"I tell you, honey," was the doubtful answer, "single life may be well enough for women—but not until dey *has ceased to struggle.*"

Many elderly people of the present day still struggle. And, from all indications, their contortions will increase rather than decrease.

Ah, well! Far be it from any one to criticise them! They are a product of our times. No one has lived until he has experienced all the sensations. And in grandpa's youth there were no automobiles, airships, nor radios, and not many divorces and scandals among elderly folk. As grandpa lives in this rapid age, he surely has a right to practise rapidity. And what man may do, woman will do.

So we can but stand by and let them play the game. We may even cheer occasionally when they try to make a home-run, and pretend not to see that their knees are sprung and that they muff the ball.

Some of us have had our fling, have lived our lives. Surely it would be cruel not to let our elders do the same!

Nor are we likely to interfere with them. There is a tradition that is impossible to shake off. It is that old age is honorable and to be revered under all conditions. We quote Scripture to prove that "the hoary head is a crown of glory," and are not familiar enough with the Bible to complete the quotation—"if it be found in the way of righteousness." So we hold our tongues about our seniors and spend our time deploring the indiscretions of our juniors. In dealing with the grandparent we follow Kipling's advice anent the chap crossed in love, and

> "Get out when he is on the move
> And give him all the continent."

A man in whom a sense of humor was the pre-eminent characteristic had been ill for many weeks. A friend urged him, as he was a Roman Catholic, to see a priest. The invalid consented. At the end of the visit as the clergyman was about to take his departure, he laid a kindly hand on the sick man's forehead.

"My son," he said, "you and I have been thinking of misdeeds for which you are sorry. But I would not leave you with the thought of your errors uppermost in your mind. Surely you can recall something in your life for which you are heartily glad?"

The sunken eyes twinkled mischievously. "Yes, father," was the whispered response, "I never missed a trick!"

If the signs of the times are to be depended on, such may be the parting exclamation of our Modern Old People.

The Prison

BY LOUIS DODGE

A PRISON, strangely fashioned,
They built and locked me in;
I heard their cries impassioned—
"You shall be saved from sin!"

And though my hands kept beating
And through the night I cried,
They turned from my entreating
And all my prayers denied.

"Our God is yours," they told me,
"To answer every need";
And bars remained to hold me—
The prison called a creed.

But oh, at last I found me
Outside their prison bars,
The boundless world around me,
Above, the steadfast stars.

And now a ceaseless singing
Stirs in the heart of me,
And gifts my hands are bringing
To God, who set me free.

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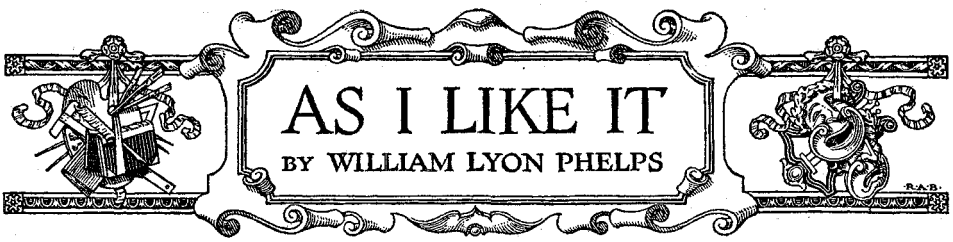

THE letters from W. H. Hudson to Edward Garnett, 1901–1922, have just been published. They make interesting reading, because they are the expression of an interesting mind. Every one who knew Hudson well seems to have been impressed by the keenness of his observation and the charm of his personality. Such qualities are sufficiently obvious in this book, all the more so because not one of the letters was intended for publication; they were written hastily and impulsively. He wrote on many subjects—natural history, war, new novels, free verse, Edith Wharton, Robert Frost, Amy Lowell, D. H. Lawrence, Henry James, and other individuals. (Hence the lack of an index is criminal.) He insisted that "Roderick Hudson" was James's masterpiece—not a bad choice, though I wish he had preferred "The American." Perhaps he would have, if he had read it. Hudson tells one anecdote which must I think be taken with salt. "He had a pose about his early work—he pretended to disparage it; but a friend of mine and his once said to him: 'Maybe you'll be furious with me for saying that "Roderick Hudson" is your greatest book.' He started back, threw up his hands in his usual way, and said: 'Well, well, well—you think so! You think so!—dear! dear!' Then suddenly sinking his voice he whispered: 'You are right—I think so too.'" Was it the hero's name that made W. H. like it so much?

Hudson showed good judgment in admiring James's posthumous fragment, "The Sense of the Past." Had the author lived to finish it, he would have achieved another masterpiece.

Amy Lowell's famous poem, "Patterns," is criticised unfavorably, because of its botanical errors. I had not noticed them.

Despite the excellence of Hudson's mind, there was a streak of childishness in the man. I do not refer to his childlike simplicity of manner, which was one of his most beautiful traits; no, I mean childishness. Among his novels there are two, "Fan" and "Ralph Herne," which are almost inconceivably crude; and his remarks on war, which naturally and properly shocked Mr. Garnett, illustrate this same immaturity. He took an attitude toward English society like Tennyson's in the opening stanzas of "Maud"; prolonged peace made social and commercial life rotten, and war would be a glorious and much-needed remedy. This may have been a survival of the savagery of his South American days, where so many were engaged in the pleasing pastime of cutting each other's throats. Hudson never felt at ease in sophisticated society; he hated it, and preferred to roam on foot or on his bicycle, talking by the way with shepherds, rustics, little children, and very old men. In November, 1913, he wrote: "I hope to stay on to see the flame of war brighten this peace-rotten land. It will look very beautiful to many watchers and have a wonderful, purifying effect." A few weeks later, speaking of Edith Wharton's "The Custom of the Country," he says: "Well, her picture is true; it is as rotten and contemptible a society as—ours, and once more I thank the gods *we* are going to have a touch of war, the only remedy for the present disease." It is natural, though not consistent, that in September, 1914, we find him writing: "The talk is war—war, war, and I'm weary of it. . . . My hope and prayer is that we may crush the mighty war lord, God's friend and favorite, utterly before long, and so have a normal life for the world once more." Evidently he forgot that he had written this, for in February, 1915, he writes: "You think it a 'cursed war,' I think it a blessed war. And it was quite time we had one for our purification . . . from the degeneration and the rottenness which comes of everlasting peace . . . the blood that is being shed will

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