

The Outlook in San Francisco on the eve of the departure of the British and Canadian members for the islands, "that the finding of facts is the most essential but the most neglected of preliminaries to the intelligent grasping of any subject. It seems a platitude to say so, but when I speak of finding facts I mean really finding them, not merely according lip service to an admitted first step. We are out to find facts."

Coming from Lionel Curtis, the founder of the "Round Table," who has practically made the constitution of three British states, and is regarded as one of the most constructive men in the Empire, such a remark is something more than the expression of the opinion of one individual. Mr. Curtis's attitude is typical of that of the members generally. The prevailing desire at the Institute will be to find facts, to sift the wheat from the chaff.

The members of the Institute are a curiously representative group—soldiers, bankers, college professors, newspaper men, missionaries, and social workers; they are of all ages, from that delightful Scotsman W. P. Ker, grown gray in the British consular service at Tientsin, or General Sir Arthur Currie, famous as leader of the Canadian forces during the World War and now principal of McGill University, to young boys like the Hon. William W. Astor, like his mother, keen, alert, interested in everything, and Malcolm MacDonald, the promising son of a brilliant father, earning their way as secretaries.

About the British party centers the main interest of the conference this year. Chiefly, perhaps, because it is the first time Great Britain has participated in the Institute, but also because the party has been preceded to the islands by a brochure which was prepared by Sir Frederick Whyte (the head of the British group, former President of the Legislative Assembly in India) and covers the whole of the situation in China from the British point of view.

With the presence of Great Britain, the Institute is regarded as being, for the first time, thoroughly representative. The position was put clearly enough by one of the members. "Great Britain," he said, "was not invited to the former Institute, but when a discussion of the Chinese problems arose, with their relations to foreign countries, it was realized that to get to the heart of the situation Great Britain must be consulted, as, historically, she predated other nations in her relations with China."

From the first conference held under the auspices of the Institute of Pacific Relations two years ago special corre-

spondence was sent to The Outlook by Frederick M. Davenport, now Representative in Congress. Mr. Davenport is attending the conference again this year, and expects to report it for Outlook readers. We suggest that our readers watch for it, for we think that they will find it notable.

Botany from a Car Window

THERE is an ever-increasing horde of Americans who must journey each week day from their homes in the country and the suburbs to the serried piles of our great cities. Some of them travel in club cars attended by colored gentlemen in white suits. Others are forced to ride in the more plebeian smoker or day coach. Whichever way they go, however, they make their round trips of fifteen, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty miles with almost the regularity of clockwork. Most of them, we imagine, pass the time with their daily papers, their cigars, or their games of pinochle or bridge. The journey to town is something to be done rather than enjoyed. The reason that most of them turn to books, papers, or cards for relief from the monotony of the journey lies in the fact that they probably are convinced that they are traveling the same road each day and that they have seen all that is to be seen. The only variation in the monotony of the landscape which they are able to discover is to be found possibly in a new series of advertising hoardings or the growth of the latest real estate extension.

And yet every such journey does afford an opportunity for an almost unlimited variety of observations. Although the route between Ruralton and Burg Center be the same in distance every day of the year, the trip is made through the continually changing panorama of the seasons. A commuter might easily gain a very comprehensive knowledge of the flora of his vicinity by carefully watching from the windows of his daily train. Even in congested centers there are still stretches of wild land in which the pageantry of spring, the lushness of summer, and the austerity of fall are as manifest as in a far wilderness. To judge from the comments which we have heard on most commuting trains, there are few which travel so rapidly that individual flowers or clumps of growth are not plainly visible a short distance from the tracks. If the form of flower or shrub be obscured by speed, there always exists the opportunity for repeated observations until the strange growth is definitely identifiable. Xavier

de Maistre made a book that will live from a "Journey Around My Room," and Mr. Beebe did as much from a few square yards of jungle soil. We are willing to wager a year's subscription to The Outlook that either of these gentlemen could find material for a good-sized volume out of a note-book compiled along any commuter's journey.

Yet how many thousands of commuters get as little from their daily stint of travel as the picnickers on the shores of Walden Pond get from the little body of water that made Thoreau famous! There are not many of us who are de Maistres, Beebes, or Thoreaus, but surely there is a great deal of opportunity for enjoyment going to waste along the railroad tracks that lead to our great cities. Keep a note-book of the seasons' progress for the next year, and see if we are mistaken.

John Drew

A CAREER of over fifty years on the American stage ended with the death of John Drew in San Francisco on July 9 at the age of seventy-three. Daniel Frohman exactly characterized Drew as actor and man when he said of him that he was a master at playing modern rôles of refined character and the most loved man in the profession.

The fine old words "comedy" and "comedian" have been vulgarized of late by their use for slap-stick moving pictures. John Drew was a comedian in the fine sense. He rarely, if ever, played the great tragical parts, and cannot therefore be compared with actors like Booth or Salvini. But in the comedy of manners he was supreme. He could get his effects quietly, almost, one might say, by a twinkle of his eye or a shrug of his shoulders. His very last rôle on the stage, Sir William in "Trelawney of the Wells," was marked by easy and finished rendering of character and humor.

John Drew grew up in a double tradition—that of a family of stage talent and that of the old-time stock company. His mother had a long career as a leading actress and managed the theater in Philadelphia where the son made his first appearance fifty-four years ago; his father was an Irish comedian; his daughter and the Barrymores, his nephews and niece, are on the stage to-day. Like the Terrys in England, the Drews were native to the stage. To be a leading man in the old stock company meant a thorough training and demanded great versatility.

Those of us who still remember

the palmy days of the Daly Theatre will always think of Drew as a bright particular star in that gracious and friendly company that included Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, Ada Rehan, James Lewis, and others. A long series of light dramas, widely diversified in character and including a few revivals of the older dramas, delighted audiences who came to look upon Daly's as a regular part of their lives. Those whose memory reaches not quite so far back will probably think with greatest pleasure of Drew's long run in 1896 with Maude Adams in "Rosemary," in which romance tinged with gentle sadness gave the two stars an equal share in pleasing and moving audiences. Others will remember



Underwood & Underwood

John Drew
1853-1927

most memorable of all of them was John Drew, the courteous, witty gentleman, off and on the stage.

of Lamb

E F. ABBOTT

of The Outlook

est was only superficial, after all, and that my real absorption was in the life of the mind, not the life of the body.

temporarily, my mind could be easily slipped into a coat pocket. Moreover, I sought something with a useful, literary flavor that would ease my conscience after I had enjoyed to the full the "sports" pages of the morning paper. I wished to convince that sensitive New England organ that my real taste was for the intellectual life, and that my interest in the supremacy of the "Yankees" on the diamond, in Babe Ruth's or "Columbia Lou" Gehrig's home runs, in Jack Dempsey's efforts to achieve a "come-back," in Bobby Jones's heroic pilgrimage to St. Andrews, in the defeat of the Harvard-Yale track team by their Oxford-Cambridge rivals, in the contests of Helen Wills and William Tilden at Wimbledon, in the excellent record of the Kent School crew on the placid waters of the Thames—that this inter-

Luckily for me—since the car was waiting at the door to take me to the station and there was little time for reflection or selection—I spied at once a pocket-sized little volume bound in blue and gold, one of those *bibelots* that are chosen for wedding gifts or birthday presents because of their looks and not because they possess any inherent value. In this case, however, the donor had chosen this *petit objet de luxe qui se place sur un cheminée, une étagère, etc., objet futile et de peu de valeur*, as Larousse somewhat contemptuously defines the term, more wisely than he or she knew—probably, I think, a she, if one may judge from the gilded cover and the red-lined title-page. For this dainty boudoir booklet contained twenty-seven selected "Essays of Elia." What Charles Lamb would say if he could see his "dream children" thus decked out in furbelows is not hard to imagine, for he

was the least pernickety of English writers and abhorred—no, abhorred is not the right word—rather, he habitually and quizzically laughed at affectation and artificiality.

But—to paraphrase Robert Burns—whatever may be its dress a book's a book for a' that. So I thrust the little etui-like collection of essays into my coat pocket.

Now I confess that I did this not with spontaneous enthusiasm, but under some degree of compulsion. The little book answered to the momentary requirements of space and time. With more leisure and more room, I suppose I should have chosen some other essayist than Lamb, notwithstanding the fact that E. V. Lucas, the greatest of Elia's living apostles, says that he is "perhaps the sweetest, sanest, and most human of English prose writers." I should doubtless have preferred, if they had been at hand, Augustine Birrell's "Obiter Dicta" or "Res Judicatae;" for Birrell, to my taste, is one of the pleasantest of contemporary English essayists. Birrell's portrait of George Borrow is at least comparable to Lamb's portraits of Mrs. Battle and Fanny Kelly, and—since I am indulging in the dangerous pastime of comparisons—let me add, at the risk of lese-majesty, that neither surpasses the character sketch of John Cavanagh, the handball player, by Lamb's friend Hazlitt. I have sometimes felt not quite educated up to Lamb. While in this respect I would not claim admission to William Lyon Phelps's admirable order of "Ignoble Prize Winners," I think I ought to receive a certificate of honorable mention for the confession.

On the train, when I had scanned the newspaper and finished the daily crossword puzzle—perhaps with that admission my readers will discern why my mind is not up to the highest refinements of English prose—I took out of my pocket my blue-and-gold essays with a feeling of literary self-righteousness. "Thank God," I thought to myself, "I am not as other men are who spend their railway journeys in reading the popular magazines!"

My first pleasurable surprise was to find that reading Lamb gave me some excuse for my commonplace tastes instead of making me ashamed of them. Cross-word puzzles, for example. I found two new words, both wholly unfamiliar to me, which I gladly pass on to the cross-word fraternity without definition, leaving them to look up the meanings in the dictionary, as I was compelled to do—not on the train, of course, but later. One is the verb