

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 153, Aug. 22, 1917

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

VOL. 153.

AUGUST 22, 1917.

[Illustration: A POULTRY-FANCIER, HEARING THAT DEFENCES AT THE FRONT ARE
SOMETIMES DISGUISED AS HEN-HOUSES, DETERMINED TO REVERSE THE PROCESS.
BEING A BIT OF AN ARTIST HE DISGUISED HIS HEN-HOUSE BY GIVING IT A
WARLIKE APPEARANCE. THE ENEMY WAS STRICKEN WITH PANIC.]

* * * * *

CHARIVARIA.

Eighty-eight policemen were bitten by dogs in 1913, but only forty-four
in 1915, says The Daily Mail, and quotes a policeman as saying that
"dogs are not half so vicious as they used to be." The true explanation
is that policemen no longer taste as good as in the old rabbit-pie days.

Recent heavy rain and the absence of sunshine have, it is stated, caused
corn in Essex to sprout in the ear. This idea of portable allotments is
appealing very strongly to busy City men.

Feeling about the Stockholm Conference is changing a little, and several
people suggest that Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD might be sent as a reprisal.

Sixty-seven children were recently lost on one day at New Brighton. The
fact that they were all restored to their parents before nightfall
speaks well for the honesty of the general public.

The German authorities have further restricted the foods to be supplied
to dogs, and German scientists are now trying to grow dachshunds with a
shorter span.

"We have a Coal Controller, but where is the coal?" plaintively asks a contemporary. There is no satisfying the jaundiced Press.

A well-dressed female baby a month old has been found under the seat of a first-class compartment in a train on the Chertsey line. Several mothers have written to congratulate her upon her courageous and unconventional protest against the fifty per cent. increase in railway fares.

A Glasgow woman has been fined a guinea for trying to enlist in the Irish Guards. Only the Scottish Courts carry pride of race to these absurd lengths.

It is announced that the recent increase in the price of bacon was sanctioned by the FOOD CONTROLLER. The news has given great satisfaction to law-abiding consumers, who bitterly resented the unauthorised increases (upon which this is a further increase) that were made under the old _regime_.

A dress made from banana skins is now being exhibited in London. It is, we believe, a _neglige_ costume, the sort of thing one can slip on at any time.

"If you had let the boy eat it, it would have punished him a great deal more than I can," said the North London magistrate to a man who was prosecuting a boy for stealing an unripe pear. It is a splendid tribute to the humanity of our stipendiary magistrates that the heroic offer of the boy to accept the greater punishment was promptly refused.

A workman at Kinlochleven, Argyllshire, found a live crab in a pocket of sand at a depth of more than ten feet. On being taken to the police-station and shown the "All Clear" notice the cautious crustacean consented to go straight home.

At a flower-day sale at Grimsby one thousand pounds was paid by a local shipowner for a blue periwinkle. In recognition of his generosity no charge was made for the pin.

A Vienna telegram states that the Emperor KARL has handed the Grand

Cross of St. Stephen to the GERMAN CHANCELLOR. The latter quite rightly protests that Herr BETHMANN-HOLLWEG is the real culprit.

From Scotland comes the news that an inmate of a workhouse has received an income-tax form to fill in. This is considered to be but a foretaste of the time when all income-tax papers will have to be addressed to the workhouses.

* * * * *

In a Gloucester meadow, Lieutenant JAGGARD has picked a mushroom weighing ten ounces and measuring twenty-seven inches in circumference. Eyewitnesses describe the gallant officer's enveloping movement as a really brilliant piece of single-handed work.

The Prussian Military Press Bureau, among its other fantasies, has discovered with horror that Calais has been leased to England for ninety-nine years. Our own information is that the situation is really worse than that, the lease being granted alternatively for ninety-nine years "or the duration of the War."

An official statement points out that the work of the National Service Department is continuing without interruption pending the appointment of a new Director-General. It appears that the members of the staff have expressed a desire to die in harness.

* * * * *

IDYLLS OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

A FRAGMENT.

So spake Sir GERARD (U.S.A.) and ceased.
Then answered WILLIAM, talking through his hat:
"When first the heathen rose against our realm,
That haunt of peace where all day long occurred
The cooing of innumerable doves,
I hailed my knighthood where I sat in hall
At high Potsdam the Palace, and they came;
And all the rafters rang with rousing _Hochs_.

"So to my feet they drew and kissed my boots
And laid their mailly fists in mine and sware
To reverence their Kaiser as their God
And _vice versa_; to uphold the Faith
Approved by me as Champion of the Church;
To ride abroad redressing Belgium's wrongs;
To honour treaties like a virgin's troth;
To serve as model in the nations' eyes
Of strength with sweetness wed; to hack their way
Without superfluous violence; to spare
The best cathedrals lest my heart should bleed,

Nor butcher babes and women, or at least
No more than needful--in a word, behave
Like Prussian officers, the flower of men.

"I bade them take ensample from their Lord
Of perfect manners, wearing on their helms
The bouquet of a blameless Junkerhood,
And be a law of culture to themselves,
Though other laws, not made in Germany,
Should perish, being scrapped. For so I deemed
That this our Order of the Table Round
Should mould its Christian pattern on the spheres,
Itself unchanged amid a world new-made,
And men should say, in that fair after-time,
'The old Order sticketh, yielding place to none.'"

So be. Whereat that other held his peace,
Seeming, for courtesy, to yield assent.
But, as within the lists at Camelot
Some temporary knight mislays his seat
And falls, and, falling, lets his morion loose,
And lights upon his head, and all the spot
Swell like a pumpkin, and he hides the bulge
Beneath his gauntlet lest it cause remark
And curious comment--so behind his hand
Sir GERARD's cheek, that had his tongue inside,
Swelled like a pumpkin....

O. S.

* * * * *

THE STOCKING OF PRIVATE PARKS.

As I came out on to the convalescents' verandah my brother James looked up from his paper.

"Did I ever tell you about a certain Private Parks?" he asked. "He was with me in Flanders in the early days. He came out with a draft and lasted about two months. Rather a curious type. Very superstitious. If a shell narrowly missed him he must have a small piece to put in his pocket. If while standing on a duck-board he happened to be immune while his pals were being knocked out he would carry it about with him all day if possible. On one occasion he was very nearly shot for insubordination, because he would go out into No-man's-land after a flower which he thought would help him.

"Not that his superstition was purely selfish. Once, when he had had two particularly close shaves during the day, he insisted upon sleeping outside the barn where we were billeted. 'I'm absolutely certain to have a third close shave,' he said, 'and if I'm in the billet someone will get it.'

"The Corporal let him lie down in the farmyard, but a little later he crept up the road about fifty yards to make things more certain."

"And I suppose the barn was hit and he escaped?" I put in, feeling that I had heard this story before.

"You don't know Private Parks," said James. "About two o'clock in the morning a shell fell on the road not ten yards from him. Bits of it must have made a pattern all round him, but not one hit him, and when he'd picked himself out of the ditch he went back to the billet, knowing all was then safe.

"Then one day when we were in the front line there came up with the mail a parcel for Private Parks. I was near when he opened it. When he saw the contents he gave a sigh and a curious resigned expression came over his face.

"What's she sent you?" I asked.

"It's from my old aunt, Sir," he said. "It's a stocking." "Only one?" "Yes," he said with great solemnity. "The other one's been pinched?" I asked. "No, Sir. The parcel's not been opened. It simply means that I shall lose a leg to-day," he added. He wasn't panicked at all. But, as to reassuring him, I might as well have argued with a tank.

"We'd had a very quiet time, but that evening the Hun put over a pretty stiff bombardment. We stood to, but we all thought it was only a little extra evening hate, except Private Parks. He kept saying, 'They're coming across,' till we told him not to get the wind up. But he hadn't got the wind up. Only he knew they were coming.

"And they did come. Just after it was dark they made a biggish raid and got into our front trench a little to our right. We started bombing inwards, but the slope of the ground was awkward, and they seemed to be having the best of the fun.

"Then Parks jumped up on to the parapet with a pail of bombs and ran along. He fairly got among them, and by the time he was hit in the right leg they were mostly casualties or prisoners. I saw him on the stretcher going back. He was in some pain, but he smiled, and said, 'One stocking will be enough now, Sir.'"

"Very extraordinary," I began, but James stopped me.

"I haven't finished," he said. "When about three months later I went down to Southmouth Convalescent Camp, almost the first man I saw was Private Parks. He was still on crutches, but he had two legs. I greeted him, and then I couldn't resist saying, 'What about the stocking?'

"I'll tell you, Sir," he said. "For a week after I was wounded it was a toss up whether they took the leg off or not. Then a parcel arrived for me. It was the other stocking. My aunt had discovered that she had left it out. That evening the surgeon decided that they need not amputate. I knew they wouldn't, of course, as soon as I received the parcel."

James had really finished this time, and after a moment's reflection I said, "I wonder if that's true."

"Do you flatter me?" he asked.

"I don't know about that. Not with intent," I said, "though it would really be more to your credit if you'd made it up."

"As a matter of fact," said James, "I did make it up. It was suggested

to me by the heading to a letter in this paper--'The Stocking of Private Parks,' though that appears to be upon quite a different subject. Something agricultural, I gather."

* * * * *

"By a comparison of the wet and dry bulb registrations the dew point and the humidity of the atmosphere is determined."

Banbury Guardian.

In the first week of August, at any rate, the atmosphere had no reason to swank.

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[Illustration: THE INTRUDERS.

AMERICAN EAGLE (to German Peace Doves). "GO AWAY; I'M BUSY."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: Chatty Waiter (to visitor growing stouter every day).

"I'M SURE, SIR YOUR STAY HERE IS DOING YOU GOOD. WHY, YOU'RE TWICE THE GENTLEMAN YOU WERE WHEN YOU CAME."]

* * * * *

A LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

Dear ----,--We got here safely, with the usual submarine scares en route, but apparently no real danger. Vessels going westward from England are not much the U-boats' concern, nor are the U's, I guess, particularly keen on wasting torpedoes on passenger ships. What they want to sink is the goods.

Anyway, we got here safely. It is all very wonderful and novel, and the interest in the War is unmistakable; but what I want to tell you about is an experience that I have had in the house of one of the leading picture collectors here--and the art treasures of America are gradually but surely becoming terrific. If some measure is not passed to prevent export, England will soon have nothing left, except in the public galleries. Of course, for a while, America can't be so rich as if she had not come into the War, but she will be richer than we can ever be for a good many years, while the steel people who make the implements of destruction at Bethlehem will be richest of all. What my man makes I cannot say, but he is a king of sorts, even if not actually a Bethlehem boss, and the Medici are not in it! I have introductions to all the most famous collectors, but, hearing of his splendours, I went to him first.

Well, I sent on my credentials, and was invited to call and inspect the Plutocrat's walls. You never saw anything like them! And he refers to his collection only as a "modest nucleus." He has agents all over the world to discover when the possessors of certain unique works are nearing the rocks. Then he offers to buy. As his wealth is unlimited, and sooner or later all the nobility and gentry of England, France, Italy and Russia will be in Queer Street, his collection cannot but grow and become more and more amazing. He even had the cheek to send the

Trustees of the National Gallery a blank cheque asking them to fill it up as they wished whenever they were ready to part with TITIAN'S "Bacchus and Ariadne." Though he calls himself a patriot, directly the War is done he will make overtures to Germany. There is a Vermeer in Berlin on which he has set his heart, and another in Dresden.

I could fill reams in telling you what he has. But I confine myself to one picture only, which he keeps in a room by itself. I am not so foolish as to pretend to know anything, but to my eyes this picture was nothing whatever but the Louvre's "Monna Lisa."

That being of course impossible, "What a wonderful copy!" I said.

"You may indeed say so," replied my host.

I looked at it more closely, even applying a pocket magnifying-glass.

"There was not a contemporary duplicate?" I inquired. "Could LEONARDO have painted two?"

The Chowder King, or whatever he is called, smiled inscrutably. "No doubt he could," he said. "But perhaps," he continued, "you have not seen the Louvre picture since it was put back after the theft?"

"Not to examine it closely," I replied.

He laughed softly and led the way to the door.

Now what I want to know is, is it possible that--?

This terrible thought has been haunting me day and night.

I have asked many Americans to tell me about this collector and his methods, but I can get no exact information. But it seems to be agreed that he would stick at nothing to get a coveted work beneath his roof. If I have many more such shocks as he gave me I shall give up paint altogether and specialise in photography or the three-colour process.

Anyway, it is God's own country, and I will tell you my further adventures as I have them. Tomorrow I am to attend a reception at the White House to hear ELLA WHEELER WILCOX recite an Ode at the President.

Yours, X. Y. Z.

* * * * *

[Illustration: Mr. Green. "IT DOESN'T SEEM TO ME TO LOOK QUITE RIGHT."

Artist (engaged solely on account of shortage of labour)._ "WELL, SIR, THE PANEL WAS A BIT ON THE LONG SIDE, BUT I THOUGHT I'D SPUN THE LETTERING OUT VERY NICE."]

* * * * *

THE MUD LARKS.

Time--NIGHT.

SCENE.-- A shell-pitted plain and a cavalry regiment under canvas

thereon. It is not yet "Lights out," and on the right hand the semi-transparent tents and bivouacs glow like giant Chinese lanterns inhabited by shadow figures. From an Officers' mess tent comes the tinkle of a gramophone, rendering classics from "Keep Smiling." In a bivouac an opposition mouth-organ saws at "The Rosary." On the left hand is a dark mass of horses, picketed in parallel lines. They lounge, hips drooping, heads low, in a pleasant after-dinner doze. The Guard lolls against a post, lantern at his feet, droning a fitful accompaniment to the distant mouth-organ. "The hours I spent wiv thee, dear 'eart, are-Stan' still, Ginger--like a string of pearls ter me-ee ... Grrr, Nellie, stop kickin'!" The range of desolate hills in the background is flickering with gun-flashes and grumbling with drum-fire--the Bosch evensong.

A bay horse (shifting his weight from one leg to the other).
Somebody's catching it in the neck to-night.

A chestnut. Yep. Now if this was 1914, with that racket loose, we'd be standing to.

A gunpack horse. Why?

Chestnut. Wind up, sonny. Why, in 1914 our saddles grew into our backs like the ivy and the oak. In 1914--

A black horse. Oh, dry up about 1914, old soldier; tell us about the Battle of Hastings and how you came to let WILLIAM'S own Mounted Blunderbusses run all over you.

A bay horse. Yes, and how you gave the field ten stone and a beating in the retreat to Corunna. What are your personal recollections of NAPOLEON, Rufus?

Chestnut. You blinkin' conscripts, you!

Black. Shiss! no bad language, Rufus--ladies present.

Chestnut. Ladies, huh. Behave nice and ladylike when they catch sight of the nosebags, don't they?

A skewbald mare. Well, we gotta stand up for our rights.

Chestnut. S'truth you do, tooth and hoof. What were you in civil life, Baby? A Suffragette?

Skewbald. No, I wasn't, so there.

Bay. No, she was a footlights favourite; wore her mane in plaits and a star-spangled bearing-rein and surcingle to improve her fig-u-are; did pretty parlour tricks to the strains of the banjo and psaltery.

N'est-ce pas, cherie?

Skewbald. Well, what if I did? There's scores of circus-gals is puffed lydies. I don't require none of your familiarity any'ow, Mister.

Bay. Beg pardon. Excuse my bluff soldierly ways; but nevertheless take your nose out of my hay-net, please.

A Canadian dun. Gee! quit weavin' about like that, Tubby. Can't you

let a guy get some sleep. I'll hand you a cold rebuff in the ribs in a minute. Wazzer matter with you, anyhow?

Tubby. Had a bad dream.

Black. Don't wonder, the way you over-eat yourself.

Bay. Ever know a Quartermaster's horse that didn't? He's the only one that gets the chance.

Skewbald. And the Officers' chargers.

Voice from over the way. Well, we need it, don't we? We do all the bally head-work.

Bay. Hearken even unto the Honourable Montmorency. Hello, Monty there! Never mind about the bally head-work, but next time you're out troop-leading try to steer a course somewhat approaching the straight. You had the line opening and shutting like a concertina this morning.

An iron-grey. Begob, and that's the holy truth! I thought my ribs was goin' ivery minnut, an' me man was cursin' undher his breath the way you'd hear him a mile away. Ye've no more idea of a straight line, Monty avic, than a crab wid dhrink taken.

Monty. Sorry, but the flies were giving me gyp.

Canadian dun. Flies? Say, but you greenhorns make me smile. Why, out West we got flies that--

Iron-grey. Och sure we've heard all about thim. 'Tis as big as bull-dogs they are; ivery time they bite you you lose a limb. Many a time the traveller has observed thim flyin' away wid a foal in their jaws, the rapparees! F' all that I do be remarkin' that whin one of the effete European variety is afther ticklin' you in the short hairs you step very free an' flippant, Johnny acushla.

A brown horse. Say, Monty, old top, any news? You've got a pal at G.H.Q., haven't you?

Monty. Oh, yes, my young brother. He's got a job on HAIG'S personal Staff now, wears a red brow-band and all that--ahem! Of course he tells me a thing or two when we meet, but in the strictest confidence, you understand.

Brown. Quite; but did he say anything about the end of the War?

Monty. Well, not precisely, that is not exactly, excepting that he says that it's pretty certain now that it--er--well, that it will end.

Brown. That's good news. Thanks, Monty.

Monty. Not a bit, old thing. Don't mention it.

Iron-grey. 'Tis a great comfort to us to know that the War will ind, if not in our day, annyway some time.

Canadian dun. You bet. Gee, I wish it was all over an' I was home in the foothills with the brown wool and pink prairie roses underfoot and

the Chinook layin' my mane over.

Iron-grey. Faith, but the County Cork would suit me completely; a roomy loose-box wid straw litter an' a leak-proof roof.

Tubby. Yes, with full meals coming regularly.

A bay mare. I've got a two-year-old in Devon I'd like to see again.

Monty. I've no quarrel with Leicestershire myself.

Gunpack horse. Garn! Wot abaht good old London?

Chestnut. Steady, Alf, what are you grouching about? You never had a full meal in your life until Lord DERBY pulled you out of that coster barrow and pushed you into the Army.

Tubby. A full meal in the Army--help!

Brown. Listen to our living skeleton. Do you chaps remember that afternoon he had to himself in an oat-field up Plug Street way? When the grooms found him he was lying on his back, legs in the air, blown up like a poisoned pup. "Blimy," says one lad to t'other, "'ere's one of our observation bladders the 'Un 'as brought down."

Chestnut. I heard the Officer boy telling the Troop Sergeant that he'd buy a hay-stack some day and try to burst you, Tubby. The Sergeant bet him a month's pay it couldn't be done.

Tubby. Just because I've got a healthy appetite--

Brown. Healthy appetites aren't being worn this season, Sir--bad form. How are the politicians' park hacks to be kept sleek if the troop-horse don't tighten his girth a bit? Be patriotic, old dear; eat less oats.

Chestnut. That Mess gramophone must be red-hot by now. It's been running continuous since First Post. I suppose somebody's mamma has sent him a bottle of ginger-pop, and they're seeing life while the bubbles last.

Monty. Yes, and I suppose my young gentleman will be parading to-morrow morning with a _camouflage_ tunic over his pyjamas, looking to me to pull him through squadron drill.

Iron-grey. God save us, thin!

A Mexican roan. Buenas noches!

Gunpack horse. Hish! Orderly Officer. 'E's in the Fourth Troop lines nah; you can 'ear 'im cursin' as he trips over the heel shackles.

Monty. Hush, you fellows. Orderly Officer. _Bong swar_.

* * * * *

_Once more heads and hips droop. They pose in attitudes of sleep like a dormitory of small boys on the approach of a prefect. The line Guard comes to life, seizes his lantern and commences to march up and down as if salvation depended on his getting in so many laps to the hour. From

the guard-tent a trumpet wails, "Lights out."_

PATLANDER.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Venus_. "HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE ARMY?"

Mars. "OH, ABOUT THREE CHEQUE-BOOKS."]

* * * * *

HYMN FOR HIGH PLACES.

In darkened days of strife and fear,
When far from home and hold,
I do essay my soul to cheer
As did wise men of old;
When folk do go in doleful guise
And are for life afraid,
I to the hills will lift mine eyes
From whence doth come mine aid.

I shall my soul a temple make
Where hills stand up on high;
Thither my sadness shall I take
And comfort there descry;
For every good and noble mount
This message doth extend--
That evil men must render count
And evil days must end.

For, sooth, it is a kingly sight
To see God's mountain tall
That vanquisheth each lesser height
As great hearts vanquish small;
Stand up, stand up, ye holy hills,
As saints and seraphs do,
That ye may bear these present ills
And lead men safely through.

Let high and low repair and go
To where great hills endure;
Let strong and weak be there to seek
Their comfort and their cure;
And for all hills in fair array
Now thanks and blessings give,
And, bearing healthful hearts away,
Home go and stoutly live.

* * * * *

"Classical Master for endurance of war wanted."--_Scotsman_.

Humane letters are very sustaining.

* * * * *

"MARCHING ON!

"The council of the Chippewa tribe of North American Indians, by a two to one majority, have accorded the suffrage to their squaws."--_The Vote_.

As SHAKSPEARE was on the point of saying, "Suffrage is the badge of all our tribe."

* * * * *

THE SPOIL-SPORT.

["The Town Clerk of Colwyn Bay informs us that the fish caught there the other day by two youths was a dogfish and not a shark, as reported, and that its size was much overestimated."--_Manchester Guardian_.]

O gallant youths of Colwyn Bay,
With what unmitigated rapture
Did I peruse but yesterday
The story of your famous capture!

Alone ye did it, or at least
'Twas next to being single-handed;
No other helped to catch the beast,
No strength but yours the monster landed.

But now comes in the cold Town Clerk,
Who has meticulously stated
It was a dogfish--not a shark--
In size much overestimated.

So ye intrepid striplings, who
Made all your school-fellows feel humble,
Are mulcted of your honours due
By an officious Cambrian Bumble.

But, though your generous hearts be sore,
Take comfort: all the true patricians
Of intellect have been at war
With frigid, rigid statisticians.

I too have suffered from the rule
Of sceptics, icily pedantic,
Who blighted, ere I went to school,
My dreams when they were most romantic.

For once, when swinging on a gate,
With hands that doubtless daubed it jammily,
I saw a lion, sure as fate,
And fled indoors to tell the family.

But when I told them, all agog,
My aunt, a lean and acid spinster,
Snapped out "the doctor's yellow dog";
And nothing I could say convinced her.

"'Twas ever thus from childhood's hour--"

Since HOMER, HANNIBAL or STRONGBOW,
Men of outstanding mental power
Are charged with drawing of the long bow.

Great travellers--not your GRANTS or SPEKES--
Who lived with dwarfs, or tamed gorillas,
Or scaled imaginary peaks
Upon the backs of pink chinchillas,

Or in some languorous lagoon
Bestrode the awe-inspiring turtle,
Or in the Mountains of the Moon
Saw rocs athwart the zenith hurtle--

All, all have had their fame aspersed
By rude Town Clerks or senior wranglers;
But those who have been treated worst
Are the heroic tribe of anglers.

* * * * *

THE NEW GOLF.

"Let's go and play the new golf," said James.

Now as I understand it there are four kinds of golf. First, the ordinary golf, as played by all people who are not quite right in their heads; second, the ideal golf, to be played by me (but not till I get to heaven) on a bowling-green with a croquet-mallet, the holes being sixty-six feet apart and both cutting-in and going-through strictly prohibited; third, the absurd golf, as played by James in pre-war days on his private nine-hole course; and fourth, it seemed, the new golf, such as James would be liable to create during a recovery from shell-shock.

James is one of those people who, possessing what Country Life would call one of the lesser country-houses of England, has an indeterminate bit of ground beyond the garden, called, according to choice of costume, "the rock-garden," "the home-farm," "the grouse moor," or "no rubbish may be shot here." James calls his own particular nettle-bed (or slag heap) "the golf-course."

When anyone went to stay with James, he was adjured to "bring-your-golf-clubs-old-man-as-I-can-give-you-a-bit-of-a-game-on-my-own-course-only-a-nine-hole-one-you understand." And when James went--far more willingly--to stay opposite the Germans, until an interesting visit was short-circuited by shell-shock, he showed himself so wonderfully at home in dug-outs and shell-holes and mine-craters, so completely undisturbed by the weariful lack of any green on the course over which his battalion was playing, that he rose from Second-Lieutenant to Lieutenant with almost unheard-of celerity in the space of two years and nine months. And now the absurd figure-of-eight nine-hole course, the third hole of which was also the seventh, and the first the ninth, had been complicated into a war kitchen-garden, and James, bored with ordinary difficulties and discomforts, had evolved the new golf.

"Come on," said he, burning with the zeal of a martyr-burner, "I'll show you the ground."

"Can't I see it by standing up in the hammock?" I protested.

We approached the dark demesne, which was now pretty decently clothed with potatoes, artichokes, rhubarb, raspberry-canes, marrows and even cucumber-frames. In the midst was a large open cask which filled itself by a pipe from a former six-inch water-hazard. Here James began to propound the mysteries.

"The game," he said, "is a mixture of the old golf, tiddleywinks, ludo and the race game."

"Not spillikins?" I protested. "A game I rather fancy myself at."

"For your information, please," continued James in his kindest military manner, "I may remark that a mashie is the club mostly used--except when it is necessary to keep low between, say, two clumps of potatoes."

"So as not to rouse the wireworms," I nodded. "Yes--go on."

"The conditions of the game are governed by the necessity of paying due respect to the vegetable hazards. There is only one hole on the course."

"If you remember," I said, "I told you long ago that that was all there was room for, but you would persist in making it nine."

"The hole," said James, "is the water-butt. You have to get into that. By the way, your balls are floaters, I hope?"

"Only six of 'em," I said. "However, I dare say you won't mind if I grub up a few potatoes to carry on with afterwards. So we hole out in the water-butt? That's the tiddleywinks part of it, I suppose? Go on."

"There are various penalties," he explained. "If you get among the potatoes, you add ten to your strokes and start again at the tee. If you are bunkered in the raspberries, you lift out--"

"Step back three paces out of sight and pick one over your left shoulder?" I inquired hopefully. "I shall often find myself in the raspberry hazard."

"And if," concluded James sternly, "you are so clumsy as not to avoid the cucumber-frames--"

"Say no more," I begged. "I understand. I shall ask for the time-table, shake hands, thank you for a most delightful visit, and express my regrets that any little _contretemps_ should have arisen to hasten my departure."

"--you add fifty to your strokes. Five for the marrows and the rhubarb--in each case returning to the tee."

"And the artichokes," I asked, surveying a thick forest of them guarding the right flank of the water-butt--"what is their market value?"

"No penalty," said James grimly, "except staying there till you get out."

"One last piece of information. What is bogey for this hole?"

"About two hundred, I think," said James; "but no doubt you'll lower it."

"I don't know," I replied. "That's about my usual at the old game." And therewith I made my tee, drove and went into the garden to cut a cabbage leaf.

* * * * *

After hoeing the vegetables with a mashie for a hot two hours, I fought my way out of the rhubarb on all fours, with a golf-ball between my teeth, and then strode doggedly back to the tee and drove into the virgin artichoke forest. While I toyed there with the sub-soil, the unwearied James went to earth among the marrows. Hastily I heeled my ball into the ground (to be retrieved by James months later and announced as a curious scientific result of growing artichokes on a golf course), uttered a cry of triumph, and strolled out into the open.

"A hundred and seventy-nine. My game, I think," I announced.

James extricated himself and walked with me to the butt.

"Hullo!" I said, "it's sunk. Thought it was a floater. It ought to be for a half-crown ball."

"You mustn't lose it," said James suspiciously. "Well let off the water and get it out."

"No, no," I protested. "It's not one that I really valued. Oh, very well," I added indifferently, feeling in my pocket for a non-floater.

James stooped to open the tap, and I popped the new ball in unobtrusively.

It floated. And the next instant James stood up and saw it.

After that of course there was nothing left to do but to ask for the time-table, shake hands, thank James for a most delightful visit, and express my regrets that any little _contretemps...._

W. B.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Major_. "WHY HAVE YOU PUT THAT CLOTH OVER HIS HEAD?"

Private Mike O'Flanagan (harassed by restive horse). "SO AS HE WON'T KNOW HE'S BEING GROOMED, SORR."]

* * * * *

"----'s new Pattern Books of
WALLPAPERS
will be sent on loan free of charge.

"N.B.-- ----'s use adhesive paste, which has been expressly prepared to conform with the Food Controller's regulations."

Advt. in Evening Paper.

So it is no use waylaying the paper-hanger on the chance of getting a free meal.

* * * * *

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

_"Anti-Reprisal." --If you are out walking, and enemy aeroplanes are dropping bombs on your side of the street, it is advisable to cross over to the other side. Never shake your umbrella at the enemy 'planes. A taxi-driver might think you were signalling to him.

* * * * *

Some of our street urchins are quite bucking up in their education. The other day a small boy called out to a Frenchman, "Pourquoi n'etes-vous pas en bleu? _Slackeur!_"

* * * * *

"Unique Old-World Cottage (big), about 30 min. door to West End, yet rural seclusion; frequent express trains, last 12 p.m.; nothing like it so close town; suit antique lover."

Observer.

This should make a beautiful retreat for an elderly _Lothario's_ declining years.

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"The Basement Tea Room is near the Boot Dept., where Afternoon Teas at moderate prices are obtainable."--_Advt. in Evening Paper_.

Very _a propos--des bottes_.

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[Illustration: _Governess_. "WELL, MOLLIE, WHAT ARE LITTLE GIRLS MADE OF?"

Mollie. "SUGAR AND SPICE AND ALL THAT'S NICE."

Governess. "AND WHAT ARE LITTLE BOYS MADE OF?"

Mollie. "SNIPS AND SNAILS AND PUPPY DOGS' TAILS.' I TOLD BOBBIE THAT YESTERDAY, AND HE COULD _HARDLY_ BELIEVE IT.]"

* * * * *

THE BOMBER GIPSY.

Come, let me tell the oft-told tale again
Of that strange Tyneside grenadier we had,
Whom none could quell or decently constrain,
For he was turbulent and sometimes bad,
Yet, stout of heart, he dearly loved to fight,

And spoke his fellows on a gusty night
In some high barn, where, huddled in the straw,
They watched the cheap wicks gutter on the shelf,
How he was irked with discipline and law,
And would fare forth to battle by himself.

This said, he left them and returned no more;
But whispers passed from Vimy to Verdun,
Where'er the fields ran thickest with gore,
Of some stray bomber that belonged to none,
But none more fierce or flung a fairer bomb,
Who ran unscathed the gamut of the Somme
And followed Freyberg up the Beaucourt mile
With uncouth cries and streaming muddy hair;
But after, when they sought his name and style
And would have honoured him--he was not there.

But most he loved to lie upon Lorette
And, couched on cornflowers, gaze across the lines
At Vimy's heights--we had not Vimy yet--
Pale Souchez's bones and Lens among the mines,
The tall pit-towers and dusky heaps of slag,
Until, like eagles on the mountain-crag
By strangers stirred, with hoarse indignant shrieks
Gunnery emerged from some deep-delved lair
To chase the intruder from their sacred peaks
And cast him down to Ablain St. Nazaire.

And rumour said he roamed the rearward ways
In quiet seasons when no battle brewed;
The transport, homing through the evening haze,
Had seen and carried him, and given him food;
And he would leave them at Bethune canteen
Or some hot drinking-house at Noeux-les-Mines,
Where he would sit with wine and eggs and bread
Till the swart minions of the A.P.M.
Stole in and called for him, but found him fled
Out at the back. He was too much for them.

Too much. And surely thou shalt e'er be so;
No hungry discipline shall starve thy soul;
Shalt freely foot it where the poppies blow,
Shalt fight unfettered when the cannon roll,
And haply, Wanderer, when the hosts go home,
Thou only still in Aveluy shalt roam,
Haunting the crumbled windmill at Gavrelle
And fling thy bombs across the silent lea,
Drink with shy peasants at St. Catherine's Well
And in the dusk go home with them to tea.

A. P. H.

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[Illustration: THE "KNIGHTLY MANNER."

BELGIUM. "AS LONG AS THERE IS MOTION IN MY BODY, AND LIFE TO GIVE ME WORDS, I'LL CRY FOR JUSTICE!"

KAISER. "JUSTICE SHALL NEVER HEAR YOU. I AM JUSTICE!"

_BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER, Valentinian, _ III. 1.

("There is no longer any international law."--_The KAISER to Mr. GERARD_.)]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, August 13th--In a certain political club there used, before the War, to be a popular pick-me-up compounded of a little whisky, a little Angostura and a good deal of soda-water, and known after its inventor as "a Henderson." In one respect the speech explaining his resignation which the right hon. Member for Barnard Castle delivered this afternoon resembled this eponymous beverage, for it was decidedly effervescent. But the other ingredients were wrongly apportioned--too much of the bitters and not enough of the mellowing spirit.

His initial mistake was not realising in time that, as Mr. ASQUITH put it, a man cannot permanently divide himself into watertight compartments. As member of the War Cabinet and Secretary of the Labour Party, he seems to have resembled one of those twin salad bottles from which oil and vinegar can be dispensed alternately but not together. The attempt to combine the two functions could only end, as it began, in a double fiasco.

[Illustration: THE DOUBLE FIASCO.

MR. HENDERSON.]

It is fortunate for the Ministry of Munitions that it possesses a spokesman so bland and imperturbable as Sir WORTHINGTON EVANS. In successive answers he informed the House that near Birmingham the Ministry was evicting 130 allotment holders on the eve of their harvest, in order to build a new factory; and that simultaneously it was abandoning in the West of England the site of another gigantic factory, on which a cool million had already been spent. Coming from almost any other Minister this amazing example of how not to do it would have raised a storm of supplemental inquiries, if not a motion for the adjournment. But the House accepted Sir WORTHINGTON'S calm and matter-of-fact narration as quietly as if it were the last word in efficiency and coordination.

I was a little premature last week in assuming that Mr. MACCALLUM SCOTT had been silenced by his appointment as Mr. CHURCHILL'S private secretary. A long question to the Board of Trade, on the subject of horse-hides, followed by a series of supplementaries delivered with his customary emphasis, showed that he is not yet resigned to his muzzle. He is not, however, entirely oblivious of the customary etiquette in this matter, for he recited his catechism from the third bench behind Ministers, and only when it was over descended to the second bench, where private secretaries most do congregate.

Tuesday, August 14th.-Mr. KING has a legitimate grievance against the Government spokesmen. Two Nationalist Members having been allowed to go to the United States to collect funds for their party, he asked yesterday whether he too would be permitted to proceed abroad on a

similar mission. Mr. BONAR LAW, with his habitual courtesy, replied that he, personally, would not offer any objection. But this afternoon, on putting an almost identical question to Lord ROBERT CECIL, Mr. KING was informed, with a touch of _brusquerie_, that "there are some people to whom we should not think of granting a passport." He cannot reconcile these replies, which seem to him to afford convincing proof that the Government does not know its own mind.

The Ministry of Munitions, In order to cater for the spiritual needs of the new population at Gretna, has simultaneously provided sites for the Church of Scotland, the Church of England, the Roman Catholics and the Congregationalists. The local blacksmith is said to be aggrieved by all this ecclesiastical rivalry.

The HOME SECRETARY has determined to put a stop to the practice of whistling for taxicabs in London. It is suggested that he would confer a still greater boon on his fellow-townsmen if he would provide a few more taxis for them not to whistle for.

Mr. PETO complained once more of the refusal of the War Office to employ "manipulative surgeons" in the Army, and called in aid the testimony of Mr. HODGE, the Minister of Labour, as a proof of Mr. BARKER'S miraculous powers. Sir WATSON CHEYNE, the newest Member of the House, pointed out that unfortunately all bone-setters were not BARKERS; and, fortified by this expert opinion, Mr. MACPHERSON declined to say more than that private soldiers might go to these unconventional practitioners at their own risk.

Wednesday, August 15th--Taking the view that a Corn Production Bill was intended to produce corn, Lord CHAPLIN made an effort to secure that the bounties should be paid in accordance with the crops harvested and not upon the acreage sown. But the Government, unwilling to risk a quarrel with the other House at this late period of the Season, declined to accept the amendment. The bounties therefore will fall, like the rain, upon good and bad land alike, though in the interests of the general taxpayer I trust not quite so heavily.

To take down the Ladies' Grille, Sir ALFRED MONO informed the House, would only cost a matter of five pounds. All the same I think there was some disappointment in certain quarters, including the gilded cage itself, that this momentous question should be disposed of without debate. Several sparkling orations, teeming with wit and persiflage, were nipped in the bud. A score of ungallant fellows, including several whom I should have diagnosed as ladies' men, opposed the removal, but they were outnumbered eight to one.

Mr. WALTER LONG introduced a Bill to enable the Government to prospect for oil in the United Kingdom. If this should necessitate the appointment of a Controller of Bores he will find abundance of work.

Contrary to expectation Mr. CHURCHILL succeeded in piloting the Munitions of War Bill through its remaining stages in double-quick time. Its progress was facilitated by his willingness to abolish the leaving-certificate, which a workman hitherto had to procure before changing one job for another. Having had unequalled experience in this respect he is convinced that the leaving-certificate is a useless formality.

Thursday, August 16--Owing to the House meeting at noon the usual

time-limit for Questions did not apply. Messrs. PRINGLE and HOGGE were especially active. With a meaning glance in their direction the HOME SECRETARY, replying to a complaint of Mr. GULLAND that the representation of the Northern Kingdom would not be increased by the Representation of the People Bill, observed that he saw no sufficient reason for extending the number of Scottish Members.

Food-stocks going up, thanks to the energy of the farmers and the economy of consumers; German submarines going down, thanks to the Navy; Russia recovering herself; Britain and France advancing hand-in-hand on the Western Front, and our enemies fumbling for peace--that was the gist of the message with which the PRIME MINISTER sped the parting Commons. But, fearing perhaps that he might have made them unduly optimistic, he concluded with a warning that not until next year could we expect to reap the fruits of our labours.

An attempt by Messrs. MACDONALD and SNOWDEN to keep the Stockholm fires burning quickly fizzled out. Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITHS mocked at the claim of those elegant doctrinaires to speak for British Labour, and Mr. BONAR LAW told them frankly that the Government had no intention of letting them go to Stockholm to chat with our enemies.

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[Illustration: THE UPPER PICTURE INDICATES WHAT GOES ON BEHIND THE LADIES' GRILLE IN THE IMAGINATION OF THE HOUSE. THE LOWER PICTURE INDICATES THE GRIM REALITY.]

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"Neu propius tectis taxum sine."

Vergil: Georg. IV. 47.

Do not signal for a taxi near houses.

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WAR ECONOMY

"The Federated Chamber of Court Dressmakers of Paris has informed the Government that for the winter season 1917-18 the length employed for woollen costumes will not exceed 4-1/2 in."--_Yorkshire Evening News_.

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From the report of a motoring accident:--

"The car pulled up in about a year and a half."--_Kentish Mercury_.

Quicker than the War, anyhow.

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From an article headed "Exclusive War Information":--

"Vertical parallel Lines that do not look so--an optical

Illusion almost as curious as that which makes Soldiers invisible when dressed in Combinations of bright Colours."

Popular Science Siftings.

We do not think our contemporary ought to give away military secrets like this.

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POLITICAL PICK-ME-UPS.

Recent revelations as to the way in which our leading Statesmen keep themselves fit have been almost entirely concerned with their physical recreations. Further investigations make it clear that they owe their fitness quite as much to diet, to alternating one form of brain-work with another or to the consolations of music.

Thus Mr. BALFOUR, who has little time for golf nowadays, finds his most refreshing recreation in reading the speeches of Lord NORTHCLIFFE, co-ordinating them with those of BURKE and PERICLES, and setting them to music in the style of HANDEL, his favourite composer.

Lord RHONDDA finds his chief solace in gratifying his literary tastes. In philosophy he is at present a convinced Rationalist. He is devoted to the study of BACON, but not averse from the lighter sort of fiction, having a special preference for cheerful stories published in a cereal form.

The PRIME MINISTER, it may not be generally known, recruits his energies by frequent perusal of the plays of SHAKSPEARE. At present he is conducting a correspondence with Sir SIDNEY LEE and Professor GOLLANCZ on the esoteric significance of _Labour's Love's Lost_.

Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL is a voracious novel-reader of catholic tastes. Just now he is revelling in _Called Back_ and _The House on the Marsh_, which are being read aloud to him by his private secretary.

Mr. ARTHUR PONSONBY, M.P., the Democratic Controller, is a confirmed fruitarian, and attributes his robust health to a diet of Morella cherries and Carlsbad plums, washed down with Stockholm tar-water.

Mr. JOHN BURNS, who happily describes himself as "a dormant volcano" has of late found an agreeable stimulant in the performance of solos on the muted first violin.

Lastly, Mr. LEO MAXSE keeps himself keyed up to concert pitch by coining new nicknames for Lord HALDANE. The list already extends to four figures.

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"Khartum has the reputation of being a very hot place this time of year. But last June must have been fairly damp if the meteorological statistics published by the 'Sudan Times' are correct. The rainfall during this month amounted to no less than 33.6 kilometres. No wonder a man I know there wrote to say the other day that sometimes the rain is too heavy for him to go on sleeping on the roof, and this in spite of a waterproof sheet. A

life-belt would probably be more useful."--_Egyptian Mail_.

Only NOAH'S Ark would really meet the case.

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[Illustration: _First Tommy_. "WHAT ARE YE GOING TO DO WITH IT?"

Second Tommy (with tiny prisoner). "FIX IT ON THE BONNET OF THE GENERAL'S MOTOR-CAR."]

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MATILDA

(From our Adjutant's Diary).

The depot has decided that Matilda is a notable puppy. I could not tell you her particular make, but our motor cyclist artificer described her as a "1917 model; well upholstered but weak in the chassis and unreliable in the differential on hairpin bends; in fact, built for comfort and not speed."

Matilda became a celebrity all in one day. The C.O. wrote the following chit to her master:--

"O.C.-'A' Company.--If your dog _must_ stroll into my orderly-room, will you please see that she is kept reasonably clean? Please take necessary action, initial and return."

Matilda was bathed and sent back for inspection to the C.O., with a chit from O.C. "A" Company, pointing out that, as he couldn't initial her, he had put his office stamp on her tummy and hoped it wouldn't rub off.

The C.O. pronounced Matilda to be moderately clean. As she was conducting the trumpeter back to "A" Company she fell into a vat of by-products near the mess hut. She couldn't be washed again, as the Quartermaster had already written three scathing chits about the previous use of depot disinfectant. Matilda spent the night licking herself clean in the detention cell.

The staff of "A" Company loved Matilda in spite of the fact that her conduct was prejudicial to good order and military discipline, and that she constantly used abusive language to her superiors. Even the Company Sergeant-Major loved her. He might have loved her still, but ... and that's the story.

Brown was the depot nuisance. He had a conduct sheet filled up in red and black, and his entries would have been even more numerous if he had not possessed a great gift of cunning. He had had several passages of arms with the C.S.M. of "A" Company and had emerged unscathed more than once.

On the occasion of this story Brown was being tried for using abusive language to a superior officer, to wit, the said C.S.M. The abusive language consisted of one very striking epithet. The charge was read over to Brown, and the C.S.M. was called upon to give evidence. He stepped smartly forward. Matilda loitered between his legs ... and then, I regret to say, the C.S.M. applied the same epithet to Matilda that

Brown had applied to him.

The case was reluctantly dismissed, and Matilda is out of favour with the C.S.M.

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"It was my first experience of a sandstorm, and I can tell you that the sensation was a most terrible one. With the aid of my assistants I got off the camel, which immediately stretched itself in the sand, and moistening my handkerchief pushed it across my face."

Sydney Herald (N.S.W.)

Wise and dexterous creature! We presume it drew the moisture from its internal reservoir.

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"The second cook, who is an American citizen, managed when the Germans ordered the lifeboats to be given up to hide one under his raincoat."--_Western Mail_.

One of the collapsible sort, no doubt.

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"Some very daring entrances were forced into these fortresses. One single soldier not directly concerned with the attack found 20 bottles of champagne in one, drank a glass or two, and went forward to seek for others. Squeezing into one he discovered a German officer in bed."--_Daily Mail_.

It must have been a bantam who thought of this ingenious ruse.

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THE NORTH ATLANTIC TRADE.

As I was walking beside the docks I met a pal o' mine
I sailed with once on the Colonies run in Thomson's Blue Star Line;
Said I, "What cheer--what brings you here?" "Why, 'aven't you 'eard?"
he said;

"I'm under the Windsor 'ouse-flag now in the North Atlantic trade.
We sweep a bit an' we fight a bit--an' that's what we like the best--
But a towin' job or a salvage job, they all go in with the rest;
When we aren't too busy upsettin' old Fritz an' 'is frightfulness
blockade,
A bit of all sorts don't come amiss in the North Atlantic trade."

"And how does old Atlantic look?" "Oh, round an' about the same;
'E 'asn't seemed to alter a lot since I've been in the game;
'E's about as big as 'e always was, an' 'e's pretty well just as wet
(Or, if there's some parts anyway dry, well, I 'aven't struck none
yet!),

There's the same old bust-up, same old mess, when a green sea breaks
inboard,
An' the equinoctials roarin' by the same as they've always roared,

An' the West Wind playin' the same old larks 'e's been at since the
world was made--
They've a peach of a time, 'ave sailormen, in the North Atlantic
trade."

"And who's your skipper, and what is he like?" "Oh, well, if you want
to know.

I'm sailin' under a hard-case mate as I sailed with years ago;
'E's big an' bucko an' full o' beans, the same as 'e used to be
When I knowed 'im last in the windbag days when first I followed the
sea.

'E was worth two men at the lee fore brace, an' three at the bunt of a
sail;

'E'd a voice you could 'ear to the royal-yards in the teeth of a Cape
'Orn gale;

But now 'e's a full-blown lootenant an' wears the twisted braid,
Commandin' one of 'is Majesty's ships in the North Atlantic trade."

"And what is the ship you're sailin' in?" "Oh, she's a bit of a
terror--

She ain't no bloomin' levvyathan, an' that's no fatal error!
She scoops the seas like a gravy-spoon when the gales are up an'
blowin',

But Fritz 'e loves 'er above a bit when 'er fightin' fangs are
showin'.

The liners go their stately way an' the cruisers take their ease,
But where would they be if it wasn't for us, with the water up to our
knees?

We're wadin' when their soles are wet, we're swimmin' when they wade,
For I tell you small craft gets it a treat in the North Atlantic
trade!"

"And what is the port you're plying to?" "When the last long trick is
done

There'll some come back to the old 'ome port--'ere's 'opin' I'll be
one;

But some 'ave made a new landfall, an' sighted another shore,
An' it ain't no use to watch for them, for they won't come 'ome no
more.

There ain't no 'arbour dues to pay when once they're over the bar,
Moored bow an' stern in a quiet berth where the lost three-deckers
are,

An' there's NELSON 'oldin' 'is one 'and out an' welcomin' them that's
made

The roads o' Glory an' the port of Death in the North Atlantic trade!"

C. F. S.

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SELF-DENIAL.

"And what," I said, "did you do during the Great War, Francesca?"

"In the first place I fine you a sum not exceeding one hundred pounds
for asking me such a question. In the second place I retort upon you by
telling you that one of the things you're going to do during the Great
War is to give up marmalade."

"What! Give up the thing which lends to breakfast its one and only distinction? Never."

"That," she said, "sounds very brave; but what are you going to do if there isn't any marmalade to be obtained for love or money?"

"Mine," I said, "has always been the sort you get for money. I have not hitherto met the amatory variety; but if it's really marmalade I'm prepared to have a go at it."

"And that," she said, "is very kind of you, but it's quite useless. For the moment there's no marmalade of any kind to be had."

"None of the dark-brown variety?"

"No."

"Or the sort that looks like golden jelly?"

"Not a scrap."

"Or the old-fashioned but admirable kind? The excellent substitute for butter at breakfast?"

"That must go like the rest. It has been a substitute for the last time."

"Impossible," I said. "Everything is now a substitute for something else. Marmalade started being a substitute long ago, and it isn't fair to stop it and let the other things go on."

"Well," she said, "what are you going to do about it? If you can't get Seville oranges how are you going to get Seville orange marmalade?"

"Oh, that's it, is it?"

"Yes, that's it, more or less. And now let's have your remedy."

"You needn't think," I said, "that I'm going to take it lying down. I shall go up to London and defy Lord RHONDDA to his face. I shall write pro-marmalade letters to various newspapers. I shall form a Marmalade League, with branches in all the constituencies so as to bring political pressure to bear. I shall head a deputation to the PRIME MINISTER. I shall get Mr. KING or Mr. HOGGE or Mr. PRINGLE, or all three of them, to ask questions in the House of Commons. In short I shall exhaust all the usual devices for giving the Government a thoroughly uncomfortable time."

"In short you will do your patriotic best to help your country through its difficulties and to put the interest of the nation above your own convenience."

"Francesca," I said, "you must not be too serious. I was but attempting a jest."

"This is no time for jests. I can't bear even to think of your joining the Brigade of Grouzers who are always girding at the Government. I won't stand your being a girder. So make up your mind to that."

"Very well," I said, "I will endeavour not to be a girder; but you simply _must_ get me a pot or two of marmalade."

"And allow the KAISER to win the War? Not if I know it. Besides, I don't like marmalade."

"There you are," I said. "You don't like marmalade--few women do--and so you're going to make a virtue for yourself by forcing _me_ to give it up. My dear, you've given the whole show away."

"Don't juggle with words," she said, speaking with a dreadful calm. "I may be able to get a pot or two--say at the outside a dozen pots. Well, if I manage it I will inform you--"

"Yes," I said eagerly.

"If I manage it," she repeated, "you shall know of it, and you shall make your self-denial complete and efficacious."

"I don't like the way in which this sentence is turning out."

"You shall have a pot in front of you at breakfast, and you shan't touch a shred of it."

"Francesca," I said, "you're a tyrant. But no, you wouldn't be mean enough to do it--before the children too."

"Perhaps, as a concession, I would allow you a little marmalade in a pudding at luncheon."

"But I don't like marmalade in a pudding at luncheon. I like it on toast at breakfast."

"But you're not going to have it on toast at breakfast."

"Well," I said, "I shall conduct reprisals. For every time you don't allow me to have any I shall destroy something you like--a blouse or a hat. If I'm to give up the essence of Dundee or Paisley you shall at least give up hats."

"But the marmalade will remain."

"Yes, and the hats will all perish. That's where I come in."

"Don't buoy yourself up with that notion," she said. "You'll have to pay for the new ones--or owe."

R. C. L

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[Illustration: "OH, CONSTABLE, I CAN'T GET A TAXI. THEY ALL SAY IT'S THEIR DINNER-HOUR. IS IT ANY GOOD MY WAITING?"]

"I CAN'T SAY, MISS. IF YOU WAS ON THE SPOT YOU _MIGHT_ BE ABLE TO CATCH ONE AFORE THEIR TEA-HOUR BEGINS."]

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Commercial Candour.

From a tailor's advertisement:--

"HAVE YOU ANY BLUE SERGES? YES! WE HAVE -- (REGD.) IN STOCK. THE SUIT TO ORDER .. 63/- Will last about another month."

Southern Daily Echo.

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Quotation from an article in the _Frankfurter Zeitung_ in praise of sandals:--

"When people saunter through the town without hats--who still wears a hat?--why should they not go without stockings?"

Times.

Well, the explanation may be that while the German head is hot the German feet are cold.

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MR. PUNCH'S "SPORPOT."

Two Summers ago Mr. Punch gave an account of the Sporpote (or Spaerpot, meaning a savings-box), a familiar institution which our little guests from Belgium brought over with them to England. The idea was taken up by certain schools in South Africa, and a competition was started to see which of them could fill the biggest Sporpote to make a fund for helping to restore the homes of Belgian exiles. This year the Eunice High School for Girls at Bloemfontein comes out first, and the second honours fall to the St. Andrew's Preparatory School for Boys at Grahamstown. The total sum of thirty-two pounds collected by the competing schools has been forwarded to and received by the author of the _Punch_ article and will be used by him for the purpose desired.

Mr. Punch begs to offer his congratulations to the winners and his best thanks to all who have contributed so generously from their personal savings to the needs of the children of our Ally.

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A Tough Proposition.

"Ducks (15) For Sale, 7 years old; 4s. each."--_Staffordshire Sentinel_.

* * * * *

WHISPER, AND I SHALL HEAR.

There's nothing like a newspaper for spreading disease. You wake up in the morning, feeling fit to do a day's digging on your allotment; you come down to your breakfast singing a Rhonddalay and eat more than your allowance. Then you open the newspaper, glance at the latest accession to the ranks of the Allied Powers, and suddenly, "Plop!" you find there is a new disease raging, and before you know where you are you discover

that you have got it badly.

That is how I discovered that I was the possessor of a heart murmur. By putting my hand on the spot under which I had been taught, and still believed, my heart to be, I felt rather than heard a distinct burbling.

I went to the telephone and fixed up an appointment with a specialist.

"It's only a murmur now," I said when I reached the consulting-room, "only a mere whisper, but---"

The doctor tapped me vigorously. Being very absent-minded I said, "Come in," the first time.

"You were rejected for this, I suppose?" he said.

"No, cow-hocked or spavined, I forget which," I said. "This hadn't started then."

The rite was quite a lengthy one, and at the conclusion the heartsmith said, "M--yes, there is a slight murmuring, certainly."

He wrote me out a prescription, and I felt the murmur myself distinctly when parting with three of the greater Bradburys and three shillings.

On the way home I ran into Beatrice.

"Well, old thing," she said, "what's the matter? I saw you coming out of Dr. Cox's."

"Yes," I said. "I've got a heart murmur. I don't know what the poor things been trying to say, but it's been murmuring like anything all the morning."

"Perhaps you're in love," she suggested.

"By Jove, I never thought of that. I wonder," I said, "if it's anything to do with you. If this were not such a public place you might like to put your head against my top left-hand waistcoat pocket and listen. Perhaps it's saying something about you."

"Have you taken to writing poetry about me?" she said. "That's always a sign."

"Now I come to think of it," I said, "I did feel a bit broody the other day, and hatched a line or two, but I can't say for certain that I had you in my mind. The lines ran like this:--

"Oh, glorious female, like a goddess decked,
No wonder that we crawl on bended knee--"

"Rotten," said Beatrice. "You couldn't have been thinking of me. I'm not a female."

"You have the right plumage for the hen-bird," I said. "However, what did me was 'decked.' I could only think of three rhymes, 'wrecked,' 'flecked' and 'stiff-necked.' You're not any of those by any chance?"

"There's 'circumspect', suggested Beatrice.

"Ah! Come and have lunch," I said, "and we'll talk it over. Some place where I can hold your hand and really find out if you are the cause of it all."

"Do you think I ought to?" she said.

"Good heavens! Of course you ought," I said. "It's most important. My heart's only murmuring now, but it may start shouting soon, and a silly ass I shall look walking about in the street with a heart yelling 'Beatrice' at the top of its voice."

As regards meat and drink I consider that Beatrice overdid it for a war-time lunch. She didn't give me any time to hold her hand, she was so busy.

"It's curious," I said, as I watched the amount of food that was going her way, "but my heart seems to have stopped murmuring altogether."

"Has it?" she said. "Oddly enough, mine's begun."

"Your luncheon has overstrained you," I said.

I had a letter from Beatrice the next morning.

DEAR JIMMY (she wrote),--You were wrong. Mine was a real murmur. It's been coming on for some time, but not on your account. It's murmuring for Basil Fludger. He's on leave, and we fixed things up last Tuesday. I didn't tell you when I met you, because I was afraid you wouldn't want to take me to lunch, and I did enjoy it.

Yours ever, BEATRICE.

If my heart gets really noisy I do hope it won't shout for Beatrice. It would be so useless.

"Let us go hence, my heart;
she will not hear" (Swinburne).
* * * * *

[Illustration: "HEARD THE LATEST RUMOUR UP FROM THE BACK, GEORGE? WAR'S GOING TO BE OVER NEXT WEEK."]

"HO. WELL, I HOPE IT DON'T UPSET MY GOING ON LEAVE NEXT TUESDAY.]"

* * * * *

CIGARISTICS

["According to an enterprising American scientist a man's character can be told from the way he smokes a cigar."--Weekly Paper.]

For, instance, a man who snatches a cigar from somebody else's mouth and smokes it himself may be assumed to be of a grasping disposition.

The man who while smoking a cigar burns his finger is a man of few words and quick of action. Plumbers never burn their fingers like that.

The man who smokes his cigar right through without removing it from his mouth is a deep thinker. Lord NORTHCLIFFE always smokes one cigar right through before deciding what England really wants, and two when he has to decide which Cabinet Minister must go.

The man who accepts a cigar from a friend, lights it, sniffs and drops it behind his chair has no character worth mentioning.

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Mem. for Agriculturists.

Protect the birds and the insects will be in their crops. Destroy the birds and the crops will be in the insects.

* * * * *

"S.P. (Lincoln).--Humming-birds don't hum with their mouths. The humming is the vibration of their wings while flying--for the same reason that a blue-bottle or an aeroplane hums."--_Pearson's Weekly_.

So it is not the pilot rubbing his feet together, as we had been taught to believe.

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[Illustration: _Uncle_. "BY JOVE, THERE'S A NICE QUIET-LOOKING GIRL JUST COME IN. WONDER WHO SHE IS." _Niece_. "HAVEN'T THE FOGGIEST. MUST BE PRE-WAR."]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

The Safety Candle (CASSELL) might have been called, but for the fact that the title has been used already, A Comedy of Age. For this is what it is--only perhaps less a comedy than a tragedy. _Agnes Tempest_ was called the Safety Candle, for the ingenious reason that, though attractive, she burnt nobody's wings. Returning as a middle-aging widow, after an unhappy wifehood in Africa, she meets on the boat two persons, _Captain Brangwyn_, a young man, and a girl-mother calling herself _Antonina Pisa_. Hence the tears. _Brangwyn_ she marries, doubtfully, half-defiantly, despite the difference in years between them; _Antonina_ is taken as a companion and very soon develops into a sick-nurse. For in the space between the ship-board engagement and the wedding a railway accident changes poor _Agnes_ from a still beautiful and active woman to a nerve-ridden invalid. But in spite of this she and _Brangwyn_ marry; and (with the much too attractive _Antonina_ always in evidence) you can guess the result. One odd point; you will hardly get any distance into Miss E.S. STEVENS' exceedingly well-written story without being struck by its resemblance to one of Mr. HICHENS' romances. The relative positions of the members of the triangle, middle-aged wife, young husband, and girl are exactly those of _The Call of the Blood_; while the Sicilian setting is identical. But this of course is by no means to accuse Miss STEVENS of plagiarism; her development of the situation, and

especially the tragedy that resolves it, is both original and convincing. The end indeed took me wholly unawares, since as a hardened novel-reader I had naturally been expecting--but read it, and see if you also are not startled by a refreshing departure from the conventional.

* * * * *

If there still linger in the remoter parts of Cromarty or the Balls Pond Road certain unsophisticated persons who believe that the stage is one long glad symposium of wine, woman and song they will be interested to know that Mr. KEBLE HOWARD has written his latest novel, The Gay Life (JOHN LANE), with the express object--or so he says--of disillusioning them. He has no use for the cynic who declared that there are three sexes, men, women and actors. His Thespians are gay because they are happy, and happy because (though poor) they are virtuous. The crowning ambition of their lives of honest toil is not unlimited silk-stockings and champagne suppers, but the combined and unqualified approval of Mr. GRANVILLE BARKER and Miss HORNIMAN. I fear the Philistines will not be much impressed with Mr. KEBLE HOWARD'S championship. In the first place he selects for his heroine a girl of what used to be known as the "lower orders." Yet it is more than doubtful if the lower orders have ever done anything for Mr. KEBLE HOWARD except open his cab-doors and bring his washing home on Saturday night. Otherwise he would not make his East End of London heroine talk an argot of which fifty per cent, is pure East Side Noo York. True, "the curtain" finds her in New York in the arms of a faithful and acrobatic American, so perhaps it doesn't matter much. Meanwhile she has become the idol of the Manchester School, enjoyed an unsuccessful season in partnership with the late Sir HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE, and signed a contract with the SCHUBERTS to tour the States, and all without any apparent diminution of the guileless flow of "Whitechapel" with which she won the hearts of her first employers. It is courageous of Mr. HOWARD to place on record his apparent belief that a total absence of the three "R's" and any number of "h's" cannot debar a strong-minded daughter of the slums from the higher rungs of the histrionic ladder.

* * * * *

When a warm-hearted and law-abiding gentleman, who has kept open-house for many guests, suddenly discovers that these guests have plotted against him, have read his private correspondence, have caused explosions in his garden, have attacked his neighbours from the vantage-ground of his house, and altogether have behaved as if he didn't exist, he is not unlikely to be both shocked and angry, and to denounce to the world the crew of traitors and assassins who have imposed on his kindness and hospitality. This is what happened to Uncle Sam at the hands of the German conspirators for whom he had unconsciously provided a base of operations. A full account of the doings of this poisonous gang is given in The German Spy in America (HUTCHINSON), by JOHN PRICE JONES, a member of the staff of the New York Sun. It is not easy for anyone, least of all for a good American, to refrain from indignation at the baseness of the rogues who thus battened for many months on the United States and their people. The book is soberly and clearly written, and is commended by Mr. ROOSEVELT in a Foreword, to which are added another Foreword by the Author, and an Introduction by Mr. ROGER B. WOOD, formerly U.S. Assistant-Attorney in New York.

* * * * *

With whatever sharpness of criticism I had approached Ma'am (HUTCHINSON), the edge of it would have been turned by the statement upon the fly-leaf that the author, M. BERESFORD RYLEY, died while the novel was still in manuscript, and that it has been revised for the press by her friend, Mr. E.V. LUCAS. As things are, having before me only the pleasant task of praise, I am the more sorry that I cannot increase that pleasure by telling the writer how much I have enjoyed a wholly admirable story. She had above everything the rare art of writing about homely and familiar matters unboringly. Ma'am (a not too happy title) begins in a dull parish, where its heroine is the newly-wedded wife of the curate. You will have read no more than the opening pages (descriptive of the terrible Sunday evening supper which the pair took at the Vicarage--a supper of cold meat and a ground-rice mould, whereat four jaded and parish-worn persons lacerated one another's nerves) before you will have realised gratefully that the story and its characters are going to be alive with a very refreshing and unpuppetlike vitality. Eventually, of course, more happens than Vicarage suppers. An old lover of Griselda (Mrs. Curate) turns up, and many most unparochial events follow upon his arrival. The scene shifts to Naples, and we meet a villaful of men and women, all of them admirably original and human. Not for a great while have I read a story so unforced and appealing. It is indeed a sad thought that this graceful pen will give us nothing more of its quality.

* * * * *

When you hear the title or see the cover of The Heel of the Hun (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) your blood may begin to curdle and your flesh to creep. Be assured. When I think of some of the war-books vouchsafed to us Mr. J.P. WHITAKER'S is almost tame, and I venture to say that it might be read out loud at a party of sock-knitters without a stitch being dropped. Mr. WHITAKER was in Roubaix and, presumably because he was believed to be an American, was allowed considerable freedom. So, before he escaped into Holland, he saw some things which were not for British eyes, and he tells us about them with a staidness altogether unusual in this kind of book. Although he forgets to mention the fact, his articles have already appeared in The Times, and I can see no particular reason why they should have been gathered together in this brief volume. Anyhow, I must believe that the Hun's heel fell less heavily on Mr. WHITAKER than upon most people who have had the misfortune to be introduced to it.

* * * * *

An author who can choose so fascinating a title as The Way of the Air (HEINEMANN) certainly has much in his favour, and this not only because of the more or less temporary connection between aeronautics and victory, but because just lately we have all been talking large and free about peace-time developments of the craft in the near future. Personally I have already arranged to take my wife's mother for a short week-end in the Holy Land in the Spring of 1920; and a forty-eight hours' mail service to Bombay is an event of to-morrow. Thus, if Mr. EDGAR C. MIDDLETON'S book fails to secure general appreciation, he must place the blame elsewhere than with his subject, and it is a fact that by some repetitions and contradictions, as well as by a tendency to let one down at what should be the critical point of his yarns, he has done something to alienate a public--such as myself--entirely predisposed in his favour. It remains to say, all the same, that this little volume is in the main a sincere and obviously well-informed account of the doings

of the men of our air services, full of incident and achievement utterly beyond belief an unbelievably short time ago. In the pages he devotes to prophecy--an irresistible temptation--he is on controversial ground, and his apparent preference for the "gas-bag" as the principal craft of the future will certainly not find general acceptance. Much more to my liking is his suggestion that duck chasing and shooting from an aeroplane--it has already been done at least once--may become a recognised sport.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Barber_. "MY TONIC 'AIR-RESTORER IS TO THE BALD 'EAD WHAT THE BENEFICENT SPRAY IS TO THE BLIGHTED TOOBER."]

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