Shaw's Ninety-fourth Birthday

F. G. PRINCE-WHITE

From F. G. Prince-White, 'Bernard Shaw is 94 Today', *Daily Mail*, 26 July 1950. Frederic George Prince-White (1894–1975), journalist, was on the editorial staff of the *Daily Mail* for over forty years. The short play to which Prince-White refers was finally entitled *Why She Would Not: A Little Comedy* (see above, p. 396).

'I've got a piece of news for you,' he told me yesterday, when I talked with him in his study at Ayot St Lawrence.

'I thought something might be expected of me to mark my birthday, as usual, so I've written another play. I've labelled it 'a little comedy', and called it *The Lady She Would Not*. It is in five scenes. I wrote the whole thing in seven days.'

He beamed triumphantly as he repeated: 'Yes, *in seven days*.'

'People seem to think,' he went on, 'that I ought to go on writing big plays like *Back to Methuselah* and *The Doctor's Dilemma* – but why should I? I've said all I wanted to say; now I can write little things to amuse myself.'

He grumbles fiercely about people who 'pester' him when his birthday comes round.

'I *don't* want to be asked how I am,' he insisted angrily. 'There's so much nonsense in this "How are you?" business. People are always saying "You look younger than ever", when the truth is they are thinking how damned awful you look and wondering that you manage to keep alive, anyhow.'

Presently he smiled (there is a world of charm in that rare smile of his) and said: 'Anyway, I'm past my second childhood now; now I'm really beginning to grow up. I still maintain that a man needs to live to be 250 if he is to make full use of the knowledge and wisdom he acquires. That is the ideal. I don't say I'm going to soar to it.'