

quod, and your bones ache accordingly.

To give quotations, as I have already said, would be ridiculous, but to those who fight shy of a book they know nothing about, *The Town-Ho's Story* (as told at the Golden Inn, Lima), or the chapter entitled 'The Whiteness of the Whale,' may safely be recommended to timid beginners.

It will be curious to observe whether a generation of readers brought up on another kind of fare will repair the injustice done by their grandparents in 1851.

Here and there a page, or even a chapter, of *The Whale* may be skipped with comparative impunity, but nobody but a sea-gudgeon can ever be sent to sleep between its pages. 'And whereas all the other things, whether beast or vessel, that enter into the dreadful gulf of the whale's mouth, are immediately lost and swallowed up, the sea-gudgeon retires into it in great security and there sleeps' (Montaigne in his *Apology for Raimond de Sebonne*).

We're not as 'gudgeons' are;
Smith, take a fresh cigar!

Jones, the tobacco-jar!

Here's to thee, 'Melville'!

[Punch]

THE WARDROBE

BY E. V. LUCAS

ONCE upon a time, there was a wardrobe in which a man's clothes were kept, the coats and waistcoats hanging over wooden shoulders and the trousers from clips. It was large enough for all his various suits, morning and evening; and they were all on fairly good terms with each other, even if the Harris tweeds were a little clannish and the frock-coat a little superior. This was because the frock-coat had been to a garden party at Buckingham Palace; for the owner of the clothes, you must

know, was what is called a man about town, who had time and opportunity to do the correct thing.

The oldest suit in the wardrobe was one of the Harris tweeds. It had been there for fifteen years and was still worn on holidays. Its age and its Scottish sagacity made it the natural head of the company, and its advice was often asked; but, owing to the difficulty of following its Highland accent, was taken only by accident.

It was an exciting moment for the clothes every morning, when their master opened the door and took out a pair of trousers. He always took the trousers first, and the coat and waistcoat a few minutes later; but the choice of the trousers told what the coat and waistcoat would be. In these few minutes there was no end of chatter.

'Hullo! it's golf to-day,' the others would say, as the knickerbockers disappeared. Or 'A luncheon party, I think,' if it were one of the pairs of trousers worn with the frock-coat.

'I hope there'll be some nice dresses to talk to,' the frock-coat would say, if it were his turn. Sometimes the waistcoat would be left behind, and then they would know it was a wedding, and one of the white waistcoats would be needed.

'I don't care much for weddings,' said the frock-coat. 'Although there's always a lot of company, it's usually too new to be interesting, straight from the tailor's and the dressmaker's. But what I most resent is the confetti.'

'Ay, man,' a Harris tweed replied, 'that's where we hae the advantage over you. Rain, snow, hail, confetti, rice—it's all one to us. We're the only sensible practical suitings amang ye. But it's awfu' seeing the guid wholesome rice being wasted.'

'Economy! what a boring theme!' a fancy waistcoat remarked.

It was, also, always an exciting mo-

ment when a new suit was hung in the wardrobe, because the new clothes brought tidings of the tailor's — the old homestead, so to speak — and there were countless questions as to who had cut it, who had stitched it, what changes there were in the staff, and so on.

In the evening, when their master came back, the excitement was confined to the dress-suit and the dinner-suit — which would it be? Would there be beautiful dresses, and, therefore, the long tails and white waistcoat, or just men only and a dinner-jacket? Not that other men's clothes are so dull: dinner-jacket can have a vast deal of gossip to retail to dinner-jacket; but full fig is more amusing. You see, some of the new gowns have delicious Parisian scandal to unfold, and the less discreet can even be counted upon for revelations of their wearers. It was well to keep in with daddy long-tails, as he was called, if you wanted to have these stories repeated to you.

As the week wore on, another excitement developed, for the great question which then began to exercise the clothes was — 'Is he going away from Saturday to Monday, or not? And, if so, what will he take?' The actual packing, they did not like at all; being jammed together in a bag is no joke; but it was all right when they were unpacked amid the new surroundings. It was interesting, too, to see what kind of valets or maids there were, and if they were rougher with the brush than their own James was, or more gentle. James had a savage way of castigating them.

But when I say that all the clothes were agitated by this week-end problem, I am wrong. There were, of course, those that were out of season — they knew that their time could not come again just yet — and there was the pair of black trousers at the back, which

could never go out unless someone had died. They were very seldom wanted, although the door never opened without giving them a little shock; but once — it was during a bad influenza epidemic — the black pair had been out three times in a fortnight. How they talked about it!

And then, one day, the man died, himself, although the clothes did not know for quite a long while that this had happened. He had often been ill before and had not needed them, and this might be the case now. They wondered exceedingly what was going on, but James never came near, and so there was no chance of discovering by asking his coat. Ordinarily, they liked it when James (and his brush) stayed away, but not this time.

It is a terrible day for wardrobes when their owners die, and they fall into the hands of the people who buy such things. I say 'buy,' but that is a slip: ladies' and gentlemen's wardrobes are not bought, as any advertisement column will tell you: they are purchased. These clothes were the perquisites of James, who, being a little brisk, fattish man, had no personal use for any of them, and so he transferred the whole lot to a dealer who snuffled through his nose, and had a Platonic love for Palestine.

It was then that their agonies set in. They were marked at prices disgracefully below their cost; they were handled and tried on; they were depreciated by intending purchasers and extolled without any truth at all by the dealer, who said that they had been the property of a Duke who was moving to the tropics; they were bargained over, and at last sold. And that was not the worst, for many of them were altered.

Only the Harris tweeds were happy. They did not care who wore them so long as they were worn and were out in the open air again.

AN ARMISTICE ANNIVERSARY IN CENTRAL AFRICA

BY F.

THE first pale pink streaks of dawn were showing when my 'boy' woke me up, by dumping down by the bedside my early morning cup of tea and slice of *paw-paw* (which in Bananaland is always pronounced 'papie'), and by rolling up the mosquito curtains. I wondered, drowsily, why he had called me so early, for in station I rose much later than this, and concluded sleepily that it must be the *dusturi* of the household of which, for the time being, I formed part. It so happened that I had been posted to another station, and was due to leave in two days' time, so that I had packed up and vacated my bungalow, and was now sheltering, for a few days, under the hospitable roof of the Director of Transport.

As I started to sip my tea, I noticed the boy was busily engaged digging in my uniform tins and extracting my full-dress white uniform, and the sight of this pricked my drowsy head wide awake. I now remembered why I was being called at dawn, and realized that I had a hectic day in front of me, and I was more than ever reluctant to get up, as I reflected that the next dawn would not be far off before I got into bed again. Subsequent events confirmed this.

This morning's sun heralded a day of days, not only in Bananaland, but throughout the Empire, and we were all determined that, situated though we were in the heart of Darkest Africa, none the less there should be no lack of pomp and circumstance and rejoicing. The official programme started with a

thanksgiving service at the churches of all denominations. His excellency the governor, accompanied by his staff and the heads of departments, would attend divine service at the cathedral, arriving by car from headquarters, and those official residents in the station who were not detailed to represent the government at the churches of other denominations would also attend the cathedral service, as would, of course, the European non-official residents as well as the multitudes of native Christians who belonged to the Established Church. Then would follow a review of the troops by H.E. on the Coronation Ground, after which he would hold a levee, for which purpose a fine grass *banda* had been built behind the flag-staff, at the saluting point. It had been beautifully done, partly, by station labor under the orders of the district commissioner, and, partly, by natives under the orders of the *Lukiko* (the native Parliament of the Kingdom).

Next in the programme figured a semi-official lunch to H.E., given by my host, who was an old personal friend of his, and the afternoon was to be filled up with sports for the troops, police and *bakopi* (peasantry). The *pièce de résistance* was to be a miniature Marathon race from Luzera, the lake port, nine miles off, to the winning post on the Coronation Ground. After tea, H.E. would motor back to headquarters in time for the big dinner and bigger ball at Government House. There were to be fireworks during the course of the evening, both at headquarters