

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 153, Sept. 12, 1917

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

VOL. 153.

SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1917.

CHARIVARIA.

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The Cologne Gazette is of the opinion that the American troops, when they arrive in France, will be hampered by their ignorance of the various languages. But we understand that the Americans can shoot in any language.

A weekly periodical is giving away a bicycle every other week. Meanwhile The Daily Telegraph continues to give away a Kaiser every day.

"I decline to have anything to do with the War," said a Conscientious Objector to a North of England magistrate, "and I resent this interference with my liberty." Indeed he is said to be so much annoyed that he intends sending the War Office a jolly snappy letter about it.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN says a gossip writer is coming to England in the Autumn. This disposes of the suggestion that arrangements were being made for England to be taken over to him.

Incidentally we notice that CHARLIE CHAPLIN has become a naturalised American, with, we presume, permission to use the rank of Honorary Britisher.

Before a Northern Tribunal an applicant stated that he was engaged in the completion of an invention which would enable dumb people to speak or signal with perfection. He was advised, however, to concentrate for a while on making certain Germans say "Kamerad."

An Isle of Wight man has succeeded in growing a vegetable marrow which weighs forty-three pounds. To avoid its being mistaken for the island he has scratched his name and address on it.

Those in search of a tactless present will bear in mind that Mr. MARK HAMBOURG has written a book entitled "How to Play the Piano."

The great flagstaff at Kew Gardens, which weighs 18 tons and is 215 feet long, is not to be erected until after the War. This has come as a great consolation to certain people who had feared the two events would clash.

In Mid Cheshire there is a scarcity of partridges, but there is plenty of other game in Derbyshire. The Mid-Cheshire birds are of the opinion that this cannot be too strongly advertised.

Thirteen years after it was posted at Watford a postcard has just reached an Ealing lady inviting her to tea, and of course she rightly protested that the tea was cold.

An estate near Goole has been purchased for L118,000, the purchaser having decided not to carry out his first intention of investing that amount in a couple of boxes of matches.

Herr Erzberger is known among his friends as "The Singing Socialist." We are afraid however that if he wants peace he will have to whistle for it.

The Provisional Government in Russia, according to _The Evening News,_ has "always regarded an international debate on the questions of war and peace as useful." But our Government, not being exactly provisional, prefers to go on giving the enemy beans.

* * * * *

[Illustration: COMFORTING THOUGHT

When there are no taxis on your return from your holidays:

"OUR TRUE STRENGTH IS TO KNOW OUR OWN WEAKNESS."--_CHARLES KINGSLEY_]

* * * * *

THE END OF AN EPISODE.

I write this in the beginning of a minor tragedy; if indeed the severance of any long, helpful and sympathetic association can ever be so lightly named. For that is precisely what our intercourse has been these many weeks past; one of nervous and quickly roused irritation on my part, of swift and gentle ministrations on his.

At least once a day we have met during that period (and occasionally, though rarely, more often), usually in those before-breakfast hours when the temper of normal man is most exacting and uncertain. But his temper never varied; the perfection of it was indeed among his finest qualities. Morning after morning, throughout a time that, as it chanced, has been full of distress and disappointment, would his soothing and infinitely gentle touch recall me to content. That stroking caress of his was a thing indescribable; one before which the black shadows left by the hours of night seemed literally to dissolve and vanish.

And now the long expected, long dreaded has begun to happen. He, too, is turning against me, as so many others of his fellows have done in the past. Who knows the reason? What continued roughness on my part has at last worn out even him? But for some days now there has been no misreading the fatal symptoms--increasing irritability on the one side, harshness turning to blunt indifference on the other. And this morning came the unforgivable offence, the cut direct.

That settles it; to-morrow, with a still smarting regret, I unwrap a new razor-blade.

* * * * *

THE WHOLE HOG.

["Victorian love-making was at best a sloppy business ... modern maidens have little use for half measures.... Primitive ideas are beginning to assert themselves."--_Daily Paper._]

Betty, when you were in your teens
And shielded from sensation,
Despite a lack of ways and means
In various appropriate scenes
I sighed my adoration.
You did not smile upon my suit;
Pallid I grew and pensive;
My disappointment was acute,
Life seemed a worthless thing and mute.
I moped, then tuned my laggard lute
And launched a new offensive.

Thus you were wooed in former days
When maids were won by waiting;
The modern lover finds it pays
To imitate the forceful ways
Of prehistoric mating.
Man is more primitive (a snub
Has no effect), so if you
Should still refuse a certain "sub."
He will not pine or spurn his grub,
But, seizing the ancestral club,
Into submission biff you.

* * * * *

MAKING THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS.

"As honorary organist at ---- Wesleyan Church he has established a sound and compact business as wholesale grocer and Italian warehouseman."--_Provincial Paper._

* * * * *

"Maid (superior) wanted for lady, gentleman, small flat, strong girl, able to assist lady with rheumatism."--_Glasgow Herald._

If we hear of a small flat girl we will send her along; but this shaped figure is rather out of fashion just now.

* * * * *

THE SUPER-PIPE.

When Jackson first joined the jolly old B.E.F. he smoked a pipe. He carried it anyhow. Loose in his pocket, mind you. A pipe-bowl at his pocket's brim a simple pipe-bowl was to him, and it was nothing more. Of

course no decent B.E.F. mess could stand that. Jackson was told that a pipe was anathema maranatha, which is Greek for no bon.

"What will I smoke then?" said Jackson, who was no Englishman. We waited for the Intelligence Officer to reply. We knew him. The Intelligence Officer said nothing. He drew something from his pocket. It was a parcel wrapped in cloth-of-gold. He removed the cloth-of-gold and there was discovered a casket, which he unlocked with a key attached to his identity disc. Inside the casket was a padlocked box, which he opened with a key attached by gold wire to his advance pay-book. Inside the box was a roll of silk. To cut it all short, he unwound puttee after puttee of careful wrapping till he reached a chamois-leather chrysalis, which he handled with extreme reverence, and from this he drew something with gentle fingers, and set it on the table-cloth before the goggle-eyed Jackson.

"A pipe," said Jackson.

There was a shriek of horror. The Intelligence Officer fainted. Here was wanton sacrilege.

"Man," said the iron-nerved Bombing Officer, "it's a Brownhill."

"What's a Brownhill?" asked Jackson.

We gasped. How could we begin to tell him of that West End shrine from which issue these lacquered symbols of a New Religion?

The Intelligence Officer was reviving. We looked to him.

"The prophet Brownhill," he said, "was once a tobacconist--an ordinary tobacconist who sold pipes."

We shuddered.

"He discovered one day that man wants more than mere pipes. He wants a--a super-pipe, something to reverence and--er--look after, you know, as well as to smoke. So he invented the Brownhill. It is an affaire de coeur--an affair of art," translated the I.O. proudly. "It is as glossy as a chestnut in its native setting, and you can buy furniture polish from the prophet Brownhill which will keep it always so. It has its year, like a famous vintage, it has a silver wind-pipe, and it costs anything up to fifty guineas."

"D'you smoke it'?" asked Jackson, brutally.

We gave him up. In awful silence each of us produced his wrappings and his caskets, extracted the shining briar, smeared it with cosmetics, and polished it more reverently than a peace time Guardsman polishes his buttons when warned for duty next day at "Buck."

* * * * *

And Jackson smoked his pipe in secret. He would take no leaf from the book of the Sassenachs.

And the War went on.

* * * * *

Jackson went on leave. To his deep disgust he had to wait a few hours in London on his way to more civilised parts, and fate led him idling to Brownhill's. He flattened his Celtic nose on the window and stared

fascinated at the array of super-pipes displayed there. After a furtive glance along the street he crept into the temple. A white-coated priest met him.

"I--I'm wantin'--a--a pipe," said Jackson. He saw the priest reel and turn pale to the lips. "I should say a--a Brownhill," he added hastily. The other man gulped, steadied himself with an effort, and gave a ghastly smile. If you had walked into a temple at Thibet and planked down sixpence and asked for an idol wrapped up in brown paper you could not have done a more dreadful thing than Jackson had done; but the priest forgave him and produced in silence a trayful of Brownhills. Then was Jackson like unto ELIA'S little Chinese boy with "the crackling." He touched a briar and was converted. He stroked them as though they were kittens, bought ten of them, a pound of polish, fifty silver wind-pipes and a bale of chamois-leather. The priest took a deep breath.

"You are a full-blooded man, Sir," said he, "if you will excuse me saying so, and you should smoke in your new Brownhills a mixture which has a proportion of Latakia to Virginian of one to nineteen--a small percentage of glycerine and cucumber being added because you have red hair, and the whole submitted to a pressure of eighteen hundred foot-pounds to the square millimetre, under violet rays. This will be known as 'Your Mixture,' Number 56785-6/11, and will be supplied to no one else on earth, except under penalty of death.

"I will take a ton," said Jackson with glazing eyes.

This was a man after the priest's own heart. He took another deep breath and dived into the strong-room. He returned under the escort of ten armed men, each of them chained by the wrist to an iron box, which he unlocked with difficulty. Inside the iron box was a thing which Jackson a few months ago would have called a pipe. He knew better now. In awful silence the priest lifted it from its satin bed. "This," he whispered, "was once smoked by Brownhill himself."

Jackson put out a hand to take it. The priest hesitated, then laid it gently on his customer's palm.

And Jackson dropped it.

Jackson has never been heard of since.

* * * * *

THE FAIRIES HAVE NEVER A PENNY TO SPEND.

The fairies have never a penny to spend,
They haven't a thing put by,
But theirs is the dower of bird and of flower,
And theirs are the earth and the sky.
And though you should live in a palace of gold
Or sleep in a dried-up ditch,
You could never be poor as the fairies are,
And never as rich.

Since ever and ever the world began
They have danced like a ribbon of flame,
They have sung their song through the centuries long,
And yet it is never the same.

And though you be foolish or though you be wise,
With hair of silver or gold,
You could never be young as the fairies are
And never as old.

R. F.

* * * * *

RARA AVIS.

From a cigarette-card:--

"REED WARBLER.

"_Acrocephalus streperus._

"This bird is found in nearly every part of the British Islands.
It builds a nest about a foot off the ground in the reed beds,
and is formed of grass, horse hair and sometimes feathers."

* * * * *

From a list of medallists of the new Order of the British Empire:--

"G. P. Hamlet.--For courage in persisting with dangerous work,
with a certainty of suffering from poisoning as a result."

Just like his illustrious namesake.

* * * * *

"Melbourne, Friday.

"The House of Representatives to-day passed the second reading of
the War Times Profits Tax Assessment Bill. The tax will be 50
per cent. for the year ending June 30, 1916, and 75 per cent.
for afterwards.--Reuter."

"_Aberdeen Paper._

Well, well, we need not worry.

* * * * *

"What is being fought out is a long-drawn battle for the
important shipping port of Trieste, with the whole of the
railway and road communications of the Iberian Peninsula."

"_The People._

Rather a shock for Madrid.

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[Illustration: THE REVERSE OF THE MEDAL.

OPTIMISTIC GERMAN _(reading paper)._"THIS IS KOLOSSAL! OUR IRRESISTIBLE
AIRMEN HAVE AGAIN, FOR THE TWENTIETH TIME, DESTROYED LONDON."

GLOOMY DITTO. "THAT BEING SO, LET'S HOPE THEY'LL STOP THOSE CURSED BRITISH AIRMEN FROM BOMBING OUR LINES EVERY DAY AND NIGHT."]

* * * * *

A STUDY IN SYMMETRY.

The following story, however improbable it may seem to you, is true.

Once upon a time there was an artist with historical leanings not unassociated with the desire for pelf--pelf being, even to idealists, what petrol is to a car. The blend brought him one day to Portsmouth, where the Victory lies, with the honourable purpose of painting a picture of that famous ship with NELSON on board. What the ADMIRAL was doing I cannot say--most probably dying--but the artist's intention was to make the work as attractive as might be and thus draw a little profit from the wave of naval enthusiasm which was then passing over the country; for not only was the picture itself to be saleable, but reproductions were to be made of it.

Permission having been obtained from the authorities, the artist boarded the Victory, set up his easel on her deck and settled down to his task, the monotony of which was pleasantly alleviated by the chatter of the old salts who guard the ship and act as guides to the tourists who visit her. All of these estimable men not only possessing views on art, but having come by now to the firm belief that they had fought with NELSON, their criticisms were not too easily combated and the artist hadn't a tedious moment. Thus, painting, conversing and learning (as one can learn only from a trained imparter of information), three or four days passed quickly away and the picture was done.

So far there has been nothing--has there?--to strain credulity. No. But a time will come--is, in fact, upon us.

On the evening of the last day, as the artist was sitting at early dinner with a friend before catching the London train, his remarks turned (as an artist's sometimes will) upon the work upon which he had just been engaged. He expressed satisfaction with it in the main, but could not, he said, help feeling that its chances of becoming a real success would be sensibly increased if he could find as a model for the central figure some one whose resemblance to NELSON was noticeable.

"There are, of course," he went on, "at the same time--that is to say, among contemporaries--no two faces exactly alike. That is an axiom. Strange as it may sound, among all the millions of countenances with two eyes, a nose in the middle and a mouth below it, some difference exists in each. That is, as I say, among contemporaries: in the world at this moment in which I am speaking. But," he continued, warming to his subject, for, as you will have already gathered, he was not one of the taciturn brush-brotherhood, "after the lapse of years I see no reason why nature should not begin precisely to reproduce physiognomies and so save herself the trouble of for ever diversifying them. That being so--and surely the hypothesis is not too far-fetched"--here his friend said, "No, not at all--oh no!"--"why," the artist continued, "should there not be at this moment, more than a century later, some one whose resemblance to NELSON is exact? He would not be necessarily a naval man--probably, indeed, not, for NELSON's face was not characteristic of the sea--but whoever he was, even if he were an archbishop, I," said the

painter firmly, "should not hesitate to go up to him and ask him to sit to me."

The friend agreed that this was a very proper attitude and that it betokened true sincerity of purpose.

"NELSON's face," the painter continued, "was an uncommon one. So large and so mobile a mouth is rare. But I have no doubt that a duplicate exists, and no matter who is the owner of it, even were he an archbishop, I should not hesitate to go up and ask him to sit to me."

(For the benefit of any feminine reader of this veracious history I should say that the repetition which she has just noticed is not an accident, but has been carefully set down. It is an attempt to give verisimilitude to the conversation--because men always say things like that twice.)

The friend again remarked that the painter's resolve did him infinite credit, and the two started for the station, still conversing on the same theme.

On entering their carriage the first thing to take their attention was a quiet little man in black, who was the absolute double of the hero of Trafalgar.

"Good gracious!" whispered the painter excitedly, "do you see that? There's the very man. The likeness to NELSON is astonishing. I never saw anything like it. I don't care who he is, I must tackle him. It's the most extraordinary chance that ever occurred."

Assuming his most silky and deferential manner--for, though clearly not an archbishop, unless in mufti, this might yet be a person of importance--the painter approached the stranger and tendered a card.

"I trust, Sir, that you will excuse me," he began, "for the liberty I am taking, but I am an artist and I happen to be engaged on a picture of NELSON on the Victory. I have all the accessories and so forth, but what I very seriously need is a brief sitting from some gentleman with a likeness to the great little Admiral. Such, Sir, as yourself. It may be news to you--it probably is--but you, Sir, if I may say so, are so like the famous and immortal warrior as almost to take one's breath away. It is astonishing, wonderful! Might I--would it be--could you--would you, Sir, be so very kind as to allow me to paint you? I would, of course, make every effort not to inconvenience you--I would arrange so that your time should be mine."

"Of course I will, guvnor," said the man. "I'm a professional model and I've been sitting for NELSON for years. Why, I've been doing it for an artist this very afternoon."

[Illustration: OUR RESTRICTED COAST AMUSEMENTS.

Vendor. "ALL THE OFFICIAL 'OLIDAY FUN. FLY THE PATRIOTIC KITES AND ANNOY THE GOTHAS!"]

* * * * *

[Illustration: Physical Drill Instructor (to weak-kneed recruit). "NAH THEN! IF YOU'RE A-GOING TER JUMP--JUMP!"]

* * * * *

A LOST LAND.

(To GERMANY.)

A childhood land of mountain ways,
Where earthy gnomes and forest fays,
Kind foolish giants, gentle bears,
Sport with the peasant as he fares
Affrighted through the forest glades,
And lead sweet wistful little maids
Lost in the woods, forlorn, alone,
To princely lovers and a throne.

* * * * *

Dear haunted land of gorge and glen,
Ah me! the dreams, the dreams of men!

A learned land of wise old books
And men with meditative looks,
Who move in quaint red-gabled towns
And sit in gravely-folded gowns,
Divining in deep-laden speech
The world's supreme arcana--each
A homely god to listening Youth
Eager to tear the veil of Truth;

* * * * *

Mild votaries of book and pen--
Alas, the dreams, the dreams of men!

A music land, whose life is wrought
In movements of melodious thought;
In symphony, great wave on wave--
Or fugue, elusive, swift, and grave;
A singing land, whose lyric rhymes
Float on the air like village chimes:
Music and Verse--the deepest part
Of a whole nation's thinking heart!

* * * * *

Oh land of Now, oh land of Then!
Dear God! the dreams, the dreams of men!

Slave nation in a land of hate,
Where are the things that made you great?
Child-hearted once--oh, deep defiled,
Dare you look now upon a child?
Your lore--a hideous mask wherein
Self-worship hides its monstrous sin:--
Music and verse, divinely wed--
How can these live where love is dead?

* * * * *

Oh depths beneath sweet human ken,
God help the dreams, the dreams of men!

* * * * *

"The Blessington Papers are included with all their atmosphere
of distinguished High Bohemia. Among them are some interesting

Disraeli letters--he was ever her staunch friend from the early 'thirties to the late 'forties, when his son had risen and her's--how brilliant!--had set."--_Saturday Review_.

And up to the present we had been under the impression that both these distinguished persons were childless.

* * * * *

HINT FOR HORTICULTURISTS.

"Mr. ----, undertaker, of Temuka, improved his plant by the purchase of a new hearse."--_Timaru Herald (New Zealand)_.

* * * * *

"Mr. ---- hopes shortly to be seen again in revue in the Wet End."--_Pall Mall Gazette_.

Or, as the CENSOR would put it, "somewhere in England."

* * * * *

Daily Mail (Ordinary Edition), 3 September, 1917: "Lord Halsbury is 92 to-day."

Times (Late War Edition), 3 September, 1917: "The Earl of Halsbury is 94 to-day."

Yet, from personal observation, one would never believe that the EX-LORD CHANCELLOR was ageing so rapidly.

* * * * *

From "German Official":--

"With the use of numerous tanks and aeroplanes, flying at a low altitude, the English infantry soon after advanced to the attack on this front."--_Evening Paper_.

Now that the enemy has given away the secret of our new weapon the CENSOR might let us know more of our flying Tanks.

* * * * *

"Prisoner then seized her round the throat with both hands and hit her on the head with a steel case-opener."--_Daily Paper_.

Which, presumably, he carried in his teeth.

* * * * *

THE SUNFLOWER.

"Have you," said Francesca, "seen our sunflowers lately?"

"Yes," I said, "I've kept an eye on them occasionally. It's a bit difficult, by the way, not to see them, isn't it?"

"Well," she said, "perhaps they are rather striking."

"Striking!" I said. "I never heard a more inadequate word. I call them simply overwhelming--the steam-rollers of the vegetable world. Look at their great yellow open faces."

"I never," said Francesca, "saw a steam-roller with a face. You're mixing your metaphors."

"And," I said, "I shall go on mixing them as long as you grow sunflowers. It's the very least a man can do by way of protest."

"I don't know why you should want to protest. The seed makes very good chicken-food."

"Yes, I know," I said, "that's what you always said."

"And I bet," she said, "you've repeated it. When you've met the tame Generals and Colonels at your club, and they've boasted to you about their potatoes, I know you've countered them with the story of how you've turned the whole of your lawn into a bed of sunflowers calculated to drive the most obstinate hen into laying two eggs a day, rain or shine."

"I admit," I said, "that I may have mentioned the matter casually, but I never thought the things were going to be like this. When I first knew them and talked about them they were tender little shoots of green just modestly showing above the ground, and now they're a forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlock aren't in it with this impenetrable jungle liberally blotched with yellow, this so-called sunflower patch."

"What would you call it," she said, "if you didn't call it sunflower?"

"I should call it a beast of prey," I said. "A sunflower seems to me to be more like a tiger than anything else."

"It was a steam-roller about a minute ago."

"Yes," I said, "it was--a tigerish steam-roller."

"How interesting," she said. "I have not met one quite like that."

"That," I said, "is because your eye isn't properly poetical. It's blocked with chicken-food and other utilitarian objects."

"I must," she said, "consult an oculist. Perhaps he will give me glasses which will unblock my eye and make me see tigers in the garden."

"No," I said, "you will have to do it for yourself. For such an eye as yours even the best oculists are unavailing."

"I might," she said, "improve if I read poetry at home. Has any poet written about sunflowers?"

"Yes," I said, "BLAKE did. He was quite mad, and he wrote a poem to a sunflower: 'Ah! Sunflower! Weary of time.' That's how it begins."

"Weary of time!" she said scornfully. "That's no good to me. I'm weary of having no time at all to myself."

"That shows," I said, "that you're not a sunflower."

"Thank heaven for that," she said. "It's enough to have four children to look after--five including yourself."

"My dear Francesca," I said, "how charming you are to count me as a child! I shall really begin to feel as if there were golden threads among the silver."

"Tut-tut," she said, "you're not so grey as all that."

"Yes, I am," I said, "quite as grey as all that and much greyer; only we don't talk about it."

"But we do talk about sunflowers," she said, "don't we?"

"If you'll promise to have the beastly glaring things dug up--"

"Not," she said, "before we've extracted from them their last pip of chicken-food."

"Well, anyhow," I said, "as soon as possible. If you'll promise to do that I'll promise never to mention them again."

"But you'll lose your reputation with the Generals and Colonels."

"I don't mind that," I said, "if I can only rid the garden of their detested presence."

"My golden-threaded boy," said Francesca, "it shall be as you desire."

R.C.L.

* * * * *

CONSTABLE JINKS.

Our village policeman is tall and well-grown,
He stands six feet two and he weighs sixteen stone;
His gait is majestic, his visage serene,
And his boots are the biggest that ever I've seen.

Fame sealed his renown with a definite stamp
When two German waiters escaped from a camp.
Unaided he captured those runaway Huns
Who had lived for a week on three half-penny buns.

When a derelict porpoise was cast on the shore
Our village policeman was much to the fore;
He measured the beast from its tip to its tail,
And blandly pronounced it "an undersized whale."

When a small boy was flying his kite on the links
It was promptly impounded by Constable Jinks,
Who astutely remarked that it might have been seen
By the vigilant crew of a Hun submarine.

It is sometimes alleged that great valour he showed

When he chased a mad cow for three miles on the road;
But there's also another account of the hunt
With a four-legged pursuer, a biped in front.

If your house has been robbed and his counsel you seek
He's sure to look in--in the course of the week,
When his massive appearance will comfort your cook,
Though he fails in the bringing of culprits to book.

His _obiter dicta_ on life and the law
Set our ribald young folk in a frequent guffaw;
But the elders repose an implicit belief
In so splendid a product of beer and of beef.

He's the strongest and solidest man in the place,
Nothing--short of mad cattle--can quicken his pace;
His moustache would do credit to any dragoon,
And his voice is as deep as a double bassoon.

His complexion is perfect, his uniform neat,
He rivets all eyes as he stalks down the street;
And I doubt if his critics will ever complain
Of his being a little deficient in brain.

For he's more than a man; he's a part of the map;
His going would cause a deplorable gap;
And the village would suffer as heavy a slump
As it would from the loss of the old parish pump.

* * * * *

A HAPPY JUXTAPOSITION.

"CHEAPER MATCHES. | FRESH LIGHT ON THE KAISER'S PLOTS."

Daily Mirror.

From the report of a Royal investiture:--

"The first officer to mount the dais was Major ----, who wore
the broad-brimmed slouch hat of the Austrian Infantry."

North China Daily News.

A souvenir, of course.

* * * * *

[Illustration: SUPPLY AND DEMAND.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Mother (to maid, who has offered Marjorie some jam)._
"OH NO, THANK YOU, NOT WITH THE _FIRST_ PIECE."

Marjorie. "BUT, MUMMY, I HAVE GIVEN UP HAVING A FIRST PIECE NOW--WAR
ECONOMY."]

* * * * *

THE TRENCH CODE.

Ah! with what awe, what infantile impatience,
We eyed the artifice when issued out,
And racked our brains about the Regulations,
And tried to think we had them free from doubt!
As Rome's old Fathers, reverently leaning
In secret cellars o'er the Sibyl's strain,
Beyond the fact that several pars
Had something vague to do with Mars,
Failed, as a rule, to find the smallest meaning,
But told the plebs the oracle was plain.

So did we study it, ourselves deceiving,
In hope to say, "We have no rations here,"
Or, "Please, Brigade, this regiment wants relieving,"
And "Thank you for the bombs--but why no beer?"
And wondered always, with a hint of presage,
Since never word emerged as it was planned,
If it was Hermes, Lord of Craft,
Compiled the code, or someone daft,
So that no mortal could compose a message
Which anybody else could understand.

Too soon the Staff, to spoil our tiny slumbers,
Or, as they said, to certify our skill,
Sent us a screed, all signs and magic numbers,
And what it signified is mystery still.
We flung them back a message yet more mazy
To say we weren't unravelling their own,
And marked it urgent, and designed
That it should reach them while they dined.
All night they toiled, till half the crowd were crazy
And bade us breathe its burthen o'er the 'phone.

* * * * *

But now they want it back--and it is missing!
And shall one patriot heart withhold a throb?
For four high officers have been here, hissing,
And plainly panicky about their job.
I know they think some dark, deluded bandit
Has gone and given it to KAISER BILL.
But though I'm grieved the General's cross,
I have no qualms about the loss--
If clever men like us can't understand it,
I don't suppose the Wilhelmstrasse will!

A. P. H.

* * * * *

SPREAD OF THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT.

"I, J.A.H. De la Bere, of Woolsevy Rectory, Morchard Bishop,
Devon, desire to Alter my Surname to De la Fontaine."--Times.

* * * * *

"WANTED

"end August in Swiss family (2 persons) living in villa near Lausanne

"NURSERY'S MAID

"able to saw, iron attend at table and take entire care of healthy baby 19 months old Good English accent serious references." _La Tribune de Lausanne._

We are glad to hear that the baby has a good English accent; he will be able to employ it with effect when the Nursery's Maid begins to saw and iron him.

* * * * *

"In the cases in which the surgeon his obliged to vast empty a bone so that offers then itself difficulties therapeuticals not little because of pus and consequently because of impossibility of transplantations, plastics, plombages ecc., the A. propose to go on the bone with specials inesions, not on the surface when the bone is most superficial, but from the surface in which are aboundings and easily cessible wet tissue, removing the margin of the bone's cavity and mathing in mode as, by cause of repaidis process, this tissue by hemselves adhere to a ground of cavity and full it."--_La Clinica Chirurgica._

That makes it perfectly clear.

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[Illustration: AVANTI, SAVOIA!]

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A DAUGHTER OF THE BACK STEPPES.

(Russia may not yet be quite sufficiently herself to be the martial ally that we could desire, but she still continues to send us the most delightful fiction. Mr. PUNCH is privileged in being able to offer his readers the opening of a new and fascinating story translated from the Russian of Ghastlilkoff.)

I was born in the year 18--, and I have never ceased to regret it. I lived with my grandmother. She was called Natasha. I do not know why. She had a large mole on her left cheek. Often she would embrace me with tears and lament over me, crying, "My little sad one, my little lonely one!" Yet I was not sad; I had too many griefs. Nor was I lonely, for I had no playmates.

Often my grandmother told me I was ugly. I had no mirror, so I believed her. When I was sixteen a man I met in the street went mad for love of me and cut his throat. For the first time in my life I wondered if my grandmother always spoke the truth. I went home and wept, but when she asked me why I could not tell her.

Our house was quite dark. It had three rooms leading in and out of one another, and no windows. There was not much fresh air. Every morning my grandmother went out to buy otchkza and pickled onions. The man who sold

them was very old. He had a cast in each eye. He inquired of my grandmother if she would allow him to be my husband, but she refused. His name I do not remember.

Our neighbours were very pleasant people, kindly and simple. There was a half-witted youth called Krop. He used to fill his mouth with large brass-headed nails. I did not dare to go near him, for he always tried to bite my arms. One day I learned that he had died. My grandmother bought me black silk mittens to wear at his funeral. I was very proud, and ran out into the road to show them to the other children. But in my haste I split them across from seam to seam, and my grandmother whipped me and put me to bed.

My grandmother's chief friend was a woman who sold toasted cheese. It was her custom to bring round the delicacy on a small hand-cart and sell to the children for a few kopecks. This woman was reputed to be very rich. She was not beautiful, for she had no teeth, and had hair on her face. The first time I saw her I ran into the house and hid behind the large barrel of butter-milk. My grandmother took me by the ear and led me to her friend.

"This is Ilonoka," she said. "She is a good girl."

I remember that I cried very loud.

Afterwards my grandmother told me that perhaps the woman would leave me all her money. Next time she came I wished to speak to her, but unfortunately I had a quinsy. When the woman eventually died it was discovered that she had been destitute for a long time. She left her hand-cart by will to my grandmother, and in her disappointment my grandmother beat me over the head with it. Soon afterwards my hair began to come out, and my grandmother said it was time I found a husband.

Accordingly she went next door, where lived a woman with five sons. They were all out except one, and he had a sore leg. She brought him to me, and I cried very bitterly. He also. His name was Ivan, and I wished it had been Peter.

The next day we were betrothed, and all our friends came to eat the feast that my grandmother provided. A school-fellow of mine, a very beautiful girl, was angry because I had a husband and not she. She scratched my face, and the blood ran on to my dress. Our friends congratulated us, and when they had gone my grandmother said it had been a great success. She and I finished what was left of the feast and went to bed. I remember that my feet were very cold, and when I fell asleep I dreamed that my betrothed's name was Peter. When I awoke I cried very loud, and my grandmother slapped my cheeks.

Shortly afterwards she died, and I went to live with my uncle, who was a pawnbroker in Moscow.

* * * * *

THE LONG-FACED CHUMS.

When Alexander won the world he knew not bombs nor guns,
His simple forms of frightfulness were quite unlike the Huns';
'Twas not by barking mortars that the pushful CAESAR scored;
He trusted close formations and the silent stabbing sword.

When ROLAND'S rearguard turned at bay, and from the furious press
The scuppered Paladin sent forth his famous S.O.S.,
Scared Roncesvalles rang loud with war, as misty legends tell,
But echo's ear was spared the shriek and crash of bursting shell.

So could you meet the shades of those whose prowess made Romance,
You'd find them only puzzled by your tales of stunts in France;
You'd have to cut the business out, and be content to chat
Of rations, grub, and officers--such odds and ends as that,

Unless you chanced to entertain some true rough-rider's ghost,
Who galloped after HANNIBAL, or with the Parthian host,
Some curled Assyrian prince who pranced, bareback, along a frieze--
Or one of RUPERT'S _beaux sabreurs_--a horseman--whom you please.

With chosen spirits such as those your talk need never end
If you are worthy of your spurs and count a horse your friend.
Just ask them "Did you clip trace-high?" or "Did you chaff your hay?"
Or boast about the gee you ride, and they'll have lots to say.

Cut out the talk of battle's din, of whizz-bangs and of crumps,
Of bombs and gas and hand-grenades, of mines and blazing dumps;
If you would wake their sympathy and warm their hearts indeed
Describe a Squadron watering, and then the fuss at "Feed!"

That lively bustle has a charm to wake a mummy's ear
Who, ere the Pyramids were planned, was mustered charioteer;
And many a horseman's spirit thrills by Lethe's drowsy brink
When in a strange, familiar dream his Troop comes down to drink!

* * * * *

From "The Story of the Haldane Missions":--

"The Kaiser laughingly remarked that he had better have the high
chair (in which the Kaiser usually sat at his council meetings).
He also gave Lord Haldane an Imperial cigar.... While discussing
the naval question, the Kaiser took a copy of the new Naval Bill
out of his pocket and handed it to Lord Haldane, who transferred
it to his pocket without looking at it."--Daily Chronicle.

He probably thought it was another of the Imperial cigars.

* * * * *

[Illustration: Grocer-fiend (who has treated three preceding customers
to (a) "We ain't got no sugar;" (b) "We have none, Madam;" and (c) "No
sugar in the shop"--to boy). "BE OFF. WE'VE GOT NO SUGAR!"

Boy. "I DIDN'T ASK FOR NO SUGAR. I WANT A PENNORTH O' SODA--AN' THAT'S
TAKEN THE' BLOOMING SWANK OUT OF YOU, AIN'T IT?"]

* * * * *

A STRAIGHT TALK WITH L. G.

(Everyone has views as to how to win the War, but not all are vocal,
or--shall we say?--vociferous. If Mr. LLOYD GEORGE reads all the papers

(as their Editors of course expect him to do) he cannot have missed quite a number of powerful articles in the following manner. And even if he should miss one or two it would not matter, because there is always another in preparation.)_

I've always said that the PREMIER shouldn't be bothered with Parliament. Of course I've said too that our old friend Demos, the new god, should have a say in affairs; but that's an inconsistency that doesn't count in the least, does it?

Now then, Mr. PREMIER, you've got the chance of your lifetime. I always said you were a lucky devil--in fact, I never met the Welshman that wasn't.

You see, Parliament's in recess, and all its trivial overpaid Members are playing golf and things. You've got absolutely a free hand if only you'll take it. It's quite easy and bound to succeed. You've only got to do as I tell you.

For instance, you want to buck up HAIG and the people at the Front. It's no use them telling you they know best, being on the spot. That's only bluff, old man. Don't take any notice of them, but just order a big general offensive; and before you can say Jack Robinson we'll have the Huns behind the Rhine.

And do tell the Navy to get a move on. I'm glad to see my articles have made you change the heads at the Admiralty; and of course that's all very well so far as it goes. But it doesn't go far enough. _Have a chat with BEATTY about it._ Get him to root the Huns out. He can bombard Ostend and Zeebrugge and all those funny little places in two-twos. Tell KING ALBERT not to mind. We'll easily slap up new towns for him after the War, built on the speedy American principle.

Then about that aerial offensive. There's really been quite enough talk about it. We want some action, Mr. PREMIER. Isn't it time it came off? Think what a bombardment of Cologne (taking care of the cathedral, _of course_), Frankfurt, Berlin, Essen and Hamburg would do, not to mention other places that I could if I had an atlas.

And about those pacifists. Just clap the whole lot in gaol. That's the best place for them. I won't object in the least, even though I am the apostle of freedom.

Then there are lots and lots of other things you might do. You might deliver a reasoned manifesto to the Russian people and buck them up a bit. That won't do anybody any harm, and _it'll be getting on with the War_, my little Welshman.

Well, there are a few points for you to go on with. You've got the brains to think of more, otherwise I wouldn't have helped to put you where you are to-day. But remember that if you _don't_ do these things Demos is waiting round the corner for you.

Demos is a good dog--a patient animal. But there's an end even to his patience. Growl, Demos, and show you're not afraid of Welshmen!

("Grrr----!" Good dog! Good dog!)

Now then, old boy, I've shown you the way. _It's up to you!_

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Another powerful article on these lines will appear next week.

[But not in _Punch_-ED.]

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[Illustration: _Caller at the office of the Inventions Board._ "DURING WAR PREPARE FOR PEACE'--THAT MUST BE OUR MOTTO! AND MY SPECIAL PATENT SHELL-CASE IS THE VERY THING. A SHELL-CASE TO-DAY----AND A BLANC-MANGE MOULD TO-MORROW."]

* * * * *

THE ONLY OTHER TOPIC.

"I shot a marrow into the--I mean I cut a marrow two feet seven inches long yesterday," said the man in the corner seat.

"What did it weigh?" we asked anxiously. After two months of them potatoes had somewhat palled. We were growing rather tired of marrows, but we waited eagerly for his answer,

"Twenty-six pounds nine and three-quarter ounces."

Disappointment again. Our hopes were dashed to the ground. Some obscure individual, according to the local press, had produced from his humble cottage garden a marrow weighing thirty-four pounds, and the thing rankled.

"Mine was a scraggy specimen, more like an Indian club than a marrow."

"Crossed in love, perhaps," said Dalton.

"What your marrow wanted was nourishment," said the Authority. "A piece of worsted round its neck, with one end dipped in a jar of water."

"Excuse me," said Jones, "the very latest is to insert a tube in the stalk, and the flavour is greatly improved if you add a little sugar to the water. Almost like a melon."

"Do you take a card out for each marrow, or one for each plant?" asked Dalton.

The quiet man opposite put his paper down. He was a new-comer in the district. We liked him, although he had no sense of humour and did not appreciate Dalton's jokes. He appeared to be interested only in the startling and the odd.

"That reminds me," he said, "of a most extraordinary experience I had a few days ago. Of course you all know Enderby?"

None of us knew Enderby, but we I did not like to say so. The quiet man's anxiety was painful. We felt he could not go on with his story unless someone knew Enderby.

"He has a little place round at the back of the Common--quite a nice

little place." Freath--that was the quiet man's name--looked at us reproachfully.

"I think I know Enderby," said Dalton. "Isn't he a heavily-built man about fifty, with a grey moustache?"

"Yes, yes," said Freath eagerly. "And a curious wart on his left cheek. Well, I dined with him the other night. His boy was there, home for the holidays. Very clever boy; his special study is the biology of plants. They gave me a very good dinner; I didn't notice very much what I was eating, but I did when the maid helped me to marrow. It was a deep crimson colour. I tasted it somewhat nervously, for I felt they were all watching me. It had the taste of the most exquisite fruit, and the flavour--I am afraid you won't believe me--was that of the finest port that I ever drank. 'How did you manage this, Arthur?' said Enderby. 'Grape-juice,' said Arthur. 'Those foreign black grapes are very cheap just now, so I mixed some with the water that I was feeding the marrows on.' I can't explain it to you; all I know is that I had a second helping. I am afraid you don't believe it," said Freath uneasily.

We assured him that we did, but we did not say it with conviction.

"Enderby called round to see me a few days afterwards," continued Freath, "and I walked back with him. As we went along he told me that a relative was staying with them--an uncle. The first night, again they had marrow for dinner. This time its flavour was not port but whisky--Scotch whisky. The old gentleman was delighted with Arthur and his experiments. Although an abstainer he had three helpings. This was very pleasing to Enderby, as the uncle was a man of considerable wealth. But he was not at all satisfied with his son's explanations, and he thought he recognised the whisky. Although an abstainer while the War is on, Enderby keeps a very good cellar, and when he came to look into things he found that Arthur had been pumping his finest '60 port and old matured Scotch whisky into the vegetable marrows. Now what do you think of that?"

We thought it very strange and we said so.

"But the strangest part has yet to come. Of course they had to keep it quiet--bottle it up, so to speak, from the old gentleman, and let the marrows down gradually. But when the marrows were once more on a temperance _regime_ the most extraordinary thing happened." The train was running into Finsbury Park. Freath rose and collected his things.

We stared at him, fascinated.

"Enderby took me into the garden to see it. He said it had been going on for the last week. From all directions, rioting across the flower-beds, the lawn, down the paths, the marrows were growing towards the wine-cellar at the rate of twelve feet a day."

Freath hastily left the carriage and jumped into the Broad Street train.

While we were discussing the story the voice of authority spoke: "The whole thing's a tissue of falsehood. There's no such man as Enderby."

"But Dalton knows him," we said.

"I don't know Enderby," said Dalton. "But I wanted to hear the story."

* * * * *

AT THE PLAY.

"THE PACIFISTS."

As a reasonable jusquaboutist I have some misgivings about Mr. HENRY ARTHUR JONES'S farce--parable, The Pacifists. Assume Market Pewbury's afflictions to have been as stated: an intolerable stalwart cad of a butcher fencing-in the best part of the common, assaulting people's grandmothers, shutting them up in coal-cellars and eating their crumpets, kissing their wives in the market square and proposing to abduct them to seaside resorts, and none so bold to do him violence and make him stop it; the police being ill or absent, the Mayor and his friend, chief victim of the butcher's aggression, unwilling on account of principles to do anything but talk and get up leagues to deal with the trouble in general, and in a final ecstasy of disapproval to write a strong letter; only uncle Belcher, a truculent old sea-dog with a natural lust for whisky and blood, organising an opposition, valiantly hiring a notable pugilist to deal with the butcher, and becoming desperately anxious lest the matter should be peaceably settled because the basher, having been engaged, must find something to bash or there will be trouble. Well, if we must have forged for us the sword of a three-Act parable, we should like it with one edge, not two.

Mr. JONES was evidently bursting with the desire to give some irritating people a very hard knock--witness the barbed dedication with which the normally peaceful theatre-announcement columns have bristled some little time past; and I think I dare say that we were interested in his first Act. He did really work out his analogies with some skill. But we soon came to feel that he was essentially doing something between flogging a dead horse, so far as we were concerned, and shooting a sitting rabbit. I suspect too that we realised the issues were too tragic for this kind of buffoonery. The tribute of our applause was a tribute of loyalty to one who has often deserved well of the republic, and partly the desire to show that our hearts were in the right place. I don't see The Pacifists as a pamphlet making many converts. As a kick on the shins it has points.

I confess the thing that pleased me most was a gay little piece of burlesque by Mr. ARTHUR CHESNEY as the red-haired shop assistant who was not a pacifist. Mr. CHARLES GLENNEY so thoroughly enjoyed the robustious sea-captain that we had to enjoy it too--a sound notion of entertainment, that. Mr. SEBASTIAN SMITH played chief rabbit with considerable skill and point; Mr. LENNOX PAWLE amused with his plump dundrearyed mayor; Mr. SAM LIVESEY'S offensive was, I am sure, as Hunnish as its author could possibly have desired. Miss ELLIS JEFFREYS appeared in the first Act as a very plausible imitation of a prominent tradesman's wife in an eighth-rate provincial town, with some quite excellent moments. But she was evidently labouring under severe strain, and I amused myself by speculating how long she would keep out of a really well-cut skirt and a sophisticated air of Mayfair. Just an Act. And surely she is mistaken in thinking that an effect of extreme agitation is best conveyed, by very rapid quasi-cinematographic progression up and down the stage? But I saw no reason to complain of the bold bad butcher's taste in the matter of a subject for abduction.

T.

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[Illustration: _Sergeant (to Private Simpkins arriving two days late)._
"WELL, SIMPKINS, SO YOU'VE TURNED UP, HAVE YOU?"

Simpkins. "YES, SERGEANT. BUT YOU ARE LUCKY TO GET ME. WHAT WITH
DOMESTIC TROUBLE AND ALL THAT DELUGE OF RAIN I NEARLY MADE A SEPARATE
PEACE."]

* * * * *

BUCEPHALUS AND THE ROAD-HOGS.

When Miss Ropes asked at breakfast how many of us would like to watch the very last cricket-match of the season at Lumsdale, practically the entire hospital held up its hand, and it was found that the two cars could not accommodate us all. It was therefore settled that Haynes (who said he knew the moves) should drive Ansell and me over in the governess-cart.

It was also settled that the crew of the governess-cart should have an early cold lunch and start an hour before the cars; thus (it was calculated) we should all arrive at the cricket-ground fairly well together. This did not take Haynes' driving into account. We started from the door at a very satisfactory pace, probably because Bucephalus, the fat pony, objected to the enthusiasm of our send-off. When we reached the road he dropped into an amble so gentle that we decided that he had really been running away in the drive. Next, taking advantage of an almost imperceptible upward slope, he began to walk. Haynes clucked at him and flapped the reins, but this had no effect beyond steering Bucephalus into the left-hand ditch.

"I thought you said you knew the moves," remarked Ansell. "Surely this is wrong?"

"The bally beast's lopsided," said Haynes with heat. "One side of his mouth's hard and the other soft."

"The difficulty being," I suggested as we lurched across the road into the other ditch, "to discover which is which.... Now you're straight. We'd better trot. It's only a one-day match."

Haynes used the ancient whip, which had as much effect as tickling a rhinoceros with a feather.

"Goad him with a penknife," suggested Ansell unfeelingly.

"There must be some way," said Haynes. "Because they _do_ trot, you know."

"Speaking as one ignorant amateur to another," I asked, "isn't the right thing to pull gently on the reins and then slacken? You go on doing it till the animal gets your meaning. Try it."

Haynes tried it, and Bucephalus stopped dead. Repetition of the treatment simply produced a tendency to back.

"For heaven's sake don't lose any of the ground we've gained," said

Ansell. "Let's get on, if only at a walk."

"We shall have to tow him," decided Haynes. He got out and hauled at the bridle, but Bucephalus refused to budge.

"This," said Ansell, becoming suddenly business-like, "is where the Boy Hero modestly but firmly takes charge. Jump in."

He picked up the reins and, though he apparently did nothing in particular with them, Bucephalus came to life at once and broke into a lumbering trot.

"You silly chump, why didn't you say you could drive?" asked Haynes.

"Nobody asked me," said the Boy Hero modestly, "and I was shy."

At the time when we had been scheduled to reach the cricket-ground we had still a mile to go along a narrow leafy road, hardly more than a lane. The cars were overdue, and Haynes, whose haughty spirit could not brook the idea of being passed by jeering plutocrats, propounded a scheme.

"They can't pass us unless we go into the ditch," he explained. "So when they come we'll pretend to be asleep, take up the middle of the road, and simply ignore them. We'll get there first, after all."

A moment later we heard the buzz of engines. I took a hurried glance round and saw the sunlight on brasswork as the car came round a distant corner.

"It's them," I said.

The reins dropped slackly on Bucephalus's back and he slowed to a walk. Inside the governess-cart all was somnolent peace. Behind us the car was already beginning to make remarks on one of those abusive press-the-button horns. "You FOOL! You FOOL! Get OUT o' the way! Get OUT o' the way!" it said. Then we heard the car slow down and pandemonium broke loose. The horn was reinforced by an ordinary hooter, a whistle, several human voices and, lastly, an exhaust siren. I stole a glance at Ansell and found that he was having a good deal of surreptitious trouble in restraining our fiery steed from doing a second bolt.

"I say," whispered Haynes in sudden agitation, "_has_ Miss Ropes an exhaust siren?"

"No, she hasn't," Ansell replied in tones of horror. "We've held up the wrong car." He looked round. "Good Lord!" he added softly and pulled Bucephalus into the ditch. In the car, with a grinning Tommy at the wheel, sat two apoplectic generals and a highly explosive brigade-major. They came alongside, and I should never be allowed to repeat what they said to us. It seemed that by delaying them we had been hindering the day's work of the entire Home Forces. We were given to understand that it was only the blue bands on our arms which saved us from being court-martialled on the spot and shot by the grinning Tommy at dawn. Then they passed on.

When our cars did appear a minute or two later we pulled meekly into the ditch to let them pass, and could find no better answer to the jeers of their occupants than a wan sickly smile apiece.

* * * * *

THE TEST OF TYPE.

(Suggested by these adjacent paragraphs in a daily paper.)

"Maj. ----. For conspicuous gallantry and resource. He rallied his men when the left flank was seriously threatened, and by his energy and fine example saved the situation. He subsequently commanded his battalion with great ability. He has displayed marked gallantry in every action in which he has taken part."

"A London angler, Mr. ----, has caught a roach of 2 lb. 1 oz. in the Lark at Barton Mills, the largest fish of its kind landed from this Suffolk stream for some years."

Though in these times monopolized by Mars
There's not a day that passes but one reads--
Sandwiched between unprofitable "pars"
And other wholly negligible screeds--
Of decorations, crosses, medals, bars,
Bestowed for valiant and heroic deeds;
Over these records we must often pass
Unless we've got a magnifying-glass!

But if some member of a fishing club
In London or the provinces, renowned
For prowess with the lob-worm or the grub,
Should land a roach of more than half a pound,
Then in the leading papers of the hub
Full space for that achievement will be found,
And clearest type and unaffected rapture
Will signalize the epoch-making capture!

The moral of the episode is plain:
If soldiers wish to petrify the nation,
Let them--when leave permits--no more disdain
To join a Roach or Perch Association,
Cull giant gooseberries, and strive to gain
Prizes for Blind-fold Pig Delineation.
Thus only--not by cross or golden stripe--
Will they achieve the honour of big type.

* * * * *

[Illustration: REPRISALS.

Competitor (in international contest). "THE BLIGHTER'S BIT ME."

Referee. "WELL, AIN'T YER GOT NO TEETH OF YER OWN? BOX ON."]

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SHAKSPEARE AND THE WAR.

[Since the entry of the United States all the English-speaking peoples are in alliance for freedom.]

I think our SHAKSPEARE, gone this many a year
To some rich haven where the poets throng
And Ruler of Ten Cities wrought in song
And spired with rhythmic music, high and clear,
Still finds his England something close and dear,
Rejoicing when her justice baffles wrong
And willing her to wrestle and be strong.
I think he bides by England and is near.

And, in the purpose of his Overlord,
His weaving spirit, still in cloudless youth
With minstrelsy made perfect, throws a cord
That rings the continents in its magic reach
To gather all who share his English speech
In one firm warrior bond of troth and truth.

* * * * *

"LET LAWS AND LEARNING..."

"I should add that Viscount Harberton sees a chance for his own order in the circumstance that, while the poor man's child is driven to school by the inspector, the rich man can 'boot the spy out,' and so confer on his children the priceless boon of complete illiteracy. Shall we live to see a House of Lords that makes its mark?"--_Observer._

Some of them, we believe, are under the impression that they have done so already.

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(_By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks._)

Unless you can share with me the sad immunity of the forties, I must despair of translating for you the emotion raised in my antique soul by the wrapper of a new RIDER HAGGARD story bearing the picture of a Zulu and the discovery inside that _Quatermain_ is come again! The tale that has so excited me is called, a little ominously, _Finished_ (WARD, LOCK), and I could have better loved a cheerier title. The matter is, to begin with, an affair of a shady doctor, of I.D.B. and an abduction; none of it, I admit, any too absorbing. But about halfway through the author, as though sharing my own views upon this part of the plot, exchanges (so to speak) the Shady for the Black, and transports us all to Zululand. And if you need reminding of what H.R.H. can do with that delectable country, I can only say I am sorry for you. Incidentally there are some stirring scenes from certain pages of history that the glare of these later days has rather faded--Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift among them; as well as the human drama of the feud between CETEWAYO (terror of my nursery!) and the witch-doctor _Zikali_. Whether the old careless rapture is altogether recovered is another matter; at least the jolly unpronounceable names are still there, and the picturesque speech. Most of the names, that is; _Allan_ of course, and others, but I for one should have welcomed rare _Umslopogaas_--or however he is rightly spelt--and _Curtis_, for personal reasons my favourite of the gallant company that have so often kept secret rendezvous with me behind the unlifted lid of a desk at preparation

time. And now have we really come at long last to Finished? I can only hope that Sir H. RIDER HAGGARD doesn't mean it.

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Mrs. HUMPHRY WARD may be numbered amongst the most indefatigable of women war-workers. She has now followed up her former success in England's Effort with a volume carrying on the story of our part in the War under the title of Towards the Goal (MURRAY). The book is written in the form of a series of letters addressed to ex-President ROOSEVELT, as the onlie begetter both of it and its predecessor. It is further equipped with a preface by the hand of this same able and clear-sighted gentleman, the chief drawback of which (from my reviewing point of view) is that it covers so well the whole ground of appreciation as to leave me nothing more to add. "Mrs. Ward writes nobly on a noble theme"--voila tout! Her theme, as I have hinted, is a further exposition of Britain's war activities as those have developed since the former book was published. In its course Mrs. WARD gives us some vivid experiences of her own as a visitor to the Western Front: things seen and heard, well calculated (were this needed) to stiffen the resolution of the great people to whom her letters are really written. England's Effort was, I understand, translated into many tongues (with results that can hardly fail of being enormously valuable); Towards the Goal should certainly receive the same treatment of which it is well worthy.

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Mr. WILLIAM HARBUTT DAWSON, in his After War Problems (ALLEN AND UNWIN), covers, under the four headings, Empire and Citizenship, Natural Efficiency, Social Reform, and National Finance and Taxation, bewilderingly wide ground, and drives a perhaps rather mandarinish team of contributors. Lord HALDANE, for instance, is no longer in the real van of educational endeavour, and is it wholly insignificant that his chapter on Education appears in the section headed National Efficiency rather than in that of Social Reform? It ought not to be difficult to give, in the light of these last years, a wider interpretation to Patriotism than that expressed by Lord MEATH on lines familiar to his public. Sir WILLIAM CHANCE has seen no new sign in the skies in relation to the problem of poverty. Sir BENJAMIN BROWNE, whose death all those interested in the settlement of the Capital-Labour quarrel must deplore, as for all his uncompromising individualism he brought to it a rare breadth of view, says much that is of real value, but does not refrain from appealing to the fact that the mutual confidence of man and officer in battle is a proof of the possibility of a similar confidence in the workshop. That confidence must, and can, we dare to believe, eventually be established. But the men don't go over the top to put money in the Colonel's pocket, and little good is done by exploiting these loose analogies and putting on a too easy air of optimism in the face of desperately serious and complex problems. But enough of fault-finding, which is a poor reward for the serious and generous labours of public-spirited men and women. After all, what one reader calls timidity of outlook another may care to praise as prudence. Here you will find an abundance of safe analysis, wise comment and constructive suggestion from a galaxy of accredited authorities.

* * * * *

In the early chapters of Mr. WILLIAM HEWLETT'S new story, The

Plot-Maker_ (DUCKWORTH), we are introduced to a popular and highly successful novelist, named _Coulthard Henderson_, in the emotional crisis produced by a sudden doubt as to whether his output of best-sellers represented anything in the least approaching actuality. You will admit a tragic situation. He meets it by the determination that his next book shall be a veritable slice of life, and to this end he selects and finances an eligible young man for the purpose of vicariously experiencing those emotions, from which age and other causes debar the chronicler; in other words, he hires a hero. The worst of this excellent idea is that it can hardly be said to originate either with _Mr. Henderson_ or Mr. HEWLETT, that credit belonging (I fancy) to the late HERBERT FLOWERDEW in a too-little-appreciated masterpiece of sensational burlesque called _The Realist_. However, _The Plot-Maker_, once set going, develops admirably enough on lines entirely its own. The so-much-an-hour hero turns out an engaging young gentleman, but a wofully poor protagonist. The situation where (in the midst of whirling events) he makes the startling discovery that he himself has been in some way switched on to the part of villain is one that you can appreciate only at first hand. Certainly if you want (as who does not in these days?) an anaesthetic of agreeable nonsense _The Plot-Maker_ is a medium that I can cordially recommend: one obvious advantage being that you need not try to believe a single word of it.

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HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

From a publisher's list:--

"Shells as evidence of the Migrations of Early Culture."

And modern Kultur spreads itself in just the same old way.

* * * * *

"Lady Required to Share Rome with another."

Staffordshire Sentinel.

But what about the King of ITALY, not to mention the POPE?

[Illustration: _Eastern Potentate (rusticating)_. "YOU HAVE NO IDEA, MY DEAR FRIEND, HOW SOOTHING IT IS TO ME TO GET AWAY FROM THE LUXURIOUS AND ARTIFICIAL LIFE OF THE COURT AND TO SPEND MY WEEK-ENDS IN QUIET RETIREMENT HERE IN THE COUNTRY WHERE A FRIEND MAY DROP IN FOR POT LUCK AND TAKE US IN THE ROUGH."]

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