

ABSURD!

By

MONTY LOWTHER.

(The humorist of the *Shell Form* at St. Jim's.)

I RECENTLY attended the Impromptu Evening of the St. Jim's Senior Debating Society, and I must say it was good fun. Mind you, as a rule, I'm not at all keen on debating.

You all know the usual musty old public school debating club, arguing solemnly and at great length on such piffling propositions as: "That the popularity of vegetarianism is in direct ratio to the inability of the nation to appreciate the spirit of pragmatism," and so on.

Nobody understands what is being talked about, least of all the speakers themselves; but everybody feels very chirpy about being so clever, and they all admire one another fearfully.

Well, anyway, the impromptu evening I attended was as different from that as french chalk is from gorgonzola. The idea was for each speaker to draw his subject out of a hat, and speak on it immediately. I can assure you, it was funny. Kildare's face, when he found he had to move the proposition: "That I am a silly ass," was a sight for gods, men, and little fishes. And Knox, who likes a little puff now and again, speaking on the subject: "That the manufacture of cigarettes should be forbidden," fairly brought the house down.

Personally, I think it would be very instructive for some of us to trot round now and again and address societies whose aims we weren't a bit interested in. It would be not only instructive, but amusing as well. I've just been imagining one or two possibilities. No need to tell me they're absurd. I know they're absurd. But, taken in small doses, you may think they're entertaining.



"Regarded from the viewpoint of a determinist, cricket is the inevitable outcome of a civilisation based on the rapacity of the idle rich."—Herbert Skimpole.

The Head Addresses the Annual Meeting of a Hopscotch Club.

"Fellow-members, nothing could give me greater pleasure than to preside at this unique function. As Cicero observed some little time ago: 'Dulce est presidere at Hops Cots Cluborum.' To hop is the noblest and most ancient form of exercise. Cæsar hopped into Gaul; Hannibal hopped over the Alps; Alexander sighed for fresh worlds to hop over. The classics teem with references to hops. Pray do not misunderstand me!

"And the latter syllable of the word—Scotch. A wonderful race, the Scotch. At least, when the words first went round that the streets of London were paved with gold, they all began to run a wonderful race. The main roads from the North have echoed with the sound of Scotch hops ever since!"

Baggy Trimble Gives a Sermon on Moderation.

"Be moderate in all things. That's always been my motto. Eat, sleep, work, play, spend money, do what you like—but always in moderation!"

" Start the day with a moderate breakfast—not more than a pound of bacon, a dozen eggs, and a couple of loaves, say! And don't go and make a beast of yourself by starting on chocolates immediately after. Give your tummy five minutes' rest, at least. I always do.

" Be moderate in spending money—that is, of course, provided it's your own! If it's somebody else's, that's a different matter. It's up to the other fellow to see how you help spend his!

" Naturally, I'm not urging anyone to be mean—far from it! In fact, this is where I come to the crux of the matter. When you see a pal (particularly one with a fine, open, honest face) down on his luck, always grant him a loan—in moderation, of course! Not fifty pounds, nor fifty shillings—nothing so hefty as that! But a small sum that no one could miss; lend it with a good heart!

" Now, is there anyone here who can lend me five bob till the end of the term?"

(Cries of " Sit down!" and " Slaughter him!" and sudden disappearance of Baggy Trimble!)

Gerald Cutts Speaks to the Society for Knitting Socks for Savages.

" Ladies and Gentlemen,—I'm with you, sole and heel—I mean, heart and soul. I have always been in favour of socks; in fact, I make it a rule never to go out without a pair! If it comes to that, I've often been given socks—by the Head, after sundry midnight excursions!

" As to savages, they interest me frightfully. If you'd seen my pater after he'd received last term's report about me, you'd agree with me that English savages in particular are well worth studyin'!

" Now that I've met your frightfully interesting society, you can count on me to spend all my spare time for the rest of the term knitting socks like a hero—perhaps!"

Skimpole Gives a Talk on Cricket.

" So far as I am able to comprehend from Professor Balmymcrumpet's work on the

com—" bat "—ive instinct in civilised communities, cricket is an outdoor pastime, conducted with the assistance of six vertical elongated cylinders known as stumps, four horizontal pieces designated bails, and two specially-shaped articles called bats, used to induce trajectory motion in a spherical object of stuffed leather, commonly called a ball.

" Regarded from the viewpoint of a determinist, cricket—a last resort of the degenerate and brainless—is the inevitable outcome of a civilisation based on the rapacity of the idle rich. As Professor Balmymcrumpet observes, in his eighteenth volume on ' Social Habits of the Ignorant Masses '— Ow-wow! Yarooooop!"

(Skimmy sits down suddenly as some genius throws Professor Balmymcrumpet's celebrated volume at his head.)

Arthur Augustus Addresses a Meeting on Sartorial Perfection.

" Gentlemen—or, wathah, I suppose, fellahs—as your guest this evenin', I pwo-pose to give you some helpful hints—hints gained from my expwience—on sartorial perfection; or, clothes and how to weah them.

" For a long time I've noticed that a numbah of you youngstahs have been twansgwessing the laws of wespectability (loud jeers and cat-calls), and I feel it my dutay to put you wise—to use a twite and slang expwession—in this mattah.

" Furthermoah, even at this moment, I notice, with wegwt, that some of you are in sad need of wepaiah, and I sincerely hope that aftah my talk (" You'll be in need of repair!"—Grundy) you will all take heed and look to your clobbah in the futuah.

" Howevah, as I say, I am your guest this evenin', and in the circs I cannot possiblly say anythin' that would be likely to hurt your feelin's. As the Fwench say: ' Toujouah la polites! '

(Meeting breaks up in violent disorder, and Arthur Augustus gets a bumping, and after this, as Grundy had forecast, he was in need of repair!)

THE END

MY FAVOURITE SEASON. SOME GREYFRIARS OPINIONS.



Dr. Locke.

TO ME the season of spring is undoubtedly the most preferable. The genial warmth of those months which herald the coming of summer is indeed pleasant. One feels that one has passed the rigours of winter, which take heavy toll of those who, like myself, have long since crossed the half-way line of life.

In addition, the great awakening of Nature in spring-time is especially gladdening to me, symbolic, as it is, of hope and promise. My life-work has been given to youth, and as I regard spring as the season of youth, it naturally finds a warm place in my heart.



Mr. Quelch.

I undoubtedly give the preference to summer, though I am afraid the long, hot days of this season are not conducive to hard work on the part of my pupils.

Nevertheless, I appreciate the beauty of summer, and also the comfort its warmth brings to limbs which are painfully subject to rheumatism in winter.



Billy Bunter.

I have no favoritt seezon. I say this bekaws so long as a fellow has plenty of seezonable grub, why should he prefer one seezon to another?

But, on sekond thorts, I like summer best, for we get the long

summer vakation then. A fellow can eat what he likes and get up when he likes without being interfeared with.

Yes, I certainly like summer best!



Hurree Singh.

My detestfulness of all your English seasons is terrific. I like my native India heatfully, but your luke-warm summers in England drive me batchfully potty.

The esteemed Bob Cherry, who is looking glaring over my shoulder, says my English is full of rotfulness, but as I was learnfully taught by the finest moonshee in Bhanipur, this is absurdfully ridiculous.



Bob Cherry.

My favourite season? Winter, every time! Cricket, tennis, boating, etc., are topping pastimes, but give me the snow-fights, footer, skating, and sledging of winter. A chap never feels so lively and fit as on a keen, frosty winter's day.



Mr. Prout.

To this problem there can be but one answer given by any red-blooded sportsman. It is that of "late summer." For on August 12th shooting is once again permissible. What a glorious thrill comes to the hunter's heart on that date!

I remember once in the Rockies, I——" (Snuff! —ED.)