

THE
BEDSIDE
FASSBEINDER

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TYPOGRAPHY by MALLIANO

INTRODUCTION

IN THIS SHORT VOLUME THE READER WHO HAS PERUSED previously-published bits of Fassbeindermania in smaller magazines throughout the country, is introduced to another aspect of Carlton J. Fassbeinder. Across the pages of a number of magazines Fassbeinder has stomped in the past with biting sarcasm, lurid satire, ludicrous personality sketches and hilarious accounts of his travels. Though often lacking in specific details, the Fassbeinder reader has usually gathered these facts after five or six encounters with that author: Fassbeinder appears to have traveled extensively, though unprofitably; Fassbeinder seems to be a University man, having been associated at one time or another with various such institutions; and Fassbeinder must have a degree in several subjects, for the Fassbeinder adventures often contain veiled references to "when I was a psychiatric consultant" "during my professorship at such-and-such," etc.

Yet withal, Fassbeinder simply becomes more and more confused as he sees more and more of the world, and if we are to gain a real insight into the character of the misunderstood fellow, we must grant that he is nothing more nor less than a misfit, "...a forlorn creature, out of place, out of time."

Readers will derive many a chuckle from the satire and absurd comedy of Fassbeinder, yet we are certain that not a few will be strangely aware of an occasional forced laugh, of a sensation, perhaps, that this is not true humor. Those who are extremely sensitive may well be left with a lingering state of depression. In this little volume the interested seeker may discover the real Fassbeinder: not the buoyant, care-free, funny chap that he is imagined to be; rather, his dominating personality will be discerned: bewildered, pathetic, a harried, confused creature, endlessly be-

ON BEING NAPOLEON, OR ANY ONE

ELSE, FOR THAT MATTER

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY CONTENTION THAT AN INDIVIDUAL, finding his own particular personality so abjectly boorish and uninspiring as to drive the possessor to distraction, has an inalienable right to turn to the pages of history and become anyone that his fancy dictates. Of course, this type of activity is frowned upon by our modern civilisation in which we find ourselves enthralled, because it allows the practitioner to escape the bonds of slavery which we have allowed to be imposed upon us. It is easy to appreciate the foiled and outwitted feelings of an employer to discover one morning, that a perfectly innocuous bookkeeper, or sales clerk, one who has for years gone along in his prescribed rut, has suddenly come to work beaming with happiness and firm in the conviction that he is Napoleon I, or Kubla Khan, or some other figure of historical importance.

Naturally, there is nothing that can be done with such people, save to cart them off to some sanatorium where they are free to be Napoleon in utter contentment. This is the aspect of the picture which hurts most, because those left behind have to continue as before. It is they who must remain in their ruts as Jack McMurtry, or Joe Blow.

I experience a great gloe and sense of elation when I am approached by some plebian business man with the distressed tale that his slave has suddenly become Sir William Francis Patrick Napier, has gone home to write six volumes of the History of the Peninsular War all over again, and demands indignantly that he be transported back to his natural time (1828) so that he may get started before some upstart commences a similiar undertaking.

"Bravo !" I will exclaim to my client, "bravo ! You are to consider yourself lucky, sir, that you

had the privilege of knowing a man who considered himself Sir William Francis Patrick Napier, and who has enough intestinal fortitude to be Sir William Francis Patrick Napier, despite the ridicule of his friends." And while the client looks at me in utter stupefaction, I become a veritable Machiavelli, seeing that I have this poor, common, unimaginative creature at plusses and fours. In a crafty voice I am apt to advise: "Don't let this man out of your employ. Increase his salary six-fold and maintain him as your confidential adviser. Sir William Francis Patrick Napier, indeed! You are deeply honoured."

The variety of experiences in my life has been infinitely expanded from the observation of the noble changes which the desire to be some great historian brings about in the person himself. Consider the petty and selfish worries of some haberdasher, and then contrast them with the great and tumultuous emotions that this man must experience when he is worrying as a new and somewhat inexperienced Napoleon, over his men in the bloody "Battle of the Pyramids" between the French and the forces of a Mamaluke Army somewhere between Cairo and Alexandria. How often, may I ask, do any of us come to experience such great and noble emotions?

To see friends and clients attempt the difficult role of an historical personage is a fascinating observation, for this is the supreme test of the man. Some of my best friends were successful Napoleons, all the more grandiose because, as they bid me farewell before marching into Russia, they were at the time steeling themselves for the horrors of the great retreat which they knew would come six months later.

But definitely sadder, are those who commenced as Napoleons, only to come sobbing to me at some later date that they were not good enough, and could I recommend some other role for them? Many a potential case of insanity has been saved in this

way.

A man who started out to be Luther Burbank made such a horrible botch of his specimen bottles and grafting operations, not to mention vainly endeavouring to write Burbank's philosophy, that I suggested to him the role of Samuel Hubbard Scudder, an etymologist, admittedly a different line than Burbank's, but a perfectly respectable occupation withal. My patient readily saw this way out and did an excellent job of writing Scudder's "Fossil Insects of North America" and "Index to North American Orthoptera". Many another patient returns to tell me, for instance, that as merely Sam Green they were an awful bust, but in their new role as Aristophanes, they have been the life of every party held at the sanatorium.

One of the most noble of all persons who have come under my care is a scholarly gentleman who has been Emporia, Kansas, for the past six years. The solicitous duty of this city to his civic, moral, & educational problems can serve as a model for all persons wishing to venture into the field of civic administration. He is now composing, with my assistance, a book entitled "My Life as Emporia, Kansas" and it is my belief that the volume, when completed, will rank with Aristotle's "Politics" and Plato's "Republic".

Of course, I will admit that there are black moments to being someone else, and one of my most horrible encounters was with an absolutely fearsome individual who carried a long knife in his mouth and went about being the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Night. My hasty action in donning a skirt made from the window drapes and convincing the fellow that I was Catherine de Medici is perhaps the only action which saved my life. Shaking experiences of this nature require a great deal of self-reserve and belief in the advantages of being someone else besides yourself.

But in general, I am a staunch defender of every

man's natural right to be whomever he damned pleases, and if he bumps into someone else who is also assuming the same role, a good, old-fashioned, fight to the death ought to prove who the better man may be. Furthermore, if a man gets tired of being one character he should change into another, for there is nothing so good for the soul as an occasional change of face.

I've been numerous persons myself, and all to the better, because Fassbeinder a t times becomes intolerable. Once, while running around as Tacitus the Roman Historian, in order to get a better savour of the death of Quintillus Veras, I bumped into a poor fellow who was Being Carlton J. Fassbeinder. This horrible apparition s o shocked and upset me that I stayed in classical times for more than a year, putting a turn in here as Horace, there as Virgil, and when I got tired of it all that I went back a few years more to the Gardens of Alexandria, and became a satyr. Aside from the fact that the various courtesans of the time were unused to horn-rimmed glasses, I did quite well for myself, thank you.

My best moment, though, was the occasion on which I s o frightened a high preasure insurance salesman, by assuming the role of Cyrano de Bergerac ready for one of his thousand duels, that the fellow telescoped into an Egyptian water-clock, which I keep on my desk at present to moisten postage stamps.

Right now I'm going over to my old friend Bergen-Op-Zoom, a lover of oysters and anchovies to the extent that he has become this famous Dutch city. He is indeed a veritable cultural mine, and is being annexed by the Dutch government sometime in 1948.

NOTES ON THE EUPHONIC ART

SINGING, I HAVE FOUND, IS QUITE PREVALENT EVERYWHERE among the human race. I was quite amazed as a youth to learn this, as in my own community, singing was largely confined to visiting troupes of operatic amateurs who visited the Ford Theatre just around the end of harvesting season when everyone was waiting for an excuse to dress up and spend their money. Aside from these sporadic visitations to the hinterland by roadshows, the only other singing I encountered in my youth was that of the converts to the Salvation Army. When an old friend of mine was won over to this insidious propaganda one night and accosted me in front of Harry's Old Fashioned Bar, singing and playing a tambourine, my disgust with singing knew no bounds.

When I commenced travelling all over the world, I discovered to my endless surprise that most persons of most races and most countries, unlike the sensible folk of my northern homeland, were convinced that singing was a feat which could be accomplished by almost anybody. This presumed fact seems to be accepted as quite a natural phenomenon, much as the changing of seasons or the rising and setting of the sun. I was raised with the knowledge that my voice is quite toneless and uninspiring, and have always prided myself in having enough sense to never make an ass of myself in an endeavour to display sonic ingenuity.

My first encounter with what I choose to call "public singing" occurred in the washroom of a Pullman going to Mackinac, Winconsin. I was shaving peacefully when I was horrified to hear, from the adjoining booth in the laboratory, a terrible saw-like sound forming the words: "You're my me-lancholly ba-a-by!" This noise so upset me that I hurriedly summoned the conductor, who fetched a

door in the smoker, and I lead them to the scene of what I thought to be a man in most dire agony. I was, of course, most soundly reprimanded by all those parties involved.

I still had not solved the problem of these gentlemen's anger when I passed a barbershop late one night in Mackinac, and perceived four males rolling about on the floor, emitting pitiful shrieks amidst which I could just barely make out: "Sweet, add a line!" I hastily burst into the barbershop and offered my services, as I had just completed a course in First Aid sponsored by the town constable in view of the impending breakage of a dam upstate a few miles. "'Ave a drinkhic," they slobbered at me, proffering a bottle of some foul liquor.

It was by such continual encounters of this nature that I gradually became aware of the fact this singing is not necessarily limited to persons with years of training behind them in the subject. Since those days I have become more worldly, but I still have a run down my nose when I hear sounds alleged to be singing, as it is my contention that singing, like painting or acting, should be limited to licensed practitioners.

In the Trobriand Islands, natives are taught to sing from birth. Little children can be seen climbing trees, now and then squeaking and yowling Trobriand Island ballads. It is indeed a pleasing sight, the local missionary told me, but I still have an urge to dispatch the whole lot with my elephant gun, throwing in the missionary for good measure.

Another aspect of public singing that has annoyed me is the fact that not all songs are in English. This complicates matters, because one then not only has to listen to all the noise, but one has not the slightest idea what it is all about. In regards to those foreign songs, I find that the noises of singers of different nationalities vary in their repulsiveness. The most obnoxious, I be-

lieve, are Swedish sailors lolling about the docks of Stockholm. Swedish music-noises have a peculiar sweet-like sickening tone about them. It always recalls to mind the horrible sensation I underwent when I regurgitated five pounds of sweet potatoes after a ridiculous childhood boast that I was the original iron man. Whenever I hear "Spaeken Svenska" with its peculiar nasal lilt, I feel that old tickling sensation rise up my spine again.

While I was walking down the Nevsky way in Leningrad, I was distracted by some wild yelpings and shoutings down in the river bed. Imagining a fight of immense proportions underway, I summoned the local gendarmoria and we ran down into the middle of the fracas. Here I perceived many booted Slavs hopping about waving their hands and shrieking at the tops of their lungs. The gendarmes turned on me in disgust and wished to know what was wrong with this spectacle. After all, they were only singing an old Russian love song. I was unable to comment on this as a flying bottle of love hit me on the head and I awoke in the Ospitalskaya Modern.

All-in-all, my views on singing throughout my life have earned me little applause from the mad mob, which insists in continuing the mad illusion that man is born with the natural ability to sing as well as talk. I did, at one time, attempt to sing in a small air-tight chamber at the University purely as an experiment. For some reason the noise I produced burst the thermostat on the fire-control system and at the same time sprung the lock on the door. I was nearly drowned before an undergrad let me out. In response to his inquiry of "what happened?" I looked at him icily and then said: "I was singing." Then I left the poor dumbfounded fool to clean up the mess.

BACKWARDS IN A SWIVEL CHAIR

IT HAS BEEN MY PRIVILEGE TO HAVE FALLEN OVER BACKWARDS in a number of interesting devices. As a matter of fact, my friends have been prompting this vice for several years, as it is always after such a minor catastrophe that the Famous Fassbeinder After-Dinner Story blossoms forth. Research has shown that a sudden descent backwards is the only known way to produce one of these stories - except perhaps to wine and dine Fassbeinder extensively on exotic vermouths and liquors. My friends have found it cheaper to upset me in a chair, however, and the wining and dining which falls my way is usually strictly plobian.

Thus it is that whenever I am invited out, I arrive to discover that while the rest of the guests are going to dine in rare old antique chairs, the chair at Fassbeinder's place is an old relic from the servant's quarters or the attic. Upon seeing this familiar sign, I know that I may expect an upset sometime before the last course is served, but I pretend to ignore the whole thing, passing the chair off as the most antique of the lot. "Good old Fassbeinder is a gem," they always say. And someone always replies, "Yes, just like the razor."

Falling over backwards in a chair used to be the epitome of shocks to me. The reaction would vary, depending on the chair, but each time, when struggling to me feet, I invariably burst into a Famous Fassbeinder After-Dinner Story. People used to gibe me about this phenomenon somewhere about the entre. "Now Carlton," one of the minor wits would smirk, "I want you to engage in a brilliant conversation." Since the time I answered with a malicious, "I will just as soon as I shine my teeth," they have been content just to let me eat in silence until the upset. As a matter of fact, some

ghosts are disturbed about my feelings until after the descent.

I could regale the reader with many nouvelle and ingenious methods used by various hosts to tilt me backwards and down without giving me prior warning, but that is only superfluous technical data and might prove boring. And in any case, all that is over! All that ceased the day at Charlie Hoffer's when I went over in a swivel chair.

Now in an ordinary straight-backed chair, when one loses his balance and falls over backwards, the motion is that of a rapidly accelerating curve, ending in a shattering bump which naturally leaves the victim in a somewhat dazed condition. As I have said previously, this was always sufficient in the past to start the Fassbeinder yarn.

In a swivel chair, as I found in that vain-glorious moment at Hoffer's, the effect is much more sensational. As I recall, Charlie and I were discussing the sales campaign for his 17-foot Oxnard Classics bookshelf. I was leaning back in his office chair. In fact an impish voice kept whispering, "Farther, just a wee bit farther!" And I, in a sudden daring mood (and probably slightly bored with Charlie's chattering), inched back imperceptibly, thrilling as the danger of my situation increased.

And then it happened!

You see, in a swivel chair, as one leans back more and more, the three legs of the tripod still remain on the floor, while the seat, bending backwards, build up tension on the springs. Eventually, the point of over-balance is reached, and I, the Experimenter, am breathless with anticipation.

CRACK!

The tri-pod base snaps up from under the chair and resumes its normal position in relation to the seat. Thus, for a moment, the chair and its occupant are suspended at a forty-five degree angle in the air!

In that moment, suspended in space, I felt all ! I knew all ! The world was at my feet ! The most treasured secrets of the universe were mine ! I was one with the cosmos ! And then there was that unparalleled descent to the floor, and the tingling inspiring shock of the crash !

Charlie Hoffer rushed over to me. "Carlton ! Carlton !" he shouted, "Say something ! Say something ! Oh Carlton, that look, that unearthly look on your face !"

"Wheeee," I said, making peculiar gesticulating motions with my hands.

"Carlton !" Charlie shouted again, shaking me violently, "Tell me, tell me, what is it like ? Oh ! That must have been glorious !"

I arose, tingling with electrical vibrations. I rightened the chair, sat down, and once again tilted back slowly, daring the brink of the cosmos. My heart thundered; slowly I eased back, letting the seat bend gradually. My tongue hung out of my mouth. Hoffer stared, pop-eyed.

CRACK !

Once again I sat reclining in my chair. Once again I was God, Zeus, Apollo, Jupiter, Zarathustra, Odin - all rolled into one. I was just beginning to see The True Concept of the Universe when the view was blotted out abruptly by the top of Hoffer's desk cutting across my vision as I descended forcefully to the floor.

To shorten a long story, I practised falling in Hoffer's chair until about 4:30 P M, at which time the tripod broke into several pieces under the strain. Charlie quickly went around to several other offices and rounded up half a dozen swivel chairs which lasted far into the night. By that time, whenever I arose, instead of bursting into a Famous Fassbeinder After-Dinner Story I spewed forth deep philosophical contemplations, or dictated at an incredible speed, mathematical formulae for the construction of machines to alleviate all

man's problems. These were unfortunately lost, as Charlie was unable to keep up with me.

A few nights later, when a dinner held at the rear Admiral Rucknew B. Bollinggreen Society at the Hopor Arms, I was upset as usual by a very ingenious host. However, instead of bursting into my Famous Fassbeinder After-Dinner Story, which had been the scheduled highlight of the evening, I growled unprintable obscenities, picked up the chair and soundly beat my host over the head with it, pausing on my way out to invert the soup tureen on Rear Admiral Bollinggreen's head. I left the banquet hall in utter chaos.

Since then I have been spurned by all my former hosts. I sit in Hoffer's office, falling backwards for hours on end in swivel chairs, which Charlie produces for me from all manner of unimaginable places. But soon the crisis will come. The OWP recently ordered the cessation of manufacture of swivel chairs, and when the available supply runs out, I will be driven to utter frustration. As a recourse, I have contemplated experiments with ten foot ladders, climbing to the top of them while Charlie holds them erect, and then falling backwards in a ten-foot arc.

Who knows what Cosmic secrets I may discover then ?

MATRICIDE, FROM THE SIDE

I FIND MYSELF QUITE INTERESTED IN THE UNIQUE ACCOMPLISHMENT of Mrs. S—, who, for a l l her twenty five years, is still quite a little lady. Mrs. S— decided to end it all yesterday, according to a local paper. And this even before her first child was conceived, let alone born. After turning on all the gas in the house, lighting a cigarette which caused a slight explosion which burned off all her hair, she picked up an eight-inch butcher knife and, to quote "slashed her left arm to ribbons." According to t h e paper she, "...bled copiously." This is a natural s i g n and should cause no worry.

Finding these machinations too slow, she went into her husband's room and got out his army Colts, proceeding to blow her temple out. She missed and only creased it. She shot again and missed completely. In a desperation she turned upon her bosom. This was a sure shot at such a close range. Still being able to walk, Mrs. S— staggered over to her neighbour's house and gasped: "My god, what have I done!"

This is an interesting sign of the times. Mrs. S— was so preoccupied that she didn't know what she had been doing! What an alarming reflection on the mental state of the nation! One of these days we are apt to discover that we have been idly gouging out an eye-ball or ripping our abdomen open with a fountain pen while listening t o the radio news.

It is possible that the strange preoccupation on the part of Mrs. S— will explain numerous other strange behaviours of human beings. For instance, there was the little boy who one night got out the ax and chopped off the heads of his mother, father, grand-father, and assorted elder and young-

er brothers and sisters.

The Freudian School would endeavour to explain this behaviour with ineffectual sex-repression motivations, or an inferiority or persecution complex. The Passbeinder school holds that t h e child was merely bored. At any rate, the little tot failed to notice the massacre until passersby were attracted to the scene by pools of blood running from under the front door.

Adults, too, can find the monotony of life very dangerous. There was the case of the middle-aged business man who had ridden the 7:40 to work every morning for thirty five years. One morning, while in idle and bored preoccupation perhaps in plans for a forthcoming business deal, he abstractly twined a packing cord about the neck of a lady in front of him and garotted her to death before anyone noticed it.

Of course, the papers built him up as a brutal fiend, and the American Weekly devoted a full double page spread to the "Interurban Strangle Fiend". The truth of the matter is that the gentleman was simply unutterably bored with the inflexible, deadening routine of modern business life. His aghast words, upon being tapped gently by the railroad detective, were: "Great jumping butterballs-- what have I done?"

A study of t h i s preoccupation theory would greatly alter public reaction towards those unfortunate individuals who hold their babies under water in the bathroom too long, or haggard-looking husbands who stagger into the sheriff's office covoured with blood, gasping: "God help me, I've just harvested my family with the reaping scythe!"

The above is an incident worthy of note. Mr. H— came home from his fields o n e night softly whistling Grieg's "Solveg S o n g", swinging the scythe in rhythm. Before he noticed what was happening, his wife and three of his four children lay dead with their heads severed neatly at the neck.

H— was brought out of his reverie by the screams of his surviving son. "Who did this?" he cried in horror.

The mode of modern living has made it necessary for us to think of and keep track of so many complex things at the same time that we often forget what we are doing at the moment in our engrossing reflections on last night's club meeting or tomorrow's shopping. The only advice I can think of at the moment is, keep your mind on what you are doing now, RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT!

Do not for one single instant let your mind swerve from your actions of the moment. You are liable to snap out of a half-awake, half-asleep condition, to discover that you have been fondling your girl's hair in the moonlight, and unfortunately, broken her neck. Then you will have the disagreeable misnomer of "Moonlight Madman" plastered all over your name and your family.

There was the case of the young writer who was tapping on a portable typewriter while flying from Ypsilanti to New York. When he finished his manuscript, he smiled, folded the pages into a mailing envelope, and walked out of the door to mail the story. He had been writing an imaginary confession in the first person. It was found on his body and the unfortunate writer was linked with the nefarious Mildred McGonaglo case.

Erh! Excuse me. I just noticed that my foot has been resting in the fireplace for the past half hour.

Oh, doctor!

SOME RESEARCH ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE

GERMAN TOURIST IN ENGLAND

KARL BAEDDECKER, WHO WAS A GREAT FRIEND OF MY GREAT-grandfather's half brother Konstantin Kryczlig Fassbeinder, opened up the mysteries of the European Continent to English speaking tourists through English editions of his guide books. I have on my private shelf in Charlie Hoffer's office a fairly complete set of Baedeker's, and whenever I feel the urge to reminisce on my old University days at Munchen, or about my brief but glorious summer in the Konnigsdamm near the Jungfernheide, it is only necessary to pull down the proper Baedeker, and I immediately shed huge tears of nostalgia, which Hoffer always stops by asking me to help him fill out his exemption tax blanks.

All during my stay in Germany, I was aware of the fact that the German tourist class was an unhappy lot, in comparison with we Anglo-American visitors. The enigma of the sad, stocky Deutscheboudentourer, with his phlognetic look of boredom long remained a mystery to me until, years later, I ventured on a tourist guide book aimed at making the German's stay in London a more pleasant and profitable venture. Immediately I realised the terrific obstacle which possession of this handbook put in the path of a German visitor, and perhaps here lies the explanation of the seeming German inability to understand the rest of the world. Allow me to conduct a tour of London with the aid of the "Handbuch der Englischen Konversationsprache", Paul Nuss, Publisher, Stuttgart, 1894.

Let us place ourselves in the position of a stolid German Burgher setting foot in a thick London fog for our initial foray into the grey city. Grasping our Handbuch tightly, we say thickly to a passerby: "It is bad, raw weather. What does one do on days of this nature?" (Handbuch, p. 187)

According to the Handb. the logical answer follows in the next line. We are to expect the Londoner to stop and say in one breath: "When a fog comes on, the streetlamps are lighted, the police set their bull's-eye lanterns going and the youths flourish their torches (links) and offer their services to carriage and foot passengers." (Handbuch, *ibid.*)

This is a sample of the "Englischen Konversation sprach". In its omnipotent way, the book provides the German traveller in London with all of his needs. It even looks after the sex-life of the tourist, judging from the goings-on under the title "Im Gasthaus". (At the Hotel)

Having prepared to retire for the evening, we glance through the Handbuch for some finishing touch to a confusing and bewildered day. Our bed is chilly. Perhaps a water bottle would ease the initial shock of retiring. The Handbuch provides us with the necessary information. Ringing for a boy, we grasp the Handbuch firmly in hand and say, on his arrival: "Light a fire in my room, and tell the chambermaid, I should like to have my bed warmed!" (Handbuch, p. 294) If this is not the right hotel, we may find ourselves with more than we bargained for.

Morning arrives. According to the Handbuch, a boy should enter now and in a ringing voice address us: "Awake! Awake! It is time to get up!" Or he may choose the alternate greeting of: "Arise! Arise! It is broad daylight!" Perhaps in the better hotels he is accompanied by a page with a horn.

If you have bifocals or myopia you had better look out at this point or you will find yourself replying in a bored monotone: "My sister is not of age (of full age)" instead of reading: "Do

"Nach den englischen Gesetzen kann ein Knabe mit Zwölf Jahre einen Eid ablegen."

you mean to get up now?" which is at best a rather stupid reply to such a gladsome awakening. The foregoing deviation in the conversation inserted into the dialogue seems unexplained. Perhaps it is some form of obscure German joke, the meaning of which would be especially obscure to an Englishman.

Thus far in the Handbuch and the reader may understand why German tourists to England have often seemed a boorish lot. As the tourist's activities in the British capital branch out as he becomes settled in his domestic situations, the obliging and ever faithful Handbuch provides a bountiful source of brilliant repartees for all manner of social functions. The following are choice excerpts from the Handbuch's conversation hints for tourists who attend a musical presentation.

EIN KONZERT (A Concert)

Q. What do you think of Miss C's singing?

A. Her accompaniment on the harp is very beautiful. (Handbuch, p. 338)

Q. He played with astounding brilliancy, do you not think so?

A. The finale was inimitable. (Handbuch, *ibid.*)

DAS MAITEN EINES ZIMMERS IN EINEM PENSIONAT (Taking a Room in a Boarding House)

Q. Good morning, Mrs. Watson. Mr. Brace told me that you have furnished rooms to let and gave me this letter of introduction.

A. The recommendation of Mr. Brace is all that I require. As I receive only a few ladies and gentlemen as boarders, it is a matter of course that I carefully select each member of our circle.

Q. Have you any rooms to let?

A. Not too many. On the ground floor we have the dining room, the drawing room, the library, the last floor is occupied by an American lady with her two

daughters, I myself share the second floor with a captain on half pay and his wife, and on the third floor I have one room let to a German professor who is making researches at the British Museum.

Q. May I see them?

A. Here is a large backroom, the other is smaller but in front.

Q. When can I come?

A. Whenever you like, you can sleep here tonight if you will.

Q. Very well, I shall send for my things in the course of the afternoon and come at six o'clock (of the clock).

A. Good morning!

(Adieu!)

And that is the whole thing that worries me. Where did that "Adieu!" work its way into this Dickens-like discussion? Anyway, I feel like leaving our German traveller at this point, since the instructions for playing bridge in German, on the next thirty pages, seem just a bit too complicated to wade through after all the exertion in the morning of renting a zimmer in a pensionat.

Someday, however, I shall look into that delightful section called "Amerikanismen", which is a frightfully stolid explanation of some good old American idioms, such as "What an aw-full looking woman."

If that is a German idea of an American idiom, you may leave me off of the next boat crossing the Atlantic. How would Paul Noss explain: "That gal's gams really send me bye-bye." Perhaps it would come out: "Das Madchens Binden machen mir sehr heiss, auf Wiedersehen and Wiedersehen."

It loses so much in the translation.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SALESMAN

AMONG THE MANY IRRITATING FORMS OF LIFE WHICH I have not yet been able to figure out a method of avoiding, is the salesman (and woman). The salesman is the point at which the obscure workings of business and economy come in contact with that vast brainless sponge termed the "laity". To me the salesman's workings are an obscure and ridiculous chimera, making no sense whatever, and satisfactorily serving neither the demands of business nor the customer. I am perpetually reminded by salespeople of the little figures that come out of & disappear into the strange doors atop an old Nuremberg clock. They have absolutely nothing to do with the telling of the time, and merely serve to make the basic functions of the clock more complicated and confusing.

Whenever I walk upstairs to save fifty dollars, or some other absurd sum, I immediately become the quarry of an immense and intricate fox-hunt conducted by all departments of the store against me. Here is a guide, there an eye-catching display, here a rail that turns me thither, there a young and loquacious salesman to answer my stupid questions. I am a lesser animal under close scrutiny in a maze, with each department waiting to see where I will blunder so that the proper party may take my wondering hand in tow and make a killing.

One would think that the customer who knew precisely what he wanted would be the salesman's dream but I have found this to be exactly opposite the case, much to my perpetual discomfiture. When I walk into a men's clothing store, wishing to buy an all-wool dark blue double-breasted serge suit with vest at \$40.00 plus tax, that is precisely what I want. This elementary statement of fact seems to be utterly beyond the grasp of the salesperson's

thought processes. Looking from the confused look on the salesperson's face, one would think I had asked for a Roman toga with gold fringing. Apparently one of the basic precepts of salesmanship is that the customer cannot possibly have the faintest idea as to what he wants, and if he thinks he has, it is an illusion which must be immediately erased.

Inevitably I find myself lead to the single-breasted department, where I am shown a light-blue gabardine with a thin white pin-stripe, which sells for \$35.00. "This is the very latest thing," I am told assuringly.

Immediately I know that I am lost! This salesman will never in the world sell me a blue wool serge suit with double-breast and vest for \$40.00. Timorously I query: "Erh, that's very nice, but I'd like to see something with a double-breast, if I may, sir. (?)"

The salesman assumes a hurt expression. To think that I should want something else after he has taken the pains to show me the very latest thing. Reluctantly I am lead back into the dim recesses of the store, where the double-breasted suits are hung. I am allowed to inspect furtively a dark brown tweed suit having no vest and selling for \$44.56.

By now I know for certain that I am hopelessly lost! The nearest this salesman will ever let me get to the blue suit I want will be a sad compromise in a double-breasted suit, sans vest, with a slight pattern, selling for \$5.00 more than I am prepared to pay.

"You don't have any with vests, do you.?" I ask hopefully.

The salesman restrains himself from an apoplectic outburst. "Vests," he chokes. "Vests!"

I have called his last card. Inwardly raging that I have been so obstinate and recalcitrant, the salesman jerks from amidst the myriads of suits a semi-blue-black double-breasted serge selling for

\$44.56 and having no vest. "Try this," he hisses indignantly.

My spirit is broken. Once again, I am beaten. Resignedly, I don this atrocity. With brisk efficiency the salesman, while I am still fumbling deep in the sleeves, takes my measurement, marks the trousers and shoulders for alteration, asks for my charge account number (thereby insulting me further by assuming that I am incapable of paying cash) (which is usually the case), and leads me over to the credit department.

After the Geheimatstadtpolizei have dismissed me I walk forlornly down the stairs, wondering why, oh why, it is always impossible to wheedle out of the sales department the suit I want. And as ever, as I pass through the front showroom windows, I see advertised as the fall special, several styles of dark blue wool double-breasted suits with vests at a flat \$40.00 plus tax. "Come is and take advantage of these fine winter bargains," the advertising reads.

Sometimes, when I want a black formal evening suit, I shall enter with a supercilious swagger, demand an orange and black pin-striped Palm Beach Suit, on the 5th day of January after the season's heaviest snowfall, and then, I am sure, I shall emerge in an eighteenth century black formal evening suit, and a stovepipe hat.

And further, the salesdepartment will consider it all a triumph of modern salesmanship and decorum

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LAST TRIP

OF THE GREAT BEELZEBUB

IT WAS WITH CONSIDERABLE CONSTERNATION THAT I READ in the morning paper of the disaster at the Hoper Arms only the day previous. But far worse than this, in my opinion, was the decision of the management to replace Great Beelzebub, the last remaining steam elevator on the North American Continent, with an Otis Automatic Lift. This move is somewhat akin to replacing the Viennese Orchestra down at the Hubschmadchen Wafe with a juke box. I couldn't believe that Great Beelzebub, the impregnable, had actually broken down, and I resolved to look up Jack, the engine man, and obtain the true story.

Jack, and the elevator captain, Oskar Gest, were two colourful remnants of the book which set the construction of the Hoper Arms and the installation with much publicity some thirty years ago of Great Beelzebub, the largest steam elevator in the world. Jack and Oskar had been piloting this majestic lift up and down its ornate shaft in the Hoper Arms for nearly three decades.

The shaft for Great Beelzebub was a late nineteenth century style spider-work of iron work, faintly resembling the Eiffel Tower. This imposing and complex monstrosity rose out of the middle of the Hoper Arms' spacious lobby and climbed in a dizzy maze for eight stories to the roof garden. In the midst of this formidable web reposed the equally ornate cage of Great Beelzebub herself. Beelzebub was something like fifteen feet deep and twenty feet long, and contained three lounges and several easy chairs, all equipped with cigarette trays and magazines. Every day since its installation Great Beelzebub had puffed in awesome splendour up her spidery shaft and hised back down to the lobby, somewhat like a gigantic spider hanging fatefully over the inhabitants of the hotel.

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Oskar, the captain, opened the door, the passengers filed in with customary ceremony, and sat down in their provided seats for the journey. Oskar would then step outside and call, a la conductor, "All ab-o-ard ! First floor, second floor, and up to the roof garden !" He would then step back in, sliding the gates shut, and pick up the engine-room telephone.

"Are you ready, Mr. Fitzpatrick ?"

"Yes," would faintly echo the metallic reply.

"First floor, please," Oskar would command.

Then, the shaft would tremble slightly. Down in the engine room Jack would be frantically shovelling coal. The cylinders and pistons flashed and huffed, and Great Beelzebub, with passengers cheering, began to ascend the giant, spidery shaft amid deep, powerful puffings and wisps of stray steam from the cylinders trailing up after the cage.

It is no wonder that this powerful and famous spectacle was firmly established in my life, and the thought of an Otis Automatic lift replacing this Victorian Colossus was revolting and disgusting.

The newspapers stated that, after thirty years of valient service, Great Beelzebub had broken down at last, seriously imperilling the lives of Commodore Lemuel G. Hoper and several bank dignitaries who had been on an inspection tour of the hotel chain of which the Hoper Arms was the most glittering link.

I found Jack at his usual booth in the Hubschmadchen Cafe, and I am now proud to state that Great Beelzebub died a glorious death from other than some ignominious internal weakness. I am privileged to say that the blame for the entire catastrophe may be placed on the Acme Ice Company, and a crew of illiterate truck drivers !

When Horace Growlinggaw, manager of the Hoper Arms, learned that the Commodore and other owners of the chain were going to pay his hotel an inspec-

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tion visit, he immediately instructed Jack and Oskar to polish up Great Beelzebub for the occasion. This they did, checking and rechecking the parts, bars, and controls. Jack even built up an extra head of steam to insure the notaries a smooth, even trip.

Commodore Hoper arrived that afternoon about 2:30, and after a brief visit in the spacious lobby rounded up his party and approached Great Beelzebub who was hovevouring at the lobby stop in all her glittering splendour. Oskar, attired in a new and freshly pressed Captain's uniform, smartly clicked his heels as the group solemnly entered and sat down, while the floor staff gathered outside to wish the party bon voyage.

"Are you ready, Mr. Fitzpatrick?" Oskar intoned resonantly into the engine telephone.

"Ready, Captain Gost," echoed the prompt metallic reply.

"Prepare for a non-stop trip to the roof gardens," Oskar commanded with a ringing voice, and with a visible swelling of pride, he slid the gate shut.

Slowly Great Beelzebub began to rise in her shaft. The floor trembled to the pounding of the mighty engines under full pressure, and wisps of steam billowed up from the shaft after the steadily rising behemoth. The staff cheered lustily.

Down in the steaming engineroom, Jack Fitzpatrick, stripped to the waist, threw shovel after shovel load of coal into the gapping maw of Great Beelzebub's fire box, and the cylinder rods and fly wheels spun with never-before-equalled rapidity.

Gaining in speed, Great Beelzebub soared past the first floor. With engines puffing and great clouds of steam ascending the shaft, Beelzebub surmounted the third and fourth floors, still holding and increasing its speed. Oskar stood in rapture before his control levers. Never had Great Beelzebub gone beyond the fourth floor without having to

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stop and build up steam! This was truly an occasion. Even Commodore Hoper and party stopped talking as they sensed the terrific powers playing beneath and about them.

And then, as Great Beelzebub steamed majestically past the fifth floor, Jack, in the engine room heard above the puffing and rumbling of the wheels, a loud trundling sound, and suddenly the basement doors of the Hoper Arms flow open and a large Acme Ice Compant truck crashed into the steam filled chamber. Husky stevedores descended from the cab and threw open the back gates of the vehicle.

"Hold on, old fellow," one of them shouted, "we will have that fire out in a jiffy!"

As Jack looked on in incredulous horror, the fellows commenced pitching 100 pound blocks of ice into Great Beelzebub's fire box! Jack cried out for them to stop this madness, but the stevedores, imagining... was cheering them on, only increased their efforts. Immediately the pressure, built up to the critical point in the thundering boilers, began to drop. High, high up in the shaft, a frown suddenly crossed Oskar's face as he felt the pace of Beelzebub begin to slacken. Was she only going to make the seventh floor before she had to stop? For nearly thirty years Oskar had imagined Great Beelzebub could climb sixteen stories if she had room enough...had he been wrong?

Oskar lifted the engineroom phone from its hook. "Pressure?" he queried tremulously. All that greeted him were strange shoutings and crashings from the boiler rooms.

Commodore Hoper looked up sharply. "I believe the pace is slowing, captain," he observed critically.

Indeed, it was apparent to anyone that the behemoth was slowing. She puffed slowly past the seventh floor, loosing speed alarmingly. Oskar tightened his hold on the emergency brake. Beelzebub ~~more~~ more and more slowly, and then, just a

yard short of the eighth floor, stopped completely. She hung for a moment. Then with a protesting rumble of gears, she began to settle slowly.

Oskar worriedly lifted the phone from its hook again. The strange metallic shouting and crashing in the engineroom was continuing unabated.

With rising speed Great Beelzebub glided down past the seventh floor. Commodore Hoper leapt to his feet. With sudden alarm, Oskar threw the safety brake. But too late! Beelzebub was now descending too fast for the claws to catch! They merely commenced ratcheting, setting up a tooth-jarring vibration within the cage. The inspection party held their hats, and gripped their seats.

All over the hotel the guests and employees knew a terrible mishap was in progress, for as Great Beelzebub shudderingly descended, the very walls of the Hoper Arms began to vibrate. Mirrors were smashed, china closets collapsed, water pipes burst and those with rooms near the shaft were jarred out of their chairs and beds. A porter carrying a stack of dishes fell into the dumb-waiter shaft and created a miniature Beelzebub of his own as he slid clattering down into the kitchens.

A huge crowd of persons ran and gathered in the lobby to peer in horror-stricken fascination up the great shaft for the first sign of the falling giant. With a rising crescendo of vibrations and sound, Great Beelzebub burst into the lobby from the upper floor, amidst a shower of plaster, and shaking as with the palsy from the slipping emergency ratchets. A great moan went up from the throng as the shuddering cage chattered past them and disappeared in clouds of steam into the depths below. The on-lookers caught a brief glimpse of the trapped occupants clinging desperately to the bars and ash-trays in that tragic moment.

The Hoper Arms jumped as if struck as Great Beelzebub crashed into the bumpers at the bottom of the shaft. The entire scene was hidden by great

clouds of dust and billowing steam, but a few sharp-eyed observers report that caught a glimpse of the top of the car recoiling almost back to the lobby level before the lobby had to be evacuated while Vesuvius quieted down.

It was over an hour before ladders could be lowered into the black pit, and still longer before the battered occupants, none seriously injured, could be extracted from the maze of twining bars and wires that had once been Great Beelzebub.

The Acme Ice Company stevedores left as soon as Beelzebub started descending, thinking the building was about to collapse, and Oskar Gost has remained mysteriously absent all the time. He must have escaped somehow through the basement. He hasn't been back to get his salary.

And that's the unknown truth about the last trip of Great Beelzebub, as told by Jack himself. Today I went over to the Hoper Arms and looked at that black, vacant shaft, and shed a silent tear for the genial behemoth that once occupied it. No more Great Beelzebub on Thanksgiving, to carry turkeys up and down to all the guests. No more staff of bell-boys singing Christmas carols under the tree in the far corner of the cage as she puffs up and down the shaft filling every floor with Joyeux Noel. A great tradition is truly passed. I will miss my chair and ash tray in the spacious interior of Great Beelzebub. I wonder if we can even smoke in the proposed Otis Automatic Lift.

Otis a gloomy day indeed!

MY EXPERIENCES AS A CRITIQUE GRAND.

OR, WHY I HATE THE STAGE

VARIOUS PERSONS ABOUT TOWN ARE ALWAYS ACCOSTING ME this summer at my favourite booth in the Hubschmadchen Cafe, in consideration of my position the past season as Critique Grand from M. Vivipier Du Pois' ballet company, and regaling me with the story of the Blackamoor who collapsed in the performance of "Aurora" the night I wasn't there, and had to be carried off the stage amidst the grande finale.

"It is unfortunate you were not present," a localite will address me, cornering Charlie Hoffer and I in our booth, as which time Hoffer will make frantic gesticulating motions to ward off the coming disaster. "It was absolutely the funniest thing I ever witnessed," the moribund character will continue, while I turn the shades of a Pousse Cafe.

Other persons will furtively accost Charlie during the morning rehearsal (for this year Hoffer has been working as a sort of stage manager, due to the absence of other employables) and demand of him: "Why does Fassbeinder become so sullen when everyone asks him about the blackamoor that collapsed? Was it a friend of Carlton's?"

The mystery has grown beyond all sensible proportions, since I feel that a blackamoor has the right to collapse if he feels like it, without the entire town becoming involved. The incident has, in fact, become the talk of the town, and all I do of late is to grouse around at Hoffer's office or in my booth at the Hubschmadchen, because it is all too revolting to think of, and I am wondering what ever happened to my mind the day I consented to become a Critique Grand just to oblige Hoffer and increase his standing with M. DuPois.

For one thing, my orderly life had never before

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come into contact with the stage, and it was a great shock for me to discover that the entire company resembled a set of case histories that had escaped from the back of any set of Kraft-Ebbing, Fritz-Kahn, or Professeur August Forol.

All this, of course, is merely leading up to the explanation of the case of the mysterious blackamoor who collapsed and so upset everyone. Several nights after the grand opening, I was walking around in the lobby during the performance, wishing I could retire to a nice, peaceful atom-smasher, when Hoffer ran up breathlessly. "One of our Supervisors has a stomach ache!" he bewailed.

"Administer Alka Seltzer in small doses, followed by Cascara," I snapped, vainly wishing that the victim would die a horrible death.

"You'll have to supervise," Hoffer insisted, pulling madly at my coat sleeve.

"Oh Lord!" I groaned. "What does a Supervisor do?"

At this Hoffer assumed an incredibly crafty look -- a look so unnatural for him that it alarmed me to some extent. "Oh, one walks about back stage," he pursed, innocently. Meanwhile I was being dragged down as outside aid, my mind vainly trying to form an idea as to the function of a Supervisor. "Doubtless," I assured myself, "one walks about back stage, warding off curiosity seekers. It can't be too bad." It was thus that I came to my senses in the dressing room face to face with M. Vivipier DuPois.

"Fass-bein-dier," he exclaimed, enthusiastically "you are about to make your debut! O, quell chance magnifique! And to sink of se thousands of young men and women who haff nevair had soch an opportunity!"

"But -" I began.

"O. K., shed those glad rags and get into this costume!" A short, awarthy gentleman was directing me. He deposited a huge haudy mass of clothes

at my feet.

"But -" I protested.

The manager desorps would have no such recalcitrance on my part. "Think !" he yelled, "you will be able to criticise the ballet from a magnificent position : just ten feet from the dancers !"

I was hopelessly trapped, a mere titmouse in the maelstrom, driven by automatic forces beyond my control. "What do I do ?" I stammered, which constituted my resignation into the kingdom of the damned.

"Nothing !" a character in a long, gold robe, said to me succinctly. "You stand absolutely still, and then follow me off when I tell you." He winked coyly at me.

"Aphrodite !" I croaked, "Aphrodite ! Would that you could see the Greeks in their decay !" I passed a hand before my eyes as I slipped into black stockings, a red hoop skirt, a cloak, and a hat not weighing less than ten pounds. A masseur hurriedly removed my glasses and commenced blacking my face.

"Do I look negroid ?" I queried hopefully.

"Entrer en scene !" the manager screamed. "Entrer en scene ! The intermission is almost over !"

An excited titter of protest swept through the cast, and I found myself carried tottering along in the unaccustomed high heels along with the company out behind the curtain.

I was placed in the back by an ornate entrance. "Hurry ! Hurry ! Hurry !" the long robe cautioned me. I heard the muffled noise of the orchestra in the pit beyond the curtain. Then I was alone on the stage !

The curtain rose and a brilliant purple light was shining on me ! Then, in rapid succession the Dramatis Personae made their entrance, and I suffered several delusions about the ballet as I watched this fantasmagoria in myopic bewilderment. Ballet dancers, rather than being silent and full

creatures of the light, puff, pant, and wheeze, and they create an insufferable din when one is less than fifty feet away.

I was observing this mad gyration and confusion when, with a sudden, alarming shock, I realised I was standing on nothing ! That is to say, there was absolutely no sensation below my knees, and the region of stagnation was creeping upwards. Sweat broke out on my stygian face. I tried to wiggle a toe and restore some circulation before gangrene set in. Immediately a thousand termites which had somehow found refuge in my legs, began to crawl up and down my veins and arteries. It was also in this moment that I realised my hat had turned into a vice, intent upon garroting me to death. I was swaying precariously, and imagining all my friends beyond the row of lights and dancers tittering gleefully : "Oh, isn't that Fassbeinder ?" "Fassbeinder ?" "Yes, it is, and he's swaying back and forth !" "He'll never last it through !" "The old boy is going down any moment !" "He'll ruin everything."

"Stand still," I cautioned myself. "You have to pull through ! You must not foul up the ballet, Fassbeinder !" But I was oscillating beyond all hope, and at last with a deep groan, I closed my eyes. I tried to think of some heroic phrase as I fell towards the floor. I was vainly fumbling with a Latin declension so as to make "Morture te salutamus" in the first person singular, as I collapsed in a heap.

I revived shortly thereafter in the dressing room, to perceive a livid M. Vivipier DuPois scowling at me. "Failure !" he spat. "An abject failure ! You will never make the corps de ballet !"

"You could have at least fallen," the manager observed, "so that the entire cast wouldn't have had to walk over you during the finale's exit."

"I am not an actor," I replied, endeavouring to assume some form of defensive dignity. "Where are

my clothes ?"

Once more I steelled myself for the heckling which would surround me on all sides once I stepped back into the lobby. After a pause, I manfully and defiantly threw open the door and strode forth.

"Fassbeinder !" I was beset on all sides. "How is the poor fellow who collapsed ? Did you see him fall ? Wasn't it disgusting ? etc. etc." This was my first intimation that my negroid appearance has successfully obscured my identity. I immediately changed my air of grim defiance to one of taken-aback nonchallance.

"Why no !" I answered, expressing mild amazement "During the ballet I was over at the Hubschmadchen, reading "Horatio at the Gridge."

'O ! Tiber, fether Tiber

To Whom the Romans pray'..."

I began in a dramatic stage voice, but Charlie Hoffer interrupted me and dragged me back to the Cafe, all the while keeping me facing the throng. Once there he heaved a sigh of relief.

"God!" he said, "how fortunate you didn't turn around. You are still black around the back of the neck !"

I looked at him intently and spoke in a mysterious voice : "That is to keep my armor from chaffing my skin !" Then I defended the bridge with several bottles of ale.

THE END