights, where it is very pleasant to sit on warm summer nights. But insects leaked into it in the innumerable ways insects can find, attracted by the lights.

Professor Matlack gave considerable thought to the matter, and at last had a flash of inspiration. Like many strokes of genius, his solution was exceedingly simple, says a mail report of Science Service (Washington). We read:

"Under the eaves of his porch, outside the screen, he fitted one bright light, much brighter than any of the shaded lamps on the porch itself. Immediately all the insects on the porch turned their backs on the subdued lights and went straight for the bright bulb. The littlest ones went out through the meshes as they had come in, and danced around the light, drunk with the strong radiation. The larger ones crowded crawling on the screen as near as they could get to it. No more insects invaded the porch, since the strongest attraction was now outside it."

Nature's Comforters

What though my plodding pen may fail,
And all my lines seem poor, and pale?
I know what's in my heart to say,
And that illumines all my day;
And in the wood the tall pines form
An audience steadfast and warm;
And as my halting measures rise
The breezes answer with their sighs;
The birds make answer to my song
Despite my note is far from strong;
And in the hills an echo free
Repeats my measures after me!

—John Kendrick Bangs in "The Foothills of Parnassus."

She Threw Paper

For throwng a newspaper from a moving motor-coach into the road, Lily Phillips of London, England, was fined $2 by the Ashford, Kent, magistrates recently. The summons, under a Kent County Council by-law, was for depositing the paper in the public highway, "so as to tend injuriously to affect the public amenities of the hghway."

Rabbit and Soy-Beans Appear on Soviet Menu

A shortage in the country's live stock and a similar falling-off in the raising, transporting, and storing of fruit and vegetables, it seems, has greatly cut down the national food supply of Soviet Russia.

To meet the emergency the Soviet authorities are relying on the soybean and the rabbit.

Posters and newspaper head-lines all over the country blazon forth the bright possibilities of rabbit-breeding, a Moscow correspondent of the London Observer tells us, while the soybean, hitherto grown mostly in Manchuria, is being more and more widely cultivated in the Soviet Union. But the soybean made a bad beginning as a dietary reform. We read then:

"In Kiev a compound of sausage and soy-bean met with little popular favor, while in Odessa a diet of soy-bean courses, offered morning, noon, and night, soon surfeited the diners in public restaurants. One cook even labeled an unsavory soy-bean preparation, 'the dish of the second Five-Year plan,' which led to an investigation of his political past and a discovery that he was not an enthusiast for the Soviet regime

"If the main difficulties with the use of soy-beans are in the field of proper preparation, the relief of the meat shortage by a large injection of stewed and boiled rabbit has been delayed by many instances of neglect and carelessness in breeding and caring for the rabbits.

"All in all, the provisioning of the country with such novel articles of diet as rabbits and soy-beans seems to encounter as many difficulties as the supply with such more conventional foodstuffs as meat, dairy products, fruit, and vegetables."

CANDID

The young artist was proud of his latest achievement. He invited his friend to view it.

"Well," he said, after the other had made a good inspection. "How do you like my portrait of the old judge?"

"How much is he going to give you for it?" asked his friend.

"What do you think he ought to give me?" put in the artist.

"Six months," the friend said bitingly.

Uniform Human Beings

By J. B. S. HALDANE,
Professor of Biochemistry at Cambridge University

I do not believe in uniformity. I think the more individuals in the world the better. If there is one lesson man can learn from the animals, it is just this: You have all sorts of dogs—shepherd dogs, wolf hounds, Newfoundland dogs, dachshunde, terriers and St. Bernards. Would any one think of producing only one species of dog and call it the perfect dog, eliminating all the others? What makes human life amusing is getting all these vareities of dogs into one family. And the one hope for humanity is that that sort of thing should go on, not only among dogs but among human beings as well.

If we have any lesson to learn from animal and plant genetics, it is that there is not any one best type in the species. On the contrary, we have various environments and various species to fit into them. . . . .

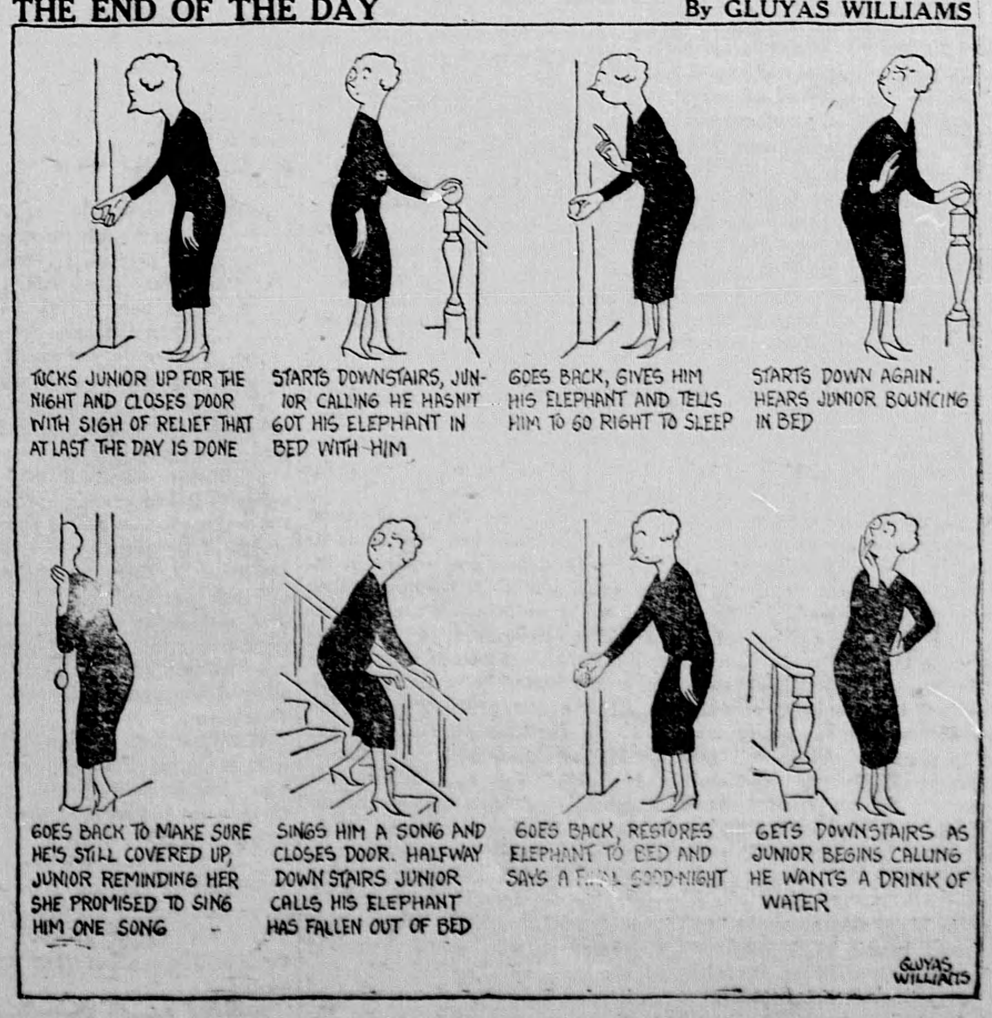
I should like to see a continual rising of the minimum, a lower limit but no upper limit, but this cannot be achieved by drastic measures. There are beastly recessives which you can't weed out in a moment. I am all for breeding up and weeding out, but I feel we do not at present know enough of the potentialities of a lot of people who, we say, are failures now and should never have been born. The fact that they are misfits among us does not mean that you could have a society where they wouldn't be happy members.

Hubby: You'll ruin me with your extravagant tastes.

Wifey: How so? You never gratify them.

THE END OF THE DAY

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



What Ozone Can And Can Not Do

Ignorant talk about Ozone has resulted in a good deal of skepticism about its alleged virtues.

The word is commonly used by many persons to mean simply "fresh air," as when they talk of "breathing in the life-giving ozone" of a cold, bright winter morning.

Yet ozone is a well-known, perfectly definite modification of oxygen, and its value as an antiseptic appears undoubted. Says The British Medical Journal (London), in an editorial:

"Ozone, that variant of oxygen which appears in traces over the sea or in the air of the open country, and which has lately been surmised by meteorologists to exist in the high atmosphere in sufficient amount to affect the temperature of its limiting layers, possesses a strong oxidizing action, in virtue of which it attacks metallic silver, and may, given suitable conditons, inhibit or destroy bacteria.

"The facility with which it can be formed from air by means of the silent electric discharge has made it available in workable quantities to industry and hygiene, and its practical uses in these fields have recently been set forth in an interesting articles by Dr. L. Hugounenq.

"Ozone, he says, is a potent agent in the vulcanization of rubber, and it is of value for the bleaching of textiles. Since it spares yeast, and at the same time acts vigorously against the germs which impair the qualities of beer, it has been employed with advantage in brewing. It is of service, too, in the maturation of odorous essences and in the preparation of drying oils. In the practise of hygiene ozone has been turned to account for its germicidal properties. It is claimed that treatment with ozonized sea water disinfects oysters and other shell-fish exposed to bacterial contamination without weakening their vitality or damaging their taste; and that ozone, when applied to perishable foodstuffs, saves their market value intact and leaves in the food no trace of material foreign to the tissues of consumers, differing in this from some other preservatives.

"The use of ozone in the purification of drinking water was first commended as a result of experiments carried out in Holland on the water of the Old Rhine. In France, to-day, water supplies are ozonized in many communities, as well as in Monte Carlo, and many schools and private houses. Sir A. C. Mouston in 1931 applied ozone to the metropolitan water at Barn Elms, obtaining results which he describes as bacteriologically perfect.

"Although the method has hitherto been little used in Britain, we may acquiesce in our author's encomium of water ozonization in France, but when he applauds in the same cordial terms the use of ozone for the purification of air, we can but feel that the analogy is forced and confidence in such a procedure ill founded. He speaks of rotary ozonizers for supplying ozone-charged air to habitations, and describes an appliance of this kind as of service 'wherever it is necessary to purify a vitiated atmosphere, as in sick-rooms or crowded factories.'

"But ozone, however effective in water, has shown itself a reluctant germicide under dry conditions. It takes some thirteen parts of ozone per million of air to affect bacteria; but one part per million causes respiratory discomfort to man, lowers his oxygen intake, produces headache and depression, and may even lead to coma. Thus a concentration which would damage bacteria in the air of a room would be more than ten times stronger than could be borne by the human occupants.

"In any event, there would appear to be no occasion to call in the resources of chemical science in order to purify air when the air of a sick-room can be speedily changed by the simple act of opening a window, and when the ills of crowded workshops can be remedied by reducing the aggregation of people or by driving fresh air in from the outside. Ozone, however, is clearly useful inasmuch as it succeeds in the wet, although, like gaseous disinfectants as a class, it is apt to fail in the dry. When we praise ozone as a sterilizing agent, we must at the same time recognize the limitations to which it is undoubtedly subject."

Hard Labor

The children had all promised to earn sixpence for the missionary society and to bring it to Sunday school.

When the day came, the teacher asked each youngster to tell how he earned his money.

"Now, Jack, you begin, and tell us all about it," she said.

"Please, miss, I got it from father."

"But, Jack," she expostulated, "that wasn't earning it, you know."

"Oh, wasn't it?" said Jack. "You don't know father."

Widow (buying a parrot): "Does this one talk?" Dealer: "Unfortunately, madam, he does not. But when anybody speaks to him he looks as if he understands perfectly." "I'll take him. He reminds me of my late husband."