

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 153, Sept. 26, 1917

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

VOL. 153.

SEPTEMBER 26, 1917.

CHARIVARIA.

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Three bandits have been executed in Mexico without a proper trial or sentence. This, we understand, renders the executions null and void.

The campaign against the cabbage butterfly in this country has reached such an alarming stage that cautious butterflies are now going about in couples.

After spending a one-pound Treasury note on cakes, chocolates, fish and chips, biscuits, apples, bananas, damsons, cigarettes, toffee, five bottles of ginger "pop" and a tin of salmon, a Chatham boy told a policeman that he was not feeling well. It was thought to be due to something the boy had been eating.

Incidentally the boy desires us to point out that the trouble was not that he had too much to eat but that there was not quite enough boy to go round.

"I read all English books," says Dr. HARDING in The New York Times, "because they are all equally good." This looks dangerously like a studied slight to Mr. H.G. WELLS.

We understand that, owing to the paper shortage, future exposures of German intrigues will only be announced on alternate days.

At the Kingston Red Cross Exhibition a potato was shown bearing a remarkable likeness to the German CROWN PRINCE. By a curious coincidence a report has recently been received that somewhere in Germany they have a Crown Prince who bears an extraordinary resemblance to a potato.

Mystery still attaches to the authorship of The Book of Artemas, but we have authority for saying that Lord SYDENHAM does not remember having written it.

At Neath Fair, the other day, a soldier just home from the Front entered a lions' den. The lions bore up bravely.

The question of body armour for the troops, it is stated, is still under consideration by the authorities. This is not to be confused with bully ARMOUR which has long been used to line the inside of the

troops.

Mr. WALTER HOWARD O'BRIEN, of New York, has sent to Queen Alexandra's Field Force Fund 1,719,000 cigarettes. Several British small boys have decided to write and ask him if he has such a thing as a cigarette picture to spare.

Doctors in many parts of London are said to be raising their fees. They should remember that there is such thing as curing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

The Muenchener Neueste Nachrichten accuses the United States of having stolen the cipher key of the LUXBURG despatches. It is this sort of thing that is gradually convincing Germany that it is beneath her dignity to fight with a nation like America.

A fine porpoise has been seen disporting itself in the Thames near Hampton Court. It is just as well to know that such things can be seen almost as well with Government ale as with the stronger brews.

Another statue has been stolen from Berlin, but Londoners need not be envious. Quite a lot of Americans will be in this country shortly, and it is hoped that their well-known propensity for souvenir-collecting may yet be diverted into useful channels.

The Midland Dairy Farmers' Association have expressed themselves as satisfied with the prices fixed for Winter milk. In other agricultural quarters this action is regarded as a dangerous precedent, the view being that no farmer should be satisfied about anything.

"My hopes of fortune have been dispelled by unremunerative Government contracts," said a contractor at the Liverpool Bankruptcy Court. It is good to read for once of the Government getting the best of a bargain.

"What is a bun?" asked the Willesden magistrate last week; which only shows that with a little practice magistrates will get into the way of doing these things almost as well as the High Court judges.

The Frankfurter Zeitung declares that "the Germany that President Wilson wants to talk peace with will only be a Germany beaten to its knees." Our own opinion is that it will be a Germany beaten to a

frazzle.

There appears to be a great demand for small second-hand yachts. The fact is connected, in well-informed circles, with the report that _The Daily Mail_ contemplates taking up the anti-submarine question.

Some solicitors have been helping to run the gas works of a certain Corporation during a strike. While commending this action, we admit that we can conceive of nothing more likely to undermine the resolute patriotism of the man in the street than a gas bill furnished by solicitor.

Women are formally warned by the Ministry of Munitions against using T.N.T. as a means of acquiring auburn hair. Any important object striking the head--a chimney-pot or a bomb from an enemy aeroplane--would be almost certain to cause an explosion, with possible injury to the scalp.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "I'M COMING TO YOU WITH 'ARF A TON IN A MINUTE, SO DON'T FRET YOURSELF, OLE PERISCOPE."]

* * * * *

GERMAN THOROUGHNESS AGAIN.

"TO HOLD POTATO CROP.

"NEW GERMAN FOOD DICTATOR WILL CONSUME ALL FOOD."--_Victoria Daily Times_.

* * * * *

"An intelligent postal service has delivered those addressed to 1,000, Upper Grosvenor Street, W. 1, to the Ministry of Good at Grosvenor House."--_Daily Mail_.

This is the first we have heard of this Ministry.

* * * * *

TO THE POTSDAM PACIFIST.

Now for the fourth time since you broke your word,
And started hacking through, the seasons' cycle
Brings Autumn on; the goose, devoted bird,
Prepares her shrift against the mass of MICHAEL;
Earth takes the dead leaves' stain,
And Peace, that hardy annual, sprouts again.

Yet why should _you_ support the Papal Chair
In fostering this recurrent apparition?

Never (we gather) were your hopes more fair,
Your _moral_ in a more superb condition;
Never did Victory's goal
Seem more adjacent to your sanguine soul.

HINDENBURG holds your British foes in baulk
Prior to trampling them to pulp like vermin;
Russia is at your mercy--you can walk
Through her to-morrow if you so determine;
There is no France to fight--
Your gallant WILLIE'S blade has "bled her white."

In England (as exposed by trusty spies)
We are reduced to starve on dog and thistles;
London, with all her forts, in ashes lies;
Through Scarboro's breached redoubts the sea-wind whistles:
And Margate, quite unmanned,
Would cause no trouble if you cared to land.

Roumania is your granary, whence you draw
For loyal turns a constant cornucopia;
Belgium, quiescent under Culture's law,
Serves as a type of Teutonised Utopia;
And, as for U.S.A.,
They're scheduled to arrive behind The Day.

Why, then, this talk of Peace? The victor's meed
Lies underneath your nose--why not continue?
Because humanity makes your bosom bleed;
So, though you have a giant's strength within you,
Your gentle heart would shrink
To use it like a giant--I don't think.

O.S.

* * * * *

MISTAKEN CHARITY.

Slip was riding a big chestnut mare down the street and humming an accompaniment to the tune she was playing with her bit. He pulled up when he saw me and, still humming, sat looking down at me.

"Stables in ten minutes," I said. "You're heading the wrong way."

"A dispensation, my lad," he replied. "I'm taking Miss Spangles up on the hill to get her warm--'tis a nipping and an eager air."

A man was coming across the road towards us. He was incredibly old and stiff and the dirt of many weeks was upon him. He stood before us and held out a battered yachting cap. "M'sieur," he said plaintively.

Miss Spangles cocked an ear and began to derange the surface of the road with a shapely foreleg. She was bored.

"Tell him," said Slip, "that I am poorer even than he is; that this beautiful horse which he admires so much is the property of the King of ENGLAND, and that my clothes are not yet paid for."

I passed this on.

"M'sieur," said the old man, holding the yachting cap a little nearer.

"Give him a piece of money to buy soap with," said Slip. "Come up, Topsy," and he trotted slowly on.

I gave the old man something for soap and went my way.

That night at dinner the Mandril, who loves argument better than life, said _a propos_ of nothing that any man who gave to a beggar was a public menace and little better than a felon. He was delighted to find every man's hand against him.

"RUSKIN," said Slip, "decrees that not only should one give to beggars, but that one should give kindly and deliberately and not as though the coin were red-hot."

The Mandril threw himself wildly into the argument. He told us dreadful stories of beggars and their ways--of advertisements he had seen in which the advertisers undertook to supply beggars with emaciated children at so much per day. Children with visible sores were in great demand, he said; nothing like a child to charm money from the pockets of passers-by, etc., etc. Presently he grew tired and changed the subject as rapidly as he had started it.

It was at lunch a few days later that the Mess waiter came in with a worried look on his face.

"There is a man at the door, Sir," he said. "Me and Burler can't make out what he wants, but he won't go away, not no'ow."

"What's he like?" I asked.

"Oh, he's old, Sir, and none too clean, and he's got a sack with him."

"Stop," said Slip. "Now, Tailer, think carefully before you answer my next question. Does he wear a yachting cap?"

"Yes, Sir," said Tailer, "that's it, Sir, 'e do wear a sort of sea 'at, Sir."

"This is very terrible," said Slip. "Are we his sole means of support? However--" and he drew a clean plate towards him and put a franc on it. The plate went slowly round the table and everyone subscribed. Stephen, who was immersed in a book on Mayflies, put in ten francs under the impression that he was subscribing towards the rent of the Mess. The Mandril appeared to have quite forgotten his dislike of beggars.

Tailer took the plate out and returned with it empty. "He's gone, Sir," he said.

"I'm glad for your sake, dear Mandril, that you have fallen in with our views," said Slip.

"What!" shouted the Mandril. "I quite forgot. A beggar!--the wretched impostor." He rushed to the window. An old man had rounded the corner of the house and was crossing the road on his way to a small cafe

opposite.

"He's going to drink it," screamed the Mandril; "battery will fire a salvo;" and he seized two oranges from the sideboard. The first was a perfect shot and hit the target between the shoulder-blades, and the second burst with fearful force against the wall of the cafe. The victim turned and looked about him in a dazed fashion and then disappeared.

That night I received a note from Monsieur Le Roux, hardware merchant and incidentally our landlord, thanking me for sixteen francs seventy-five centimes paid in advance to his workman, and asking me to name a day on which he could call to mend our broken stove.

* * * * *

"It is not a little pathetic to observe that a year ago, and even two years ago, The Daily Mail was urging the Government then in power to introduce compulsory rations. Thus on November 13, 1916, we said: 'Ministers should at once prepare the organisation for a system of bread tickets. It took the diligent Germans six months to get their system into action, and it will take our ... officials quite as long. They ought to be getting to work on it now, not putting it off.'--Daily Mail."

We dare not guess what was the suppressed adjective that The Daily Mail applied to "our officials."

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[Illustration: OUR UNEMPLOYED.

WAR OFFICE BRASS HAT (to Volunteer, "A" Class). "AND MIND YOU, IF YOU DON'T FULFIL YOUR OBLIGATIONS YOU'LL BE COURT-MARTIALLED!"

MR. PUNCH. "THAT WON'T WORRY HIM. HIS TROUBLE IS THAT, WHEN HE DOES FULFIL HIS OBLIGATIONS, YOU MAKE SO LITTLE USE OF HIM."]

* * * * *

SUGAR CONTROL.

"Good evening, Sir," said Lord RHONDDA'S minion (the man who does his dirty work), moistening his lips with a bit of pencil. "You were allocated one hundredweight of sugar for jam-making in respect of your soft fruit, I believe?"

"How did you guess?" I said. "I say, do tell me when the War's going to end. Just between ourselves, you know."

"This being the case," he went on (evidently trying to change the subject--no War Office secrets to be got out of him, you notice), "I must request you to show me your fruit-trees and also your jam cupboard."

"The latter," I said--for he had called just after tea--"is rather full at present, but doing nicely, thanks. As you observe, however, we think it wiser not to try to close the bottom button of the door."

"Perhaps your wife--" suggested the man tentatively.

"My wife does her best, of course. She often says, 'Dearest, a third pot of tea if you _like_, but I'm sure a third cup of jam wouldn't be good for you.' By the way, don't you want to see the tea-orchard too? The Cox's Orange Pekoes have done frightfully well this year--the new blend, you know; or should I say hybrid?"

At this moment my wife appeared, looking particularly charming in a _mousseline de soie aux fines herbes--anglice_, a sprigged muslin. I seized her hand and led her aside.

"Lord RHONDDA'S myrmidon is upon us!" I hissed. "'Tis for your husband's life, child. Hold the minion of the law in check--attract him; fascinate him; play him that little thing on the piano--you know, 'Tum-ti-tum'--while I slope off to the secret chamber, where my ancestor lay hid before--I mean after--the Battle of Worcester. By the way, I hope it's been dusted lately? Hush! if he sees us hold secret parlance I'm lost."

"Alas!" said my wife, "the secret chamber is where we keep the jam."

She smiled subtly at me and then winningly at the inspector as she turned towards him.

"Step this way, please," she continued.

I caught the idea at once and, blessing the quick wit of woman, followed in the victim's wake, ready to close the secret panel behind him and leave him to a lingering death.

My wife slid open the trap, turning with a triumphant smile as she did so, and I saw at once that the death of anyone shut up inside would be a lot more lingering than I had imagined, for the place seemed full of jam. I was surprised.

"Can I be going to eat all that?" I thought; and life seemed suddenly a very beautiful thing.

The inspector ran a hungry eye over it all, and if he had tried to clamber inside for a closer inspection I should not have given him the quick push I had planned. I should have held him back by his coat. My own way of testing the amount of jam which my wife had made was not for the likes of him.

"About a hundred-and-fifty pounds," he said at last.

"Just a little over," nodded my wife.

"I tell you," I whispered, "this chap knows everything." Then aloud, "I say, Sir, if you wouldn't mind putting me on to something for the Cotsall Selling Plate. Simply," I added hastily, "in the national interest, of course. Keeping up the breed of horses."

The inspector changed the subject again. "You were allocated one hundredweight of sugar, I believe, Ma'am," he said.

"Oh, yes," replied my wife. "But you see some of our jam is still sticking to the trees. Perhaps this gentleman would like to see the

orchard, Wenceslaus," she added, turning to me.

(Of course, you know, my Christian name isn't really Wenceslaus, but we authors enjoy so little privacy nowadays that I must really be allowed to leave it at that.)

So I took the inspector off to see the orchard, pausing on the way at the strawberry bed.

"This," I explained, "was to have made up quite fifty pounds of our allocation, but I'm afraid the crop failed this year. So that must account for any little discrepancy in the weight of fruit." I was very firm about this.

"Strawberries have done well enough elsewhere," said Nemesis suspiciously. "I'm surprised that yours should have failed."

"When I say 'failed,'" I explained, "I mean 'failed to get as far as the preserving pan.' I always retain an option on eating the crop fresh."

The inspector frowned and was going to make a note of this, so I tried to distract his attention.

"Do you know," I said, "a short time ago people persisted in mistaking me for a brother of the Duke of Cotsall?"

"Why?" he asked--rather rudely.

"Because of the strawberry mark on my upper lip. Ah, I think this is the orchard. There was a wealth of bloom here when I put in my application."

"Applications were not made till the fruit was on the trees," said Lord RHONDDA'S minion, sharply. "Ah, there's a nice lot of plums."

This seemed more satisfactory.

"Yes, isn't there?" I said enthusiastically. "Now I'm sure this makes up the amount all right."

"Plums are stone fruit," he observed stonily, "and you were allocated one hundredweight of sugar for your soft fruit, I believe?"

One really gets very tired of people who go on harping on the same thing over and over again.

"What about raspberries?" I inquired.

"Soft fruit, of course," said the inspector.

"But they contain stones," I urged. "Nasty little things wot gits into the 'ollers of your teeth somethink cruel, as cook says. Really, the Government ought to give us more careful instructions. And what about the apples? Are pips stones?"

"Apples are not used for jam-making," he retorted.

"What!" I exclaimed. "Tell that to the--to the Army in general!"

Plum-and-apple jam, my dear Sir! And that reminds me: a jam composed of half stone and half soft fruit--how do we stand in respect to that?"

"Well, Sir," said the inspector, closing his notebook grudgingly, "I don't think we need go into that. I think you've got just about the requisite amount of soft fruit for the one hundredweight of sugar which, I believe, you were allocated."

"There's still the rose garden," I said, "if you're not satisfied."

"Been turning that into an orchard, have you?" he asked. "Very patriotic, I'm sure."

"Well, I don't know," I said. "My wife wants to make _pot-pourri_ as usual, but what I say is, in these days--and with all that sugar--it would surely be more patriotic (as you say) to make _fleurs de Nice._"

"It would be more patriotic perhaps," observed Lord RHONDDA'S minion sententiously, "not to make jam at all."

"Ah!" I said. "Have a glass of beer before you go."

W. B.

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[Illustration: UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE.

Chorus. "HERE SHALL HE SEE
NO ENEMY
BUT WINTER AND ROUGH WEATHER."]

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[Illustration: _Taxi-driver (who has forced lady-driver on to the pavement). _ "NOW, THEN, IF YOU WANT TO LOOK IN THE SHOP WINDOWS WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A DAY OFF?"]

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Headline in _The Yorkshire Daily Observer_:--

"KAISER'S 1904 PLOTS"

No doubt there were quite as many as that, but we should like to know how our contemporary arrives at the exact number.

* * * * *

AN EXTRAORDINARY DAY.

1. A Staff Officer came back from the line without having had a narrow escape.
2. A General visited the line and expressed unqualified approval of everything he saw.
3. A Quartermaster-Sergeant put _all_ the contents of the rum-jar into

the tea.

4. A sniper fired at a Hun and reported a miss.

5. A bombing-party threw bombs into a sap without reporting "shrieks and groans were heard, and it is thought that many casualties were inflicted."

6. A Sergeant-Major complimented a new squad of recruits.

7. Somebody read an Intelligence Summary.

8. A very high official fired the first shot to open the new rifle-range and failed to hit the bull.

NOTE--(a) The Marker was not court-martialled for spreading alarm and despondency in His Majesty's forces; but

(b) The quality of mercy was fearfully strained.

9. A bombing-class came back from practice without a single casualty.

10. A Subaltern got leave on compassionate grounds. He wanted to be married.

11. A Corps Commander was punctual at an inspection. And

12. It did not rain on the day of the offensive.

Truly an extraordinary day. Shall we ever live to see it, I wonder?

* * * * *

MORE SEX PROBLEMS

"For Sale.--Dark red Shorthorn Bulls, from two years downwards, bred to milk for thirty years."--_Farmer's Weekly_.

"For Sale by Auction, one Mare Colt."--_Kent and Sussex Courier_.

"Then again the cockerel is a summer layer."--_Irish Farming World_.

* * * * *

"Sir Godfrey Baring, the sitting Liberal member, is not standing again."--_Evening Paper_.

If he's not going to sit or stand, he'll have to take it lying down.

* * * * *

A Venetian boy-scout on the Lido
Had sighted a hostile torpedo,
So he cried, "Don't suppose
You can blow up the Doge;
You must do without him--as we do."

* * * * *

"WEST OF ENGLAND.--To be Sold, a perfect gentleman's Residence, in faultless condition and all modern improvements, and a pedigree Stock Farm of 150 acres adjoining, with possession."--_Daily Paper_.

We hope the pedigree of the perfect gentleman is included as well as that of the stock farm.

* * * * *

PETHERTON AND THE RAG AUCTION.

A letter I received last Friday gave me one of those welcome excuses to get into closer touch with my neighbour, Petherton, than our daily proximity might seem to connote. I wrote to him thus:--

DEAR MR. PETHERTON,--Miss Gore-Langley has written to me to say that she is getting up a Rag Auction on behalf of the Belgian Relief Fund, and not knowing you personally, and having probably heard that I am connected by ties of kinship with you, she asked me to approach you on the subject of any old clothes you may have to spare in such a cause.

Of course I'm not suggesting you should allow yourself to be denuded in the cause (like Lady GODIVA), but I daresay you have some odds and ends stowed away that you would contribute; for instance, that delightful old topper that you were wont to go to church in before the War, and that used to cause a titter among the choir--can't you get the moths to let you have it? Neckties, again. Where are the tartans of '71? Surely there may be some bonny stragglers left in your tie-bins. And who fears to talk of '98 and its fancy waistcoats? All rancour about them has passed away, and if you have any ring-straked or spotted survivors, no doubt they would fetch something in a good cause. I hope you will see what you can do for

Yours very truly,

HENRY J. FORDYCE.

Petherton's reply was brief. He wrote:--

SIR--Had Miss Gore-Langley chosen a better channel for the conveyance of her wishes I should have been only too pleased to do what I could to help. As it is, I do not care to have anything to do with the affair.

Yours faithfully,

FREDERICK PETHERTON.

But he was better than his word, as I soon discovered. So I wrote:--

DEAR PETHERTON,--I have had such a treat to-day. I took one or two things across to Miss Gore-Langley, who was unpacking your noble contributions when I arrived. Talk about family histories; your parcel spoke volumes.

I was frightfully interested in that brown bowler with the flat brim, and those jam-pot collars. Parting with them must have been such sweet sorrow.

I feel like bidding for some of your things, among which I also noted an elegantly-worked pair of braces. With a little grafting on to the remains of those I am now wearing, the result should be something really serviceable. I don't mind confessing to you that I simply can't bring my mind to buying any new wearing apparel just now. I'd like the bowler too. It should help to keep the birds from my vegetables, and incidentally the wolf from the door. And seeing it fluttering in the breeze you would have a continual reminder of your own salad days.

Surely the priceless family portrait in the Oxford oak frame got into the parcel by mistake. I am expecting to acquire that for a song, as it cannot be of interest except to one of the family, and I should be glad to number it among my heirlooms.

Miss G.-L. is awfully braced with the haul, and asked me to thank you, which is one of my objects in writing this.

Yours sincerely,

HARRY FORDYCE.

Petherton was breathing hard by this time, and let drive with:--

SIR,--It is like your confounded impertinence to overhaul the few things I sent to Miss Gore-Langley, and had I known that you would have had the opportunity of seeing what my wife insisted on sending I should certainly not have permitted their despatch.

I have already told you what I think of your ridiculous claims to kinship with my family, and shall undoubtedly try to thwart any impudent attempts you may make to acquire my discarded belongings. The photograph you mention was of course accidentally included in the parcel, and I am sending for it.

Yours faithfully,

FREDERICK PETHERTON.

In the cause of charity I rushed over to the Dower House, and pointed out to Miss Gore-Langley how she might swell the proceeds of the sale. I then wrote thus to Petherton:--

DEAR OLD MAN,--Thanks for your jolly letter. I'm sorry to tell you that Miss G.-L. holds very strong views on the subject of charitable donations, and you will have to go and bid for anything you want back. I'm very keen on that photograph, if only for the sake of your pose and the elastic-side boots you affected at that period. Everyone here is quite excited at the idea of having Cousin Fred's portrait among the family likenesses in the dining-room, and its particular place on the wall is practically decided upon.

I shall probably let the braces go if necessary, but I shall contest the ownership of the bowler up to a point.

Why not have your revenge by buying one or two of my things? There is a choice pair of cotton socks, marked T.W., that I once got from the laundry by mistake; they are much too large for me, but should fit you nicely. There's a footbath too. It leaks a bit, but your scientific knowledge will enable you to put it right. It's a grand thing to have in the house, in case of a sudden rush of blood to the head.

Cheerio!

Yours ever,

HARRY.

Petherton simply replied:--

SIR,--It is, I know, absolutely useless to make an appeal to you, and I shall simply outbid you for the portrait if possible; if not, I shall adopt other measures to prevent your enjoying your ill-mannered triumph.

Yours faithfully,

F. PETHERTON.

The Auction was held last Wednesday. I didn't attend it, but got Miss Gore-Langley to run up the price of the portrait as far as seemed safe, on my behalf, which resulted in Mrs. Petherton getting it for L5 15s. I got the hat, but Mrs. Petherton outbid my agent for the braces.

DEAR FREDDY (I wrote), Wasn't it a roaring success--the Auction, I mean? I didn't manage to attend, but have heard glowing accounts from its promoter.

The most insignificant things, I hear, went for big prices; one patriotic lady, I'm told, even going to L5 15s. for a faded photograph of a veteran in the clothes of a most uninteresting sartorial period. It was in a cheap wooden frame, of a pattern that is quite out of the movement. Fancy, L5 15s.!

Did you buy anything?

In haste,

Yours, H.

If you have any stout safety-pins, lend me a couple, old boy. I failed to secure the braces. They fetched 1s. 9d., which was greatly in excess of their intrinsic value.

There has been no reply from Petherton to date.

* * * * *

JOURNALISTIC CANDOUR.

"Mr. Wells has no master in controversy with ordinary mortals, but I would seriously warn him that arguing with the 'Morning

Post' leads after a certain point to softening of the brain."--" _Diarist" in "The Westminster Gazette_."

We have always taken a painful interest in _The Westminster's_ quarrels with _The Morning Post_.

* * * * *

"In 1914-15 there was for the first time a surplus of cereals of about 27,475 tons produced in Egypt."--_Times_.

For the first time? Shade of JOSEPH!

* * * * *

"A Young Lady is desirous of CHANGE. Has wholesale and retail military experience. Also knowledge of practical."--_Daily Telegraph_.

Now, then, HAIG.

* * * * *

[Illustration: DOING THEIR BIT.]

* * * * *

BEASTS ROYAL.

I.

QUEEN HATSHEPSU'S APE.

B.C. 1491.

Now from the land of Punt the galleys come,
HATSHEPSU'S, sent by Amen-Ra and her
To bring from God's own land the gold and myrrh,
The ivory, the incense and the gum;
The greyhound, anxious-eyed, with ear of silk,
The little ape, with whiskers white as milk,
And the enamelled peacock come with them.

The little ape sits on HATSHEPSU'S chair,
And with a solemn and ironic eye
He sees TAHUTMES strap the balsamed hair
Unto his royal chin and wonders why;
He sees the stewards and chamberlains bow down,
Plays with the asp upon HATSHEPSU'S crown,
And thinks, "A goodly land, this land of Khem!"

The little ape sits on HATSHEPSU'S knee
While the great lotus-fans move to and fro;
Outside along the Nile the galleys go
And the Phoenician rowers seek the sea;
Outside the masons carve TAHUTMES' chin,
Tipped with the beard of Ra, and lo, within--
The ape, derisive and ineffable.

The little ape from Punt sits there beside
TAHUTMES and HATSHEPSU on their throne,
Dissembling courteously his inward pride
When the great men of Egypt, one by one,
Their oiled and shaven heads before him bend,
And thinking, "I was born unto this end;
I am the King they honour. It is well."

* * * * *

THE CLINCHOPHONE.

["WANTED.--Loud gramophone (second-hand) for reprisals."--_Advt.
in "The Times."_]

It is just to meet such pressing demands as this that the Gramophobia
Company have introduced their remarkable instrument or weapon,
described as The Clinchophone. No home is complete without it.

It is supplied with little oil bath, B.S.A. fittings and kick start.

A child can set it in motion, but nothing on earth will stop it until
its object is achieved and there is peace with honour.

Installed in a neighbourhood bristling with pianos, amateur singers,
gramophones, and other grind boxes it saves its cost in doctors'
bills.

It is fatal at fifty yards, and there has been nothing like it since
the "Tanks." It can do almost everything except stop before its time.

Read the following testimonials:--

"GENTLEMEN,--While the grand piano next door was playing last
evening I pressed the button of The Clinchophone. The piano
immediately sat back on its haunches, gibbered and then fell
on the player."

"DEAR SIR,--At the first trial of my new Clinchophone my
neighbour's gramophone rushed out of the house and has not been
heard of since."

"SAVED" says: "Last night the _basso profundo_ two doors away
started singing, 'Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep.' He sang two
bars and then crawled round to my house on his hands and knees and
collapsed on the doorstep with the word 'Kamerad!' on his lips."

* * * * *

OUR STYLISTS.

"The look from his eyes, the ashen colour of his face, the passion
in his voice, mute though it was, frightened and bewildered
her."--_Story in "Home Notes."_

* * * * *

[Illustration: "DEARIE ME, NOW, I SHOULDN'T HA' THOUGHT THEY GIVES YOU
ENOUGH MONEY IN THE ARMY TO FILL ALL THEM THERE LITTLE PURSES."]

* * * * *

PATROLS.

The Scout Officer soliloquises:--

The lights begin to leap along the lines,
Leap up and hang and swoop and sputter out;
A bullet hits a wiring-post and whines;
I wish to Heaven that I was not a Scout!

Time was (in Dorsetshire) I loved the trade;
Far other is this battle in the waste,
Wherein, each night, though not of course afraid,
I wriggle round with ill-concealed distaste,

Where who can say what menace is not nigh,
What ambushed foe, what unexploded crump,
And the glad worm, aspiring to the sky,
Emerges suddenly and makes you jump.

Where either all is still, so still one feels
That something huge must presently explode,
And back, far back, is heard the noise of wheels
From Prussian waggons on the Douai road;

And flares shoot upward with a startling hiss
And fall, and flame intolerably close,
So that it seems no living man could miss--
How huge my head must look, my legs how gross!--

Or the live air is full of droning hums
And cracking whips and whispering snakes of fire,
And a loud buzz of conversation comes
From Simpson's party putting out some wire.

Or else--as when some soloist is done
And the hushed orchestra may now begin--
A sudden rage inflames the placid Hun
And scouts lie naked in a world of din.

The sullen bomb dissolves in singing shapes;
The whizz-bang jostles it--too fast to flee;
Machine-guns chatter like demented apes--
And, goodness, can it _all_ be meant for me?

It can and is. And such are small affairs
Compared with Tompkins and his Lewis gun,
Or eager folk who play about with flares,
And, like as not, mistake me for a Hun;

Compared with when some gunner, having dined,
To show his guest the glories of his art
'Poops off a round or two,' which burst behind,
But fail to drown the beating of my heart

Sweet to all soldiers is the rearward view;
To infanters how grand the gunners' case!

And I suppose men pine at G.H.Q.
For the rich ease of people at the Base.

To me is sweet this mean and noisome ditch,
When on my belly I must issue out
Into the night, inscrutable as pitch--
I wish to Heaven that I was not a Scout!

A. P. H.

* * * * *

"Good Donkey for Sale: musical."--_Louth Advertiser_.

Sings "The Vicar of Bray."

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE INSEPARABLE.

THE KAISER (_to his People_). "DO NOT LISTEN TO THOSE WHO WOULD SOW
DISSENSION BETWEEN US. _I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU_."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: AFTER THE INSPECTION.

Orderly (to Colonel) . "CAN I GET YOU A TAXI, SIR?"

Colonel . "YES, PLEASE, DEAR."]

* * * * *

A LONDON MYSTERY SOLVED.

Everyone must have observed a phenomenon of the London streets which
becomes continually more noticeable. And not only must they have
observed it, but have suffered from it.

At one time the omnibuses, which are rapidly becoming the only means
of street transport for human beings, had regular stopping-places at
the corner's of streets, at Piccadilly Circus, at Oxford Circus, and
so forth.

The corner was the accepted spot; the crowds gathered there, and the
omnibus, stopping there, emptied and refilled. But there has been a
gradual tendency towards the abandonment of the corners, causing the
omnibuses to pull up farther and farther from them, so that it seems
almost as if a time may come when, instead of Piccadilly Circus, for
example, the stopping-place for west-bound omnibuses will be St.
James's church.

Everyone, as I say, must have noticed this change in traffic habits,
and most people believe that police regulations are at the bottom of
it.

But I know better; and the reason why I know better is a little
conversation I have had with a driver.

It was during one of the finest efforts towards depressing dampness that even this Summer has put up, and the driver dripped. A great crowd of miserable mortals awaited his omnibus at a certain recognised halt, all desperately anxious for a seat or even standing room; but these he disregarded and carefully urged the vehicle on for another twenty yards.

While the wretched people were running along the pavement to begin their struggle for a place, I asked him why he had put them to all that trouble.

"I suppose it's the police," I said, to make it easier for him.

"Not as I know of," he replied.

"But why not stop where the public expect you to?" I asked.

"Why?" he inquired.

"Well, it would be more reasonable, more helpful," I suggested.

"Who wants to help or be reasonable?" he replied. "Here, look at me. I'm driving this bus for hours and hours every day. I'm cold and wet. I'm putting on the brakes from morning to night, saving people's silly lives, until I'm sick of the sight of them. If you was to drive a motor bus in London you'd want a little amusement now and then, too."

"So it's just for entertainment that you dodge about over the stopping-places and keep changing them?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

* * * * *

ANOTHER IMPENDING APOLOGY.

"I was sorry to hear that Lady Diana had met with a nasty motor accident; but had escaped with only slight injuries."--_Mrs. Gossip in "The Daily Sketch."_

* * * * *

"STOP-PRESS NEWS.

"GERMAN OFFICIAL.

"Also ran: Julian, The Vizier, Siller and Pennant."--_Manchester Evening Chronicle_.

It is not often that the German official communiques admit defeat.

* * * * *

"The Poor's Piece appears to be a sort of No Man's Land, and ever since the extinction of Vestrydom has been within the parochial administrative parvenu of the Urban District Council."--_Essex Paper_.

Who is this municipal upstart?

* * * * *

A SIGNIFICANT STEP.

The Evening Post's Washington correspondent states: "Mr. Lloyd George's speech at Glasgow is a significant step in the process of winning the war by diplomatic strategy."--Sydney Daily Telegraph.

There's many a slip 'twixt the dip and the lip; but "diplomatic" is not a bad word.

* * * * *

THE MUD LARKS.

Nobody out here seems exactly infatuated with the politicians nowadays. The Front Trenches have about as much use for the Front Benches as a big-game hunter for mosquitoes. The bayonet professor indicates his row of dummies and says to his lads, "Just imagine they are Cabinet Ministers--go!" and in a clock-tick the heavens are raining shreds of sacking and particles of straw. The demon bomber fancies some prominent Parliamentarian is lurking in the opposite sap, grits his teeth, and gets an extra five yards into his bowling.

But I am not entirely of the vulgar opinion. The finished politician may not be a subject for odes, but a political education is a great asset to any man. Our Mess President, William, once assisted a friend to lose a parliamentary election, and his experience has been invaluable to us. The moment we are tired of fighting and want billets, the Squadron sits down where it is and the Skipper passes the word along for William. William dusts his boots, adjusts his tie and heads for the most prepossessing farm in sight. Arrived there he takes off his hat to the dog, pats the pig, asks the cow after the calf, salutes the farmer, curtseys to the farmeress, then turning to the inevitable baby, exclaims in the language of the country, "Mong Jew, kell jolly ong-fong" (Gosh, what a topping kid!), and bending tenderly over it imprints a lingering kiss upon its indiarubber features and wins the freedom of the farm. The Mess may make use of the kitchen; the spare bed is at the Skipper's disposal; the cow will move up and make room for the First Mate; the pig will be only too happy to welcome the Subalterns to its modest abode.

Ordinary billeting officers stand no chance against our William and his political education. "That fellow," I heard one disgruntled competitor remark of him, "would hug the Devil for a knob of coke." Once only did he meet his match, and a battle of Titans resulted.

In pursuit of his business he entered a certain farm-house, to find the baby already in possession of another officer, a heavy red creature with a monocle, who was rocking the infant's cradle seventy-five revolutions per minute and making dulcet noises on a moustache comb.

William's heart fell to his field boots; he recognised the red creature's markings immediately. This was another politician; no bloodless victory would be his; fur would fly first, powder burn--Wow!

The red person must have tumbled to William as well, for he increased the revolutions to one hundred and forty per minute and broke into a shrill lullaby of his own impromptu composition:--

"Go to sleep, Mummy's liddle Did-ums;
Go to sleep, Daddy's liddle Thing-ma-jig."

Nevertheless this did not baffle our William. He approached from a flank, deftly twitched the infant out of its cradle by the scruff of its neck, and commenced to plaster it with tender kisses. However the red man tailed it as it went past and hung on, kissing any bits he could reach. When the mother reappeared they were worrying the baby between them as a couple of hound puppies worry the hind leg of a cub. She beat them faithfully with a broom and hove both of them out into the wide wet world, and we all slept in a bog that night, and William was much abused and loathed. But that was his only failure.

If getting billets is William's job, getting rid of them is the Babe's affair. William, like myself, has far too great a mastery of the patois to handle delicate situations with success. For instance, when the fanner approaches me with tidings that my troopers have burnt two ploughshares and a crowbar and my troop horses have masticated a brick wall I engage him in palaver, with the result that we eventually part, I under the impression that the incident is closed, and he under the impression that I have promised to buy him a new farm. This leads to all sorts of international complications.

The Babe, on the other hand, regards a knowledge of French as immoral and only knows enough of it to order himself a drink. He is also gifted with a slight stutter, which under the stress of a foreign language becomes chronic. So when we evacuate a billet William furnishes the Babe with enough money to compensate the farmer for all damages we have not committed, and then effaces himself. Donning a bright smile the Babe approaches the farmer and presses the lucre into his honest palm.

"Hi," says the worthy fellow, "what is this, then? One hundred francs! Where is the seventy-four francs, six centimes for the fleas your dog stole? The two hundred francs, three centimes for the indigestion your rations gave my pig? The eight thousand and ninety-nine francs, five centimes insurance money I should have collected if your brigands had not stopped my barn from burning?--and all the other little damages, three million, eight hundred thousand and forty-four francs, one centime in all--where is it, hein?"

"Ec-c-coutez une moment," the Babe begins, "Jer p-p-poovay expliquay tut--tut--tut--tut--sh-sh-shiss--" says he, loosening his stammer at rapid fire, popping and hissing, rushing and hitching like a red-hot machine-gun with a siphon attachment. In five minutes the farmer is white in the face and imploring the Babe to let by-gones be by-gones. "N-n-not a b-bit of it, old t-top," says the Babe. "Jer p-p-poovay exp-p-pliquay b-b-bub-bub-bub--" and away it goes again like a combined steam-riveter and shower-bath, like the water coming down at Lodore. No farmer however hardy has been known to stand more than twenty minutes of this. A quarter-of-an-hour usually sees him bolting and barring himself into the cellar, with the Babe blowing him kisses of fond farewell through the keyhole.

We are billeted on a farm at the present moment. The Skipper occupies

the best bed; the rest of us are doing the _al fresco_ touch in tents and bivouacs scattered about the surrounding landscape. We are on very intimate terms with the genial farmyard folk. Every morning I awake to find half-a-dozen hens and their gentleman-friend roosting along my anatomy. One of the hens laid an egg in my ear this morning. William says she mistook it for her nest, but I take it the hen, as an honest bird, was merely paying rent for the roost.

The Babe turned up at breakfast this morning wearing only half a moustache. He said a goat had browsed off the other half while he slept. The poor beast has been having fits of giggles ever since--a moustache must be very ticklish to digest.

Yesterday MacTavish, while engaged in taking his tub in the open, noticed that his bath-water was mysteriously sinking lower and lower. Turning round to investigate the cause of the phenomenon he beheld a gentle milch privily sucking it up behind, his back. There was a strong flavour of Coal Tar soap in the _cafe au lait_ to-day.

This morning at dawn I was aroused by a cold foot pawing at my face. Blinking awake, I observed Albert Edward in rosy pyjamas capering beside my bed. "Show a leg, quick," he whispered. "Rouse out, and Uncle will show boysey pretty picture."

Brushing aside the coverlet of fowl I followed him tip-toe across the dewy mead to the tarpaulin which he and MacTavish call "home."

Albert Edward lifted a flap and signed me to peep within. It was, as he had promised, a pretty picture.

At the foot of our MacTavish's mattress, under a spare blanket lifted from that warrior in his sleep, lay a large pink pig. Both were occupied in peaceful and stertorous repose.

"Heads of Angels, by Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS," breathed Albert Edward in my ear.

PATLANDER.

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[Illustration: _Old Lady from the Country_. "I'VE ASKED FOUR PORTERS, AND THEY ALL TELL ME DIFFERENT."

Porter. "WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT, MISSUS, IF YER ASKS FOUR DIFFERENT PORTERS?"]

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COMMERCIAL CANDOUR.

"1913 Touring Ford, in splendid condition, fitted with new coils, parafin vaporiser; has been little use."--_Irish Times_.

* * * * *

THE TWO LETTERS.

I had as usual two letters to write. There are always two and often

twenty, but this morning there were two only. One was to my old friend, A., who had just gone into bankruptcy; the other was to my young friend, B., whose sporting efforts in France have won him very rapid promotion. He was just bringing his new captain's stars to England on a few days' leave.

A. is a somewhat austere and melancholy man; B. is just as different as you can imagine.

I wrote thus. First to A.--

"MY DEAR MAN,--I am sorry to hear your bad news. The times are sufficiently depressing without such a blow as this having to fall on you. I am certain that you don't deserve such treatment, and you have all my sympathy. As for the disgrace--there is none. You are simply a victim of the War. If there is anything I can do to cheer you up, let me know.

"I am, yours, etc.,--."

To B. I wrote thus:--

"DEAR OLD TOP,--This is the best news I have heard for a long time. I always knew you would bring it off soon; but I wasn't prepared for anything quite so sudden. There is, of course, only one thing to do when a man fulfils his destiny in this way. The custom is immemorial, and, war or no war, we must crack a bottle. Tell me where you would like to dine, and when, and I'll fix it up, and some jolly show afterwards. Occasions like This must be celebrated.

"I am, yours, etc.,--."

So far it is a somewhat feeble narrative, nor has it any point beyond the circumstance that I posted the letters in the wrong envelopes.

* * * * *

WHAT TO DO WITH OUR CRITICS.

"The Ministry of Munitions has for disposal approximately 75 TONS WEEKLY of PRESS MUD."--_Advt. in "The Engineer."_

* * * * *

"In consequence of the epidemic at the Royal Naval College, Osborne, in the spring of this year, it has been decided to reduce the number of cadets at the College from 500 to 300. This reduction will not affect the numbers to be entered, as a larger number of cadets will be accommodated at Dartmouth Colliery."--_Scotsman_.

Where they will be trained, we suppose, as mine-sweepers.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE REDUCED TRAIN SERVICE AT SLOWGRAVE.

"NO NEED TO IDLE YOUR TIME AWAY. JUST GET A SHEET OF EMERY-PAPER AND

TAKE THE RUST OFF O' THEM RAILS."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: TRIALS OF A CAMOUFLAGE OFFICER.

Sergeant-Major. "BEG PARDON, SIR, I WAS TO ASK YOU IF YOU'D STEP UP TO THE BATTERY, SIR."

Camouflage Officer. "WHAT'S THE MATTER?"

Sergeant-Major. "IT'S THOSE PAINTED GRASS SCREENS, SIR. THE MULES HAVE EATEN THEM.]"

* * * * *

"GOG."

(_TO THE AUTHOR OF "JONG," PUNCH, SEPTEMBER 19TH._)

O singer sublime of Beeyah-byyah-bunniga-nelliga-jong,
It isn't envy, the green and yellow,
That makes me take up my lyre, old fellow,
And burst with a fierce cacophonous bellow
Across the path of your song.
I want to propose another name,
Unknown to you and unknown to fame;
It is like the sound of a hand-sawn log
Or the hostile hark of a husky dog:
Chagogagog-munchogagog-chabun-agungamog!

This cracker of jaws is a lake, I'm told,
A lake in the U.S.A.,
And first the Indians, the red sort, owned it,
But later to Uncle Sam they loaned it,
Who afterwards made no bones, but boned it
In the fine Autolycus way;
And though life wasn't a matter vital
He kept with the lake its rasping title,
Which recalls the croak of an amorous frog
Or a siren heard in an ocean fog:
Chagogagog-munchogagog-chabun-agungamog!

* * * * *

THE BUTTERFLY.

"Two thousand cabbage butterflies have been captured by Huntingdon school-children, but more stern measures for their capture must be introduced."--_Evening Paper_.

In order to capture the cabbage butterfly the first thing to do is to interest the creature by giving it a cabbage-leaf to play with. Then take the kitchen-chopper in the right hand, lift it high and bring it down with a crash on the third vertebra. Few butterflies repeat any offence after this is severed.

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THE INVINCIBLE ARGENTINE.

"There is a most useful Navy, including two or three super-Dreadnoughts, and the best-bred racehorses in the world."--_Irish Times_.

* * * * *

"Further instructions as regards the allowance to householders which have increased in size will be issued later. The issue of temporary cards is under consideration."--_Food Control Notice in "Liverpool Daily Post."_

"Who have increased in size" would be better grammar and just as good sense.

* * * * *

A LESSON FOR THE NATIONAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT.

Words under a picture in _The Daily Mail_ :--

"Chiropodists are attending to the feet of America's new army, and dentists are paying attention to the teeth."

Whereas in the British Army it might so easily have been the other way round.

* * * * *

OUR STYLISTS AGAIN.

From _The Tatler_ on the subject of the little Stork, which is the badge of Capt. Guynemer's squadron:--

"What emblem could, indeed, be more appropriate as well as beautiful as the bird which is the symbol of Alsace?"

* * * * *

"Wanted, Girls, age 18 to 22, for Jam Jars."--_Manchester Evening Chronicle_.

As a substitute for sugar, we presume; but wouldn't "Sweet Seventeen" be even more suitable?

* * * * *

"In almost every part of England and Wales there are now some 200,000 women who are doing a real national work on the land."--_Mr. PROTHERO'S letter in "The Daily Telegraph."_

If there are 200,000 women in almost every part of England there can't be much chance for the men, particularly the single men.

* * * * *

THE WAR DOG.

Never confuse the "War dog" with the "dog of War." The War dog is a direct product of the War, but you never yet met him collecting for a hospital, or succouring the wounded, or assisting the police, or hauling a mitrailleuse if he could help it. Yet the War dog worships the Army; it represents a square meal and a "cushy" bed. The new draft takes him for a mascot; but the old hand knows him better. A shameless blend of petty larceny, mendacity, fleas, gourmandism, dirt and unequalled plausibility.

You meet the War dog on some endless road. He will probably be wearing round his neck a piece of dirty card analogous to the eye patch and drooping Inverness cape of some mendicants nearer home--a "property" in fact, and put there by himself, the writer is convinced, although he has not yet actually caught the War dog dressing for the part. The War dog on the road has "spotted" you long before you have seen him, and he has marked you for his own. You become conscious of a piteous whine just behind you and, turning, see the War dog, his eyes filled with tears of entreaty, crawling towards you on his stomach. He advances inch by inch, and on being encouraged with comfortable words of invitation the parasite wriggles his lean body (it is trained to look lean--actually it is well padded with stolen food from officers' kitchens) up to your feet, and, selecting a puddle in token of his deep humility, rolls upon his back and smiles tearfully up at you from between his grimy fore-paws. Then the game goes forward merrily as per schedule.

Of course you take him back to camp and give him your last piece of Blighty cake. You introduce your protege--always crawling on his stomach--to the cook; swear to the dog's immaculate conduct; beg a trifle of straw from the transport, and in short see him comfortably settled for the night.

The War dog has you now well beneath his paws. He joins the Mess and listens with an ill-concealed grin as each in turn boasts of the rat-catching powers of his dog at home. Then the War dog retreats hurriedly as a mouse appears; and you, his victim, apologise for him and explain how he has been shaken by adversity and what a noble creature a few days of good food and kind treatment will make of him. The rest is simple. The War dog (with his court) invades your bed and home parcels, and brings you into disrepute with all and sundry--especially the Cook and Quarter. He is fought and soundly thrashed by the regimental mascot (half his size), and the battalion wit composes limericks about you and your pet.

Then suddenly your War dog disappears. You are just beginning to live him down--having moved into another area--when you espy him from the street, the centre of a noisy group in a not too reputable wine-shop. But the War dog never recognises you. He has finished with you--grown tired of you, in fact (he rarely "works" the same victim for more than three weeks). You and your battalion are to him as it were a bone picked clean; and you depart with a prayer that he may die a stray's death at the hands of the Military Police.

One month travelling snugly in a G.S. waggon (you never catch him marching like an honest mascot), the next "swinging the lead" in some warm dug-out--there are few moves on the board of the great War game that he does not know. He will patronise a score of regiments in three months; travel from one end of the Western Front to the other and back again, taking care never to attempt to renew an old acquaintance.

Occasionally he makes the mistake of running across a mitrailleuse battery with its dog-teams needing reinforcements, or tries to billet himself on a military pigeon-loft and meets a violent death. But whatever fortune may bring him we can confidently assert that he is much too fly to chance his luck across the border and into the land where the sausage-machines guard the secret of perpetual motion.

* * * * *

IN WILD WALES.

Dwarfing the town that to the hillside clings
On terraced slopes, the castle, nobly planned
And noble in its ruined greatness, flings
Its double challenge to the sea and land.

Oh, if the ancient spirit of the place
Could win free utterance in articulate tones,
What tales to hearten and inspire and brace
Would issue from these grey and lichened stones!

Once manned and held by paladin and peer,
Now tenanted by jackdaws, bats and owls,
Save when the casual tourist through its drear
And grass-grown courts disconsolately prowls.

Once famous as the scene of Border fights,
Now watching, in the greatest war of all,
Old men, with their bilingual acolytes,
Beating, outside its gates, a little ball;

While on the crumbling battlements on high,
Where mail-clad men-at-arms kept watch and ward,
Adventurous sheep amaze the curious eye
Instead of grazing on the level sward.

But though such incongruities may jar
The sense of fitness in a mind fastidious,
Modernity has wholly failed to mar
The face of Nature here, or make it hideous.

Inland the amphitheatre of hills
Sweeps round with Snowdon as their central crest,
And murmurs of innumerable rills
Blend with the heaving of the ocean's breast.

Already Autumn's fiery finger laid
On heath and marsh and woodland far and wide
In all their gorgeous pageantry has arrayed
The tranquil beauties of the countryside.

Here every prospect pleases, and the spot,
Unspoilt, unvulgarised by man, remains,
Thanks largely to a System which has not
Accelerated or improved its trains.

Yet even here, amid untroubled ways,
Far from the city's fevered, tainted breath,
Yon distant plume of yellow smoke betrays

The ceaseless labours of the mills of death.

* * * * *

"William Arthur Fletcher, ship's apprentice, of South Shields, was remanded for a week on a charge of being absent from his ship. His captain alleged that he had found Fletcher asleep on the bridge."--_Daily Dispatch_.

It must have been his mind that was absent.

* * * * *

"At St. Peter's, Vere Street, where he is going to preach from the 30th of this month to the end of this year, the Rev. R.J. Campbell will speak from the pulpit of Frederick Denison Maurice, like himself a convert to the Church of England ... To hear him was an experience never forgotten."--_Guardian_.

And this although MAURICE rarely preached for more than one month on end.

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[Illustration: MANNERS IN MACEDONIA.

LADIES FIRST.]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(_By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks_.)

I can't help thinking that _Gyp_, the central figure in Mr. JOHN GALSWORTHY'S new story, _Beyond_ (HEINEMANN), was unhappy in her encounters with the opposite sex. But if memory serves me this is an experience familiar to Mr. GALSWORTHY'S heroines. Men were always wanting to kiss _Gyp_, or to marry her, or both, and after a time kept going off and repeating the process with somebody else; so that one can't fairly be astonished if towards the end of the book her outlook had become rather cynical. The character who might have preserved her estimate of mankind in general, and the best and most sympathetically drawn figure in the book, is _Gyp's_ perfectly delightful old father, who throughout the conspicuous failure of her two unions, legitimate and other, retained his fine and chivalrous regard and unflinching care for a daughter who might well have been a thorn in the flesh of a conventional parent. But the relations of these two were never conventional. _Gyp_ had been herself a love-child, and the knowledge of this is shown very clearly in its influence upon their mutual attitude. As for her own affairs, these were, first--to her father's unbounded astonishment--marriage with a temperamental violinist, who ran rapidly down the scale from adoration of his own wife to intrigue with another's; second, clandestine relations with a man of her own race and breed, who loved her to idolatry, and within a few months was found embracing his cousin. Poor _Gyp_! I jest; but you will need no telling that for sincerity and beauty of writing here is a book that you cannot afford to miss. Sometimes I am a little uncertain what Mr. GALSWORTHY is driving at, but I never fail to admire his drive.

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Unless Mr. S.P.B. MAIS learns to curb his enthusiasms and to rid himself of certain prejudices he will be wantonly seeking trouble. Rebellion (GRANT RICHARDS) is in some respects a more thoughtful and promising book than Interlude, but it is marred by what can only be called the same narrow point of view. With everybody and everything modern Mr. MAIS shows an ardent sympathy, but if he is ever to give a comprehensive picture of life he must contrive to be more patient with the old-fashioned. Here his strong personality obtrudes itself too often, and he is inclined to forget that he is a novelist and not a preacher. I could imagine him throwing off a fine comminatory sermon from the text, "Cursed be he who does not admire the genius of Mr. COMPTON MACKENZIE." This homily is drawn from me with reluctance, because in the main I am a strong believer in Mr. MAIS, and (with his connivance) have every intention of retaining that attitude. With all its faults Rebellion remains gloriously distinct from the rubbish-heap of fiction by virtue of its intense sincerity and its frequent flashes of fine descriptive writing. The question of sex dominates it, and those of us who still think that such problems are merely sustenance for the prurient-minded may cast it impatiently aside. But others who like to watch a clever man feeling his way towards the light, and regard a novel as neither a bait nor a bauble, can be confidently advised to read it. They may be irritated, but they will be intrigued.

* * * * *

On the cover of One Woman's Hero (METHUEN) you will read that "This book has been designed to cheer and strengthen those for whom, from bereavement owing to the War, the days and nights are sometimes only a procession of sad and torturing visions." Which of course disarms criticism, other than what may be expressed in a question whether a book less exclusively preoccupied by the War might not more surely have attained this end. But again, of course, maybe it wouldn't. The tale (for all our pretendings) is not yet written that can actually bring oblivion to bereavement, so perhaps the next best thing is topical chatter of the bright and unsentimental kind with which SYBIL CAMPBELL LETHBRIDGE has filled her entertaining pages. Chatter is the only term for it, though it is quite good of its style; the form being a series of letters written to a friend by the young wife of a soldier at the front. Her neighbours, their households and dinners and affectations and courage, are what she writes about; especially do I commend her handling of the "Let us Forget and Forgive" tribe. To all such (and most of us know at least one) I should suggest the posting of a copy of One Woman's Hero, with the page turned down (an act permissible in so good a cause) at the report of the annihilation of one of these well-intentioned but infuriating philosophers. The combined logic and equity of this suggest that the Government might do worse than commandeer the services of Miss LETHBRIDGE as a dinner-table propagandist.

* * * * *

I think BEATRICE GRIMSHAW tortures overmuch her tough bronzed Australian hero, who "could fight his weight in wild cats," and her beautiful slender heroine, "daughter of castles, descendant of crusaders." First the twain fall desperately in love, and Edith,

the Catholic, discovers Ben to be an innocent divorce. Marriage impossible, they part. But it is apparently quite in order for her to marry, without loving, a cocoa king who drinks--anything but cocoa; which done, to add to the bitterness of the cup, Ben's wife is reported dead. Whereafter the king in a drunken fit poisons himself, and the widow, fearing to be suspect, flies with her big Ben to his secret Nobody's Island (HURST AND BLACKETT), off the New Guinea coast, where they live comfortably off ambergris. Eventually tracked down by the dead king's brother, who allows himself to be persuaded of Edith's innocence on what seems to me the most inadequate evidence, the lovers, after protracted mental agonies and physical dangers, are about to enjoy deserved peace when Ben's wife turns up again, necessitating further separation; till finally Edith, with a handsome babe and the news that after all Ben's first wife wasn't a wife at all, finds her way back to Nobody's Island. Now that does seem to be rather overdoing it. But I hasten to credit the writer with a very happy gift of description, which brings the Papuan forests and mountains (or something plausibly like them) vividly before the reader, while the characters, including a boy villain ingenuously bizarre, are amusing puppets capably manipulated.

* * * * *

Mrs. BARNES-GRUNDY possesses a wonderful supply of sprightly humour. Her Mad Month (HUTCHINSON) is funny without being flippant, and although the heroine is very naughty she is never naughty enough to shock her creator's unhyphenated namesake. Perhaps Charmian's exploits in escaping from a severe grandmother, and going unchaperoned to Harrogate (where a very pretty piece of philandering ensued), do not amount to much when seriously considered, but it is one of Mrs. BARNES-GRUNDY'S strong points that you cannot take her seriously. I am on her side all the time when she is giving me light comedy, but when she leaves that vein and bathes her heroine in tears I cannot conjure up any real sympathy. I never for a moment doubted that Charmian's lover, though reported as having "died from wounds," would turn up again. I am afraid the War is responsible for a great deal of rather obvious fiction.

* * * * *

Miss MARIE HARRISON has investigated the condition of Ireland, and in Dawn in Ireland (MELROSE) she presents the results of her studies. The book is inspired by a great deal of the right kind of enthusiasm, and the advice given is so excellent as to arouse the fear that it will not be taken. Yet Miss HARRISON is justified of her endeavours. She shows how often the English governors of Ireland have failed, in spite of the best intentions, only because they applied their remedy too late and thus, to their own great surprise, wasted the generosity of which they were perhaps too conscious. According to Miss HARRISON the gombeenman is the curse of Ireland, the serpent whose presence, if only he can be reduced to being an absentee, warrants us in regarding Ireland as a possible Eden. Miss HARRISON will please to take the preceding sentence as proving my entire sympathy with Irish modes of thought and expression and, generally, with Ireland. Against the gombeener (who is a shop-keeper running his business on the long-credit system) she invokes a vision of the blessings of co-operation. One of her heroes is Sir HORACE PLUNKETT, and, indeed, the work of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, over which he has presided, has been an unmingled benefit to Ireland. I heartily

endorse Miss HARRISON'S hope that "at no distant period all will be well with Ireland." Her book should certainly help towards this result.

* * * * *

Captain VERE SHORTT fell at Loos in September of 1915, and left twelve chapters of a story, _The Rod of the Snake_ (LANE), which his sister has finished and very capably finished; helped by the recollection of many intimate conversations about the plot and its development. It tells how young _Charlie Shandross_, bidding his preposterous soldier uncle be hanged, shook the stale dust of Ballybar off his feet, served three years in the C.M.R., and so prepared himself for the deadly adventure of the rod of the snake, the image of the ape, the Haytian attache and the sinister priestess of Voodoo rites--Paris its setting. I won't spoil your pleasure by giving the details away; I will only say it is all very splendidly incredible, but not unplausible, and the authors do take pains with their puzzles, as where the hero and his party find the secret spring of the panel in the vault by the blood tracks of their enemy, who has been thoughtfully wounded in the hand. A small point but significant; too many writers in this kind being given to whisking their favourites out of danger in the most arbitrary manner. A good railway book, of the sort you can confidently pass on to the soldiers' hospitals after reading it.

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[Illustration: THE LAST VISITOR AND THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.]

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