HISTORICAL SKETCHES of SHAKESPEARE'S LONDON

By Zaidee Douglas Adams

IN the days of Shakespeare England's capital was quite a different town from the "Llyndin" of the Celts, or the London of today. With the passing of the feudal barons, and their methods of warfare, the necessity for the thick-walled, moated castles, which were little less than prisons, had vanished. Civilization had replaced them with magnificent mansions and the beautiful villas one finds in Italy.

London streets still continued narrow, dark and miry, the houses with their protruding stories being so near together that neighbors on opposite sides of the streets might shake hands from the upper windows. But the favorite residence portion, "The Strand," which lay outside the city walls along the banks of the Thames, was a series of beautiful villas. The Italian Renaissance had touched England's architecture, as well as her life and letters. The landscape, heretofore beetling with high walls and heavy turreted exteriors, had been changed for the spacious villas, with tiled walks and gardens terraced down to the water's edge. Pancoast likens these beautiful homes on the water front to a second Venice, each family possessing its gondola and waterman. At night it was especially Venetian, when these little crafts shot out into the river from every landing, their lights making little star pictures in the water, and anon a ripple of laughter, or the tinkle of a guitar breaking the silence.

Many famous people owned homes along the river. Here were the dwellings of Bacon and Raleigh, the Temple, with its lovely gardens, etc., while near the town was the house owned by Hans Holbein, the Dutch artist. London Bridge, with its shops and drawbridge, which Elizabeth had lately repaired and decorated with the "Nonesuch" tower, all added to the air of prosperity and progress, though the usual adornment of ghastly heads of traitors and criminals, which were always visible about that tower, could scarcely have added zest to the gayety of the bustling, rushing crowd who daily jostled each other across London Bridge.

But we must not forget the most famous of all these landmarks ,the work of William Rufus. It has been said, "the history of the Tower of London is the history of England," and if the stones of this palace, fortress and prison could speak out and voice the "cry of the human," what lessons might they not teach us of life's vices, vanities and vicissitudes. But no one would stop to listen to the unpleasant in those days. The throng of courtiers which crowded London streets were a brilliant mass of color, velvets, satins, laces and jewels. Here intellect, wit and laughter completely obliterated from memory the horrors and gloom of the reign of Mary. Elizabeth often mingled with this brilliant throng, herself the most gorgeous, and followed by an immense retinue of richly dressed courtiers. When attending church a thousand men sometimes formed her bodyguard, and as the queen especially favored handsome masculinity, one can imagine the scene was well worth the looking. Sometimes she took a little trip on the river, accompanied by a whole fleet of boats, and the banks lined with cheering, waving spectators, the queen always the central figure.

The air was full of life and movement. Lowell says:

"Every breeze was dusty with the golden pollen of Greece, Rome and Italy."

Men were rejuvenated, new thoughts were born in these new surroundings. The new world, calling for explorers, broke the idea of England's insular limitations, and the accumulated enthusiasm of all this activity, crystallized into national literature, national unity and national growth. Shakespeare, with his keen, yet loving dissection of the human heart; Spencer, with his delicate poetry and fulsome flattery; Bacon, with his deep and rugged thought, and Ben Johnson, with his witticisms and ridicule of the vanities and foibles of other people, all aid us in our mental picture of the London of those stirring times.

Bull baiting, bear baiting, cock fighting, gambling and the theater were the national amusements, and in the jolly crowd of London's narrow streets, one can imagine many a "Falstaff" brushing elbows with such men as the elegant Raleigh, the courteous Sir Philip Sidney, the bluff and hearty Sir Francis Drake, each ready to do his part at a minute's notice, to protect his country from the attack of an Armada, extend her territory into the mysterious new world, or pen a history of England's greatness. These were the days which all loyal Englishmen look upon with pride, and history speaks of as "the golden days of Good Queen Bess."

And this was the inspiration of the country boy, who, in 1857, first came to London, not very well equipped with money, but with a wife, two little ones and a monumental ambition as incentives to success. It was in these crude days that Shakespeare wrote "Titus Andronicus," a coarse, degrading tragedy that would be a bitter disappointment did we not understand that the "unparalleled mind" was in the throes of development, had not fully come into its own, and was probably producing that "the pot might boil." However, our old-time awe and veneration is quick to return, when we remember later, finer and more beautiful creations of unselfish love, of passion, of ambition and that this same country fellow became a power, leading the thought of the century, bringing men to love their country and their country's history, with an ardor and enthusiasm that only the historical dramas of a Shakespeare could inspire. Elizabeth shared in the general enthusiasm for this golden hearted poet, who, after all, remained untouched by praise and adulation, and exchanged it as soon as possible for God's beautiful country, going back in the prime of life to his beloved Stratford to listen to the voices of the birds and the flowers and the gently flowing Avon.

MRS. CASEY AT THE WOMAN'S CLUB

By IRENE STODDARD CAPWELL

"PHWAT'S this Oi hear, Mrs. Casey? Shure Mary Ann tills me ye're afther j'inin' a cloob."

"Indade, Mrs. Flanigan, Oi am complacency. "'Tis the fashin t' that," responded Mrs. Casey with belahng to a cloob nowadays."

"An' phwat loike is ut?"

"Shure 'tis fer the incurridgemint iv Littheracboor and Airtt, an' the name iv ut is the Minervy Cloob."

"Named afher Minervy Sullivan, Oi suppose."

"Minervy Sullivan, indade! Did ye niver hear iv Minervy, the Goddiss iv Wisdom? Moy! but ye're ignorint, Mrs. Flanigan! Shame till ye!" and Mrs. Casey Looked down contemptuously upon her benighted neighbor from the heights of her newly-acquired knowledge.

"Faix, if Oi had the namin' iv annyt'ing," retorted the incensed Mrs. Flanigan, "Oi'd rather be namin' ut afther a daycint Christian gairrl th'n wan iv thim haythin throllops. Shure niver wan iv thimiver had cloas enough to pit an thim fer to go into rispictible sassoyty, an' sorra a t'ing did they iver do fer a livin' but sit an a cloud!"

"No more do the angels in Hiven, Mrs. Flanigan, barrin' playin' an hairrps now an' thin. But whist now, till Oi till ye about the cloob. Ye see Mrs. Gilhooley is the Prizzidint."

"An' phwat does she do?"

"She sits up an the platform an' cahls the matin' t' arrdher be rappin' an the table wid a t'ing they cahls a gravul. Thin she tills the sickritirry (that's Mary Ann), to rade the minnits. Thim do be the prosadins iv the last matin' which Mary Ann is afther wroitin' down in a book. Thin Mrs. Gilhooley siz, 'The minnuts bees approved,' and cahls fer the trizzurer to make a repoort."

"Who's the trizzurer?"

"Mrs. McGinty, that lives around the carrner furninst the saloon. She has a foine hid for figgers. Phwin she has the repoort rid, soom wan gits a move an that it be adapted. 'Adapted it is,' siz Mrs. Gilhooley. Then there bees the repoorts iv the commytays; there's a lot iv thim. Mrs. Kelly (she's a gra-ate friend iv Mrs. Gilhooley's) is chairman iv the raycipshin commytay, an' it's illigint she is, an' Judy O'Connor is chairman iv the house commytay. She does be lookin' afther the hahl, an' the foornichoor, an' rowin' the janitor. ('Tis a naygur he is.) 'Tis Judy that kin do that the quane's ta-aste. 'Twud warrum yer hairrt to hear her.

"Thin there bees the progum commytay. They names the pa-apers that's to be rid an' picks out the wans that's to wroite thim. Shure we had a foine wan last wake. 'Twas an the Rainysince. 'Twas Biddy O'Toole wroate ut an' 'twas jist gra-and! Biddy was afther goin' to the loiberry ivery day fer a wake to rade the soyclipedies an' she knew ahl about the Rainysinse."

"An' phwat is ut?" asked Mrs. Flanigan.

"Doan't ye know phwat the Rainysince is?"

"That Oi doan't, onliss it bees the koind iv sinse you have to coom in phwin it rains. Bedad, Oi t'ink 'twud not hurrt Biddy O'Toole t' have a little iv that, tho' 'tis not in the soyclipedy she'll foind ut."

"'Tis you fer a joak, Mrs. Flanigan, but that's not the koind iv sinse this is, at ahl at ahl. It's—it's—phwoy—oh, phwat is ut now? Shure Oi know as aisy as aytin', but Oi havn't the flow of langwudge t' ixpriss mesilf. It's oh, begorra! it's some new koind iv a shtatute it is; that's ahl. The cloob does be givin' a cyard parrthy nixt wake to raise some money to boy pitchers fer the schools. Will ye be afther boyin' a tickut ahf me, Oi dinnaw?"

"That Oi'll not! Oi don't approve iv ut. Pitchers indade! Phwat nixt will they be wantin'? Shure, 'tis disthractin' enough they bees alriddy wid flowers in the windies an' the loike o' that. Me Mickey's that harrd wurrked wid mud mays an' dhrawing' an' huntin' boogs an' shtones that he hasn't had toime fer a shindy wid Pat Foley fer a wake, an' it's nadin' a batin' he is, that Foley b'y. Shure, Mrs. Casey dear, Oi do be fearin' nairrvis prosthra-ashin fer Mickey!" and Mrs. Flanigan sighed dolefully.

"Besoides, luk at the ixpinse," she went on. "Faix, but 'tis a waste to be putin' good money into bran new pitchers phwin there do be plenty iv ould wans that moight be sphared. Oi have a foine wan mesilf iv St. Pathrick dhroivin' the shnakes from ould Oirland. 'Tis hand painted ut is, be me cousin Mary O'Grady. There do be an illigant gowld frame an ut, barrin' wan iv the carrners is broake. 'Twas hung in the parrlor oaver the chimney till a year ago phwin me man tuk ut down. He sid he niver did be lukin' at ut widout t'inkin. .twas the trimmins he had. Yez may have that fer the cloob, if ye loike."

"Indade, 'tis koind iv ye, Mrs. Flanigan, an' Oi'll name ut to the commytay. But ye naden't be throubled about the ixpinse. Shure pitchers is chape now. They bees a man down town that paints pitchers in a windy an Shtate shtrate; foine large illigint wans they arre, landshcapes an' say sayshcapes. Ye can boy a shmall soized wan fer a quarrther an' a larrge wan fer fifty cints. If the cyarrd parrthy is a succiss we kin boy shlathers iv thim."

"So ye can; that's gra-and! And did ye iver shpake at the cloob yersilf, Mrs. Casey?"

"Niver but wanst; an' thin they didn't lave me shpake. Ye know that little impidint hizzy iv a Katie Murphy, doant ye? The sassy t'ing. She do be always jumpin' up an' foindin' fault an' objistin' till she do ma-ake me that toird 'twud aise me sowl to shlap the oogly fa-ace iv her. Well, wan day Mary Ann had been radin' the minnuts, an' that little shpalpeen jumped up and sid there was something wrang wid 'em. Oi forgit now phwat it was, but 'twas no sich a t'ing, an' Oi rose t' me fate an' sid that sa-ame.

"'Maddim Prizzident! the mimber is out of arrdher!' siz she. Oi knowed that was a loy, fer Mary Ann always does be lukin' me oaver befoor Oi go to the cloob, an' she does be that pertikler she laves me no rist. So Oi siz:

"'Tis yersilf that's out iv arrdher!' Oi siz.

"'Will the mimber plaze addriss the chair,' siz Mrs. Gilhooley. 'Phwich wan?' Oi siz, lukin' around to see if 'twas me own she mint. 'Oi mane, shpake to the chairman, manin' mesilf,' she siz. 'Virry well, mum!' Oi siz. ''Tis yersilf kin see wid half an oye that Katie Murphy's hat is an crookut, an' there's a shmut an her noase, an' the braid iv her skurrt is thrailin' an the flure. 'Tis not fer the loikes iv her to be cahlin' a daycint wumman out iv arrdher,' Oi siz. 'That'll be ahl iv that!' siz Mrs. Gilhooley, 'Sit down!' siz Biddy O'Toole, who was sittin' furninst me, an' she gave me a jurrk into me chair that came near knockin' ivery toot' out iv me hid, so Oi had no more chanst to shpake me moind that day, but jist wait till Oi catch her! Oi'll aise me falin's! Out iv arrdher indade."