

# Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 153, Oct. 17, 1917

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

VOL. 153.

OCTOBER 17, 1917.

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## CHARIVARIA.

The mutiny of the German sailors at Kiel is now explained. They preferred death to another speech from the KAISER.

\*\*\*

A Constantinople poet has translated the plays of SHAKSPEARE into Turkish. The rendering is said to be faithful to the text, and it is assumed that a keen appreciation of Turkey's military necessities alone accounts for his reference to the "Swan of Avon" as the "Bulbul of Potsdam."

\*\*\*

The use of flour as an ingredient of sausages is now forbidden. Young sausages which have hitherto been fed on bread and milk must either be broken to bones or killed for the table.

\*\*\*

An optimist writes to express the hope that by this elimination of flour the dreadful secret of the sausage may be at last revealed.

\*\*\*

The German Government has created a Pulp Commission. We have always said they would be reduced to it in time.

\*\*\*

The King of SIAM'S royal yacht has been turned into a cargo boat. Reports that the Sacred White Elephant has been commandeered for use as a floating dock are still unconfirmed.

\*\*\*

For giving corn to pheasants a fine of ten pounds has been inflicted on a merchant of New York (Lincs.) The removal en bloc of this village from the mouth of the Hudson river to its present site should finally convince the sceptics of the magnitude of America's war effort.

\*\*\*

The Vacant Land Cultivation Society offers a prize of ten shillings for the heaviest potato. Some of our most notorious potato-tellers are expected to compete.

\*\*\*

The provision of steel helmets for the Metropolitan Police is all right so far as it goes, but the Force is still asking why it cannot be furnished with some protection for its other extremities.

\*\*\*

From China it is reported that an aboriginal priest now claiming the Throne has been accustomed to eat the flesh of tigers, wolves, leopards, &c., also the human heart. It is, however, only fair to our own restaurateurs to state that, though China is alleged to be on the eve of war, there is as yet no food-control in that country.

\*\*\*

An unusual scarcity of wasps is reported from various parts of the country. Nothing is being done about it.

\*\*\*

A calf has been sold for two thousand seven hundred guineas in Aberdeenshire. The plucky purchaser is understood to have had for some time past a craving for a veal cutlet.

\*\*\*

A new form of frightfulness is evidently being practised upon their guards by our interned Huns. "Some of them," says a contemporary, "purchase a hundred cigars with a portion of the one pound a day which is the miserable maximum they may spend on luxuries."

\*\*\*

"People who speak of suicide seldom do anything desperate," says a well-known mental expert. So that the KAISER'S threat to fight England to the death may be taken for what it is worth.

\*\*\*

An extraordinary meeting of German Reichstag Members has arrived at the decision that the Germans cannot hope for victory in the field. We see nothing extraordinary in this.

\*\*\*

Professor BERGEN was once described as "the well-known inventor and philanthropist." He still invents (his latest is a gas-thrower, reported by the Berliner Tageblatt to be "a veritable monster of destruction"), but has dropped the other job.

\*\*\*

A swallow-tail butterfly which escaped from the Zoo has been re-captured at Eastbourne. When caught it gave the policeman to understand that it would go quietly.

\*\*\*

Two men, we read, took twenty-two hours to chisel a hole through the three-foot flint concrete roof of the London Opera House. The report that they did this to avoid the Entertainment Tax has now been contradicted.

\*\*\*

"The American Winston Churchill," says The Daily Express, "has to plod through life without a middle name." We all have our little cross

to bear. Even the MINISTER OF MUNITIONS has to plod through life with the knowledge that there is another Winston Churchill loose about the world.

\*\*\*

It is proposed that Parliament shall sit from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., instead of from 3 to 11 P.M. We do not care for this crude attempt to mix business with politics.

\*\*\*

The Boundary Commission Report advocates the creation of thirty-one new M.P.'s. It will be a bitter disappointment for those who were sanguine enough to hope that Redistribution would spell Reform.

\*\*\*

The Government has commandeered all stocks of rum. The rigours of war, it seems, must be suffered even by our little tots.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: \_The Wit.\_ "AH, NOW YOU'RE FOR IT, ALBERT?"

\_Tractor-Driver.\_ "WOT'S THE MATTER?"

\_The Wit.\_ "WHY, YOU'VE BEEN AND GONE AND COME ON PARADE WITHOUT YOUR SPURS."]

\* \* \* \* \*

"The bridegroom, 6 ft. 35 ins. in height, was wearing the full-dress uniform of a captain in the Army."--\_Great Yarmouth Independent\_

He would need it all.

\* \* \* \* \*

Headline to a description of a recent push:--

"VONDERFUL RESULTS."--\_Evening Paper\_.

The "Hidden Hand" in the composing-room?

\* \* \* \* \*

THE INNOCENTS ABROAD.

["Stedfastness and righteousness are the qualities which the German people value in the highest degree, and which have brought it a good and honourable reputation in the whole world. When we make experiments in lies and deception, intrigue and low cunning, we suffer hopeless and brutal failure. Our lies are coarse and improbable, our ambiguity is pitiful simplicity. The history of the War proves this by a hundred examples. When our enemies poured all these things upon us like a hailstorm, and we convinced ourselves of the effectiveness of such tactics, we tried to imitate them. But these tactics will not fit the German. We are rough but moral, we are credulous but honest."--\_Herr DERNBURG, in

"Deutsche Politik." ]

In Eden bowers, so fair to see,  
There dwelt, when sin was yet to be,  
A guileless Serpent up a tree,  
    Sniffing the virgin breezes;  
Till EVE (the huzzy!), one fine day,  
With evil purpose came his way,  
And led that simple worm astray  
    By low and wicked wheezes.

A Wolf there was, quite sweet and good,  
Till in his path Red Riding-Hood  
Went camouflaging through the wood--  
    A brazen little terror;  
Large teeth she had and bulgy eyes  
And told the most amazing lies,  
And taught him, in a flowery guise,  
    The downward route to error.

Of Fritz's nature, fresh as morn,  
Pure as a babe that's just been born,  
Clean as a poodle lately-shorn,  
    These are symbolic samples;  
The Wolf unversed in specious vice,  
The Serpent with a taste as nice  
As anything in Paradise--  
    Debauched by bad examples.

England seduced us. 'Neath her spell,  
Mistress of lies, we fell and fell  
Into the poisoned sink, or well,  
    Of faked and fabulous rumour;  
And there, as we were bound to do,  
We failed, because we loved the True,  
And loathed the False as alien to  
    Our artless German humour.

I speak as one who ought to know;  
Myself I tried a trick or so  
In U.S.A. and had to go,  
    Looking absurdly silly;  
And now against us, big with fate,  
That Hemisphere has thrown its weight,  
Both North and South (though up to date  
    We haven't heard from Chili).

Laughter we've earned--a noble shame!  
Built to achieve a higher aim,  
We honest Huns can't play the game  
    Of shifty propaganders;  
Henceforth we'd better all get back  
On to the straight and righteous track  
And help our HINDENBURG to hack  
    (If not too late) through Flanders.

O.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Red heels were much in evidence, both Lady D---- and Lady C----

affected them, and they were to be seen in other unexpected places."--\_Observer\_.

Certainly their use as ornaments in the small of the back surprised us a good deal.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE CARP AT MIRAMEL.

[In the following article all actual names, personal, geographical and regimental, have been duly camouflaged.]

The carp that live in the moat of the Chateau de Miramel (in the zone of the armies in France) are of an age and ugliness incredible and of a superlative cynicism. One of them--local tradition pointed to a one-eyed old reprobate with a yellow face--is the richer these hundred years past by an English peeress's diamond ring.

From the bottom of the moat one world-war is like another, and none of them very different from peace. It is but a row of grinning red healthy faces over the coping and a shower of bread and biscuit.

When the nightmare of BONAPARTE was ended in the Autumn of 1815, the 22nd K.R. Lancers, commanded by an English peer, billeted themselves in and around the Chateau de Miramel. The English peer, finding time hang heavy on his hands, or my lady's letters proving insistent, sent for her to come out to him at Miramel. You could do that sort of homely thing in 1815.

So my lady comes to Miramel, and the very first day, as she leans out of window in the round tower, mishandles her diamond ring (gift of my lord) and drops it into the moat. Her host, the good Comte de Miramel, dredged and drained, but no trace of the diamond ring was ever found. But old Cyclops, the carp, grinned horribly.

In due course my lord and lady went home to the Isle of Fogs, and thence they sent their portraits to their host as a souvenir of their stay. Here indeed the portraits still hang, very graceful in the style of the period. And to the appreciative visitor Madame de Miramel (of to-day) shows a missive of thanks, written in indifferent bad French, in which my lady refers sorrowfully to "\_ma bague diamantee\_."

\* \* \* \* \*

Once again the 22nd K.R. Lancers are billeted in Miramel. The other day I noticed on a worn stone pillar at the great door the following half-obliterated words:--

"ED. WYNN, pikeman of the dashing 22nd King's Ryol ridgemet of lanciers. Sept. 1815";

and freshly scratched above the inscription:--

"Better at piking than at spelling.  
22nd K.R. Lancers. JAS. BARNET. Sept. 1917."

The old carp seems to be right, and one war is very like another. There is no radical change in the orthography of the 22nd King's Royal Lancers, and some-one else's wall is still the medium for self-expression.

Old Cyclops must be throwing his mind back a hundred years or so. There is a rain of bread and biscuits into the moat and a ring of red grinning faces above the coping. Yesterday I threw a disused safety-razor blade over the old scoundrel's nose. And "Bless my soul!" he said, as he lazily bolted it, "there hasn't been such a year for minnows since 1815."

But Armageddon 1917 holds surprises even for those who live at the bottom of a moat. For very early this morning a bauble fell into the moat that Cyclops himself couldn't digest. The old cynic was found floating, scarred belly upwards, on the surface of the water.

The mess-waiter took charge of the \_post-mortem\_. Like the \_Duke of Plaza Toro\_, he "likes an interment" and rarely misses a last rite. A keen fisherman, he had little difficulty in extracting an exhibit for the Court's inspection, which he unhesitatingly pronounced to be a diamond ring in an advanced state of decomposition.

The mess-cook, on the other hand, identified the relic as the stopping, recently mislaid, from one of his back teeth.

In any case there seems little room for doubt that a Hun airman has avenged the long-dead lady.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: ENIGMA.

POLICEMAN (\_on duty at St. Stephen's\_). "STAND ASIDE, PLEASE."

MR. PUNCH. "WHAT'S HAPPENING?"

POLICEMAN. "PARLIAMENT REASSEMBLING."

MR. PUNCH. "WHY?"]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: \_Ex-Bus-driver (in difficulties in the roadless zone).\_  
"ERE'S OLE PICCADILLY UP AGIN--FAIR IN THE 'IGHTH OF THE SEASON."]

\* \* \* \* \*

THE MUD LARKS.

All the world has marvelled at "the irrepressible good humour" of old Atkins. Every distinguished tripper who comes Cook's-touring to the Front for a couple of days devotes at least a chapter of his resultant book to it. "How in thunder does Thomas do it?" they ask. "What the mischief does he find to laugh at?" Listen.

Years ago, when the well-known War was young, a great man sat in his sanctum exercising his grey matter. He said to himself, "There is a War on. Men, amounting to several, will be prised loose from comfortable surroundings and condemned to get on with it for the term of their unnatural lives. They will be shelled, gassed, mined and bombed, smothered in mud, worked to the bone, bored stiff and scared silly. Fatigues will be unending, rations short, rum diluted, reliefs late and leave nil. Their girls will forsake them for diamond-studded munitioneers. Their wives will write saying, 'Little Jimmie has the



mumps; and what about the rent? You aren't spending all of five bob a week on yourself, are you?' This is but a tithe (or else a tittle) of the things that will occur to them, and their sunny natures will sour and sicken if something isn't done about it."

The great man sat up all night chewing penholders and pondering on the problem. The BIG IDEA came with the end of the eighth penholder.

He sprang to his feet, fires of inspiration flashing from his eyes, and boomed, "Let there be Funny Cuts!"--then went to bed. Next morning he created "I." (which stands for Intelligence), carefully selected his Staff, arrayed them in tabs of appropriate hue, and told them to go the limit. And they have been going it faithfully ever since. What the Marines are to the Senior Service, "I." is to us. Should a Subaltern come in with the yarn that the spook of HINDENBURG accosted him at Bloody Corner and offered him a cigar, or a balloon cherub buttonhole you with the story of a Bosch tank fitted with rubber tyres, C-springs and hot and cold water, that he has seen climbing trees behind St. Quentin, we retort, "Oh, go and tell it to 'I.'" and then sit back and see what the inspired official organ of the green tabs will make of it. A hint is as good as a wink to them, a nudge ample. Under the genius of these imaginative artists the most trivial incident burgeons forth into a LE QUEUX spell-binder, and the whole British Army, mustering about its Sergeant-Majors, gets selected cameos read to it every morning at roll-call, laughs brokenly into the jaws of dawn and continues chuckling to itself all day. Now you know.

Our Adjutant had a telephone call not long ago. "Army speaking," said a voice. "Will you send somebody over to Rataplan and see if there is a Town Major there?"

The Adjutant said he would, and a N.C.O. was despatched forthwith. He returned later, reporting no symptoms of one, so the Adjutant rang up Exchange and asked to be hooked on to Army Headquarters. "Which branch?" Exchange inquired. "Why, really I don't know--forgot to ask," the Adjutant confessed. "I'll have a try at 'A.'"

"Hello," said "A." "There is no Town Major at Rataplan," said the Adjutant. "You astound me, Fair Unknown," said "A."; "but what about it, anyway?" The Adjutant apologised and asked Exchange for "Q." department. "Hello," said "Q." "There is no Town Major at Rataplan," said the Adjutant. "Sorry, old thing, whoever you are," said "Q.," "but we don't stock 'em. Rations, iron; perspirators, box; oil, whale, delivered with promptitude and civility, but NOT Town Majors--sorry." The Adjutant sighed and consulted with Exchange as to who possibly could have rung him up.

Exchange couldn't guess unless it was "I."--no harm in trying, anyhow.

"Hello!" said "I." "There is no Town Major at Rataplan," the Adjutant, droned somewhat wearily. "Wha-t!" "I." exclaimed, suddenly interested. "Say it again, clearer." "RAT-A-PLAN--NO--TOWN--MA-JOR," the Adjutant repeated. There was a pause; then he heard the somebody give off an awed "Good Lord!" and drop the receiver. Next morning in Funny Cuts (the organ of Intelligence) we learned that "Corps Headquarters was heavily shelled last night. The Town Major is missing. This is evidence that the enemy has brought long-range guns into the opposite sector." Followed masses of information as to the probable make of the guns, the size of shell they preferred, the life-story of the Battery Commander, his favourite flower and author.

The Bosch, always on the alert to snaffle the paying devices of an opposition firm, now has his "I." staff and \_Funny Cuts\_ as well. From time to time we capture a copy and read this sort of thing:--

"From agonised screeches heard by one of our intrepid airmen while patrolling over the enemy's lines yesterday, it is evident that the brutal and relentless British are bayonetting their prisoners."

A Highland Division, whose star pipers were holding a dirge and lament contest on that date, are now ticking off the hours to the next offensive.

The Antrims had a \_cordon bleu\_ by the name of Michael O'Callagan. He was a sturdy rogue, having retreated all the way from Mons, and subsequently advanced all the way back to the Yser with a huge stock-pot on his back, from which he had furnished mysterious stews to all comers, at all hours, under any conditions. For this, and for the fact that he could cook under water, and would turn out hot meals when other \_chefs\_ were committing suicide, much was forgiven him, but he was prone to look upon the \_vin\_ when it was \_rouge\_ and was habitually coated an inch thick with a varnish of soot and pot-black. One morning he calmly hove himself over the parapet and, in spite of the earnest attentions of Hun snipers, remained there long enough to collect sufficient \_debris\_ to boil his dixies. Next day the Bosch \_Funny Cuts\_ flared forth scareheads:--

"SAVAGES ON THE SOMME.

"The desperate and unprincipled British are employing black cannibal Zulus in the defence of their system. Yesterday one of them, a chief of incredibly depraved appearance, was observed scouting in the open."

The communique ended with a treatise on the Zulu, its black man-eating habits, and an exhortation to "our old Brandenburgers" not to be dismayed.

PATLANDER.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: OWING TO PRESSURE FROM THE ALL-HIGHEST, HIS ORIENTAL ALLY IS FORMING A MAGIC-CARPET BOMBING SQUADRON.]

\* \* \* \* \*

MORE SEX PROBLEMS.

From a stock-auction report:--

"THE BULL CALVES. THE BULL CALVES."  
\_Glasgow Herald.\_

Notwithstanding the repetition of this statement we find great difficulty in believing it.

\* \* \* \* \*

"SOLDIERS' CHRISTMAS GIFTS. POSTING DATES FOR EGYPT AND SALONIKA."  
\_Times.\_

It sounds a little like consigning coal to Newcastle.

\* \* \* \* \*

"AIR RAIDS.--Peaceful country rectory, Hampshire, well out of danger zone, can receive three or four paying guests. Large garden, beautiful scenery, high, bracing. Simple life. L10 each weekly."--\_The Times.\_

This enterprising parson seems to have borrowed his recipe for the simple life from GRAY'S \_Elegy\_:--

Along the cool sequester'd vale of life  
They kept the noiseless tenner of their way.

\* \* \* \* \*

BEASTS ROYAL.

IV.

KING HENRY'S STAG-HOUND. A.D. 1536.

Ten puffs upon my master's toes,  
And twenty on his sleeves,  
Upon his hat a Tudor rose  
Set round with silver leaves;  
But never a hunting-spear,  
And never a rowel-spur;  
Who is this that he calls his Dear?  
I think I will bark at her.

The Windsor groves were fresh and green,  
Dangling with Summer dew,  
When my master rode with his Spanish queen,  
And the huntsman cried, "Halloo!"  
Now never a horn is heard,  
And never the lances stir;  
Who is this that he calls his Bird?  
I think I will follow her.

To-night my master walks alone  
In the pleached pathway dim,  
And the thick moss reddens on the stone  
Where she used to walk with him.  
When will he shout for the glove  
And the spear of the verderer?  
Where is she gone whom he called his Love?  
For I cannot follow her.

\* \* \* \* \*

SECOND CHILDHOOD.

I must make a confession to someone. I have wasted raw material which is a substitute for something else indispensable for defeating the Hun, and probably traitor is the right name for me. Let me explain.

Somewhere in Nutshire there is a place called Cotterham. It is one of those little villages which somehow nobody expects to meet nowadays outside the pages of a KATE GREENAWAY painting book. There is the

village green, with its pond and geese and absurdly pretty cottages with gardens full of red bergamot and lads'-love, and a little school where the children are still taught to curtsey and pull their forelocks when the Squire goes by. And beyond the Green, at the end of Plough Lane and after you have crossed Leg-o'-Mutton Common, you come to Down Wood, and if you don't meet Little Red Riding-Hood on the way or come on Snow White and her seven dwarfs, that is only because you must have taken the wrong turning after you came through the kissing-gate at the bottom of Lovers' Lane. I am a native of Cotterham, and in my more reflective moments I wonder why such an idyllic place should have produced anything so unromantic as myself, His Majesty's Deputy Assistant Acting Inspector for All Sorts of Unexpected Explosives. Cotterham still has a large place in my affections, and it gave me a considerable shock the other day to get a letter from the Squire, who is an old friend, asking me down for a week-end, and adding, "You can do a little professional job for me too. You really will be interested to see what splendid work is being done here in your line of fire. The output is some of the best in the district. But there has been trouble lately and the leaders of the two biggest shifts were found to have appropriated a substantial part of the output to their own uses. I shall rely on you to straighten things out and suggest the right penalties."

So they were even making munitions in Cotterham. I conjured up visions of interminable rows of huts, of thousands of overalled workers swamping Plough Lane, trampling the Green brown, scaring the geese, obliterating the immemorial shape of Leg-o'-Mutton Common by a mushroom township, laying Down Wood low, and coming to me with some miserable tale of petty pilfering for my adjustment. I must own I got out of the train at Muddlehamstead and into the station fly feeling distinctly low-spirited. It was some consolation to find that the railway still stopped seven miles short of my village, though I reflected gloomily that the place itself was doubtless a network of light railways by this time. We bowled along in stately fashion up Plough Lane and past Halfpenny Cross to the Manor House with its thatched roof and Virginia-creeper all over the porch. The Squire carried me off at once for the professional part of my visit, but we fell to talking of fishing, which had been good, and cubbing, which had been bad, and were on to Leg-o'-Mutton Common before I remembered to speak of munitions.

"Not much sign of war here," I said with a relieved sigh. "I was afraid they'd have spoilt the dear old heath for a certainty. Only don't say it's Down Wood they've gone to, for that'd be more than I could stand. I thought there were fairies there long after I ought to have been a hard-headed young man of six, and if they've gone and desecrated that wood with factories--"

The Squire smiled.

"I don't think I should worry. Amongst all your Unexpected Explosives do you happen to condescend to have heard of the gentle horse-chestnut and the school-children that collect them? Here are the two delinquents I wrote to you about, and we've caught them in the act. Just look at them wasting the precious things."

Two small boys were playing at conkers, two small boys with very earnest faces and grubby clothes which never figured in KATE GREENAWAY'S pictures, wasting precious material which five-and-thirty other scholars were diligently collecting and stuffing into sacks. I ought to have given them a lecture on patriotism--the army behind the

Army. But we each of us keep one childish passion untamed, even if we are unromantic old bachelors, and I, His Majesty's Deputy Assistant Acting Inspector for All Sorts of Unexpected Explosives and his very loyal subject, who have lived for nearly half-a-century of Octobers in London town--I borrowed the bigger conker and systematically and in deadly earnest I fought and defeated the other small boy.

They say that treason never succeeds; so perhaps I can't be a traitor after all.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE UNDISMAYED.

In a world of insecurity and change it is good to have one bedrock certainty upon which the mind can rest. Thrones totter and fall; Commanders-in-chief are superseded; Admirals of the High Fleet are displaced; in politics leaders come and go and reputations pass; in ordinary life a thousand mutations are visible. But amid all this flux there remains mercifully one resolute piece of routine that nothing can alter. Whatever may be happening elsewhere in the world--mutinies in the German Navy, revolutions in Russia, advances in France, advances in Flanders--Leicester Square keeps its head. Armageddon may be turning the world upside down, but it cannot cause those old antagonists, STEVENSON and REECE, to cease their perpetual contest; and if the War lasts another ten years you will read in The Times of October 17th, 1927, a paragraph to the effect that "at the close of play yesterday in the billiard match of 16,000 points up between Stevenson and Reece, at the Grand Hall, Leicester Square, the scores were: Reece (in play), 4,676; Stevenson, 2,837."

\* \* \* \* \*

#### NOT CANNIBALS AFTER ALL.

"The first contingent of the American troops brought food for six months, and hence the fears of the peasants in France lest they should be eaten up are groundless."--Adelaide Advertiser.

\* \* \* \* \*

"If the public continue to spend the same sum of money on bread at 9d. as they did when it was 1s., it is easy to see that the consumption will rise by a quarter or 25 per cent."--Glasgow Evening News.

We are always timid about questioning a Scotsman's arithmetic, but we make the increase a third, or 33-1/3 per cent.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: He (connoisseur of wines). "WE STAYED SEVERAL DAYS AT AN INN IN A LITTLE GLOUCESTERSHIRE VILLAGE, AS WE FOUND THEY HAD SUCH AN EXCELLENT CELLAR."

She. "REALLY! I HAD NO IDEA THE RAIDERS HAD GOT SO FAR WEST AS THAT."]

\* \* \* \* \*

#### CROSS-TALK WITH PETHERTON.

Petherton and I have just emerged from another bombardment. Certain correspondence in The Surbury Gazette and North Herts Courier gave me a welcome excuse for firing what I may term a sighting shot. I wrote to my genial neighbour as follows:--

DEAR MR. PETHERTON,--No doubt you have seen the recent letters in the local paper anent the remains of the old Cross, which are at once an ornament to Castle Street, Surbury, and a standing menace to the peace of mind of the local antiquarians.

I am exceedingly interested in the matter myself and feel that the views of one who, I am sure, adds a wide knowledge of archaeology to the long list of his accomplishments, would be both interesting and instructive to myself and (if you would allow your views to be published) to our little community in general.

If therefore you will write and let me know your opinion on the matter I shall take it as a friendly and cousinly (vide certain eighteenth-century documents in the Record Office) act.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY J. FORDYCE.

Petherton replied with a whizz-bang as thus:--

SIR,--I have read the idiotic correspondence to which you refer, and am informed that you are the author of the screed which appeared in last Saturday's issue of the paper. If my informant is correct as to the authorship of the letter I can only say it is a pity that, with apparently no knowledge of the subject, you should venture into print. Anyone enjoying the least acquaintance with the rudiments of English history would be perfectly aware that the remains have no connection with QUEEN ELEANOR whatever. The whereabouts of all the crosses put up to her memory are quite well known to archaeologists.

Yours faithfully,

FREDERICK PETHERTON.

I replied with light artillery:--

DEAR PETHERTON,--Yours re the late Mrs. EDWARD PLANTAGENET to hand.

Though not a professed archaeologist I do know something of the ruin in question, having several times examined it and having heard, perhaps, most, if not all, the various theories concerning it. I have been here a good deal longer than you have, I believe, and cannot think that you know more of the subject than I.

Have you read Wycherley's treatise on the Eleanor Crosses? [I invented this monograph for the purpose of inducing Petherton to reload.] If not, why not? Perhaps you would like to dispute the existence of a castle on the site where the Castle Farm now stands, and where such shameless profiteering is carried on in eggs and butter?

By the way, how is your poultry? I notice that your sezieme siecle rooster wants his tail remodelling. Perhaps you are not worrying about new plumage for him till after the War, though it seems like carrying patriotism to absurd lengths.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY J. FORDYCE.

I hope you will allow your letter to be published in The Gazette.

In reply to this Petherton discharged with:--

SIR,--I am not concerned with the castle, which may or may not have existed in Surbury, nor am I interested in your friend's monograph on Eleanor Crosses. Other people besides yourself have the impudence to rush into print on matters of which they are sublimely ignorant.

Perhaps I had better inform you that EDWARD I. reigned at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries (1272-1307), not in the fifteenth, and a very slight knowledge of architecture would convince you that the Surbury relics are not earlier than the fifteenth century.

Trusting you will not commit any further absurdities, though I am not too sanguine,

I am, Yours faithfully,

FREDERICK PETHERTON.

My views are not for publication. I prefer not to be mixed up in such a symposium.

It was evident that my neighbour's weapon was beginning to get heated, so I flicked him with some more light artillery to draw him on, and loosed off with:--

Dear Old Man,--What a historian you are! You have JOHN RICHARD GREEN beaten to his knees, FROUDE and GARDINER out of sight, and even the authoress of the immortal Little Arthur could not have placed EDDY I. with greater chronological exactitude. In fact there seems to be no subject on which you cannot write informatively, which makes me sorry that you will not join in the literary fray in the local paper, as it deprives the natives of a great treat.

But--there is a but, my dear Fred--I cannot admit your claim to superior knowledge of the Surbury relics. Remember, I have grown up with them as it were. Yours ever,

HARRY FORDYCE.

Sir (exploded Petherton),--What senseless drivel you write on the least provocation! Whether you grew up with the Surbury relics or not, you have certainly decayed with them. Every stone that's left of that confounded ruin (probably only a simple market-cross) proclaims the date of its birth. Even the broken finial and the two crockets lying on the ground expose your ignorance. Eleanor Cross, bah!

Yours flly., F. PETHERTON.

I thought it was time to emerge from my literary camouflage and let off a heavy howitzer; which I did, with the following:--

Dear Freddy,--I am afraid you have got hold of the wrong end of the

stick and laid an egg in a mare's nest. [These mixed metaphors were designed to tease him into a further barrage.] I did not write, and I do not remember saying that I had written, the letter to the paper which seems to have given you as much pleasure as it has given me. I had no hand in the symposium, but the way you have brought your Chesterfield battery into action has been so masterly that I, for one, can never regret that you were misinformed. I believe the particular letter to The Gazette was written by one of the staff, a native of the place, who probably carved his name on the base in his youth, and has felt a personal interest in the Cross ever since. I hope with this new light on the affair you will favour me with your further views on history and archaeology.

Yours ever, Harry.

How lovely the blackberries are looking after the rain!

But I couldn't draw Petherton's fire again, for his gun had been knocked out by this direct hit.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: Excitable Lady (describing to wounded Tommies the appearance of a bomb-hole on the London Front). "You could have buried a horse in it. You never saw such a thing in your life!"]

\* \* \* \* \*

SUGAR CONTROL.

Thanks to the new sugar regulations we now expect half a pound of sugar per head per week instead of half a pound of sugar per head per-haps.

\* \* \* \* \*

"HOGS STILL SOARING."  
Headline in Canadian Paper.

The shortage of petrol seems to have driven them from the roads.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Sir John Hare declares that there is no truth in the statement that he is saying '----' to the stage."--Bournemouth Echo.

Personally, we never believed that he would be guilty of such language.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The only thing which will actually bring peace is an army of occupation standing on its own flat feet, either in Germany or on the German frontier."--Weekly Dispatch.

But why this preference for the flat-footed? Are not the hammer-toed to have a chance?

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: THE DANCE OF DEATH.



THE KAISER. "STOP! STOP! I'M TIRED."

DEATH. "I STARTED AT YOUR BIDDING; I STOP WHEN I CHOOSE."]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: Officer. "I SAY--LOOK HERE. I TOLD YOU TO GO TO PADDINGTON, AND YOU'RE GOING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION."

Taxi-Driver. "ORL RIGHT--ORL RIGHT! YOU'RE LUCKY TO GET A CAB AT ALL INSTEAD OF GRUMBLIN' ABAHT WHERE YER WANTS TER GO TO!"]

\* \* \* \* \*

THE NEW MRS. MARKHAM.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER LX.

Mary. I wish, Mamma, that there were not so many shocking stories in history.

Mrs. M. History is, indeed, a sad catalogue of human miseries, and one is glad to turn aside from the horrors of war to the amenities of private life. Shall I tell you something of the domestic habits of the English in the early twentieth century?

Mary. Oh do, Mamma; I shall like that very much.

Mrs. M. The nobility and the well-to-do classes no longer lived shut up in gloomy castles, but made a point of spending most of their time in public. They never took their meals at home, but habitually frequented large buildings called restaurants, fitted up with sumptuous and semi-Sultanic splendour. In these halls, while the guests sat at a number of tables, they were entertained by minstrels and singers. It was even said that they acquired the habit of eating and drinking in time to the music. They were waited upon for the most part by foreigners, who spoke broken English, and what with the babel of tongues, the din of the music and the constant popping of corks, for alcohol had not yet been prohibited, the scene begged a description.

Richard. Well, I am sure I would rather dine in our neat little dining-room, with our silent wireless waiter, than partake of the most extravagant repasts in those sumptuous halls.

George. I must just ask you, Mamma, about one thing that has all along puzzled me very much. What was the House of Lords about all this time that they let the House of Commons govern the country and have their own way in everything?

Mrs. M. I am afraid, my dear George, that you are animated by a somewhat reactionary bias in favour of feudalism, which in your own best interests you would do well to curb. It is enough to say that some of the peers supported the House of Commons, and the majority were too timid to make any stand against the numbers and violence of the other House. Nowadays, thanks to the wide diffusion of peerages and the fact that they are conferred far more freely on persons of advanced political views, this lack of independence has largely been eliminated.

\_Richard.\_ I am sure we must all thank you for the trouble you took to explain about Free Trade and Protection; but if you are not too tired will you kindly tell us something about the learned and clever men who lived at this time?

\_Mrs. M.\_ You know, my dear boy, that I am always happy to impart information, and am pleased to have such attentive listeners. The authoress of your favourite poems, Mary, lived in this reign. I mean Mrs. ELLA WHEELER WILCOX. The Rev. H.G. WELLS, the famous theologian who abolished the Latin and Greek grammars; the Baroness Corkscrew--to call her by the name under which she was ultimately elevated to the peerage--who wrote so many beautiful historical romances that she quite superseded Sir WALTER SCOTT; Sir JOHN OXENHAM, one of England's greatest poets; and Lord HALL-CAINE, author of Isle of Man Power, were commanding figures in this period.

\_Richard.\_ Oh, Mamma, did not Lord HALL-CAINE discover the North Pole?

\_Mrs. M.\_ Not that I am aware of, my dear boy, though it is quite possible. But you are probably confusing him with the Arctic explorer, Dr. KANE. Among the scientific men I must mention Sir WILLIAM ROBERTSON NICOLL, the great Scots agriculturist who first applied intensive culture to the kailyard; General BELLOC, the illustrious topographer, and HAROLD BEGBIE, who discovered and popularized Sir OLIVER LODGE.

\_Richard.\_ Ah, Mamma, I know enough about the Georgians to feel sure that you have left out a great many things. You have never told us about the Marquis of NORTHCLIFFE'S discovery of America, his introduction of the potato to that Continent, and his building of the Yellow House in the Yellowstone Park.

\_George.\_ And you have not fully satisfied our curiosity about Sir GEORGE ROBEY, Baronet, Lord LAUDER, Sir CHARLES CHAPLIN and other great Leaders of English Society.

\_Mrs. M.\_ True, my dear, but you must read their lives in the Dictionary of National Biography, for here is the tea, and I must leave off.

\* \* \* \* \*

ALLIRAP ASRAS.

It would be interesting to know more of this great Persian ruler, but history being reticent our chance has gone, unless it should be the good fortune of some member of Sir STANLEY MAUDE'S expedition, rummaging in the archives of Baghdad, to come upon new facts. Meanwhile I offer the name as a terse and snappy one for a Persian kitten, such as I saw the other day convert several shillings'-worth of my aunt's Berlin wool (as it is still, I believe, called, in spite of The Daily Mail) into sheer scrap. Knitting however is not what it was in the early days of the War and the tragedy led to no bloodshed, my aunt, who has evidently an emulative admiration for Sir ISAAC NEWTON, merely shaking her finger. But self-control among women must be on the increase, for in a hotel the other day I overheard a coffee-room conversation in which two cases were instanced of supreme heroism under agonising conditions--one being when a butler (an old and honoured butler too, who had never misconducted himself before) fainted while carrying round the after-dinner coffee and poured most of it over the ample shoulders of a dowager. This lady not only

disregarded the pain and the damp, but assisted in bringing the butler to. The Distinguished Service Order has been given for less than that.

It was either in this hotel or another that I met the Naval officer among whose duties is the granting or refusing of permits to amateur photographers in districts where "Dora" does not wish for enemy cameras. Among the requirements of the form which has to be filled up is one asking the applicant, in the interests of identification, to specify any peculiar skin marks. One lady, with a conscientiousness not excelled by the actor who blacked himself all over to play \_Othello\_, stated that she had only an appendicitis scar.

But I am digressing. Where was I? Oh yes, we were discussing that great Persian, Allirap Asras. Those authorities who think that he was a predecessor of BAHRAM, the hunter, are wrong, for there was never any Persian of the name at all. I am sorry to have deceived you, but you must blame not me but a certain domestic remedy. If one bright cart, drawn by a mettled steed and dispensing this medicinal beverage at a penny a glass, will insist upon being outside Westminster Abbey and another at the top of Cockspur Street every working day of the week for ever and ever, how can one help sooner or later spelling its staple product backwards and embroidering a little on the result?

But what I want to know is--who drinks sarsaparilla, anyway?

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: \_Vague Tommy (writing letter).\_"WOT DAY IS IT?"

\_Chorus.\_ "THE FOURTEENTH."

\_Tommy.\_ "WOT MONTH?"

\_Chorus.\_ "OCTOBER."

\_Tommy.\_ "WOT YEAR?"]

\* \* \* \* \*

"What fine fellows we might have been had we lived in those bygone times. We too, perhaps, would have influenced history and our names might have been inscribed in the book of immortality."--\_New Ireland.\_

We understand now why they call it Sin-Fain.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: LAMENTABLE LARCENY IN A BOARDING-HOUSE.]

\* \* \* \* \*

A DECLARATION OF WAR.

This is the yarn that M'Larty told by the brazier fire,  
Where over the mud-filled trenches the star shells blaze and expire--  
A yarn he swore was a true one; but Mac was an awful liar:--

"Way up in the wild North Country, a couple of years ago  
I hauled Hank out of a snowdrift--it was maybe thirty 'below,'  
And I packed him along to my shanty and I took and thawed him with snow.

"He was stiff as a cold-store bullock, I might have left him for dead,  
But I packed him along, as I've told you, and melted him out instead,  
And I rolled him up in my blankets and put him to sleep in my bed.

"So he dwelt in my humble shanty while the wintry gales did roar,  
While the blizzards howled in the passes and the timber wolves at the  
door,  
And he slept in my bunk at night-time while I stretched out on the floor.

"He watched me frying my bacon and he said that the smell was grand;  
He watched me bucking the stove-wood, but he never lent me a hand,  
And he played on my concertina the airs of his native land.

"And one month grew into two months and two months grew into three,  
And there he was sitting and smiling like a blooming Old Man of the Sea,  
Eating my pork and beans up and necking my whisky and tea.

"You say, 'Why didn't I shift him?' For the life o' me I dunno;  
I suppose there's something inside me that can't tell a fellow to go  
I hauled by the heels from a snowdrift at maybe thirty 'below.'...

"But at last, when the snows were going and the blue Spring skies  
were pale,  
Out after bear in the valley I met a chap on the trail--  
A chap coming up from the city, who stopped and told me a tale--

"A tale of a red war raging all over the land and sea,  
And when he was through I was laughing, for the joke of it seemed to be  
That Hank was a goldarn German--and Hank was rooming with me!

"So off I hiked to the shanty, and never a word I said,  
I floated in like a cyclone, I yanked him out of my bed,  
And I grabbed the concertina and smashed it over his head.

"I shook him up for a minute, I stood him down on the floor,  
I grabbed the scruff of his trousers and ran him along to the door,  
And I said, 'This here, if you get me, is a Declaration of War!'

"And I gave him a hoist with my gum-boot, a kind of a lift with my toe;  
But you can't give a fellow a hiding, as anyone sure must know,  
When you hauled him out of a snowdrift at maybe thirty 'below.'"

C.F.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

A GOOD DAY'S WORK.

"He left Flanders on leave at one o'clock yesterday morning  
and was in London after fourteen months' fighting before  
sundown."--\_Daily News\_.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Why can't we find machies for long-distance raids since Germans  
can?"--\_Evening News\_.

Personally, if distance is required, we prefer a brassie. We can only  
assume that the iron club is chosen in consequence of the number of  
bad lies there are about.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the German Naval mutiny:--

"They may be divided into two camps. One holds that it is not an affair to which too much importance can be attached; the other that it is an affair to which one cannot attach too much importance."--\_Star\_.

We cannot help feeling that these two factions might safely be accommodated in the same camp.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: A LONG-SIGHTED PATRIOT.

\_Aunt Susie (whose charity begins as far as possible from home).\_  
"HAVE YOU FOUND OUT WHETHER THEY WEAR KNITTED SOCKS IN ARGENTINA?"]

\* \* \* \* \*

AT THE PLAY.

"ONE HOUR OF LIFE."

In Captain DESMOND COKE'S extravaganza a group of philanthropists adopt the time-honoured procedure of ROBIN HOOD and his Greenwood Company, robbing Dives on system to pay Lazarus. Their economics are sounder than their sociology, which is of the crudest. They specialize in jewellery--useless, barbaric and generally vulgar survivals--which they extract from shop and safe, and sell in Amsterdam, distributing the proceeds to various deserving charitable agencies. In this particular crowded hour of life the leader of the group, a fanatical prig with hypnotic eyes, abducts the beautiful \_Lady Fenton\_, with ten thousand pounds' worth of stuff upon her, from one of the least ambitious of Soho restaurants.

How came she there, thus bedizened? Well, her husband, eccentric peer with a priceless collection of snuffboxes and a chronic deficiency of humour, had arranged the little dinner to effect a reconciliation, away from the prying eyes of their set. It was not a success. She felt that she sparkled too much, was piqued, and dismissed her lord. Enter the hypnotic prig, who adroitly conveys her to his headquarters, preaches to her and converts her to the point of surrendering her jewels without a pang, and offering to assist in the lifting of the snuffboxes. I can't say more without endangering the effect of Captain COKE'S ingenious shifts and spoofs.

The author seemed to me to tempt Providence by placing his perfervid philanthropist and his serious doctrines against a background of burlesque. But he succeeded in entertaining his audience. Miss LILLAH MCCARTHY, looking her very best as \_Lady Fenton\_, and Mr. COWLEY WRIGHT, looking quite plausible as the irresistible chief of the General Charities Distribution Bureau, shared the chief honours of the evening.

T.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The views expressed by Mr. Roosevelt are crystallising everywhere, and are bearing excellent fruit."--\_Daily Paper.\_

How does he get his sugar?

\* \* \* \* \*

"Two million troubles are now standing to Koslovsky's account in Petrograd banks."--\_Rangitikei Advocate (N.Z.).\_

We knew conditions were very trying in Russia, but had no idea any one man had such a burden as this.

\* \* \* \* \*

RHYMES FOR THE TIMES.

There was a false Pasha named BOLO,  
Who sank in iniquity so low.  
That the dirtiest work  
Of the Hun and the Turk  
Never made him ejaculate \_Nolo!\_

There was a stout fellow called YAPP,  
A great Red Triangular chap;  
Now he's working still harder  
To stock the State larder,  
And never has time for a nap.

The manners and customs of Clare  
Have long been admittedly "quare,"  
But the tolerance shown  
To sedition full-blown  
Is enough to make CADBURY swear.

Politicians unstable and vague  
May well take example from HAIG,  
Who talks to the Huns  
In the voice of his guns  
Till they dread him far worse than the plague.

Renowned for her fine macaroni,  
And also for Signor MARCONI,  
Now Italy sends,  
To enrapture her friends,  
(And to finish these rhymes), the Caproni.

\* \* \* \* \*

MISSING.

"He was last seen going over the parapet into the German trenches."

What did you find after war's fierce alarms,  
When the kind earth gave you a resting place,  
And comforting night gathered you in her arms,  
With light dew falling on your upturned face?

Did your heart beat, remembering what had been?  
Did you still hear around you, as you lay,

The wings of airmen sweeping by unseen,  
The thunder of the guns at close of day?

All nature stoops to guard your lonely bed;  
Sunshine and rain fall with their calming breath;  
You need no pall, so young and newly dead,  
Where the Lost Legion triumphs over death.

When with the morrow's dawn the bugle blew,  
For the first time it summoned you in vain;  
The Last Post does not sound for such as you;  
But God's Reveille wakens you again.

\* \* \* \* \*

SUGAR.

"Francesca," I said, "you must be very deeply occupied; for ten minutes I have not heard your silvery voice."

"I am attempting," she said, "to fill up our sugar form."

"Is it a tremendous struggle?"

"Yes," she said, "it is a regular brain-smasher."

"Give me the paper, and let me have a go at it."

With a haggard face, but without a word, she handed me the buff form, and sat silently while I read the various explanations and directions.

"Francesca," I said, "you are doing wrong. It says that the form must be filled up and signed by a responsible member of the household. Now you can say that you're brilliant or amiable or handsome or powerful or domineering, but can you honestly say you're responsible? No, you can't. So I shall keep this form and fill it up myself in due time, and leave you to look after the hens or talk to the gardener."

"Anybody," she said, "who can wring a smile from a gardener, as I have this morning, is entitled to be considered responsible. Infirm of purpose! hand me the paper."

"Very well," I said, "you can have the paper; only remember that, if we get fined a thousand pounds for transgressing the Defence of the Realm Act, you mustn't ask me for the money. You must pay it yourself."

"I'll chance that," she said, as I handed back the paper.

"Now then, we shan't be long. Which of these two addresses shall we have?"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, they tell you to fill in the address in capital letters, and then they give you two to pick from. One is 1000, Upper Grosvenor Street, W. 1--"

"It is a longer street than I had supposed."

"And the other," she continued, "is 17, Church Lane, Middlewich,

Cheshire."

"Let it be Middlewich," I said. "Since boyhood's hour I have dreamt of living in Middlewich. As for the other, I simply couldn't live in a street of a thousand houses. Could you?"

"No," she said, "I couldn't. We'll be Middlewichians.... There, it's done. Capital letters and all."

"Don't slack off," I said. "Fill it all up now that you've got started."

"I suppose I'd better begin with myself."

"Yes," I said, "you may have that privilege. Put it down quick: Carlyon, Francesca; age blank, because they don't want ages over eighteen; F for female, and Married Woman for occupation. Then treat me in the same way, putting M for F, and 2nd Lieutenant of Volunteers instead of Married Woman."

"Why shouldn't I put Married Man as your occupation?"

"Simply because it isn't done. It's a splendid occupation, but it isn't recognised as such in formal documents."

"Another injustice to women. I shall enter you as Married Man."

"Enter me as anything you like," I said, "only let's get on with the job."

"Very well; you're down as Married Man."

"Now get on with the children. Muriel first. What about her?"

"But she's away having her education finished."

"Yes," I said, "but she'll be back for the holidays, and she'll want her sugar then, like the rest of us. And Frederick is away at his school, probably getting much better sugar than we are. He'll be wanting his ration in the holidays. You'd better put a note about that."

"A note?" she said. "There's no room for notes on this form. All they want is a bald statement. And that's just what they can't get. They'll have to take it with the hair on. I'm cramming in about the holidays, and I hope Lord RHONDDA will be pleased with all the information he's getting about our family."

"Keep going," I said; "you've still got the servants to do."

"Yes, but the kitchenmaid's gone, and I haven't engaged another one yet."

"Don't let that worry you," I said. "Write down--Kitchenmaid about to be engaged. Name will be supplied later."

"You're quite brilliant to-day. There, that's finished, thank Heaven."

"Not yet. You've got to address it to the Local Food Office."

"But I haven't the remotest where the Local Food Office is. It can't



have been there more than a short time, anyhow."

"Hurrah!" I said, looking over her shoulder at the document. "It says if you are in doubt as to the name of the district of your Local Food Office you are to inquire of any policeman or special constable."

"That's all very well," she said, "but how are we to find a policeman in this remote and peaceful place? I've never seen one. Have you?"

"Yes," I said, "I think I saw one last year on a bicycle."

"Well, he's probably arrived somewhere else by this time. He's no good to us."

"No, but we might find a special constable."

"I'll tell you what," she said, "old Glumgold is a special constable. I heard him complaining bitterly of having been hauled out of bed during the last air-raid on London. 'No nigher to we nor forty mile,' he said it was. He's sure to be among the cabbages. Be a dear and dash out and ask him."

So I found Glumgold in among the cabbages and asked him where the Local Food Office was, and he said he'd be gingered if he knew, he or his old woman either; and that was the question they was a-going to arst of us, because to-day was the last day for sending in. So I advised him to chance it with Nebsbury, which happens to be eight miles off and possesses a High Street; and then I went back to Francesca and told her that Glumgold advised Nebsbury--which was cowardly, but one can't spend a lifetime over a fiddle-headed document like that. Anyhow, we folded it up and posted it, and we've heard nothing since.

R.C.L.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: ECHOES OF THE AIR-RAIDS.

\_First Souvenir-hunter\_. "FOUND ANYFINK, 'ERB?"

\_Second ditto\_. "NO; BUT THAT'LL BE ALL RIGHT. THEY'RE SURE TO COME AGAIN TERMORRER NIGHT.]"

\* \* \* \* \*

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(\_BY MR. PUNCH'S STAFF OF LEARNED CLERKS.\_)

Not for a great while have I met a story at once so moving and so simply made as Summer (MACMILLAN). Of course at this time the art of EDITH WHARTON is no new discovery; but to my thinking she has never done better work than this tale of a New England village, and the wakening to love of the girl who was drowsing away her youth there. It is all, as I say, so simple, and written with such apparent economy of effort, that only afterwards does the amazing cleverness of Mrs. WHARTON'S method impress itself upon the reader. Charity Royall was a waif, of worse than ambiguous parentage, brought up in a community where her passionate and violently sensitive nature was stifled. Two men loved her--dour middle-aged Lawyer Royall, whose house she kept,

and Lucius Harney, the young visitor from the city, the fairy-prince of poor Charity's one great romance, through whom came tragedy. You see already the whole stark simplicity of the theme. What I cannot convey to you is that secret of Mrs. WHARTON'S that enables her by some exquisitely right word or phrase so to illuminate a scene that you see it as though by an inspiration of your own, and feel that thus and thus did the thing in fact happen. There are episodes in Summer--for example the Fourth of July firework evening, or the wildly macabre scene of the night funeral on the mountain--that seem to me to come as near perfection in their telling as anything I am ever likely to read, and when you have enjoyed them for yourself I fancy you will be inclined to join me in very sincere gratitude for work of such rare quality.

\* \* \* \* \*

Those who admired (which is the same as saying those who read) that excellent book, The Retreat from Mons, will be glad to hear that its author, Major A. CORBETT-SMITH, has now continued his record in a further volume, called The Marne and After (CASSELL). In it you will find all those qualities, a sane and soldier-like common-sense, an entire absence of gush, and a saving humour in the midst of horrors, which made the earlier installment memorable. Above all else I have been impressed by the first of these characteristics. Major CORBETT-SMITH writes from the viewpoint of one to whom even this ghastliest of wars is part of the day's work. That he sees its human and hideous sides by no means impairs this quiet professional outlook. I recall one phrase in his chapter on the secret agents of the enemy: "At the Aisne German spies were a regular plague"--just as one might speak of wasps or weather--which somehow conveyed to me very vividly the secret of our original little army's disproportionate influence in the early weeks of the War. The operations which we call the actual Battle of the Marne (surely fated to be the most fought-again engagement in history) are here very clearly described, with illustrative plans; while one other chapter, called suggestively "Kultur," may be commended to those super-philosophers amongst us who are already beginning an attempt to belittle the foul record of calculated crime that must for at least a generation place Germany outside the pale of civilization. For this grim chapter alone I should like to see Major CORBETT-SMITH'S otherwise cheery volume scattered broadcast over the country.

\* \* \* \* \*

June (METHUEN) is saturated with the simple sentimentality in which American authors excel. I do not know whether British novelists could write this sort of book successfully if they would, but I do know that they don't. Miss EDITH BARNARD DELANO, however, succeeds in getting considerable charm into her story, and if it leaves rather a sweeter taste in the mouth than some of us relish there are others who like their fiction to be strongly sugared. June, an orphan child, was looked after by nigger servants, and by one, Mammy, in particular. She possessed a house and a valley; and a young man prospecting in the latter met with an accident and was discovered by the child. Hence complications, and the removal of June from her home to be educated with some cousins. Then poverty, hard times and plenty of pluck. But the clouds began to lift when June discovered that an emerald cross of hers was worth four thousand dollars; and finally the sun burst forth when, through the agency of the accidental young man, her property was found to be very valuable, and she more valuable still--to the young man. It sounds ingenuous, doesn't it? But not

nearly so easy to write as it seems, for to produce anything as artless as June is an art in itself.

\* \* \* \* \*

In The Book of the Happy Warrior (LONGMANS) a chivalrous modern knight holds up to our youngsters the patterns of an older chivalry to teach them courage, clean fighting and devoted service. Sir HENEY NEWBOLT claims that the tradition of the public schools is the direct survival of the mediaeval training for knighthood, and incidentally defends flannelled and muddied youth from hasty aspersions. ROLAND and his OLIVER, RICHARD LION-HEART, EDWARD the Black Prince and CHANDOS, DU GUESCLIN and BAYARD, if they revisited this tortured earth, would be dismayed by the procedure and the chilling impersonality of modern war. Perhaps in the glorious single combats of the Flying Corps they might recognise some faint semblance of their ancient method. Sir HENRY, rightly from his point of view, chooses to ignore the wholesale horrors of to-day's warfare and to emphasize the ideal of fighting service as a fine discipline and proof of manly worth. He shows an obvious, honest, aristocratic bias, but he does not forget another side of the matter, as a fragment of an imaginary conversation between a young lord and a squire present at the great tourney at St. Inglebert's between the Gentlemen of England and of France pleasantly shows. The Englishmen were worsted and took their defeat in a fine sporting spirit. "How is it we're beaten? We always win the battles, don't we?" asks the boy. "The archers win them for us," says the Squire. Quite a characteristic little touch of subaltern modesty! One thought occurs to me especially. It is unthinkable that a book like this should appear in the Germany of to-day. It will be worth your while giving it to your boy to find out why.

\* \* \* \* \*

Since the practice of writing first novels is becoming increasingly popular with young authors it was inevitable that a "First Novel Library" should find its way on to the market. Whether the classification is to be construed as an appeal for forbearance for the shortcomings of the neophyte, or as a warning which a considerate publisher feels is due to the public, is not for me to say. But the policy of charging six shillings for these maiden efforts--all that is required of us for the mature masterpieces of our MAURICE HEWLETTS and ARNOLD BENNETTS--is open to question. The Puppet, by JANE HARDING (UNWIN), is not without merit, but the faults of the beginner are present in manifold. The heroine tells her story in the first person--a difficult method of handling fiction at the best--and in the result we find a young lady of no particular education or apparent attainments holding forth in the stilted diction of a rather prosy early-Victorian Archbishop. The effect of unreality produced goes far to spoil a plot which is wound and unwound with considerable skill. Miss HARDING will write a good novel yet, but she must learn to make her characters act the parts she assigns to them.

\* \* \* \* \*

We all must be writing books about the War. It is natural enough to suppose one's own share of war-work is worthy of record, and indeed, when we come to think of it, the historian of the future will get his complete picture of the time only when he realises how every scrap of the national energy was absorbed in the one master purpose. That being so it is arguable that Mr. WARD MUIR was thinking far ahead in compiling his hospital reminiscences, Observations of an Orderly

(SIMPKIN). One hastens to make it clear that the last thing intended or desired is to disparage the usefulness or the stark self-sacrifice of the men who are serving in menial capacities in our war hospitals, but to tell the truth this account of sculleries and laundry-baskets, polishing paste and nigger minstrels, bathrooms and pillow-slips, has not much intrinsic interest about it, nor are the author's general reflections very different from what one could supply oneself without much effort. His notes on war slang are about the best thing in the volume, and I liked the story of the blinded soldiers--feeling anything in the world but mournful or pathetic--who played pranks on the Tube escalator; but on the whole this is a book which will be of considerable interest only to the writer's fellow-labourers. They, beyond any doubt, will be glad to read this history of their familiar rounds and common tasks.

\* \* \* \* \*

\_Wanted, a Tortoise-Shell\_ (LANE) would have made an excellent short story, but to pursue its farcical developments through three hundred pages requires a considerable amount of perseverance. The scene of Mr. PETER BLUNDER'S book is laid in tropical Jallagar, where the British Resident was keener on cats than on his duties. A male tortoise-shell was what he fanatically and almost ferociously desired, and to obtain it he was ready to barter his daughter to one \_Kamp\_, who is tersely described as "a fat Swede." I conceived a strong distaste for this large and perspiring man, and can congratulate Mr. BLUNDELL on having created a character odious enough to linger in the memory. For the rest there are some gleams of real fun where a beach-comber tries to palm off a dyed cat as the long-deferred tortoise-shell, and the exit of this animal from a world too covetous to hold it is thoroughly sound farce. But on the whole I failed to get many of those quiet gurgles of delight which are the best tribute one can pay to a funny man's work.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: \_Chairman at Farmers' Ordinary.\_ "NOW, GENTLEMEN, FILL UP YOUR MATCHBOXES TO THE VERY GOOD HEALTH OF THE CATERER."]

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