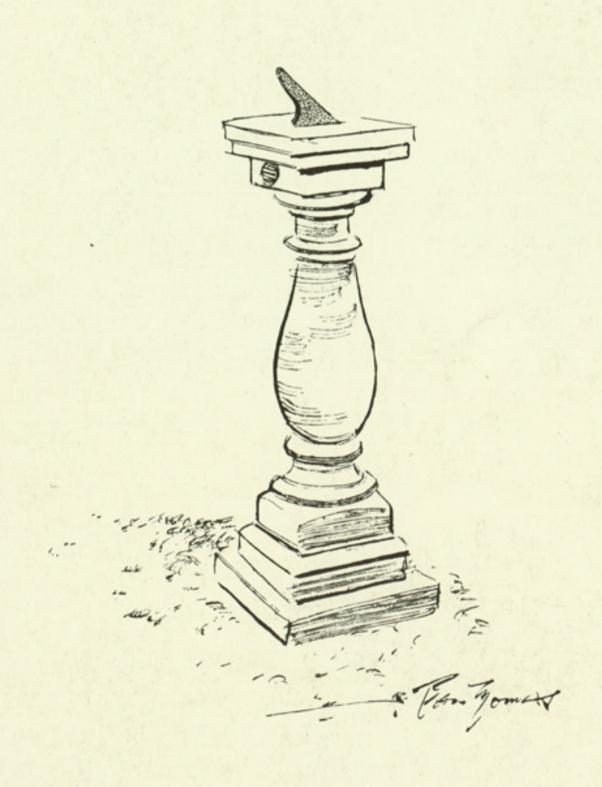
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Only a Sun-dial

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ONET ASGN-BIAL



SHADOW and sun; so, too, our Lives are made, yet think how great the sun, how small the shade.

(Motto on an old Sundial.)

ONLY
A SUNDIAL.

Christmas, 1934

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I wonder if the marks on wing and leaf Hold any language, no man ever heard, Or that God's writing positive and brief Spells to his creatures one melodious word, And that the eternal certainty of things Is writ on orchis leaves and magpie wings. BRIAN WATERS.

ONLY A SUNDIAL.

More than thirty long years ago, before the present handsome Kew Bridge was built, a party of studentsas they were referred to in a complimentary sensewere wont to spend many week-end hours pottering about at a boat-house at the foot of old Kew Bridge or in various boats upon the river Thames. These students, who were really not at all studious, travelled all the way from Toynbee Hall, in Whitechapel, for their boating exercise. What a tedious journey it was on the old Underground Railway, from Aldgate Station to Gunnersbury!

When the old Kew Bridge was demolished, a kindly contractor gave, or perhaps sold, one of the small stone columns, or pilasters, that served as part of a parapet or protective railing by the side of the footpath on the dear old structure. The recipient, or purchaser, was a Mr. Fowler, a member of the then Board of Management of the Royal Hospital & Home for Incurables, Putney, who wanted the stone column to convert into a Sundial as a useful ornament in the grounds of that National Charity. It happened, also, that one of the students above mentioned was, purely by chance, introduced to Mr. Fowler, and the latter said to him: "What are you going to be?" to which the student replied: "Really, I don't know; perhaps Lord Mayor of London, or perhaps merely a doorkeeper somewhere."

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Time passed, and the Sundial (the bit of old Kew Bridge) still stands at the edge of one of the southern lawns in the grounds of the Royal Hospital & Home for Incurables, Putney, and the student who had been brought into touch with Mr. Fowler has been Secretary of that Institution now for twenty-eight years. How strangely odd are some of the happenings in real life!

Then it was Mr. Fowler who informed the student that he wished he could write something for publication with reference to old Kew Bridge; something that would be "on record." And it was he who suggested to the student that, surely, he could jot down a few remarks for print concerning the old Bridge that had so many romantic associations.



"COULD THE OLD BRIDGE TELL ONLY A LITTLE OF THE MEETINGS IT SAW!"

2001/00/10/12/26

"fond good-byes; the youngsters who first ex"changed meaning glances as they crossed the river
"by the bridge. The tranquil twilight time, when
"youth and maid first understood; the silent star
"time, when heart spoke to heart as never before;
"the moonlight time, when the tender gleams of
"reverie played with the old man's thoughts till
"he brushed aside a tear; the mysterious midnight
"time, when night's lamp had gone behind a cloud
"and the lily-stars looked down on grief and guilt
"and darkness; the dewy dawn time, when the
"crystal-gemmed leaves awaited the wooing of the
"sunbeams; the high-noon time, when man and
"beast passed and repassed with their burdens.

"Life is always cheating us; our hopes are dashed and our dreams come to nothing. If you stand awhile on Kew Bridge with me some day when the opening ceremony has passed into the other incidents of local history, I will try to point out how a bridge across a river is almost the best spot for seeing some of the inner character of man and woman and child. Why a bridge should have such a potency I cannot tell unless it is that, being neither on dry land nor ship, man and woman and child momentarily forget themselves.

"Here comes hurrying on foot the busy man "whose time is money. He is impatient, and would



- HE CANNOT RESIST JUST ONE PEEP OVER THE PARAPET, WHERE HIS EYES REST UPON A BOAT FULL OF HAPPY LADS AND LASSES."

So it came about that the following from the student's pen appeared on the editorial page of a great London newspaper, on a day in the year 1903 when King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra opened the new Kew Bridge. Here is the little essay, word for word, as it appeared nearly thirty-one years ago:—

"THE ROMANCE OF KEW BRIDGE.

"The King and Queen visit Kew to-day and open "the new Kew Bridge. The engineering features "of the structure have already been described; "here I only seek to write a few words as to the "unseen associations that such a connecting path between Surrey and Middlesex must have. Perhaps "many persons who to-day are present at the opening ceremony will not give a thought to these associations. Yet what a line of reflection they neglect; what recollections of momentous, if not happy, hours they will miss!

"The spectators to-day keep tryst, but what is "this tryst compared with the trysts that this new bridge will witness as the days and the years pass?

"Could the old bridge tell only a little of the "meetings it saw! The lovers who met and kissed "there; the sweethearts who sighed and said their

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"with her as the tiny things sail on, now close to each other's side and now swept apart. Her lips move as she sees the little brown leaf torn asunder by an eddy and parted for ever from the mate by whose side it once rode so gaily.

"And now a sweet child, fresh and clean and bright and good, comes tripping by. What of sorrow she knows is only when a loved toy breaks in her baby hands. A real joy to her is the bridge—
a joy as wonderful as is the prettiest flower.
Knowing nothing of the woe of heart unloved, and caring nothing for anything that matters, she shouts for glee as she sees life and craft on the bosom of the river below. What to her are the marvels of the air when she can see the men and the barges on the water?

"Is the new bridge spoiled for the poet by the proximity of the electric tramway-cars? Can he no longer think and sigh and see beautiful visions as he could when London lay farther away? Are the depths of the river less blue than they were? Are the tiny arbours of the banks, where the fishes used to play at hide and seek, improved beyond his recognition? Shall he throw his rhyme away in fretfulness, and betake him where there is peace amid which he may pour out a secret tale that would make the Homeric legends pale?



"THE AGED ARTIST WHOSE HOME IS NEAR, AND WHO HAD KNOWN THE ANCIENT SADDLE-BACK BRIDGE SO MANY YEARS,"

"What is the mathematical exactitude of the new bridge to the aged artist whose home is near, and who had known the ancient saddle-back bridge so many years? Was the old bridge dangerous? Well, but it was picturesque! Is the new bridge safe? Well, but it is so precise! The artist no doubt loves horses, and he is pleased to know that they will find the new bridge easy; yet he cannot help thinking indulgently of the old familiar bridge that he crossed so many times in sunny and in dreary conditions.

"What is it to him to hear that the centre arch of the new bridge has a fine, sweeping span of one hundred and thirteen feet?

"The river embraces the piers of the new bridge as if already friends with them, and the breezes whistle through it and over it and under it just as if it had stood there for centuries. Perhaps the May breeze thinks the new bridge is an ancient knight, whose prowess it will call to its aid should occasion arise. Or, perhaps, the breeze holds counsel with itself to the effect that if the waters sweep in one direction it will blow in the other, making things even and in keeping with the spirit of fair play.

"And then what feelings will the new bridge awake" in the long-absent traveller who has returned to

"jump the Thames if his physical attributes per"mitted it, so eager is he to reach the place where
he would be. He makes his way rapidly till he
is right above mid-stream. So far he has not
once glanced sideways; but suddenly he hears
a shout of young blood and gladness, and he
cannot resist just one peep over the parapet, where
his eyes rest upon a boat full of happy lads and
lasses.

"His peep lengthens into a stare, and his face "lights up, and he is again a boy; his own swiftlypassing prime is out of mind, for he sees and he remembers; he pulls himself up, and rushes away to keep his appointment, and he is all the better for that brief space when he lost himself upon the bridge.

"A society dame leaves Surrey for Middlesex by the bridge. Her high-heeled shoes and her costume are not by way of putting her in sympathy with what there is of Nature within view. She has time enough on her hands to indulge her every whim, and she and her companion stay in their walk. There is some echo of romance about her, despite her life of the past ten years.

"She sees—or is it mere fancy?—a green leaf and a brown leaf lightly riding down the stream together, and she begs her companion to watch

"Kew to revive old sweet memories? He will "look for the dear old landmark and find it gone—"gone with other and perhaps still more loved "things. He will ask after the old bridge, maybe, and his question will be met with a vague surprise that gravely discredits his curiosity. What avail will it be for him to speak of beauty banished, memories gone, dream pictures spoiled? Only to him will be the consolation that he was comforted when away and wandering amid alien rush and bustle by his oft-pictured scene of the old bridge.

"But Progress demands new bridges, just as she demands new manners, new foods, new men, new women—new everything!"

What a change in my environment—in my location! To be for nearly a century, or perhaps more, a part of an ancient and traffic-laden bridge spanning the Thames, and now to be a small and lowly sundial, standing all alone in surroundings so utterly different. It may or may not be true that, as the poet sings, sundials record only sunny hours; but a sundial has also to stay out-of-doors and withstand the searching winds and icy blasts of winter.

Nowadays, I do not see the busy City man hurrying from his suburban home or his river-side club to his



"BUT PROGRESS DEMANDS NEW BRIDGES, JUST AS SHE DEMANDS NEW MANNERS, NEW FOODS, NEW MEN, NEW WOMEN—NEW EVERYTHING."

office or his shop or his warehouse. I stand and watch invalids passing and repassing, with halting steps. To be sure, I see the gardeners at work, and I see visitors come and go, but my life is altogether different from what it was.

I never realized until coming here how many human beings there are who only get about at all when out-of-doors with the aid of a wheeled-chair or a wheeled-couch. I did not know that invalids, doomed to years and years of physical inactivity, could remain so peaceful in mind and so resigned in spirit. It never occurred to me that I should stand as a silent witness of so much suffering and so much calm and Christian acceptance of cruel circumstances that are beyond human control.

There are occasional days, I gladly admit, when human liveliness is round about me. Only recently there was a Garden Party held in the grounds of the Royal Hospital & Home for Incurables, Putney, and what a scene it presented! Try and picture it: a band of musicians in the centre of a spacious and secluded lawn; a series of strange and weird side-shows dotted round about the edges of the lawn; a cokernut-shy a little distance away from me on another and lower lawn. Scores of young and merry nurses in uniform swarming everywhere. Male attendants and porters and serving-maids and others; a small throng of

visitors and their children—all in eager pursuit of prizes in return for pennies extracted by the side-show custodians. And, looking on with unaffected pleasure, the two hundred or more Incurables, seated in their wheeled-chairs, or lying upon wheeled-couches, helpless in sporting pursuits, but engrossed by the movement and novelty of it all. Did ever "Punch and Judy," or the "Revolving Horse," or the strawberries and cream, or the ices, or the kindly greetings of welcome guests, or the fair sky, offer themselves to a more appreciative audience? Such was the scene.

Sometimes, as I stand here in the cold and wintry season, and just to pass the time, I pretend that I overhear the Months having an argument. January and February will "have words." I try and think that the two months are two of the patients. Perhaps it is only the wind in the trees I hear, and, yet, how easy it is to suppose that February is being "catty" to January.

"Here I am," says February, giving January an unkind little push. "You are over, thank goodness!"

"Beginnings are always difficult," answers January, almost apologetically, "but I have my friends."

"You want 'em. Look how many men you betray into acting ridiculously! They make New Year resolutions and they break them during your absurd reign."

"Anyway," explains January, "I have the decency "not to impose an Ash Wednesday! What do the "schoolboys think of you about that?"

"You are too near the stale festivities of December.
"You are the disagreeable loophole of the year; if
"Christmas bills are not paid while you are running,
"hate is engendered. You are too far away from
"spring flowers. Birds are more intent on corn than
"on courtship when you are in sway."

"Really, I must be a terrible month! But you are "only imitating Tennyson in decrying me. He wrote "about the absence of the blue woodlouse and the "plump dormouse; about the bees being stilled and the "flies being killed."

And January pauses awhile to take breath and to see the effect upon February of quoting a great English poet.

"Tennyson, forsooth," says February. "I have heard somewhere that he was only what one might call a pretty poet; he was graceful, if you like, but he didn't always hit the nail on the head. Now I don't wish to appear rude to English poets, but may I quote you a line or two of what Oliver Wendell

"Holmes wrote with splendid inclination towards me?:—

"' The heart of Nature warms

" 'Beneath the wrecks of unresisting storms,

" 'Doubtful at first, suspected more than seen,

"' The southern slopes are fringed with tender green:

"' The snowdrop, bearing on her patient breast

"' The frozen trophy torn from Winter's crest;

"'The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the "'mould

"' Naked and shivering with his cup of gold."

"But," replies January, "you are only what I "style a service month; you are only here to prepare "for March. Look at me: I move the lazy winter "mists and make a new light so that you may see "your way."

"You confess to waiting upon me?" observes February, loftily.

"I wait upon you only in the same sense that an "artist awaits the effect of his brush," answers January.

"That's good, very good," laughs February. "What would you say if I ventured mildly to suggest that you resign yearly in my favour?"

"I should say that you were very rude, and I should "draw your counselling friends' attention to the fact



"THEY FORGIVE ME IN CONSIDERATION OF SHROVE TUESDAY,"

"that you evidently found things more than you "could manage, or you would not hold office for a "shorter period than the month you usurped!"

"The good die young," thrills February.

"That," says January, "has never been proved."

"But it is accepted."

"Quite so, February 'fill-dyke."

"' Fill-dyke,' you call me, do you? What are dykes "for if not to be filled? Work is as it is done, you "know."

"Exactly; but why boast about your touch of "Spring if you go and fill up the dykes with water? "What about the poor little frolicking lambs that "might tumble safely up and down the sides of the "dyke and have capital sport if it were dry instead of "full of dangerous water?"

And again January pauses.

"I believe in lessons being taught early. If the "lambs did not learn while young that there is a limit "to everything, playgrounds included, we should be "overrun with sheep, as Australia is with rabbits. "A sense of limit is all that keeps the horse and the "cow and the sheep the servants of man. Have you "not read that the 'sweeping vales and foaming "'floods are free alike to all'?"

"I think with regard to the word 'floods' that "'gratuitous' would be a better adjective.' And January looks happy.

"But my floods fill the farmers with faith; they do
"not all sow until I come along with my watering can.
"They display their recognition of me by sowing with
"a generous hand when I have obliged them."

"But everybody knows that what comes with the flood goes with the ebb," snarls January.

"Ask the property owners," returns February.

"Adverting to your notion that the farmers wait "till you have come and gone, do you not know that "the heroine seldom ventures forth till the villain is "safely away?" And once more January seems satisfied.

"But were it not for the villian, who would know of the virtues of the heroine? Why not divide honours when the spectators are away, as some of the Continental politicians are said to do? What so sweet and so beautiful as good example, and why any good example at all except for the villian? "Ask the rainswept hills if I harm their tenderest blades; ask the blackbird why he clearly whistles me to stay."

"He whistles for what he cannot see, that foolish blackbird," suggests January.



"THE SPENDTHRIFT CROCUS, BURSTING THROUGH THE MOULD."

"Well, shall I say that you are conscious of my points? That you caught them?" inquires February.

"A king may be conscious of a cat, if I may twist an "old proverb," ventures January.

"Certainly, you may twist it any way you please, "but be careful of the blackbird I mentioned just now. "He can't abide cats!" and February's eyes light up with glee.

"But the poets we referred to; ought we to introduce "more pets?" And January frowns.

"Poets aren't pets, you insinuate?" rejoins February.

"Certainly not, unless they are lady poets," ejaculates January. "And then not if they happen to be married!"

"Well," says February, speaking as if with some sort of an idea in mind that January really needs silencing in an effectual but gentle manner, "have you not heard of Christina Rossetti? She once wrote some "lines expressly for us. I am sorry now that I gave you a push when I met you, for she teaches us in her precious way the exact truth about ourselves." Hear what she says:—

"'It suffices. What suffices?

" 'All suffices reckoned rightly:

" 'Spring shall bloom where now the ice is,

- "' Roses make the bramble sightly,
- "' And the quickening sun shine brightly,
- " ' And the latter wind blow lightly,
- " ' And my garden teem with spices.'

"Then we have done no good by quarrelling?" says January.

"No; we never do," answers February, holding out a friendly hand and smiling genially as the two part.

* * * * *

What a mistake some folk make when they think that, here at the Royal Hospital & Home for Incurables, there is no cheerfulness. I sometimes hear the patients talking, as they pass and repass slowly. We have had, and have, the Mark Tapleys among them, and their good humour, and readiness and determination to see the humour in the inevitable, leave the good seed behind them, good, which might, without this great quality of humour, have been interred with their bones.

I believe that there is a continuous succession of Mark Tapleys, hereditary in the Institution, rewarding those who seek to help them with a cheerful appreciation and a real gratitude which are evident in their bearing, constituting an outstanding feature of the best of our residents at Putney.

Some of the wards in this world-famous Institution (there are over sixty) have been christened with an un-



""FILL-DYKE" YOU CALL ME, DO YOU? WHAT ARE DYKES FOR IF NOT TO BE FILLED? WORK IS AS IT IS DONE, YOU KNOW."

official name. For instance, the name printed over the door may be "Victoria" or "Elizabeth," but the character of those who occupy the beds therein has become famous among the other patients and the nursing staff, and a special name, descriptive of the tone or "humour" of the ward, has been bestowed upon it. There is one ward that is known as "Sunshine Trap," because the bright side of things is always enlarged upon by the happy and contented souls who lie there year in and year out, bravely and serenely bearing all the physical ills that are their lot in life. If one enters "Sunshine Trap" and talks with the inmates, one hears that God is good, and the daily food is good, and the nurse-in-charge is good, and the visitors are good, and "all things work together for good." There is no hint of weariness or despair or regret. One leaves the ward better and humbler than one enters it. What a beautiful lesson this is to learn from those who have suffered and who are suffering, and who still have left the saving sense of humour.

The other day I heard one of the patients say to a distinguished visitor: "Occasionally, when Sister thinks "I am looking so happy that I must be hysterical, she "induces a touch of morbidity by giving me a hospital "periodical to read."

You have heard the tale of the cruel man who caught two squirrels and put them into a rusty parrot cage. One of the squirrels lost all self-control, and knocked itself about so much that a speedy and painful death resulted, caused by its frantic efforts to escape, and its refusal to eat, while the other assumed a resigned air, and ate the food supplied, seeming so tame that the cruel man opened the cage door and allowed the occupant in and about the garden, whence it very naturally took its departure without any trouble. The moral of this little tale (there is always a tiresome moral) is that we should endeavour to make the best of things, for therein lies the secret of freedom and happiness. In this spirit we get glimpses of the brighter side of life, and can accept the association of Incurability and Humour without any suspicion of mockery.

Even a sundial, given a brain (what a phenomenon!) might say, of a big Home for Incurables: "One is "heartbroken to think that there can be in this "country such a mass of human suffering, such a mass of irremediable distress. On the other hand, when you "think of the angelic administrations, of the helpful "medical and surgical treatment, of the careful nursing, of the general manifestations of sympathy which you see at the Royal Hospital & Home for Incurables, "Putney, one really rejoices that, after all, this is not a decadent age, but that we are animated by warm sympathy and by a lofty conception of individual and public obligations."

The residents at this wonderful place are, as a class, a brave and resigned assortment of humans, whose



"SPRING SHALL BLOOM WHERE NOW THE ICE IS, ROSES MAKE THE BRAMBLES SIGHTLY."

long, unalterable and pathetic condition, tends to lean upon cheery and sympathetic outside influence. They have more than enough time for sad and sombre reflection, for self-analysis and gloomy introspection. They desire change and spiritual optimism. Perhaps they look for emotional rather than intellectual friendship, but not for comradeship that is any less honest because it is light-hearted.

Some time ago, two of the women patients here brought their wheeled-chairs close to my stone base, and one of them had a little book in her hand. The title of the booklet was "Thoughts of an Incurable," and she was reading from it, slowly and distinctly; she read loudly because her companion was deaf, and here are some of the "Thoughts" she spoke, evidently with keen appreciation of them:—

"Dealing with some folk is not unlike using too short
"a bit of sealing-wax: one will probably burn one's
"fingers."

"Gossip in a hospital is like sand in an egg-boiler: "it runs so quickly from one department to another."

"God made the country, and man made the town, "and the Royal Hospital & Home for Incurables, "Putney, stands between the two."

"Visitors' eyes are all different: some eyes speak of "sympathy and others only of curiosity." "A mischievous thought came to me to-day: even "we Incurables have our blessings, for example, "nobody dreams of borrowing money from us."

"Groans and tears are not wanted. Hospital visitors "prefer to be cheered up."

"Bits of gossip. How swift and how magic they "are: we feel guilty, and yet we cannot help it."

"Some of my friends say to me: Be steadfast, "never waver. Possibly they think I am an iron railing."

"I have nothing to say about the woman who judges "all her sisters, except that she is conducting a very "big business."

It is no easy matter for the managers of a great Home for Incurables, after so many issues, year after year, to prepare a Christmas Appeal which shall be at once arresting and calculated to result in response on the part of strangers among the benevolent public. Perhaps that is why it has been left to a lowly sundial to put on record a few scattered thoughts and reflections.

The Royal Hospital & Home for Incurables, Putney, is the largest and oldest Institution of its special character in the world. The annual expenditure is about £50,000, of which the sum of only £12,000 is assured income.



'VISITORS' EYES ARE ALL DIFFERENT, SOME EYES SPEAK OF SYMPATHY, AND OTHERS ONLY OF CURIOSITY."

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

An Annual Subscriber has One Vote at each Election for each Half Guinea, and an additional Vote for every additional Half Guinea. A Donation entitles to votes at the next ensuing Election, four votes being given for each Guinea contributed. A Life Subscriber has One Vote for Life for Five Guineas, and an additional Vote for Life for every additional Five Guineas.

Subscriptions received at the Office, Bond Court House, Walbrook, E.C.4, by the Secretary, to whom all Orders should be made payable; by the Treasurer, and by Messrs. GLYN, MILLS & Co., 67, Lombard Street, E.C.3.

It may surprise some readers to learn that the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, Putney, is denied a share in the annual distribution from the King Edward's Hospital Fund and the Saturday and Sunday Collections for the Hospitals. Not one penny from these funds ever finds its way to this Charity. The main reason for this is that the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, Putney, does not cure patients, a task which it would naturally not pretend to undertake, since it only accepts cases which have already been discharged as incurable by other hospitals, or certified as incurable by two doctors. Surely, the fact that this hospital is denied a share in the distribution of these Funds lends added claim upon the generosity of the public?

The Hospital is not quite a mile from East Putney Railway Station (District Railway), where cabs are obtainable. Putney Station (Southern Railway) is rather more than a mile distant. Motor omnibuses (Services Nos. 93 and 85B) run from Putney Bridge Station (District Railway) to the top of Putney Hill which is within three minutes' walk of the Hospital.

FORM OF BEQUEST.

Incurables Putney, the sum of £, free of duty, to be paid, together with the duty thereon, out of such part of my estate as can be lawfully bequeathed for charitable purposes, and to be applicable to the general purposes of such Institution, and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer for the time being of such Institution shall be a sufficient discharge for the same.

N.B.—By virtue of the "Mortmain and Charitable Uses Act, 1891," land may now be devised to a Charity, but it is liable to be sold within one year from the death of the Testator.

BANKERS' ORDER

Messrs.

Home for Incurables, Putney, at Messrs. Glyn, Mills & Co., the sum of Please pay now and annually to the A/c of the Royal Hospital and

Guineas.

SH

HRISTMAS, 1914.

