



British Balance Sense.

One day I was sitting in a countryside pub somewhere way back in the Cornwall Peninsula, in the southwestern part of Britain. I had been in this pub the previous year. Nothing seemed to have changed since then. But when nature called and I went off looking for the lavatory to relieve myself, it was nowhere to be found on the ground floor. They had, as I discovered soon, relocated it up to the first floor.

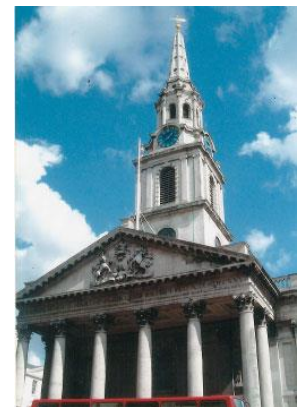


Resuming my seat at the bar, I spoke to a man behind the counter in an attempt to engage him in conversation. I asked him if the pub had gone through some renovation that moved only the washroom up above. He looked at me briefly, a man in his early thirties, but did not make any response whatsoever to my inquiry. Instead, he disappeared back into the interior and then, as if on cue, a young

black woman appeared in front of me. She was all smiles, but not a single word came out of her rich, thick lips. At a loss, I just kept on drinking beer in silence.

A while later, I went out the pub onto the patio-like garden and sat on one of the chairs placed around a huge round wooden table for customers to enjoy themselves outside. A beer mug in my hand, I looked up at the varicolored evening sky, a faint glow in the west and the darkening east gathering clouds into the night.

All of a sudden, there appeared a middle-aged man walking in a casual manner toward me. A total stranger. I gave a little start as the creature instinct will dictate in any human being. He began to speak to me in a mild tone of voice. He said something to the effect that there used to be the lavatory on the ground floor, but “change has taken place and now they have the thing on the first floor, don’t they?” Taken by surprise, I didn’t know how to answer except to say, “Oh yes, it’s been changed.” He listened to me leisurely and turned around, vanishing into the thin night air. At that very moment, I was inadvertent enough not to grasp what had happened. Why on earth does a native white man speak to a total stranger, yet more, a vagrant-looking guy obviously from the Orient. There must be some reason behind all of this.



Looking back, I belatedly realized that this middle aged man must have shared the counter with me inside of the pub. He watched what was going on at the board. I don’t know what this gentleman made of what happened at the counter. What I know for sure at the least is “Speaking and Spoken” should be something that needs a striking of balance to constitute the formula. He will have seen



this balance broken at the bar and made up his mind to make good on what went off balance.

Before disappearing, he glanced back on me and I looked up at him. Fair enough. The night in Cornwall was drawing near over everyone. I stood to my feet and went on my way back home to my landlord’s, very lighthearted.