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Date of paper unknown. Reverse side referred to Corn Markets in 1925 and 1926 .·. date most likely 1927. Paper referred to as the "Journal".

1/6/81.
Original loaned by Mrs. V. Gooch of Lt. Bradley, daughter-in-law of N. Gooch. Mrs. V. Gooch's husband kept the "Fox" after his father, but did not survive long.

Original photo of N. Gooch loaned by above.

BLIND, BUT CHEERFUL AND CAPABLE!

Great Bradley's Sightless Innkeeper.

Smiles and Efficiency in the Gloom.

"Total eclipse, no sun, no moon," has been sung around the history of Samson, and appropriately enough, too, for the loss of eyesight brought hopeless gloom and jeers to that depoiled giant. But lost powers of vision, terrible though such affliction must naturally be, need not of necessity mean despondency and the death of cheerfulness.

A visit to the "Fox" Inn, Great Bradley, will prove this. (I speak from experience.) There will be seen Mr. Nathan Gooch (husband of the licensee, Mrs. Rosa A. Gooch), totally blind in both eyes, and yet alert and smiling through the darkness. And it is not as though he had never known aught else; never seen the sunnght, or gazed unwaveringly into the eyes of his fellows. Time was when he, too, saw the changes of nature in the passing seasons, descried the beauties of landscape and stream; and noted the golden rays of the sunset, and the shadows cast by the silver moon as it paseed under drifting clouds. For his birth in 1886 saw him with the full vision of infancy, and the glory of eyesight remained with him until 1902, when as a soldier at the Curragh, in Ireland, the bursting of a ginger beer bottle wrought the havoc which resulted in total blindness in both eyes. Various operations, with their attendant agony, were perrormed in Dublin and in London, but the deep-seated injury manifested itself in an awful truth, and a future of darkness had to be faced. And it was confronted with mental cheerfulness. Realising the futility and hopelessness of despair, the gallant young soldier, who was discharged from the army in 1904, devoted himself to the cultivation of his other senses and with such effect and success that to-day he is an all-round capable man—apart from eyesight—with an extraordinary capacity for realising and taking in that which is going on around him.

Behind the bar he is as deft and quick as the next man in supplying customers' needs. Whether it be a bottle of Greene' King's Ale or India Ale, a glass of bitter, or "something short," he will supply you rapidly and unerringly, and he will pass along the glasses with the same facility as he found them and "charged" them. Nor is he ever at a loss in the money part of the deal. In a flash he names the coin you have tendered to him, and unhesitatingly he gives you your correct change. Wonderful? May be. Keen students of human nature would probably tell you that it is the result of the cheerful and resolute application of the senses and powers that are left to him to the necessities of the case. That is the way I like to look at it, and the way that I feel touches the truth.

It was a bright, sunny autumn morning when I called in at the "Fox," during the hours that the Home Secretary says I may have alcoholic refreshment. Mr. Gooch was at the receipt of custom, and a mutual aquaintance with places and people opened into a mutually interesting conversation. At least the genial landlord's readiness to listen as well as to talk led me to the pleasing belief that the interest of the conversation was not all on one side, a conclusion which received support when a kindly invitation was extended to me to step inside the parlour to look at certain objects of interest, which were pointed out to me with exactness by the sightless man. Here I saw a framed picture of "The Innkeeper who has never seen his Inn!"

I was not the only customer at the "Fox" that morning, happily for the material well-being of Mr. Gooch and his wife. Others came and went, and the landlord knew each one before he spoke. The footstep had been the herald. Not the least interesting of those who looked in when passing was one of the good old stagers of the village, "Johnnie" Ling, who not only pleasantly acceded to the suggestion that he should stand beside the landlord at the door of the inn, to aid in lending effect to a photograph, but also assisted the skilled photographer by conjuring up a smile for the occasion. Both "Johnnie" and the smile will be seen in the picture on Page 2 of this issue.

Amongst other callers was a gentleman from Norwich, whose motor-car hummed outside while the owner refreshed within. From this patron of Great Bradley's social centre I learned a story which emphasised Mr. Gooch's remarkable powers of acuteness, sense of location, and deftness of hand. It referred to a game in which victory rested with those who were most successful in throwing a penny into a small round aperture in a bench or seat some little distance away. The narrator and the host took on experts hailing from the locality of Bury St. Edmund's, and the latter were fairly extinguished, bowling honours resting with mine host of the "Fox!" Nor must I forget to mention that Mr. Gooch works his own aerial set.

To come to definite matters of fact, I may say that Mr. Gooch is a native of Bury St. Edmund's, and that he is a soldier by birth, having been born at the Depot of the Suffolk Regiment in the capital town of West Suffolk. He comes of a Duffy family, and an uncle of his, Mr. Frank Gooch, lived in Guildhall Street.

When thirteen years of age—in 1899—he enlisted as a drummer in the Suffolks, subsequently passing into another section of the military forces of the country, and he had, therefore, seen three years' military service when the catastrophe which cut short his army career occurred. Nineteen years ago he entered into occupation of the licensed house he now carries on in conjunction with his wife, and which he has never seen! As a boy, Mr. Gooch went to the Risbygate School, in Bury St. Edmund's, under the headmastership of Mr. E. H. Taylor (now retired, and a Councillor of the Borough), and he has vivid memories of his school days. Also of those later years when the lines of life appeared to be laid for him as a soldier in the service of King and Country. Mention of the late Lieut.-Col. J. T. Potter drew from Mr. Gooch many happy reminiscences, and he had also pleasing recollections of Captain J. T. Hearn, then honourably forging his way to high and well-deserved promotion.

It may be that the attainment of high rank would have fallen to Mr. Gooch had not physical disaster come his way, but he has made the best of circumstances, and, receiving fate's blow with courage, has taken up the reins of life calmly and happily in the peaceful village of Great Bradley.