

The Rectory, Woodford.

DATE AS POSTMARK

Dear Everyone,

Here we are again, and we hope this letter reaches you as it leaves us. Something seems to have happened to the Family Budget of Letters. Let us all search our consciences in this matter, and administer such rebukes to ourselves as we should others should do to us. For myself I feel that common charity and consideration, and “the-habit-and-frame-of-mind-of-always-thinking-and-saying-the-best-we-can-of-people-and-things” does not permit me to pursue my enquiries into this delay. Let us all try to be better people in the future, and to pull our weight, instead of indulging in fruitless and harmful mutual recriminations.

Now where was I? The trouble, of course, with Circular letters is that by their very nature the time-continuum is necessarily broken, and this leads to serious dislocation of [Page 2] thought, and the possible omission of some item of topical interest which is either, (due to delays avoidable or unavoidable, I leave you to judge), no longer topical enough still to be interesting, or else not interesting enough still to be topical, or even too topical to sustain even a vestige of interest. The only cure for this, as I see it, is for there to be as many Budgets of letters as there are members in the family, so that each morning we may sit down at our desk with our accustomed punctilium, and, to the cheerful accompaniment of tinkling china, as the housewife and her staff perform the tuneful obsequies of the morning meal, record, if not for posterity at least for the ever important NOW, impressions of events, fragments of learned converse, anything and everything, indeed, of significance and value in the previous day's happenings that comes readily to the mind and freely to the pen. In this way, no single day would pass unremembered, and as the Scheme gathered impetus, the Time continuum would be restored, until perhaps the need of a twice-daily Budget [Page 3] for each of would impress itself upon us with such urgency and compulsion as we could not well gainsay. Indeed, I visualise such a boundless unfolding of this powerful and fruitful plan, that we should not even have to wait till the afternoon's post for the resumption of our task, but should find ourselves, still with pen in hand, catching fresh nuances of meaning and snatching deeper and ever deeper insights from the sub-stance of earlier paragraphs from our pen, whilst the ink is not yet dry.

As a slight instance of what I mean, and now that I am coming to the close of my record of these last few months, I glance upwards, and my eye, for a moment fancy-free, lights upon the opening words of my present work, and my mind is stilled for a while as I think of “this letter reaching you as it leaves us”. What a majestic conception of space-time lies hidden there! What philosophy!! What poignancy and sense of adventure, as my little missal sets out on its unknown voyage!!! What visions of joy does not the promise of safe arrival arouse in the breast!!!! [Page 4] What comparison and contrast can be sensed by the imagination between the agitation and nervous exhaustion of him who sends, and the expectancy, (and satisfaction, it may be), of him, her, them who receive!!!!

Alas, I am shattered by the realities of life. My wife sounds the Gong for Lunch, and perforce I must draw two things, - this letter to a close, and myself to the Dinner Table. And still, the next Budget has not arrived!!!!

From

Joe