

TT 13 Day 33 (Being at home). The Guvnor has been amused by some of the views declared by the 'chatterati' about drinking at home. Personally, I don't know what the fuss is about; I wander to my drinking bowl many times a day but I guess he is talking about alcohol, one the 'ols' that is forbidden these days along with cholesterol. Because the pubs and restaurants are closed, people are drinking at home and surprising themselves how much is being consumed and also how full are the recycling boxes at the end of the fortnight.

He chuckled at the letter to the Dublin Herald from Tom in County Wicklow who wrote: 'SIR – For Pete's sake open the pubs again before we all become alcoholics.'

Here, there is less amusement as his wife frowns when he opens a beer on an 'ordinary' weekday. "It's the slippery slope, you know" to which he replies, "I know; refusing a beer at lunchtime is the slippery slope to sobriety". She doesn't laugh out loud, but I see her smile behind his back and shrug her shoulders.

No wonder he, and others, are driven to imbibe (I like that word as it fits to badly with 'sobriety') slightly more than usual. It is going to get worse as we come out of this crisis and there is a day of reckoning when the Chancellor tots up the bill for keeping so many pots on the simmer. The Guvnor worked for a charity once upon a time and remembers vividly the criticism he and his fellow Directors had to take year after year about the size of the reserve fund his charity held. The stock answer in his case was always 'we don't know when there will be another World War and mass casualties and/or the aftermath of those casualties will require extraordinary help.' How

prescient that was because, while this isn't a conventional war its consequences can certainly be compared to one.

Interestingly, the magnificent Bill Mathewson wrote to his tax collector as the 2nd World War neared its end:

'Dear Sir, For the following reasons I am unable to meet your demand note for Income Tax. I have been bombed, blasted, burnt and sand-bagged, walked upon, sat upon, held up, held down, flattened and squeezed by Income Tax, Super Tax, Beer Tax, Spirit Tax, Motor Tax, and every Society, Organisation and Club that man can conceive to extract whatever I might have left.

The Government has governed my business until I do not know who owns it. I am suspected, inspected, examined, informed, required and condemned so that I do not know who I am, where I am, or why I am here at all. All I know is that I am supposed to have an inexhaustible supply of money for every need, desire or hope in the human race and because I will not go out and beg, borrow or steal money to give away, I am outed, boycotted, talked about, held up, rung up, robbed and all but ruined. The only reason I am clinging to life at all is to see what might happen next.' I suspect we may well find ourselves in a similar position when or if this crisis ends but, for now, we are all hunkering down, keeping our heads and everything else below the parapet and hoping no-one does anything stupid and brings the virus here.

Keeping safe took on a whole new meaning here when the Guvnor came in to find a pile of washing on the kitchen table and a note on the floor saying. "I'm washing my hair; please peg out." Interesting, eh!