

papers, may quite conceivably be improved rather than otherwise by the loss of its directing counsels." For—

"The unique value of the *Times* was its impersonality, and Lord Northcliffe's control, while fruitful of much advantage in other ways, tended to rob it of this character. Of late years especially it had become involved in his feuds, and tinged with his prepossessions. It may be that the loss it will inevitably suffer in individuality may be compensated by a distinct gain, in that it will more correctly represent the average opinion of the solid classes, and be again what it has latterly ceased to be, a fairly accurate barometer for foreigners of British opinion."

It is what Northcliffe did to the *Times*, we see, which will be the measure of his abilities. For the *Times* has almost stood as the *alter ego* of the British Empire. "Lord Northcliffe's journalism," says the *London Nation and Athenæum*, "must, in any critical view of it, be judged by the last phase of our Napoleon's career:

"Lord Northcliffe bought the *Times* when at the top of his fame and in the prime of his experience as the life and soul of the new journalism. He had all literary England to draw from, and he had full command of a mighty fortune for the rebuilding of the greatest English newspaper in its decline from the proud mastery of Deane. Lord Northcliffe failed because, with all his genius, he lacked the moral and the intellectual outfit for his job. Thus it happened that the last Northcliffian paper proved to be the most characterless of all. With the old standard of merit fell the old tradition of omniscience and omnipresence, the old feeling that the *Times* was governing England. Lord Northcliffe seemed—of course, he only seemed—to let that tradition out to France. But, in fact, he never lived enough with the greater things of his time to know what it required of him when it called for quality rather than for a crude, quantitative measurement of its needs. Absurd as the word may seem, he was not quietist enough to be a good director of the *Times*. . . . He could not wait for the faithful report, the authoritative word, the skilled and patient judgment. So, while he aspired to govern the politicians, he only intimidated them."

The *Spectator*, too, joins the others in hoping that the time has come when "so great a national institution" as the *Times* may "find that stability which it needs." Where so conservative an organ of opinion always placed Northcliffe may probably be seen in this paragraph:

"That Lord Northcliffe had in any supreme measure the special gift of the newspaper editor, the instinct for publicity, we are not prepared to admit. He knew a certain public, and to that public he served the dish, or rather the series of dishes, which they desired for their daily mental food. But in doing this he did not, we think, show any extraordinary originality, tho no doubt he did show great enterprise. It is true that he hit off the public taste, but he hit it off not so much by the exercise of imagination or any of the higher forms of ratiocination as by a personal process. The *Daily Mail* hit its particular public between wind and water not because Lord Northcliffe had skilfully diagnosed what that public liked, but because he made a paper which he liked himself. By what was for him the most fortunate of accidents, he represented exactly what we had almost called the men and women of 'the new learning'—a class keen, eager, and intelligent, but also very superficial and very badly educated.

"To put it in another way, Lord Northcliffe was a man who had a bright, ill-balanced, sensational mind, which was hungry for general information. He desired to know a little about everything, but he did not want to be bored by knowing too much about anything. There was no limit to his mental alertness or to

his eagerness to hear and half discuss every new thing. What he, in common with his public, could not bear even for five minutes was reflection. No one who ever talked with Lord Northcliffe and tried to get him to reflect could fail to notice the infantile character of his mind. In many ways he and, once more, also his public, were like the lady in Pope—the lady 'with too much quickness ever to be taught.'"

MYSTERIES IN THE THEATER

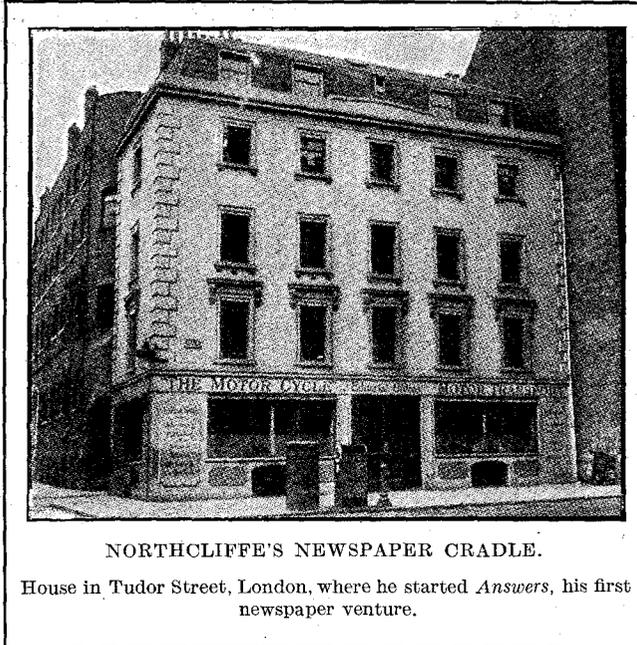
PLAYS ARE SUBJECT TO EPIDEMICS. Just now it is mystery that is supposed to be drawing the tired amusement seeker. The theater provides him with thrills for jaded nerves and takes him into its confidence on an "honor" basis, asking him not to divulge the point of the mystery to intending visitors to the play, so that their pleasure shall not be spoiled. The machinery of the plays seems to go as far back as the old "Mysteries of Udolpho" days, and Mr. Reamer, dramatic critic of the *New York Herald*, begs the playwrights to moderate their transports and deal in simpler devices. "Whispering Wires" turns a telephone into a firearm and "The Monster" plays over the keyboard of nature for its spooky thrills. Mr. Reamer objects:

"It is not a healthy sign for the future of these plays of mystery that writers find it necessary to surround their incidents with so much irrelevant aid to bewilderment. In 'The Bat' an occasional hand reached from behind a drapery or a symbol of the thief was seen on a panel. But the action passed in a country home. The most exciting murder is the least unusual. To kill a man or woman in a two-room-bath-and-kitchenette apartment at three in the afternoon on a popular thoroughfare is in its effects more horrifying than any killing that ever took place in the old belfry at midnight. Detective stories are like Herbert Spencer's ideal style, impressive in ratio to their lack of effort. In a tale or play the effort may be present. But the revelation of it weakens the effect of every act.

"Mystification by the simple and every-day means of life is the most enduring and striking. When Gaboriau and Boisgobey were surrounding their stories with all possible paraphernalia of crime there came into the field of ephemeral literature a story of crime by Anna Katherine Green which had more genuine suspense than any published in this country or Europe. It was 'The Leavenworth Case,' long accounted the best of American detective stories. This fame, it is needless to say, came from the probability and simplicity of the conditions which the author laid down for herself. No exotic or supernatural power was invoked to solve this story of a murder.

"So it ought to be with the mystery play that is going to be most successful in its effect on the listener. Lightning may flash, thunder roar, telephones discharge bullets and the wind sigh about the inky rooms. Yet to enthrall the spectators with the aid of none of these arbitrary and theatrical means, makes the best kind of a mystery whether it be divided into acts or chapters.

"It is for the good of the playwrights therefore that they are urged to bear in mind the value of such simple means of creating their effects. Sardou wrote in 'Fedora' nothing more than a good mystery play and there are no other qualities in Sir James Young's 'Jim the Penman.' Yet they made theater history in their time. Doubtless both playwrights could have invented unessential bugaboos to make them seem more mysterious. Luckily it was not necessary. They knew their craft. So they could impart to every line and action more absorbing eloquence than might have come from all the thunder and lightning and midnight darkness that the property man could invent for them."



NORTHCLIFFE'S NEWSPAPER CRADLE.

House in Tudor Street, London, where he started *Answers*, his first newspaper venture.

WHY BOYS GO TO COLLEGE

LEARNING FOR ITS OWN SAKE plays a relatively small part, it seems, in the complex of motives that send boys to college to-day. They are storming the doors in such increasing numbers that artificial means have to be devised for keeping out the overplus—those that the physical conditions can not accommodate. "What the typical boy sees in college," says John Palmer Gavit, who has been analyzing our higher institutions for the New York *Evening Post*, "appears to be not any educational process that he is to undergo through instruction, so much as a chance to *live*, in all that the word may be taken to mean, in a very pleasant environment and amid most interesting events and social activities for four years or more before the hurly-burly and the more or less irksome routine of hard work in the outside world swallow him up." What Father, who pays the bills, thinks of this expensive program does not come within the purview of this inquiry. The boy, it must be said, is more or less the victim of class prejudice, and tho he may covet intellectual distinction in addition to his social graces, he is forced to conceal these ambitions beneath a surface of nonchalance. To go into some of the details of Mr. Gavit's inquiries:

"During the past few weeks in various places I have been asking many college boys and graduates of many different colleges as I chanced to meet them what they regarded as the net advantage acquired in their college life. The answers were all prompt and glib enough; you could make them into a formula on a rubber stamp or set them to music. With a proportion of exceptions so small as to be almost negligible, the list of advantages cited had to do with purely *social* relationships and experiences. The fellow students from every class and corner of the earth whom he met and the helpful and enjoyable friendships that he made; the teamwork he participated in, the executive experience he gained as manager of some athletic group or as editor of a periodical; the democratic atmosphere in which he lived (every college is democratic, if you let its adherents tell it!); the self-reliance he acquired, and so on. I can count on the fingers of one hand—any way, not more than two—the men who even mentioned spontaneously the studies they pursued or any purely intellectual activity in which they engaged.

"Oh, yes, the studies, too!"

"To be sure, it was an oversight, wholly unintentional. Call attention to the omission, and instantly:

"Oh, yes, there's that, too."

"Not that the teachers, very great teachers, were not remembered. Almost always there was one, or perhaps two or more, of whom appreciative mention was made among the assets; but in every instance professor or instructor was acknowledged among the avails not because of what he taught but because of what he *was*. One thus including William James among the things the Harvard of his day gave to him said to me:

"I didn't get much of his stuff, but I got *him*."

"Some allowance must be made for the fact that it is not 'good form' in colleges to exhibit 'high-brow' tendencies or excessive enthusiasm about one's intellectual interests. Ask an Army officer, a real thoroughbred, what are the qualifications

of an officer. He will list many things, but he will never mention bravery among them.

"Nevertheless, it seems to me highly significant that the acknowledgment among college men is almost invariably of what the college *life* has done or is doing; seldom or never any first allusion to the formal college *work*. Only one man has said to me the shrewdly discriminating thing:

"One has to look out that he balances the two things. It is a great mistake at college to neglect either the courses or the student activities."

The college community is described as a microcosm, "a little cross-section of society, where the individual, made what he is by personal equation and the home and social environment out of which he came originally, modified but rarely radically changed by the preparatory school, goes on being much the same kind of person that he was and would have been had he never come to college at all." Mr. Gavit declares he knows no college where high scholarship in and for itself commands great social prestige. He thinks students at nearly all colleges may be divided into four groups with reference to relationship between scholarship and social standing. Thus:

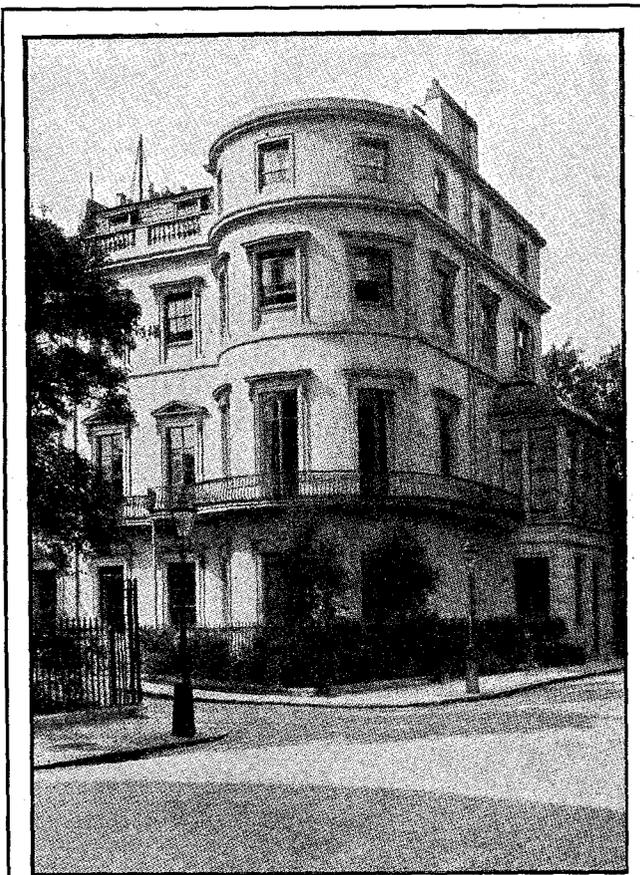
"Group 1—The socially prominent and personally popular. Active in all the more conspicuous athletic and other undergraduate activities. Financially comfortable, as a rule; very small proportion working their way or in need of financial assistance. Few of notably high standing in scholarship; indeed, men most important for athletic prestige and important student activities frequently in hot water and in danger of being lost by probation for low grades. Few, if any, Phi Beta Kappas, and an excessive proportion of low-stand students. Probably about

25 per cent. of students are in this group.

"Group 2—Men of lesser prominence. Engaged in minor sports and activities. Notably better average grades than group 1. Members of less prominent clubs and fraternities. A large proportion working their way and in need of financial assistance. Again few, if any, Phi Beta Kappas. This group contains about a normal percentage distribution of all the grades of scholarship. Probably about 30 per cent. of students are in this group.

"Group 3—The students. Personally inconspicuous socially, but monopolizing the Phi Beta Kappa group and the high scholarship grades generally. Perhaps 20 per cent. of this group working their way and having relatively hard sledding financially. These are the men who take college very seriously from the point of view of both scholarship and college regulations. They have neither time nor money to waste. A smaller group—say 20 per cent.

"Group 4—The recluses and the entirely obscure. Half or more of these are in serious financial straits, earning their way by hard work, often complete drudgery. The college makes allowances for the time they must spend in wage-earning rather than in study. This group includes also those who live at home in the college town or within commuting distance, or in nooks, corners and attics of the neighborhood, getting education under the greatest handicaps. It will include some very high-stand men and some tottering for various reasons on the verge of dismissal for total failure. Probably about 25 per cent. of the students are in group 4."



NORTHCLIFFE'S LONDON HOME.

No. 1 Carleton Gardens W, where the man who liked to be called the "Napoleon of English journalism" died.