King Inspects Bibles—King George VI examines a few of the thousands of Bibles sent all over the world by the British and Foreign Bible Society. He was visiting the Society's headquarters in London with the queen.

SPORTS-&c

by A SIXBIT CRITIC

THREE CHEERS FOR OUR SIDE! is the title of an article in the latest issue of the English weekly, "Tit Bits," to come to hand; and we only wish we had the space to reprint the piece in its entirety. It certainly says some things that badly needed saying, in these times when almost everybody seems to delight in putting the boots to poor old John Bull.

* * *

"We should be grateful to anybody who gives us a laugh these days," writes Wilfrid Webster, "so three hearty cheers for Professor A. A. Mavrodin, of Leningrad University. "It wasn't we who defeated the Spanish Armada, he has discovered, but the Russians."

* * *

"The English ships were made of Russian wood," he has just told the world. "They sailed under Russian sails and were painted with Russian tar. Russia made it possible for the English fleet to defeat the Armada."

* * *

Are you sure, Professor? comments the writer, that the winning admiral's name wasn't Francisky Drakeovitch?

* * *

From there, Mr. Webster goes on to deal with some more recent pieces of stone-throwing. "Not by any means so amusing has been the attitude recently displayed toward us by Ben Hogan, non-playing captain of the American professional golf team which came over here in September. In spite of being sustained by 600 steaks and other meat which our kindly customs let them import without licence, the visiting golfers were beaten in the Ryder Cup foursomes.

* * *

"Then they retained the cup by winning all the singles, and all our sports writers and all our defeated players paid tribute to the brilliant play of the Americans."

* * *

But was Hogan happy? Not he. On landing back in New York, he said he did not like British golf. "British courses," he added, are terrible!" And he didn't mean meat ones!

* * *

Back from Britain in the same ship was Fred Perry, pre-war Wimbledon lawn tennis champion. "Nobody can play tennis over there any more," he was kind enough to say, "and the courts are in terrible condition."

* * *

Equally severe were the comments of Evangelist Renee Marts. (In case you don't happen to know, or remember, Miss Martz is nine years old and is widely billed as The Wonder-Child Preacher). "No matter what I ate," commented Renee, speaking of her experiences in Britain, "it did not fill me up. Their ice cream is terrible. I did not like their candy. The people are threadbare and shabby!"

* * *

Not having been born until 1940—remarks the author—the little evangelist can hardly be blamed for not appreciating the main cause of our austerity. But surely the two sportsmen should have had some inkling of what has been going on in these isles in the last 10 years. As an American, Hogan may be largely forgiven for his ignorance, and so may Perry, for he has long been a United States citizen.

* * *

The fact is that the average American has very little appreciation of the fundamental causes of Britain's present plight, nor does he realize the tremendous strain to which all our resources (including golf courses and tennis courts) were subjected during the war, two years of which we endured before the United States was forced into the conflict.

* * *

Mr. Webster explains that this lack of appreciation is not due to indifference, and that the average American is well disposed toward the people of Britain.

* * *

"It is largely because the facts about Britain are either kept from, or distorted into falsehood. When the instalments of Winston Churchill's second war book, "Their Finest Hour," appeared in the Daily Telegraph, we were given the comparative figures of British and American casualties. The magazine, Life, which holds the United States rights for Mr. Churchill's memoirs, cut out those figures. Life's editor spared his readers the knowledge that, in proportion to the two nations' population, Britain lost twice as many fighting men as did the United States.. He also left out all mention of the 60,000 British civilians killed in air raids."

* * *

But this is all we can quote from a very ably written article. This is supposed to be a column about sports, and it was the remarks of those two noted "sportsmen," Ben Hogan and Fred Perry, which first caught our eye.

* * *

Still, thinking it over again, perhaps they just furnish further evidence of the growing tendency of a whole lot of athletes and sports figures to take themselves much, much too seriously. We don't need to confine ourselves to golf and tennis to see glaring examples of this tendency—or to travel south of the border to find it, either!

Double Scrubbing — New York's water-saving campaign put both little Radigan kiddies in the same bath tub. Maureen, age 2½, took it nicely, but Jimmy, age 4 months, seems to say, "What's going on here?" Mother, Mrs. Dorothy Radigan, scrubs away—using as little water as possible.

Chink In The Armour

A Short Story by Clare Plummer

There was a legend in the remote Sussex village of Catesby. It was known throughout the length and breadth of the country—and, indeed farther afield—the legend of Lady Catesby of Catesby Manor, a lady bountiful par excellence.

And now, though she was dead, the legend would never die.

It seemed to Martin Gregory, wandering son of the village, that nothing had changed since he had left many years before. Even the tramp whom he and Bill Daley, the factor's son, had christened Sunny Jim, was sitting there by the lodge gates in his dirt and his happiness, cooking a stew identical with the horrible concoctions he had brewed all those years ago when Martin and Bill had been lads together.

But now the estate had passed to the National Trust and the long line of the Catesbys was finished.

It was with a kind of melancholy pride that Bill Daley led the first party of visitors from the gatehouse, up the drive, and in through the great main doorway.

For a moment, Martin Gregory stood and watched. Then he glanced at Sunny Jim, who stared back. It wasn't often Jim spoke, but the happiness which glowed from him needed no words.

Now he spoke slowly, as if his voice were an instrument rusty through lack of use.

"I'd go, too, if I was you, sir," he wheezed. "Nice to 'ear tell 'bout 'er Ladyship."

Martin grinned at him. "All right, I will. It's years since I've been in these parts. I thought I'd like to see the leaves before they fell. Sentimental, I suppose."

He paid his money at the gatehouse, took his ticket, and crept into the great hall as Bill Daley was warming to his theme. Some whim prompted him to keep in the background of the party where he wouldn't be noticed.

"And that, ladies and gentlemen," Bill was saying, "is the portrait of Lady Catesby herself, painted a short time before she died."

The party lifted tis eyes from the fireplace with its armorial bearings to the picture above, and stared in reverent silence at the painting—of a woman somehow lacking in humanity. The famous artist had succeeded in showing no more than he had been able to discover—a beautiful, empty shell.

"She was a very wonderful woman," Bill went on. "The village will never forget her." There was an expression of devotion on his face.

The almost trance-like look was now reflected in the eyes of his listeners. They, too, had read of the legend in their newspapers.

As Martin listened, the old spell began to fall on him. It was true, every word of it—the houses she had built in the village, the well-equipped schoolhouse, the prize herds, the famous beech woods, the model farms.

And yet, it seemed there was more happiness in the grimy face of the old tramp—the proverbial poor man at the gate—than in that of Irene, Lady Catesby.

But if there were doubts in Martin's mind, there were none in Bill's. He, like Martin, had been through the war, but it seemed to have left him untouched, as if in the core of his being there still remained this vision, this faith in a legend.

Then he directed his hearers' gaze towards the picture which hung beside that of Lady Catesby, of Roger, her husband. Here, too, was perfection. A beautiful love story, cut short by the death of his lordship. He was drowned on his way to join an expedition to free some obscure European country from the yoke of another.

Bill Daley's geography was as unreal as his grasp of life, but there was no mistaking his sincerity as he told a story of deathless gallantry.

The audience sighed nostalgically. Not even Hollywood had conceived anything like this. And now it focussed its gazed on the next portrait, of young Jeremy Catesby, their only son. And here, again, was that lustre of heroism; for he had lost his life on a climbing expedition in Africa.

It was then, as Bill's voice went on eulogizing, that Martin's clear doctor's brain began to question. Why had young Jeremy—whom he had known as a quiet, gentle lad, a bookworm at heart—gone off into a dark continent that could have held no attraction for him, and died in a test of physical endurance for which he was utterly unsuited?

And more strangely still, why should this father, a conventional English gentleman, have sacrificed himself in a cause which could not have touched him in the very least?

What was the chink in the armor? Why was it that somehow the story seemed to ring false.

As Martin went over the house, he was again caught and held by the spell, and his imagination was still dazzled when, at the end of the tour, he went up to Bill and made himself known.

"It's grand to see you here still, old man," he said, warmly. "I remember how you loved the old place."

Bill gripped his outstretched hand. "Gosh, Martin Gregory, by all that wonderful! Yes, it was a bit of luck being kept on here. It's meant so much to me."

"I read about the estate being taken over, and I felt I'd like to see the beech woods again," Martin told him. "I've dreamed of 'em in the most outlandish places."

Bill smiled understandingly. Then his voice filled with emotion. "It's a year almost to the day since her Ladyship died. But it doesn't seem possible she isn't with us still, there are so many signs of her goodness everywhere."

The two men walked slowly down to the gatehouse, where another party of sightseers was beginning to collect.

"It seems as if we were still kids together, you and I and young Jeremy," Bill continued. "Such a tragedy he went, too. But then, it was a fitting end for a Catesby."

He lit his pipe and pointed. "Even old Sunny Jim's here to welcome you! Queer how he turns up every autumn. Remember how he'd always arrive in time to see the leaves turn? Then he'd disappear again." He laughed awkwardly. "I expect it was only coincidence, really. You'd hardly expect a tramp to care."

"No, hardly," Martin agreed.

When the last of the visitors had gone and Martin had supped with Bill in his quarters at the manor, he sauntered down to the gatehouse before turning in, for a last look at the house in the evening light.

Sunny Jim was still sitting there, and Martin held out a plug of tobacco to him.

"Guess you'd rather have a chew than smoke," he said, with a grin.

The tramp took the tobacco and stowed it away in some dingy inner recess.

He pointed up to the trees. "Kinder pretty," he remarked.

Martin nodded. Then, impulsively he said, "They're lovely, too, in winter, when they're bare. You'd like 'em. I expect things'll loosen up a bit now her Ladyship's gone. Maybe you could find yourself a corner somewhere around, where you'd be snug and dry. There's a gamekeeper's shack in the woods that hasn't been used for years, so Mr. Daley tells me."

Sunny Jim's face broke into a delighted grin, showing broken teeth. "It's an idea, sir," he said. "I'm sure 'er Ladyship wouldn't have approved, but now, I guess I'll give it a try."

Then something flashed into Martin's mind—suddenly, like a voice speaking that wasn't his own.

He swung open the gates and with a gesture that was in no way ironic, he swept off his hat, and said:

"Welcome home, my Lord!"

For a moment the tramp regarded him without a blink. Then with dignity, he collected his few ludicrous belongings and moved slowly through the gates.

When he spoke, his voice had changed. "She was a maniac for perfection was Irene," he muttered. "And in the end, it would have driven me mad. I suppose the boy couldn't stand it either. She was never meant for this world. She's much better suited where she's gone." Now there was a ghost of a smile on his weatherbeaten face. "I tried to keep away, all those years. But—it was the beech woods that drew me back. I loved 'em, you know—always shall.

He raised his battered hat in salutation.

There was moisture in Martin's eyes as he watched him go up the drive towards the gamekeeper's shack. But why should there be? He had his beloved woods to add to the precious treasure of freedom and independence.

The last of the Catesbys was home . . .

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