

CAUTIONARY TALES  
FOR CHILDREN

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# CAUTIONARY TALES FOR CHILDREN

By Hilaire Belloc

1907  
United Kingdom



## Contents

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION.....              | 2  |
| AUTHOR/HISTORICAL CONTEXT..... | 48 |



**DEDICATED TO**

BOBBY, JOHNNY, AND EDDIE SOMERSET

# INTRODUCTION

Upon being asked by a Reader whether the verses contained in this book were true.



AND IS IT TRUE? IT IS NOT TRUE.  
AND IF IT WERE IT WOULDN'T DO,  
FOR PEOPLE SUCH AS ME AND YOU  
WHO PRETTY NEARLY ALL DAY LONG  
ARE DOING SOMETHING RATHER WRONG.  
BECAUSE IF THINGS WERE REALLY SO,  
YOU WOULD HAVE PERISHED LONG AGO,  
AND I WOULD NOT HAVE LIVED TO WRITE  
THE NOBLE LINES THAT MEET YOUR SIGHT,  
NOR B. T. B. SURVIVED TO DRAW  
THE NICEST THINGS YOU EVER SAW.

H. B.

Jim,

WHO RAN AWAY FROM HIS NURSE, AND WAS EATEN BY  
A LION.





There was a Boy whose name was Jim;  
His Friends were very good to him.  
They gave him Tea, and Cakes, and Jam,  
And slices of delicious Ham,  
And Chocolate with pink inside,  
And little Tricycles to ride,  
And



read him Stories through and through,  
And even took him to the Zoo—  
But there it was the dreadful Fate  
Befell him, which I now relate.  
You know—at least you OUGHT to know.  
For I have often told you so—  
That Children never are allowed  
To leave their Nurses in a Crowd;

Now this was Jim's especial Foible,  
He ran away when he was able,  
And on this inauspicious day  
He slipped his hand and ran away!  
He hadn't gone a yard when—



Bang!  
With open Jaws, a Lion sprang,  
And hungrily began to eat  
The Boy: beginning at his feet.  
Now just imagine how it feels  
When first your toes and then your heels,  
And then by gradual degrees,  
Your shins and ankles, calves and knees,  
Are slowly eaten, bit by bit.



No wonder Jim detested it!  
No wonder that he shouted "Hi!"  
The Honest Keeper heard his cry,  
Though very fat



he almost ran  
To help the little gentleman.  
"Ponto!" he ordered as he came  
(For Ponto was the Lion's name),  
"Ponto!" he cried,



with angry Frown.  
"Let go, Sir! Down, Sir! Put it down!"  
The Lion made a sudden Stop,  
He let the Dainty Morsel drop,  
And slunk reluctant to his Cage,  
Snarling with Disappointed Rage  
But when he bent him over Jim,  
The Honest Keeper's



Eyes were dim.  
The Lion having reached his Head,  
The Miserable Boy was dead!



When Nurse informed his Parents, they  
Were more Concerned than I can say:—  
His Mother, as She dried her eyes,  
Said, “Well—it gives me no surprise,  
He would not do as he was told!”  
His Father, who was self-controlled,  
Bade all the children round attend  
To James’ miserable end,  
And always keep a-hold of Nurse

For fear of finding something worse.  
Henry King,  
WHO CHEWED BITS OF STRING, AND WAS EARLY CUT  
OFF IN DREADFUL AGONIES.

The Chief Defect of Henry King  
Was



chewing little bits of String.  
At last he swallowed some which tied  
Itself in ugly Knots inside.



Physicians of the Utmost Fame  
Were called at once; but when they came  
They answered,



as they took their Fees,  
“There is no Cure for this Disease.  
Henry will very soon be dead.”  
His Parents stood about his Bed  
Lamenting his Untimely Death,  
When Henry, with his Latest Breath,  
Cried—  
“Oh, my Friends, be warned by me,



That Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch and Tea  
Are all the Human Frame requires ...”  
With that the Wretched Child expires.  
Matilda,  
WHO TOLD LIES, AND WAS BURNED TO DEATH.

Matilda told such Dreadful Lies,



It made one Gasp and Stretch one's Eyes;  
Her Aunt, who, from her Earliest Youth,  
Had kept a Strict Regard for Truth,



Attempted to Believe Matilda:  
The effort very nearly killed her,  
And would have done so, had not She  
Discovered this Infirmary.  
For once, towards the Close of Day,  
Matilda, growing tired of play,  
And finding she was left alone,  
Went tiptoe

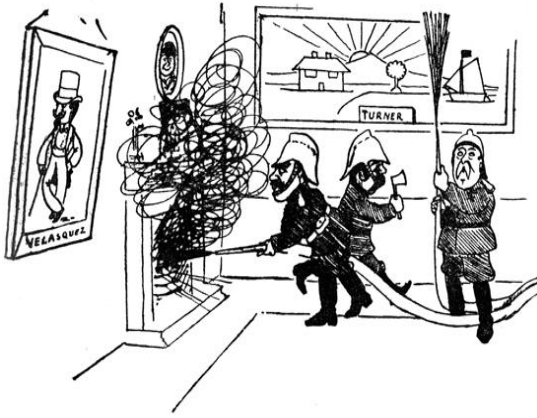




to  
the Telephone  
And summoned the Immediate Aid  
Of London's Noble Fire-Brigade.  
Within an hour the Gallant Band  
Were pouring in on every hand,  
From Putney, Hackney Downs and Bow,  
With Courage high and Hearts a-glow  
They galloped, roaring through the Town,



“Matilda’s House is Burning Down!”  
Inspired by British Cheers and Loud  
Proceeding from the Frenzied Crowd,  
They ran their ladders through a score  
Of windows on the Ball Room Floor;  
And took Peculiar Pains to Souse  
The Pictures up and down the House,



Until Matilda's Aunt succeeded  
 In showing them they were not needed  
 And even then she had to pay  
 To get the Men to go away!  
 It happened that a few Weeks later  
 Her Aunt was off to the Theatre  
 To see that Interesting Play  
 THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY.



She had refused to take her Niece

To hear this Entertaining Piece:  
A Deprivation Just and Wise  
To Punish her for Telling Lies.  
That Night a Fire DID break out—  
You should have heard Matilda Shout!  
You should have heard her Scream and Bawl,  
And throw the window up and call  
To People passing in the Street—  
(The rapidly increasing Heat  
Encouraging her to obtain  
Their confidence)—but all in vain!  
For every time She shouted “Fire!”



They only answered “Little Liar!”  
And therefore when her Aunt returned,  
Matilda, and the House, were Burned.



Franklin Hyde,  
WHO CAROUSED IN THE DIRT AND WAS CORRECTED BY  
HIS UNCLE.



His Uncle came on Franklin Hyde  
Carousing in the Dirt.  
He Shook him hard from Side to Side  
And



Hit him till it Hurt,

Exclaiming, with a Final Thud,  
“Take



that! Abandoned Boy!  
For Playing with Disgusting Mud  
As though it were a Toy!”

## MORAL

From Franklin Hyde's adventure, learn  
To pass your Leisure Time  
In Cleanly Merriment, and turn  
From Mud and Ooze and Slime  
And every form of Nastiness—  
But, on the other Hand,  
Children in ordinary Dress  
May always play with Sand.



Godolphin Horne,  
WHO WAS CURSED WITH THE SIN OF PRIDE, AND  
BECAME A BOOT-BLACK.



Godolphin Horne was Nobly Born;  
He held the Human Race in Scorn,  
And lived with all his Sisters where  
His father lived, in Berkeley Square.  
And oh! the Lad was Deathly Proud!  
He never shook your Hand or Bowed,  
But merely smirked and nodded



thus:

How perfectly ridiculous!  
Alas! That such Affected Tricks  
Should flourish in a Child of Six!  
(For such was Young Godolphin's age).  
Just then, the Court required a Page,  
Whereat



the Lord High Chamberlain  
(The Kindest and the Best of Men),  
He went good-naturedly and



took  
A Perfectly Enormous Book  
Called PEOPLE QUALIFIED TO BE  
ATTENDANT ON HIS MAJESTY,  
And murmured, as he scanned the list



(To see that no one should be missed),  
“There’s



William Coutts has got the Flue,



And Billy Higgs would never do,



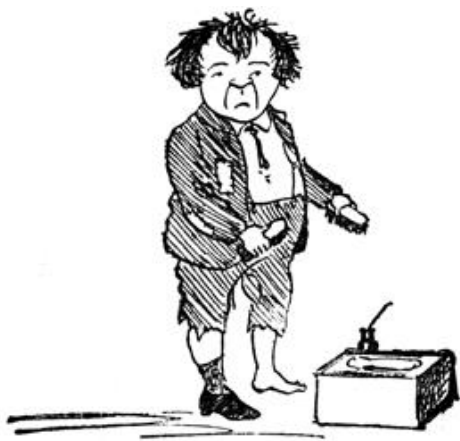
And Guy de Vere is far too young,



And ... wasn't D'Alton's Father hung?  
And as for Alexander Byng!— ...  
I think I know the kind of thing,  
A Churchman, cleanly, nobly born,  
Come  
let us say Godolphin Horne?"  
But hardly had he said the word  
When Murmurs of Dissent were heard.  
The King of Iceland's Eldest Son  
Said, "Thank you! I am taking none!"  
The Aged Duchess of Athlone  
Remarked, in her sub-acid tone,  
"I doubt if He is what we need!"  
With which the Bishops all agreed;  
And even Lady Mary Flood  
(SO Kind, and oh! so REALLY good)  
Said, "No! He wouldn't do at all,  
He'd make us feel a lot too small,"  
The Chamberlain said,  
"... Well, well, well!  
No doubt you're right.... One cannot tell!"  
He took his Gold and Diamond Pen  
And



Scratched Godolphin out again.  
So now Godolphin is the Boy  
Who blacks the Boots at the Savoy.



Algernon,  
WHO PLAYED WITH A LOADED GUN, AND, ON MISSING  
HIS SISTER WAS REPRIMANDED BY HIS FATHER.



Young Algernon, the Doctor's Son,  
Was



playing with a Loaded Gun.  
He pointed it towards his sister,  
Aimed very carefully, but



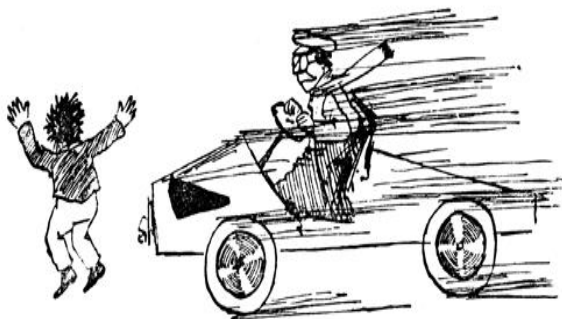
Missed her!



His Father, who was standing near,  
The Loud Explosion chanced to Hear,



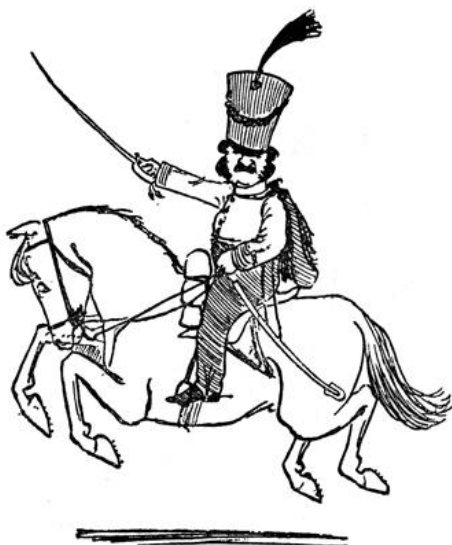
And reprimanded Algernon  
For playing with a Loaded Gun.  
Hildebrand,  
WHO WAS FRIGHTENED BY A PASSING MOTOR, AND  
WAS BROUGHT TO REASON.



“Oh, Murder! What was that, Papa!”  
“My child,  
It was a Motor-Car,  
A Most Ingenious Toy!”



Designed to Captivate and Charm  
Much rather than to rouse Alarm  
In any English Boy.  
“What would your Great Grandfather who



Was Aide-de-Camp to General Brue,  
And lost a leg at



Waterloo,  
And



Quatre-Bras and



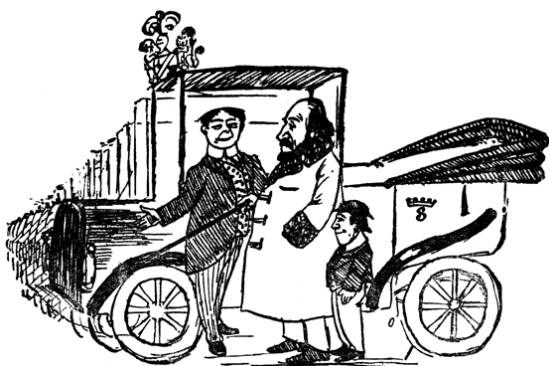


Ligny too!

And died at Trafalgar!—



What would he have remarked to hear  
His Young Descendant shriek with fear,  
Because he happened to be near  
A Harmless Motor-Car!  
But do not fret about it! Come!  
We'll off to Town



And purchase some!”

Lord Lundy,

WHO WAS TOO FREELY MOVED TO TEARS, AND  
THEREBY RUINED HIS POLITICAL CAREER.



Lord Lundy from his earliest years  
Was far too freely moved to Tears.  
For instance if his Mother said,  
“Lundy! It’s time to go to Bed!”  
He bellowed like a Little Turk.  
Or if



his father Lord Dunquerque  
Said "Hi!" in a Commanding Tone,  
"Hi, Lundy! Leave the Cat alone!"  
Lord Lundy, letting go its tail,  
Would raise so terrible a wail  
As moved  
His  
Grandpapa  
the



Duke

To utter the severe rebuke:

“When I, Sir! was a little Boy,  
An Animal was not a Toy!”

His father’s Elder Sister, who  
Was married to a Parvenoo,



Confided to Her Husband, “Drat!  
The Miserable, Peevish Brat!  
Why don’t they drown the Little Beast?”  
Suggestions which, to say the least,  
Are not what we expect to hear  
From Daughters of an English Peer.  
His grandmamma, His Mother’s Mother,  
Who had some dignity or other,  
The Garter, or no matter what,  
I can’t remember all the Lot!  
Said “Oh! that I were Brisk and Spry  
To give him that for which to cry!”  
(An empty wish, alas! for she



Was Blind and nearly ninety-three).



The  
Dear Old Butler  
thought—but there!  
I really neither know nor care  
For what the Dear Old Butler thought!

In my opinion, Butlers ought  
To know their place, and not to play  
The Old Retainer night and day  
I'm getting tired and so are you,  
Let's cut the Poem into two!

Lord Lundy

(SECOND CANTO)

It happened to Lord Lundy then,  
As happens to so many men:  
Towards the age of twenty-six,  
They shoved him into politics;  
In which profession he commanded  
The income that his rank demanded  
In turn as Secretary for  
India, the Colonies, and War.  
But very soon his friends began  
To doubt if he were quite the man:  
Thus, if a member rose to say  
(As members do from day to day),



“Arising out of that reply ...!”



Lord Lundy would begin to cry.  
A Hint at harmless little jobs  
Would shake him with convulsive sobs.  
While as for Revelations, these  
Would simply bring him to his knees,  
And leave him whimpering like a child.  
It drove his Colleagues raving wild!  
They let him sink from Post to Post,  
From fifteen hundred at the most  
To eight, and barely six—and then  
To be Curator of Big Ben!...  
And finally there came a Threat  
To oust him from the Cabinet!  
The Duke—his aged grand-sire—bore  
The shame till he could bear no more.  
He rallied his declining powers,  
Summoned the youth to Brackley Towers,  
And bitterly addressed him thus—  
“Sir! you have disappointed us!  
We had intended you to be  
The next Prime Minister but three:  
The stocks were sold; the Press was squared:  
The Middle Class was quite prepared.  
But as it is!... My language fails!



Go out and govern New South Wales!”  
The Aged Patriot groaned and died:  
And gracious! how Lord Lundy cried!



Rebecca,  
WHO SLAMMED DOORS FOR FUN AND PERISHED  
MISERABLY.



A Trick that everyone abhors  
In Little Girls is slamming Doors.  
A



Wealthy Banker's



Little Daughter  
Who lived in Palace Green, Bayswater  
(By name Rebecca Offendort),  
Was given to this Furious Sport.  
She would deliberately go



And Slam the door like  
Billy-Ho!



To make  
her  
Uncle Jacob start.  
She was not really bad at heart,  
But only rather rude and wild:  
She was an aggravating child....  
It happened that a Marble Bust  
Of Abraham was standing just  
Above the Door this little Lamb

Had carefully prepared to Slam,  
And Down it came! It knocked her flat!

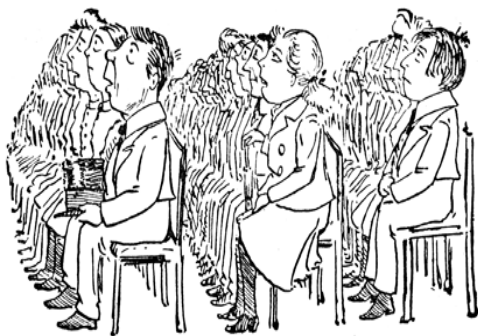


It laid her out! She looked like that.



Her funeral Sermon (which was long  
And followed by a Sacred Song)  
Mentioned her Virtues, it is true,  
But dwelt upon her Vices too,  
And showed the Dreadful End of One  
Who goes and slams the door for Fun.  
The children who were brought to hear

The awful Tale from far and near  
Were much impressed,  
and inly swore  
They never more would slam the Door.  
—As often they had done before.



George,  
WHO PLAYED WITH A DANGEROUS TOY, AND SUFFERED  
A CATASTROPHE OF CONSIDERABLE DIMENSIONS.

When George's Grandmamma was told



That George had been as good as Gold,  
She Promised in the Afternoon  
To buy him an IMMENSE BALLOON.  
And



so she did; but when it came,  
It got into the candle flame,  
And being of a dangerous sort  
Exploded



with a loud report!  
The Lights went out! The Windows broke!  
The Room was filled with reeking smoke.  
And in the darkness shrieks and yells  
Were mingled with Electric Bells,  
And falling masonry and groans,  
And crunching, as of broken bones,  
And dreadful shrieks, when, worst of all,  
The House itself began to fall!  
It tottered, shuddering to and fro,  
Then crashed into the street below—  
Which happened to be Savile Row.

When Help arrived, among the Dead  
Were



Cousin Mary,



Little Fred,



The Footmen



(both of them),



The Groom,



The man that cleaned the Billiard-Room,



The Chaplain, and



The Still-Room Maid.  
And I am dreadfully afraid  
That Monsieur Champignon, the Chef,  
Will now be





permanently deaf—  
And both his  
Aides



are much the same;  
While George, who was in part to blame,  
Received, you will regret to hear,  
A nasty lump



behind the ear.

#### MORAL

The moral is that little Boys  
Should not be given dangerous Toys.  
Charles Augustus Fortescue,  
WHO ALWAYS DID WHAT WAS RIGHT, AND SO  
ACCUMULATED AN IMMENSE FORTUNE.

The nicest child I ever knew  
Was Charles Augustus Fortescue.  
He never lost his cap, or tore  
His stockings or his pinafore:  
In eating Bread he made no Crumbs,  
He was extremely fond of sums,



To which, however, he preferred  
 The Parsing of a Latin Word—  
 He sought, when it was in his power,  
 For information twice an hour,  
 And as for finding Mutton-Fat  
 Unappetising, far from that!  
 He often, at his Father's Board,  
 Would beg them, of his own accord,



To give him, if they did not mind,  
 The Greasiest Morsels they could find—  
 His Later Years did not belie  
 The Promise of his Infancy.  
 In Public Life he always tried

To take a judgment Broad and Wide;

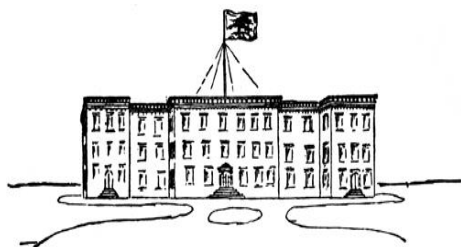


In Private, none was more than he  
Renowned for quiet courtesy.  
He rose at once in his Career,  
And long before his Fortieth Year  
Had wedded  
Fifi,



Only Child  
Of Bunyan, First Lord Aberfylde.  
He thus became immensely Rich,

And built the Splendid Mansion which  
Is called



**“The Cedars,  
Muswell Hill,”**

Where he resides in Affluence still  
To show what Everybody might  
Become by  
SIMPLY DOING RIGHT.

End of Cautionary Tales for Children, by Hilaire Belloc

# Author/Historical Context

During the time this book was originally written, the world was a very different place. The happenings of the time as well as the personal and professional life of the author produced an effect on how this book was written, worded and the content of the manuscript. The following is intended to help the reader better connect with these writings.

**Joseph Hilaire Pierre René Belloc** (27 July 1870– 16 July 1953) was an Anglo-French writer and historian of the early twentieth century. Belloc was also an orator, poet, sailor, satirist, writer of letters, soldier, and political activist. His Catholic faith had a strong impact on his works.

Belloc became a naturalised British subject in 1902 while retaining his French citizenship. He served as President of the Oxford Union and later MP for Salford South from 1906 to 1910. Belloc was a noted disputant, with a number of long-running feuds.

Belloc's writings encompassed religious poetry and comic verse for children. His widely sold *Cautionary Tales for Children* included "Jim, who ran away from his nurse, and was eaten by a lion" and "Matilda, who told lies and was burned to death". He wrote historical biographies and numerous travel works, including *The Path to Rome* (1902). He also collaborated with G. K. Chesterton on a number of works.

## Family and Career

Belloc was born in La Celle-Saint-Cloud, France to a French father, Louis Belloc (1830–1872) and an English mother. His sister Marie Adelaide Belloc Lowndes also became a writer.

Belloc's mother Bessie Rayner Parkes (1829–1925) was a writer, activist and an advocate for women's equality, a co-founder of the *English Woman's Journal* and the Langham Place Group. As an adult, Belloc campaigned against women's suffrage as a member of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League.

Belloc's maternal grandfather was Joseph Parkes (1796–1865). Belloc's grandmother, Elizabeth Rayner Priestley (1797–1877), was born in the United States, a granddaughter of Joseph Priestley.

In 1867, Parkes married attorney Louis Belloc, son of Jean-Hilaire Belloc. In 1872, five years after they wed, Louis died but not before being wiped out financially in a stock market crash. The young widow then brought her children back to England.

### **Early Life**

Belloc grew up in England; his boyhood was spent in Slindon, Sussex. He wrote about his home in poems such as "West Sussex Drinking Song", "The South Country", and "Ha'nacker Mill". After graduating from John Henry Newman's Oratory School in Edgbaston, Birmingham, In 1890, Belloc met Elodie Hogan, an American living in Northern California.

Belloc served his term of military service, as a French citizen, with an artillery regiment near Toul in 1891. He proceeded to Balliol College, Oxford, as a history scholar, securing a first-class honours degree in 1895. Belloc would later write in a poem "Balliol made me, Balliol fed me/ Whatever I had she gave me again".

### **Later Years**

Belloc traveled to the United States to visit Hogan, An athletic man who walked extensively in Britain and Europe, Bellow walked a significant part of the distance from the American Midwest to Hogan's home in California. While walking, he paid for lodging at remote farm houses and ranches by sketching the owners and reciting poetry. The couple married in 1896.

In 1906, Belloc purchased land and a house called King's Land at Shipley in the United Kingdom. The couple had five children before Hogan's death in 1914 from influenza. Belloc wore mourning garb for the rest of his life and kept her room as she had left it. His son Louis was killed in 1918 while serving in the Royal Flying Corps in northern France. Belloc placed a memorial tablet at the nearby Cambrai Cathedral. It is in the same side chapel as the icon Our Lady of Cambrai.

On 2 April 1941, Belloc's son Peter Gilbert Marie Sebastian Belloc died at age 36 of pneumonia. He fell ill while on active service with the 5th Battalion, Royal Marines in Scotland. He is buried in West Grinstead at Our Lady of Consolation and St. Francis churchyard.

In 1937, Belloc was invited to be a visiting professor at Fordham University in New York City by university president Robert Gannon. Belloc delivered a series of lectures at Fordham which he completed in May of that year. While pleased to accept the invitation, the

experience left him physically exhausted, and he considered stopping the lectures early.

## **Death and Legacy**

In 1941, Belloc suffered a stroke and never recovered from its effects. In 1941, Belloc suffered burns and shock after falling on his fireplace. He died on 16 July 1953 at Mount Alvernia Nursing Home in Guildford, Surrey.

Belloc was buried at the Shrine Church of Our Lady of Consolation and St Francis at West Grinstead, where he had regularly attended Mass as a parishioner. His estate was probated at £7,451. At his funeral Mass, homilist Monsignor Ronald Knox observed, "No man of his time fought so hard for the good things." Boys from the Choir and Sacristy of Worth Preparatory School sang and served at the Mass.

Recent biographies of Belloc have been written by A. N. Wilson and Joseph Pearce. Jesuit political philosopher James Schall's *Remembering Belloc* was published by St. Augustine Press in September 2013. A memoir of Belloc was written by Henry Edward George Rope.

## **Political Career**

At Balliol College, Belloc served as President of the Oxford Union. He went into politics after he became a naturalized British subject. A great disappointment in his life was his failure to gain a fellowship of All Souls College, Oxford in 1895. This failure may have been caused in part by his producing a small statue of the Virgin and placing it before him on the table during the interview for the fellowship.

From 1906 to 1910 Belloc was a Liberal Party Member of Parliament for Salford South. During one campaign speech he was asked by a heckler if he was a "papist." Retrieving his rosary from his pocket he responded,

"Gentlemen, I am a Catholic. As far as possible, I go to Mass every day. This [taking a rosary out of his pocket] is a rosary. As far as possible, I kneel down and tell these beads every day. If you reject me on account of my religion, I shall thank God that He has spared me the indignity of being your representative."

The crowd cheered and Belloc won the election.

Belloc's only period of steady employment after that was from 1914 to 1920 as editor of *Land and Water*. Otherwise, he lived by his writing



and was often financially insecure.

### **In Controversy and Debate**

Belloc first came to public attention shortly after arriving at Balliol College, Oxford as a recent French army veteran. Attending his first debate of the Oxford Union Debating Society, he saw that the affirmative position was wretchedly and half-heartedly defended. As the debate drew to its conclusion and the division of the house was called, he rose from his seat in the audience, and delivered a vigorous, impromptu defence of the proposition. Belloc won that debate from the audience, as the division of the house then showed, and his reputation as a debater was established. He was later elected president of the Union. He held his own in debates there with F. E. Smith and John Buchan, the latter a friend.

In the 1920s, Belloc attacked H. G. Wells's *The Outline of History*. Belloc criticized what he termed Wells' secular bias and his belief in evolution by means of natural selection, a theory that Belloc asserted had been completely discredited. Wells remarked that "Debating Mr. Belloc is like arguing with a hailstorm". Belloc's review of *Outline of History* observed that Wells' book was a powerful and well-written volume, "up until the appearance of Man, that is, somewhere around page seven." Wells responded with a small book, *Mr. Belloc Objects*. Not to be outdone, Belloc followed with, "Mr. Belloc Still Objects."

G. G. Coulton wrote *Mr. Belloc on Medieval History* in a 1920 article. After a long simmering feud, Belloc replied with a booklet, *The Case of Dr. Coulton*, in 1938.

Belloc's style during later life fulfilled the nickname he received in childhood, Old Thunder. Belloc's friend, Lord Sheffield, described his provocative personality in a preface to *The Cruise of the Nona*.

### **Hobbies**

During his later years, Belloc would sail when he could afford to do so and became a well-known yachtsman. He won many races and was on the French sailing team.

In the early 1930s, he was given an old pilot cutter called *Jersey*. He sailed this for some years around the coasts of England, with the help of younger men. One sailor, Dermot MacCarthy, wrote a book about it, called *Sailing with Mr. Belloc*.

### **Writing**

Belloc wrote over 150 books, The subjects ranged from warfare to

poetry to the many current topics of his day. He has been called one of the Big Four of Edwardian Letters, along with H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, and G. K. Chesterton, all of whom debated with each other into the 1930s. Belloc was closely associated with Chesterton, and Shaw coined the term "Chesterbelloc" for their partnership. Belloc was co-editor with Cecil Chesterton of the literary periodical the Eye-Witness,

Asked once why he wrote so much, Belloc responded, "Because my children are howling for pearls and caviar." Belloc observed that "The first job of letters is to get a canon," that is, to identify those works a writer sees as exemplary of the best of prose and verse. For his own prose style, he claimed to aspire to be as clear and concise as "Mary had a little lamb."

### **Essays and Travel Writing**

In 1902, Belloc published *The Path to Rome* (1902), an account of a walking pilgrimage from Central France across the Alps to Rome. *The Path to Rome* contains descriptions of the people and places he encountered, his drawings in pencil and in ink of the route, humor, poesy. In 1909, Belloc published *The Pyrenees*, providing many details of that region.

As an essayist he was one of a small, group (with Chesterton, E. V. Lucas and Robert Lynd) of popular writers.

### **Poetry**

His *Cautionary Tales for Children*, humorous poems with an implausible moral, illustrated by Basil Temple Blackwood (signing as "B.T.B.") and later by Edward Gorey, are the most widely known of his writings. Supposedly for children, they, like Lewis Carroll's works, are more to adult and satirical tastes: "Henry King, Who chewed bits of string and was early cut off in dreadful agonies". A similar poem tells the story of "Rebecca, who slammed doors for fun and perished miserably".

The tale of "Matilda who told lies and was burned to death" was adapted into the play *Matilda Liar!* by Debbie Isitt. Quentin Blake, the illustrator, described Belloc as at one and the same time the overbearing adult and mischievous child. Roald Dahl was a follower. But Belloc has broader if sourer scope.

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