

Punch, Volume 156, 26 March 1919

Various

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PUNCH,
OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.
VOL. 156.

March 26, 1919.

CHARIVARIA.

WILLIAM HOHENZOLLERN is reported to be busy sawing trees. Some declare that his energy is due to an hallucination that they are German generals. Others say the whole story is a clumsy attempt to discredit him with the Labour party.

Dublin Corporation has decided to increase its revenue by eight thousand pounds by raising the charge on water. Citizens are urged to put patriotism before prejudice and give the stuff a trial.

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The inconveniences that attend influenza reached their climax a few days ago when an occupant of a crowded tube train blew the nose of the man next to him in mistake for his own.

The beggar who has been going about telling a pitiful story of being wounded by a trench-mortar during the Jutland battle is now regarded by the police as an impostor.

A defendant in a County Court case at Liverpool last week stated in his evidence that he had been on the telephone for the last twenty years. In fairness to the Postal authorities he should have admitted that it was a trunk call.

[Illustration: _Foreman (late R.S.M.)._ "ERE! YOU AIN'T IN THE ARMY NOW. THERE'S NO CALL FOR _YOU_ TO KEEP A WATCH ON THE RHINE."]

A lady-correspondent, writing to a daily paper, laments the fact that the War has changed a great many husbands. Surely the wife who receives the wrong husband can get some sort of redress from the War Office.

All the main-line railways are to be electrified, Sir ERIC GEDDES told the House of Commons. Meanwhile he has successfully electrified all the old buffers.

A number of women are doing good work as mates on Medway sailing barges. The denial of the report that one of them recently looked at a Wapping policeman for five minutes on end without once repeating herself may be ascribed to professional jealousy.

"The small car," says a trade contemporary, "has come to stop." We can well believe it. It is an old habit.

It has been discovered that the new Education Act, which prohibits boys under twelve being worked for more than two hours on Sunday, may apply to choir-boys. A Commission, we understand, is to be called upon to decide finally whether they are really boys or just little demons.

A man who applied to the Bloomsbury County Court for relief against an eviction order stated that he could find no other suitable house, as he had nine children under fourteen years of age. His residential problem remains unsolved, but we understand, with regard to the other difficulty, that the Board of Works has offered to sell him a card index at considerably below cost.

"Bridegrooms," says a contemporary, "are discovering that weddings cost more." The growing practice among fathers-in-law of delivering their daughters "free at rail," instead of, as formerly, "from house to house," may have something to do with it.

"Ramsgate," says _The Daily Mail_, "is racing Margate in Thanet's reconstruction." At present Margate still claims to lead by one nigger and two winkle-barrows.

The Colorado Legislature has passed a resolution in favour of Irish independence. The remark attributed to Mr. A.J. BALFOUR, that he always thought Colorado was the name of a twopenny cigar, has failed to make the situation easier.

"A pupil at a West London 'out-of-work' school," says a news item, "daily attends his studies in an opera-hat." On being informed of this fact, Sir THOMAS BEECHAM is reported to have expressed the opinion that its significance was obvious.

President WILSON, it is announced, hopes to visit Scotland shortly for some golf. He believes that some adjustment of the dispute as to the respective merits of the running-up and pitch-and-stop methods of approach should be embodied in the Peace terms if international harmony is to be really secured.

Primroses and crocuses are blooming in North London. Pending an official announcement by _The Daily Mail_ people are requested to accept this as a preliminary Spring.

Concrete ships, says a Government official, can be made in moulds. But of course you must not forget to grease the tin.

A Sinn Feiner, arriving home in Crossgar, Co. Down, last week, had a very hearty welcome. Thirteen spectators and seven policemen were injured.

Many members of the Bar are greatly afraid that some learned judge will ask, "What is the Jazz-step?" before the question has really been settled by the dancers themselves.

The young lady who, on receiving a proposal of marriage over the telephone last week, replied, "Yes, who's speaking?" turns out to be an ex-typist recently demobilised from the Air Ministry.

It is interesting to note that to-day is the anniversary of the day
that was not a Flag-day last year.

* * * * *

ANOTHER SEX-PROBLEM.

"Information Wanted as to the whereabouts of James ---- (nee Liza
----), ship agent. Last heard of 30 years ago."--_Glasgow Paper_.

* * * * *

THE PRELIMINARY DOVE: ITS PROSPECTS.

Within a little week or two,
So all our sanguine prints declare,
The Dove (or Bird of Peace) is due
To spread its wings and take the air,
Like Mr. THOMAS when he flew
Across the firmamental blue
To join the PREMIER in communion
Touching the Railway Workers' Union.

We've waited many a weary week
With bulging eyes and fevered brow,
While WILSON pressed upon its beak
His League-of-Nations' olive bough,
Wondering what amount of weight
Its efforts could negotiate,
How much, in fact, the bird would stand
Without collapsing on the land.

And, even though it should contrive
To keep its pinions on the flap,
And by a _tour de force_ survive
This devastating handicap,
Yet are there perils in the skies
Whereon we blandly shut our eyes,
But which are bound to be incurred,
And, notably, the Bolshy-bird.

This brand of vulture, most obscene,
May have designs upon the Dove;
Its carrion taste was never keen
On the Millennial reign of Love;
And I, for one, am stiff with fear
About our little friend's career,
Lest that disgusting fowl should maul
And eat it, olive-branch and all.

I mention this to mark the quaint
Notion of "Peace" the public has,
That wants to smear the Town with paint,
To whoop and jubilate and jazz;
And while our flappers beat the floor
There's Russia soaked in seas of gore,
And LENIN waxing beastly fat;
Nobody seems to think of that.

O.S.

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PERFECTLY UNAUTHENTIC ANECDOTES.

which may be reproduced (with the permission of Mr. Punch) in any forthcoming volume of Anybody's Reminiscences.

"You do things so sketchily and casually," said FRITH to WHISTLER one day. "Now when I paint a picture I take pains. 'The Derby Day' cost me weeks and months of sleeplessness. I did nothing else; I gave my whole mind to it." "Oh," said WHISTLER, "that's where it's gone to, is it?"

* * * * *

When Mr. BERNARD SHAW made his tour of the ports in order to popularise Socialism in the Navy, he was courteously received at Portsmouth by Sir HEDWORTH MEUX. The talk happened to turn on the theatre, and the Admiral was candid enough to confess himself somewhat at sea with regard to the merits of contemporary writers. "Now, Mr. SHAW," he said in his breezy way, "I wish you would tell me who is the most eminent of the playwrights of to-day?" "Ay, ay, Sir," said Mr. SHAW promptly.

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Dr. Brotherton told me that he was once with MATTHEW ARNOLD in an election crowd at Oxford, when the Professor of Poetry accidentally collided with a working-man flown with Radicalism and beer. "Go to blazes!" said the proletarian. "My friend," replied ARNOLD, "we are well met. In me you see the official representative of Literature, whereas you, I perceive, stand for Dogma."

* * * * *

Mrs. Brown of Newquay, who claims to be the original _Mrs. Partington_, told me that SYDNEY SMITH'S last years were overclouded by his inability to discover the riddle to which the answer is contained in the words, "The one rode a horse and the other rode a dendron."

* * * * *

Probably few people remember a Nottinghamshire poet of an earlier day who fulfilled with much conscientiousness the duties of local laureate. It was the age of Notts's pre-eminence in cricket, and that, with other reasons, inspired the bard to write some verses which opened with the line, "Is there a county to compare with Notts?" The county of Derby was jealous of its neighbour in other things besides sport, and considered itself to have scored when its own tame minstrel retorted with a parody ending:--

"Is there a county to compare with Notts?
Lots!"

Unfortunately the thing was catching, and other counties did their best to follow suit, though with considerable difficulty as to rhymes. I think it was a singer of Tavistock who won the laurels. After disposing of an adjacent rival with the contemptuous jingle, "Dorset--Curse it!" he wound up:--

"Is there a country to compare with Devon?
Heaven!"

* * * * *

Lady Crownderby once told me that she was among the first to see Lord HOUGHTON on his return from Spain, and she asked him what he thought

of Spanish women in comparison with those of our own country. "My dear lady," replied HOUGHTON, "I feel like LOT when he escaped from the Cities of the Plain."

* * * * *

At a dinner given in honour of her nephew's appointment to a Rural Deanery, Mrs. Hinkson-Hanksey told me that she once rallied DISRAELI on his lack of religious profession, saying how much it compromised him in the eyes of many of his fellow-countrymen in comparison with his great rival. "My dear lady," said DISRAELI, "you are aware that the New Testament divides all men into two categories. Without specifying the class to which I personally belong, I am quite willing to admit that Mr. GLADSTONE is a sheep and possesses many of the characteristics of that admirable animal."

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When I was at Hawarden in the summer of 1893, little DOROTHY DREW asked her grandfather for the loan of a book "to press flowers in." It is a process, as readers may know, not good for the book, and I thought the illustrious statesman and bibliophile looked a little embarrassed. But his face cleared in a moment, and he went out of the room and presently returned with a sufficient volume, in which the flowers were duly laid, the book being then, with the united efforts of the company, subjected to the necessary pressure under a heavy cabinet. Anxious to know which volume of his beloved library Mr. GLADSTONE had selected for desecration, I took an early opportunity of furtively examining the title of the tortured tome. It was _Coningsby_.

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ANOTHER IMPENDING APOLOGY.

"Councillor ----'s son will be married to the eldest daughter of Councillor ----. The members of the Corporation are invited to the suspicious event."--_Local Paper_.

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[Illustration: THE DISTRACTIONS OF AN INDISPENSABLE.]

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[Illustration: _Sergeant_. "Now, ME LAD, A SUIT OF MUFTI OR FORTY-FIVE SHILLINGS?" _Tommy_. "OO, LUMME! I'LL PAY THE FINE."]

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GALLERY PLAY.

It wasn't till Panmore noticed its absence on his return from France that I remembered the little oil painting which I had left at the Ferndale Gallery on sale or return, during the early days of the War, when my financial outlook was bad.

Panmore said he had always wanted to buy it, but hadn't liked to ask me if I would part with it. I assured him that excess even of delicacy was a mistake and that I would try to get the picture back.

So I wrote to the Gallery thus:--

DEAR SIRS (it seemed absurd to write "Dear Gallery"),--In 1914 or

1915 I brought you a small oil painting, which you agreed to sell or return to me. As I haven't heard from you since, I conclude that there has been nothing doing in such pictures and I should like to have it back. The picture is quite a small one, about the size of an ordinary book, and so far as I recollect it portrays a man looking at a horse, to see if its withers stand where they did; or perhaps wondering whether he would sell it and buy a scooter. As a matter of fact I never took particular notice of the picture, not caring for it, but a friend of mine who knows it well appears interested in it and wants to buy it. So please let me have it back as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

THEOPHILUS B. PIPER-CARY.

P.S.--By the way, there's a cow, I remember, in the background; a red one. Not a red background; a red cow.

This was the answer I received:--

DEAR SIR,--In reply to yours of the 13th inst., we remember your visit, but cannot trace having such a picture as you describe in our possession at present. We believe you dealt with our Mr. James Langford, who joined up in May, 1915, and is not yet demobilised. He is in Egypt at the moment, we understand, and we are afraid it would take some time to get into communication with him.

We shall be glad if under the circumstances you will allow the matter to rest until his return.

In any case we are afraid we cannot hold ourselves responsible for the picture, unless you can produce a receipt from us proving that it reached us.

We are, Yours obediently,

pp. THE FERNDAL GALLERY.

J.S.

The last paragraph in their letter gave me the impression that they knew they had the picture but had mislaid it. Meanwhile Panmore seemed so hot on it and I was so badly hit by the War that I thought I would have another shot at recovering it. So I addressed the Gallery as follows:--

DEAR SIR,--Thanks for your letter, and in reply I should be obliged if you could get another search party out. I have found a receipt for the picture, signed with a name that might, if straightened out, be James Langford.

My friend is getting quite excited about it, and he is the sort of person one wants to humour. He is a Lieut.-Colonel, an O.B.E., and, what is more important still, one of the feoffees of Buckley's Hospital (a fifteenth-century foundation here), and whatever a feoffee may be he is not the kind of man to toy with in a small town like this.

I forgot to mention that there is an inn on the left of the picture, and a girl coming out of it carrying, perhaps, a bran-mash for the horse or some Government dope for the man, and there are some hens, all fully regardant and expectant, at her feet.

Hoping to hear in the course of a post or two that you have found the painting,

I am, Yours anxiously,

THEOPHILUS B. PIPER-CARY.

P.S.--Don't forget there's a cow in the background; a red cow.

Three days later I received a picture (not mine) from the Gallery with this letter:--

DEAR SIR,--After a most exhaustive search we have found and send herewith what we believe to be your picture, though it does not quite answer to your description. It is, however, the only one of which we do not appear to have any record.

Our Mr. Langford seems likely to be abroad for some months, so unless you will accept this picture in settlement of the matter we do not see any present way out of the difficulty.

Confident that, if it is not yours, it is at least just as good, we trust that you will agree to cry quits.

We are, Yours obediently,

pp. THE FERNDAL GALLERY.

J.S.

Why they should feel sure it was just as good, unless they remembered my picture, wasn't very clear, but evidently the receipt had put the wind up them, and I wrote and accepted the substitute at once, because Panmore liked it better even than the original picture. He said it was an Alken and gave me far more than I would have thought of asking for it, or for the original one.

About a week after selling it I received this wire from the Gallery:--

Please return painting sent in error. Very valuable Alken. Have customer.

FERNDAL.

"Diamond cut diamond," I said to myself. And I replied thus:--

DEAR SIR,--I received your wire, but regret that I cannot comply with your request. Firstly, because I have already accepted the picture which you regarded as mine or its equivalent, in place of the one that was mine and is now yours; and, secondly, because my friend the feoffee has already bought it, the one that was yours and is now mine, or rather his (you know what I mean, don't you?), and I haven't the heart to ask him to return it.

Perhaps yours (the one that is now yours and was mine before), being the equivalent of the one that was yours and is now mine (or rather the feoffee's), would suit your client. I can only suggest your having another look for it; the matter so far as I am concerned is at an end. Yours faithfully,

THEOPHILUS B. PIPER-CARY.

P.S.--You'll know it when you find it. There's a red cow in the background.

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"Sentence of Mike Ancon, found guilty of housekeeping, was postponed yesterday afternoon."--_Manitoba Free Press._

This species of crime is almost extinct in England.

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[Illustration: THE "HESITATION" WALTZ.]

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THE RISING EGG.

Whatever may be the decline in the price of eggs their social movement is clearly upwards. The following passage from _The Croydon Advertiser_ gives an admirable life-history of the egg, from shell to profit-sharing:--

"Eggs will be dated and graded and sold accordingly, and as soon as they have done laying fattened for table purposes, also young cockerels. They will be killed and plucked, and the feathers will be sorted and sold in the best markets. So you see they will receive full market price for their produce; then if they are shareholders they will receive a further profit in the difference between the cost and the selling, also the very big amounts received for the skins and the feathers."

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[Illustration: HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL.

Oldest Inhabitant. "I NEVER EXPECTED TO LIVE TILL THE END OF THE WAR, MA'AM; BUT NOW I'M HOPING TO BE SPARED TO SEE THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT ONE."]

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CHOICE BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

THE NEW PARIS SKETCH-BOOK; OR, THE FIRST FIFTY THOUSAND.

By GLADYS FLAPPERTON, O.B.E., Author of _Peace and Plenty of It._

This charming volume describes in detail the delightful Parisian holiday which has been provided by the Government under the best possible conditions for young ladies with (and without) a knowledge of typewriting.

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_TIGER LILY,

A POEM IN FOURTEEN SPASMS._

By WOODROW WILSON.

Affectionately dedicated to M. CLEMENCEAU.

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THE HISTORY OF FREDERICK THE GREAT.

BY HAROLD SMITH, M.P.

("England's Harold.")

With an Introduction by the LORD CHANCELLOR.

* * * * *

O SMILLIE, WE HAVE MISSED YOU, AND OTHER LYRICS.

Highly recommended by Messrs. MUDIE and SANKEY (the Author).

Copies of this beautiful work have been accepted by several mining royalties.

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THE GEDDES BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY.

Publication of the Second Volume (AUC--ERIC).

It is hoped to complete in twelve handsome volumes this the first attempt to record and codify the achievements and services of the GEDDES family in the Great War.

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WASTEWARD HO!

A ROMANCE OF CIPPENHAM.

With an Introductory Apologia by Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL.

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THE NEXT WAR.

["As the result of a conference called by the War Office it has been decided to wage a war of annihilation against the warble-fly. It is hoped that by means of concerted action through the country this pestilent insect, so injurious to the hides of horses and cattle, may be completely stamped out." _Daily Paper._]

The warble-fly, the warble-fly
Is absolutely doomed to die.
They've summoned all the General Staff,
There's going to be a mighty "strafe,"
And soon the land from shore to shore
Will echo with the din of war,
As armed hosts with martial cries
Descend upon the warble-flies.

We've got the shells, we've got the guns
(The same that overwhelmed the Huns),
And, what is more, we've got the Man;
With WINSTON riding in the van
I do not think there's any doubt
That we shall put the foe to rout,
And, scoring peace by compromise,
Annihilate the warble-flies.

In tranquil peace the gentle beeves
Shall chew their cud through summer eves;
No more shall that alarming warble
Affright the calm of heifer or bull,

And send them snorting round the croft
With eyes of fear and tails aloft.
Till every warble-fly be floored
Whitehall will _never_ sheathe the sword.

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The Growth of Impropropriety.

"Her hair is always exquisitely dressed, and her shoes in perfect shape. No more in the way of dress is required of any woman."

Daily Mirror.

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"PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT OF A DANGEROUS CORONER."

Headline in Provincial Paper.

The best plan, possibly, would be to get the jury to sit on him.

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[Illustration: NEWSPAPER HEADINGS POPULARLY ILLUSTRATED.

"INFLUENZA MICROBE DISCOVERED AT A LONDON HOSPITAL."]

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MRS. BLOGGINS'S STATEMENT.

It is not too much to say that bed-making circles in Cambridge have been agitated to their utmost depths by the recent advent of some hundreds of American youths who have come to pursue certain courses of study within the University walls. Let us make one thing perfectly clear. Bed-makers do not object to Americans as Americans, but this avalanche of Transatlantics arrives on the very eve of the vacation, just when the bed-makers are packing off the contingent of young Naval officers who have been making things hum during the past term.

Persuaded that their too-brief holidays will be entirely absorbed in attending to the Americans, the bed-makers urge with some justice that they too are entitled to enjoy the beautiful things of this enchanting world quite as much as miners and railway-men. We understand that meetings of their Association are being held, and that the University authorities are faced by a situation which is rapidly passing beyond their control. Bed-makers are amongst the most loyal members of the community, but they feel, as a prominent member of the profession put it, that "the last camel breaks the straw's back," and they are determined to uphold their immemorial rights.

We have thought it our duty therefore to interview the celebrated Mrs. Bloggins, the _doyenne_ of the Corps of Bed-makers of Trinity College. We found the lady in her home in Paradise Walk, where she was engaged in eating some excellent buttered toast. We lost no time in explaining the purport of our visit.

"We desire to know, Mrs. Bloggins," we began, "what your feelings are with regard to the Americans."

"Ah," said Mrs. Bloggins, speaking with deep emotion, "you may well call 'em Americans, for I've never bin so troubled about anythink before. Some people seem to git the notion into their 'eads that bed-makers do no work. Why we're arst to slave from mornin' till

night, and our pay is paltry. Things in Cambridge isn't like what they was. Time was when our young gentlemen used to 'ave big dinners in their rooms, and a careful bed-maker could save a bone or two. Nowadays they,'re only cheese-parers, that's what I call 'em. You won't believe me, I know, but my mother, who was a bed-maker afore me, used to 'ave a month at the seaside every year, all paid for out of money give to 'er by 'er young gentlemen. To be sure there was a wrangler, or somethink of that kind, who didn't come up to the mark, so she soon got rid of 'im; 'e used to find 'is butter was took by the cat, and accidents of that kind.

"Mind yer," she continued, "I ain't got nothink to say against the Americans. They may be the most liberal-'earted gentlemen in the world for all I know. But it's the principle of the thing I'm objectin' to. It's a case of kill me quick or cure me to-morrow, and if President WILSON was to talk till next week 'e couldn't make it no different. You can't make a silk sock out of a side of bacon, and that's true whichever way you look at it."

"But what steps," we urged, "does your Association intend to take, Mrs. Bloggins, over this matter?"

"I don't know nothink about no 'sociations," said Mrs. Bloggins, "but I do know that we're all in it, and Mrs. Pledger and Mrs. 'Uggins, and the rest of 'em, we knows our power and we intends to use it."

"In what way do you mean?" I said.

She looked at me cunningly.

"Now you're spyin'. It's dirty work and I won't 'ave it 'ere. You might be the Proctor hisself for all I cares--you're not going to ferret nothink out of me."

Hereupon she rose with great dignity and plainly indicated that the interview was at an end.

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La Haute Cuisine.

"Cook; French; age 38; wages L25-L30 week."--_Morning Post._

* * * * *

TO THE DEATH.

[According to the papers, two Frenchmen have agreed to fight a duel in aeroplanes.]

"Cauliflower!" shrieked Gaspard Volauvent across the little table in the _estaminet_. His face bristled with rage.

"Serpent!" replied Jacques Rissolo, bristling with equal dexterity.

The two stout little men glared ferociously at each other. Then Jacques picked up his glass and poured the wine of the country over his friend's head.

"Drown, serpent!" he said magnificently. He beckoned to the waiter. "Another bottle," he said. "My friend has drunk all this."

Gaspard removed the wine from his whiskers with the local paper and leant over the table towards Jacques.

"This must be wiped out in blood," he said slowly. "You understand?"

"Perfectly," replied the other. "The only question is whose."

"Name your weapons," said Gaspard Volauvent grandly.

"Aeroplanes," replied Jacques Rissolle after a moment's thought.

"Bah! I cannot fly."

"Then I win," said Jacques simply.

The other looked at him in astonishment.

"What! You fly?"

"No; but I can learn."

"Then I will learn too," said Gaspard with dignity. "We meet--in six months?"

"Good." Jacques pointed to the ceiling. "Say three thousand feet up."

"Three thousand four hundred," said Gaspard for the sake of disagreeing.

"After all, that is for our seconds to arrange. My friend Epinard of the Roullens Aerodrome will act for me. He will also instruct me how to bring serpents to the ground."

"With the idea of cleansing the sky of cauliflowers," said Gaspard, "I shall proceed to the flying-ground at Dormancourt; Blanchaille, the instructor there, will receive your friend."

He bowed and walked out.

Details were soon settled. On a date six months ahead the two combatants would meet three thousand two hundred feet above the little town in which they lived, and fight to the death. In the event of both crashing, the one who crashed last would be deemed the victor. It was Gaspard's second who insisted on this clause; Gaspard himself felt that it did not matter.

The first month of instruction went by. At the end of it Jacques Rissolle had only one hope. It was that when he crashed he should crash on some of Gaspard's family. Gaspard had no hope, but one consolation. It was that no crash could involve his stomach, which he invariably left behind him as soon as the aeroplane rose.

At the end of the second month Gaspard wrote to Jacques.

"My friend," he wrote, "the hatred of you which I nurse in my bosom, and which fills me with the desire to purge you from the sky, is in danger of being transferred to my instructor. Let us therefore meet and renew our enmity."

Jacques Rissolle wrote back to Gaspard.

"My enemy," he wrote, "there is nobody in the whole of the Roullens aerodrome whom I do not detest with a detestation beside which my hatred for you seems as maudlin adoration. This is notwithstanding the fact that I make the most marvellous progress in the art of flying. It is merely something in their faces which annoys me. Let me therefore see yours again, in the hope that it will make me think more kindly of theirs."

They met, poured wine over each other and parted. After another month the need of a further stimulant was felt. They met again, and agreed to insult each other weekly.

On the last day of his training Gaspard spoke seriously to his instructor.

"You see that I make nothing of it," he said. "My thoughts are ever with the stomach that I leave behind. Not once have I been in a position to take control. How then can I fight? My friend, I arrange it all. You shall take my place."

"Is that quite fair to Rissole?" asked Blanchaille doubtfully.

"Do not think that I want you to hurt him. That is not necessary. He will hurt himself. Keep out of his way until he has finished with himself, and then fly back here. It is easy."

It seemed the best way; indeed the only way. Gaspard Volauvent could never get to the _rendezvous_ alone, and it would be fatal to his honour if Jacques arrived there and found nobody to meet him. Reluctantly Blanchaille agreed.

At the appointed hour Gaspard put his head cautiously out of his bedroom window and gazed up into the heavens. He saw two aeroplanes straight above him. At the thought that he might have been in one of them he shuddered violently. Indeed he felt so unwell that the need for some slight restorative became pressing. He tripped off to the _estaminet_.

It was empty save for one table. Gaspard walked towards it, hoping for a little conversation. The occupant lowered the newspaper from in front of his face and looked up.

It was too much for Gaspard.

"Coward!" he shrieked.

Jacques, who had been just going to say the same thing, hastily substituted "Serpent!"

"I know you," cried Gaspard. "You send your instructor up in your place. Poltroon!"

Jacques picked up his glass and poured the wine of the country over his friend's head.

"Drown, serpent," he said magnificently. He beckoned to the waiter. "Another bottle," he said. "My friend has drunk all this."

Gaspard removed the wine from his whiskers with Jacques' paper and leant over him.

"This must be wiped out in blood," he said slowly. "Name your weapons."

"Submarines," said Jacques after a moment's thought.

A.A.M.

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THE SWANS OF YPRES.

Ypres was once a weaving town,
Where merchants jostled up and down
And merry shuttles used to ply;
On the looms the fleeces were
Brought from the mart at Winchester,
And silver flax from Burgundy.

Who is weaving there to-night?
Only the moon, whose shuttle white
Makes silver warp on dyke and pond;
Her hands fling veils of lily-woof
On riven spire and open roof
And on the haggard marsh beyond.

No happy ghosts or fairies haunt
The ancient city, huddling gaunt,
Where waggons crawl with anxious wheel
And o'er the marshland desolate
Win slowly to the battered gate
That Flemings call the Gate of Lille.

Yet by some wonder it befalls
That, where the lonely outer walls
Brood in the silent pool below,
Among the sedges of the moat,
Like lilies furled, the two swans float;
"The Swans of Ypres" men call them now.

They have heard guns and many men
Come and depart and come again,
They have seen strange disastrous things,
When fire and fume rolled o'er their nest;
But changeless and aloof they rest,
The Swans of Ypres, with folded wings.

* * * * *

"Will Treasury notes ever be displaced by boxes of chocolates?
"--_Daily Paper_.

Certainly. Ours often are.

* * * * *

From the report of the Committee on the Staffing of Government Offices
we gather that there has been a good deal of overflapping.

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[Illustration: TRANSPORT FACILITIES.]

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[Illustration: _Mistress._ "OH, JANE, HOW DID YOU DO THAT?"

Maid. "I'M VERY SORRY, MUM; I WAS ACCIDENTALLY DUSTING."]

* * * * *

THE SCHLOSS BILLET.

We had not expected much of a billet in a defeated and starving
country; that was probably why everybody was enthusiastic over it--at
first. I, as billeting officer, was especially proud of having
discovered it. The very thing for Brigade Headquarters--secluded,

dignified, commanding and spacious.

A couple of kilos from the gates through the drive brings you to the Schloss. Entering a hall about the size of a modern theatre you journey to the ante-room, a vast apartment, which for space compares favourably with the Coliseum at Rome. A world-exhibition of pictures and tapestries covers the walls of the Schloss, while an acre or two of painted ceiling shows the chief events of German history, from the Creation to the Franco-Prussian War.

In the Dining-room, reached by a progress over carpets and rugs representative of all the best periods of Oriental art, it would be fairly easy to stage a review on the table itself; while in the Music-room a hundred or so lorries could be parked without attracting observation too glaringly. Should the need arise, the Library could accommodate a battalion on parade, a rifle range or sufficient office room for Q branch of a division. A labyrinth of corridors and servants' bedrooms harbours the rank and file, and it is said that the number of kitchens, pantries and cellars in the north and east wings runs into three figures.

The Divisional Commander called it "homely"; the Corps Commander remarked that its style was "not cramped, anyhow--what?" and the Army Commander pronounced it very "cosy."

The first two days I did not see my servant at all. On Wednesday he turned up just before lunch. On Monday and Tuesday, he explained, he had wandered through corridors and passages trying to find my room, and, by rising an hour before _reveille_, he thought he would be able to get from his quarters to mine by about breakfast-time.

We used to adjourn to the billiard-room after dinner, but gave it up because it was necessary to stop play at half-past ten in order to be in bed by midnight. Signals is worried because he has not enough line left to reach Battalions, all available supplies having been used up in connecting the General's room with various parts of the Schloss. We are continually late for dinner owing to errors in judging the distances from one room to another. Our once happy family has dissolved into silent morose individuals, for we have grown strange and distant to one another. Liaison between departments has broken down, and the Staff-Captain whom I saw yesterday in the distance is suffering from premature decay.

But a solution has been found, for the Engineers are unloading a couple of Nissen huts to put up in the hall, and we shall soon be a united family once more.

* * * * *

"The surveyor said that as things were at present he had little or no authority over the men who, for the most part, simply considered him his equal."--_Trade Paper._

If he doesn't take a stronger line the men will consider him his inferior.

* * * * *

From a short story:--

"She was a slip of a thing, with the sort of eyes that go well with curly long lashes--if they are blue, as hers were."--_Weekly Paper._

Our local _coiffeur_ only stocks the old-fashioned peroxide.

* * * * *

[Illustration: OVERWEIGHTED.

PRESIDENT WILSON. "HERE'S YOUR OLIVE BRANCH. NOW GET BUSY." DOVE OF PEACE. "OF COURSE I WANT TO PLEASE EVERYBODY; BUT ISN'T THIS A BIT THICK?"]

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE STRENUOUS LIFE.

BEFORE TAKING OFFICE ALL MEMBERS IN FUTURE WILL HAVE TO PASS A TEST OF THEIR ABILITY TO SUSTAIN A PROLONGED FLIGHT, FIVE THOUSAND FEET UP, AT A HUNDRED-AND-SEVENTY MILES AN HOUR.]

Monday, March 17th--Mr. GEORGE TERRELL, always a little inclined to look upon the black side of things, was apprehensive about the spread of Bolshevism in this country. Not so Lord HENRY BENTINCK, who genially exploded with "Is not Bolshevism in this country a pure bogey?" Not quite that, perhaps; but I gathered that in Mr. BONAR LAW'S opinion it hasn't a ghost of a chance.

Great cheers from the Wee Frees greeted the advent of Mr. A.E. NEWBOULD, the victor of West Leyton, whose defeat of the Coalition candidate has increased the size of their party by something like four per cent. As the new Member is understood to be connected with the film business his colleagues are hoping that they will soon have Ministers on the "movies."

We know on high authority that evil communications corrupt good manners. Sir ERIC GEDDES goes further and believes that they corrupt everything. That was the text of his capital speech on the second reading of the Transportation Bill. Dispensing on this occasion with his usual typescript, he discoursed at large for an hour and a-half on the paralytic condition of our railways, roads, canals and docks.

We all had our pleasant morning dreams, he said, but they usually disappeared after we had had our cold bath; and the country, which was no longer rich, but poor, must take its douche. His own dream is of a beautifully centralised control, directing all our traffic agencies (save tramways and shipping) into the most convenient channels; and he won't be happy till he gets it. But judging by some of the speeches that followed he too may have a frigid disillusionment when the Bill comes up against the "interests" in Committee. Mr. T.P. O'CONNOR, on behalf of Liverpool, described it as the product of "an old bureaucracy and a young Parliamentarian," and Mr. RENWICK declared that, if it passed, the Manchester Ship Canal would be "between the devil and the deep sea," surely an uncalled-for attack on Cottonopolis.

Upon the adjournment, Col. CLAUDE LOWTHER again raised the question of the payment of German indemnities, and Mr. BONAR LAW again declared that the policy of the Government was to demand the largest amount that Germany could pay, but not to demand what we knew she couldn't pay. It would have saved him a lot of trouble if at the General Election the Government spokesmen had insisted as much upon the second half of the policy as they did upon the first.

Tuesday, March 18th--GILBERT'S fanciful description of the "most susceptible Chancellor" is justified by the way in which the present occupant of the Woolsack and his predecessors vie with one another in the endeavour to secure the favour of the fair sex. Today it was Lord HALDANE'S turn to oblige, and he brought in a Bill to enable

Scotswomen to become Advocates and Law Agents. Lord HALSBURY'S contribution to the work of feminine emancipation has not yet been announced. The rumour that a deputation of ladies recently approached him with a proposal that they should be eligible for judicial office—"Scarlet and ermine are _so_ becoming"—and that he put them off with the old joke about there being "enough old women on the Bench already" is, of course, apocryphal.

Not infrequently in the official reports of the Lords' debates a speech begins thus: "Lord ---- (_who was indistinctly heard_)." The Commons' report might well adopt this salutary practice as a warning to Members who persistently mumble, or who address their remarks to the body of the House instead of to the SPEAKER. Ministers are the worst offenders. One of them was asked this afternoon, for example, whether the Judicial Adviser to the SULTAN had discouraged the use of the English language in the Egyptian Courts, but all we could hear of the _sotto voce_ conversation between him and his interrogator was that "er--er--language--er--had--been--er--er--misunderstood."

Some savages, travellers tell us, are unable to count beyond five. Some Ministers, on the other hand, show an inability to reckon except in millions. Mr. CHURCHILL, when asked how many soldiers were not receiving the recent increase of pay, remarked casually that the numbers were "not so very great--half-a-million would cover them." Happily these "sloppy statistics" (to recall a phrase used by Mr. ASQUITH during the Tariff Reform controversy) do not appeal to the FOOD-CONTROLLER. He, being invited to say whether the Government had made "approximately £2,400,000" by the charge on cattle-sales, replied that the amount was "approximately" £3,449,939; and we felt that he was cut to the heart at not being able to give the odd shillings and pence.

The renewed debate on the Transportation Bill revealed a good deal of opposition. Roadmen thought it an excellent project for railways; railwaymen were all in favour of its being applied to docks; and dockmen had no objection to its being tried on the roads. But none of them wanted it for his own particular interest. Sir EDWARD CARSON'S objections were both particular and general. Belfast would be ruined if its port were controlled by "a nest of politicians" in Dublin, but apart from that he doubted whether the promised economies would be realised in any direction. Ministers were "gluttons for centralisation," and would, he prophesied, incur the usual fate of gluttons, acute indigestion.

Mr. BONAR LAW, while admitting that he himself would not have voted for the Bill five years ago, declared that the War had made it essential. That seemed to be the general opinion, for the second reading was agreed to without a division.

Wednesday, March 19th.--Lord MALMESBURY, who has lately been the victim of a burglary, attributed it to housebreakers having been demobilised before policemen. Whether this was done on the ground that they conducted "one man businesses," or because someone in Whitehall assumed that the wielders of the centre-bit must be "pivotal," I do not know, but an Army Order requiring Commanding Officers to keep the balance even between criminals and coppers seems to be urgently needed.

The Bishops were delighted to hear from Lord ERNLE that his department includes a Hop-Controller, and are going to ask him to turn his attention to the Jazz.

Museums could not be opened just yet, said Lord STANMORE, because some eight thousand officials of various departments were at present lodged in these buildings. To judge by the comments of the public Press,

there are several hundreds more who ought to be kept there.

Thursday, March 20th--Lord WINTERTON wanted to know what the Government was doing to counteract Mr. BERNARD SHAW'S alleged anti-British propaganda in the United States. Mr. CECIL HARMSWORTH thought Professor OMAN'S recent memorandum would prove a sufficient counterblast. He had, however, no objection to adding Mr. SHAW'S latest pamphlet to "the large budget of Shavian literature" already at the Foreign Office, where, it is said, the clerks on night-duty like to beguile their leisure with light fiction.

Late in the evening Mr. BONAR LAW announced the intentions of the Government with regard to the coal industry. It would adopt Mr. Justice SANKEY'S report, giving the men a large portion of their demands. If the miners still persisted in striking--well, the State would strike too, with all its might; otherwise there was an end of government in this country. The cheers which greeted this statement seriously annoyed Mr. JACK JONES, who sits for Silvertown, and maintains the explosive reputation of his constituency.

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[Illustration: THE CROWN OF OLD KING COAL.

TRYING IT ON.]

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THE CROSSING-SWEEPER.

Five years ago he swept the snow,
Or the mud, or the dust or the leaves that blow,
Or stood at the corner "dossing";
Picking up rubbish and dangerous rind
That careless people had left behind,
He swept the crossing.

And still he sweeps and clears the way
In blizzard and mist and soaking spray,
Out on the Channel tossing;
Picking up mines of a devilish kind
That unscrupulous people have left behind,
He sweeps the crossing.

* * * * *

"COAL STRIKE POPSTONED."

Provincial Paper.

Much the best thing to do with it.

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DRAMATISTS TO THE RESCUE.

In view of the theory developed by the Ministry of Reconstruction's Sub-Committee on Organisation and Conditions of Domestic Service, that "the attitude adopted by the Press and the Stage is usually an unfortunate one, as servants are frequently represented as comic or flippant characters, and are held up to ridicule," a meeting of our leading dramatists was hastily convened last evening by Lady HEADFORT (who, it will be remembered, is all for calling her maids "Home-birds") to engage their sympathetic co-operation in aid of mistresses, housekeepers and employers generally. What the stage

has taken away the stage must give back: that is Lady HEADFORT'S contention. Not that the domestic problem will even then be settled; there will probably still be difficulty in persuading W.A.A.C.s and Land Women and Munitioners who have tasted blood to descend below stairs again; but perhaps a little help will be forthcoming. Hence this influential gathering.

Sir SQUIRE BANCROFT, who presided, said that the domestic problem was one of great seriousness. Personally he rarely descended to the servants' hall, but he did not pretend to be unaware of the usefulness of such regions and of our dependence upon them. There must be give and take. If the stage had been guilty of too much levity in its portraiture of domestic servants, then, in the interests of all of us, it must make what our lively neighbours call the _amende honorable_.

Sir JAMES BARRIE said that no one could hold him personally to blame. His plays had always exhibited domestic servants in a most favourable light. Not only was a butler the hero of _The Admirable Crichton_, a maidservant the heroine of _A Kiss for Cinderella_ and a charwoman the heroine of _The Old Lady Shows Her Medals_, but the actual authorship of _Peter Pan_ was given to the smallest nursemaid on record.

Mr. SOMERSET MAUGHAM also claimed to be on the side of the home-birds. Had he not in _Smith_ written a part of strong parlour-maid interest for Miss MARIE LOeHR?

Mr. G.B. SHAW said that there was no need for the meeting at all, because he was just putting the finishing touches to a witty drama which would settle the whole question. In this play, which, he could tell them on the best authority in the world, his own, was a work of surpassing genius, the Irish Question, which had baffled statesmen and philosophers for centuries, is settled once and for all by the wisdom and presence of mind of a Kerry kitchenmaid.

The Chairman said that perhaps the meeting might as well proceed with its discussion, since there was always the possibility that the run of Mr. SHAW'S play might not equal that of his last, which, he understood, had just been produced in New York and had come off almost at once.

Mr. HENRY ARTHUR JONES said that if any branch of art could effect social transformations it was the drama. Personally he looked upon the stage as only one degree less powerful than the Senate and vastly more serious than the Church. Its first duty was to instruct, elevate and reform; to amuse was never its true function. Hence, if the dramatists of the country cared to take up the task of remedying the servant shortage, the matter would be quickly settled. But only, added the speaker with extreme gravity, if the authors of the pernicious rubbish known as _revue_ were first gagged and bound.

Mr. MAX PEMBERTON said that, although he had given up _revue_ writing in favour of transforming farcical plays, he felt that he might make an appeal to the authors of _revue_ (who often exceeded the audience in number) to join in this very laudable campaign. Speaking as one of the two-and-twenty Hippodromios, although no longer in that capacity, he would appeal to his successors to paint life below stairs in such resplendent hues that the desire instantly to take service would be implanted in every female bosom.

Mr. ALFRED SUTRO, speaking at the moment not so much as a dramatist as a man without a cook, said that he agreed heartily with the sentiments of the gentleman who had just sat down.

Sir ARTHUR WING PINERO said that he was always willing to help worthy causes and was as ready to write a play for the object in view as, not

long since, he had been to write one to encourage economy. But it was useless unless the company chosen would co-operate. The dramatist did not stand alone. So long as the ordinary stage idea of a parlourmaid was a saucy nymph with a feather brush and very short skirts, so long would dramatists strive in vain to exalt her calling. He was prepared to do his best, but feared that the actors' traditions would prove too strong.

Mr. WALTER MELVILLE said that he hoped nothing would be done to tamper with such traditions as Sir ARTHUR complained of. It was the duty of a stage servant to begin plays and to be funny. The curtain of a farce should rise on a butler and a parlourmaid remarking on the fact that master was suspiciously late last night; and the butler should be amorous, bibulous and peculative, and the parlourmaid coy and trim. Similarly, footmen should be haughty and drop their aitches, cooks short-tempered, red and fat, and office-boys knowing and cheeky. The public expected it, and the public ought to have it because the public paid.

There being no further remarks, the meeting dispersed, the various speakers returning sadly home to perform the household duties.

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"EX-KAISER TO PAP THE PENALTY."

Sunday Paper.

We always feared he would get off with a soft punishment.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Docker_ (_by way of concluding a heated argument with Scotsman_). "WELL, GO UP THERE, THEN, AN' TALK TO YOUR BLINKIN' SCOTCH PALS."]

* * * * *

OUR POPULAR GUIDES.

"HOW INFLUENZA MAY BE SPREAD."

Headline in a Daily Paper.

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A correspondent writes: "It may interest you to know that I recently received the following statement from a provincial branch of a floor-cloth company:--

'Owing to some of the principal ingredients used in the manufacture of floor coverings having been taken over by the Ministry of Food, the price of the material is again advanced.'

Have you noticed it at all in your soup?"

* * * * *

THE HOUSE-HUNTER

Unless something is done for Higgins without delay the nation must prepare to face a tremendous rise in the rate of mortality among house-agents.

Soon after he came back from the War he began to adopt a threatening

attitude (as the police-court witnesses say) towards these gentlemen. Recently he has gone beyond the threatening stage. If rumour can be trusted, he has thrown at least six of them through their office windows. He has taken a dislike to the whole tribe. They are, in his opinion, a gang of criminals for whom no punishment could be too severe, because they impose upon the public in general and Higgins in particular, by continuing in business as if they were in a position to let houses when, as a matter of fact, there are no houses for them to let.

Higgins wants a house. Yes, incredible though it may sound, this man, who for years has been content to dwell in a dug-out or consort with creeping things in the confines of a canvas tent, and even on occasion make his bed beneath the starry dome of heaven, with nothing in between, has now developed a craving for a residence built of bricks and mortar.

What is more, he expects the house-agents to find it for him, and, since he considers the whole thing from the purely personal point of view, their excuses for failing to do so are of no avail. The fact that half a million other people want houses is nothing to him. He ignores it. He believes that the house-agentry of the country has hatched a gigantic conspiracy to keep him, Higgins, out of a home.

I have done my best to put him out of his misery. After seeing the poor wretch wear himself (and his boots) out in useless journeying to and from the places where house-agents pretend to work I thought of a scheme--not strictly original--for obtaining a house and presented it to him without hope of reward.

"You are committing an error," I said.

"I shall commit a murder in a minute," he growled but, knowing what he had suffered, I took no notice of the threat.

"Listen," I said; "all the habitable houses in England are occupied and it will be years before the new ones are built. The painting of "TO LET" boards has become a lost art. You are wasting your time in looking for an empty dwelling. Take my advice. Choose one that is occupied, any one you fancy, and empty it."

At this point he interpolated an offensive expression with which I was not familiar before I joined the army, but I overlooked that also.

"You think it is impossible, but you are wrong," I told him. "This scheme is bound to succeed. All you have to do is to haunt the house. You do not eject the tenant yourself. You conjure up a ghost to do it for you."

"The devil!"

"No--not necessarily. An ordinary ghost will do."

"But, my dear good fool, how in Hades or out of it can I produce a ghost?"

"Easily. By suggestion. That is the secret. This is an age of suggestion. Doctors are curing patients by suggestion. Politicians hypnotise the public by suggestion. And you can frighten the present occupants out of your chosen home by suggestion. No real ghost is required. Having selected the house you pay a call and lay ground-bait, so to speak. You tell the tenant you are interested in the place because you happen to know that at one time it was haunted. You relate a gruesome tale of some mysterious tragedy that you say has occurred there, and generally make your victim's flesh creep.

"He or she, a woman for choice, will probably laugh at first. Never mind. Allow a few days for the idea to sink in, and then call again. It is a hundred to one that you will hear that strange manifestations have been observed. After that it will be plain sailing. You will continue to call, always supplying fresh suggestion, until at last, thoroughly unnerved, the tenant will bolt, probably taking refuge in a hotel. That will be your chance. Snatch the place up at once, and there you are."

For the first time since he was demobilised, Higgins smiled.

"By Heavens!" he said, "I'll try it. There's a little place at Croydon which would be a perfect billet. I will pay my first visit at once."

He sauntered away, proclaiming in song the satisfactory condition of rose-culture in Picardy.

Yesterday he came back.

His face was grim. There was a light in his eye which I did not like. He made no mention of roses blooming in Picardy or anywhere else.

"How is the scheme working?" I asked. "Have you called on the Croydon gentleman?"

"I have," he answered; "and when I had laid the blessed ground-bait, as you call it, he told me he always did think there was a ghost about the place, and he was delighted to have his theory confirmed. He wants more details now. He invites me to furnish evidence. What for, you ask? Well, you see, he happens to be an active member of the Society for Psychical Research."

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Polite Stranger (during the busy hour on the Underground_). "WON'T YOU SHARE MY HANDLE, MADAM?"]

* * * * *

SILLY SEASONING.

The strange case of the halibut and the cormorant, recently reported in the daily Press, has brought us a budget of interesting letters, from which we select the following as agreeable evidence of the return of normal conditions in the fish-story-telling industry:--

Gullane, N.B.

Dear Sir,--One of the most striking results of the War has been its effect on the mentality of birds and animals and even fishes. The papers have lately contained accounts of a halibut which swallowed a cormorant and survived the exploit only to fall a victim to the wiles of a North Sea fisherman. As the cormorant is generally regarded to be the _dernier cri_ in voracity, the incident illustrates the old saying of the biter bit. As a rule birds of prey have the upper hand in their contests with the finny denizens of the deep. But the triumph of the halibut is not altogether unprecedented. I remember, when I was cruising in the China Seas in the year 1854, witnessing a combat between a dolphin and a Bombay duck, in which the latter came off second-best. And some thirty years later, during a yachting excursion off the Scilly Isles, I saw an even more remarkable duel between a porbeagle--as the Cornish people call the mackerel-shark--and a pipit, in which, strange to relate, the bird came off victorious.

Believe me to be, Sir,

Yours truthfully,

CONSTANTINE PHIBSON.

Tara, Diddlebury.

DEAR SIR,--When I was an undergraduate at Cambridge in the 'sixties a "Limerick" was current which began as follows:--

"There was an adventurous sole
Which swallowed an albatross whole."

Unfortunately I cannot remember the conclusion of the stanza, nor am I able to state whether it was founded on fact or was merely an ebullition of lyrical fancy. In the latter case the lines are a striking instance of the prophetic power of minstrelsy, and justify the use of the word "_vates_" or seer, as applied to poets by the ancient Romans.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

SEPTIMUS BOWLONG.

Rougemont Villa, Crookhaven.

DEAR SIR,--The halibut-cormorant episode has attracted undue attention, since many similar but far more extraordinary incidents have occurred during the War, but have passed unrecorded owing to the claims of Bellona. I will confine myself to one which was witnessed by my daughter Anna in course of bathing at Sheringham in August, 1917. While swimming underwater she collided with a middle-sized sea-serpent, which was evidently in difficulties and made its way to the beach, where it expired. The post-mortem, which was conducted by Professor Darcy Johnson, F.R.S., revealed that the serpent had been choked by a gigantic gooseberry, which had formed part of the cargo of a Greenland tramp torpedoed by an enemy submarine. The serpent was actually being stuffed when a bomb dropped by a Zeppelin blew it into infinitesimal smithereens, to the profound disappointment of the Professor and my daughter Anna, who has never been quite the same woman since. Permit me to subscribe myself

Yours faithfully,

ALEXANDER NIAS.

Steep Hill, Cramlington.

DEAR SIR,--There is nothing surprising in the story of a halibut devouring a cormorant. As you will see from consulting _Murray_, halibut means "holy-butt" (or flat-fish), and holy fishes are possessed of magical powers. When I lived on the coast of Florida I had a tame tarpon, which could swallow anything--croquet balls, door scrapers--and once ate an entire cottage pianoforte in half-an-hour. Here I may add that in my travels in Turkestan I was attacked by a boa-constrictor, and, though I escaped with my life, it proceeded to swallow the Bactrian camel on which I was riding.

On the following day, however, when the boa was still in a comatose condition, I killed it with a boomerang, rescued the camel and continued my journey without further mishap.

I am, Sir, Yours veraciously,

ANDREW MERRIMAN.

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[Illustration: _Lady Driver (just joined)_. "OH, SERGEANT, I HOPE I SHAN'T UPSET MY FIRST PASSENGER!"

Sergeant (A.S.C., M.T.). "PASSENGER, MISS! DON'T LET THAT WORRY YOU. PLENTY MORE PASSENGERS!"]

* * * * *

THE SIX-HOUR DAY.

AN ANTICIPATION.

["If the husband's hours are reduced to six that gives the wife a chance. The home and the children are as much his as hers. With his enlarged leisure he will now be able to take a fair share in home duties."

Mrs. WILL CROOKS.]

Jock Mackay was a lusty soul;
He earned his livelihood winning coal;
Black with grime, all huddled and bent,
A third of his life in the pit he spent;
A third he slept and a third he slacked
Training the whippet his fancy backed,
Or talking strikes with a fervent zest
In the bar of the neighbouring "Miners' Rest."

Jean Mackay was his wife; her day
Started or ever the dawn was grey;
She lit the fire, she shook the mats,
She frizzled the bacon and dressed the brats,
She darned and mended, she made the beds,
She combed the tugs in the tousled heads,
She knitted the socks, she washed and baked
Till every bone in her body ached;
She toiled and moiled in a non-stop fight
From six in the morning till ten at night.

But there dawned a day when Jock Mackay
Came home from the mine with a dancing eye
And a laugh in his heart, and he cried out, "Jean,
'Tis the grandest day that the warl' has seen!
The lads are a' cheerin' and rinnin' fey,
For the Government's gien us the sax-hour day."

Jean stopped scrubbing. "Is't true?" said she;
"I wish ye luck. But bide a wee.
Noo that the battle is owre an' done,
What will ye dae wi' the hours ye've won?"

"What will I dae wi' them? What I like.
I'll tak' a bit turn wi' my wee bit tyke,
Or call for a crack wi' the lads at the "Rest,"
And mebbe I micht tak' a drap, if pressed."

"That's a' vera weel, but bide a bit.
Ye work sax hours a day in your pit,
But I'd hae ye to bear in mind," said Jean,
"While ye work sax I work saxteen."

Jock scratched his head. "Ay, lass, that's sae.
Aweel, an' what would ye hae me dae?"

"Fair does," she answered; "it's only fair
That ye should be takin' your ain just share,
An' help me in keepin' the hame for a spell
In the extry hours that ye've got to yoursel',
Sae, while I'm scrubbin' the floor," she said,
"Ye micht be pittin' the bairns tae bed."
Jock laughed. "I doot there's somethin' in it;
I'll stairt on my duties this verra minute."

A week went by: Jock learnt to scrub,
He gave the bairns their Saturday tub,
He made the beds, he blacked the grates,
He washed up saucers and cups and plates,
He cleaned and polished, he boiled and baked
Till every bone in his body ached.

Around the neighbourhood rumour flew;
Soon every wife in the village knew
That Jock, when his spell in the pit was done,
Was cook, nurse, parlourmaid rolled into one;
And every wife she vowed that her man
Should be trained on the same super-excellent plan.
* * * * *

Behold these lusty miners all
Fettered fast in domestic thrall,
Scrubbing, rubbing, baking bread,
Busy with scissors and needle and thread,
Spreading the brats their bread and jam,
Trundling them out in the morning pram,
Washing their pinafores clean and white
And tucking them up in their cots at night.
* * * * *

Ask me not--for I cannot tell,
I can only guess--how the end befell:
A wifely word, an angry scowl,
A bit of a grumble, a bit of a growl,
A scolding here, a squabbling there,
And here the sound of an ugly swear,
A cry of despair from the sore opprest,
A secret call to the "Miners' Rest,"
A sudden revolt from the brooms and mats,
And a roar from a thousand throats--"Down brats!"
* * * * *

"What--striking again?" you cry, aghast.
Nay, friend, cheer up, for the worst is past;
A glint of blue may be seen through the grey--
They are asking again for an eight-hour day.

* * * * *

THE DISCIPLINARIAN.

Saluting is rapidly becoming a thing of the past, even among
British-born soldiers. Dating from the Armistice, it has lapsed more
and more, until now it is practically extinct.

Now I regard this as serious. I have ever been a stickler for discipline, and consequently I dislike it when men pass by--not, like the Levite, on the other side--but close to me without so much as a click of the eyeballs.

So I decided that I as a disciplinarian would make a stand against it; I would keep my eyes open for any particularly flagrant case. When I found it I intended to let myself go. I promised myself an agreeable ten minutes--or longer, if I got properly worked up.

My chance came the other day. I was strolling down Regent Street when three N.C.O.'s, including a sergeant, passed me. They did not salute. I might have been a civilian for all the notice they took of me. Ha! my hour had come.

Turning, I hastened after them.

"Sergeant, a word."

They stopped and the Sergeant asked if I was speaking to him.

"Have you ever heard of the little word 'Sir,' Sergeant?" I asked severely. "Evidently not. However I pass over that. But a moment ago you went by me without saluting. Deliberately--inexcusably. I was as close to you as I am now."

"But how--" began the Sergeant.

"Not a word," I cut him short. "Not a word. You know perfectly well that you have neglected your duty grossly. Now tell me. Is it your own idea to drop saluting, or has Mr. CHURCHILL had a word in your ear?" (Sarcasm is my strong point.)

"But look here--" said the Sergeant, rather red in the face.

"Do not interrupt," I thundered, warming to my work. "How, I ask, do you expect the ordinary soldier to salute when you slink past officers--you, who ought to be a shining example? Now I am going to report--"

Something in the Sergeant's eye, which seemed to be travelling over my person generally, made me suddenly glance down at myself, and it was then that, horror-struck, I realised that I was wearing for the first time my new ten-guinea suit.

As I faded away the Sergeant clicked his heels and saluted smartly.

* * * * *

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

"Lady will exchange clothing, self, little girl, for farm butter, eggs, jam."--_The Lady_.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Infuriated Italian (who has recently purchased a British Army horse). _"FAIR WORDS DID I SPEAK HIM, SAYING, 'PEDRO, AVANTI PIANISSIMO,' AND--BEHOLD!"]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

Within The Rim (COLLINS) is, I suppose, the last of the posthumous volumes of Mr. HENRY JAMES. It is a short book, produced with the beauty that I have already grown to associate with the imprint of its publishers, and containing five occasional pieces. Of these the first, which gives its title to the whole, is the most considerable: an essay of very moving poignancy, telling the emotion of the writer during the earliest months of the War, in "the most beautiful English summer conceivable," months that he "was to spend so much of in looking over from the old rampart of a little high-perched Sussex town at the bright blue streak of the Channel ... and staring at the bright mystery beyond the rim of the farthest opaline reach." In the thoughts to which HENRY JAMES here gives expression one may find much of the love and sympathy for this country that subsequently led to that assumption of British citizenship which he intended as their demonstration to the world. Of interest also in this same paper is the revelation of a mind that knew already by a personal experience (of the American Civil War) "what immensities our affair would carry in its bosom—a knowledge that flattered me by its hint of immunity from illusion." I would not be understood that this is a volume for the casual reader, or even for one desirous of making a first acquaintance with the Master, since much of it exemplifies not only the beauty but the perplexities of his later style; but it is certainly one which his disciples will not willingly be without.

* * * * *

Notebooks of a Spinster Lady (CASSELL) is smallish talk about biggish wigs of the Victorian era, but not on that sole account to be condemned. Perhaps rather wholesome as showing how little distant we are from an age of government of the people by superior people for superior people. The notebooks cover the years 1878-1903, but the anecdotes have a much wider range, are often indeed of a venerable antiquity. The lady of the notebooks was not, I fancy, of a critical temper, and versions not too credible of well-known contes figure in her quiet kindly pages. There are moreover stories which I should not hesitate to describe as of an appalling banality if they were not concerned with such very nice people. On the whole I don't think it quite fair to the spinster lady to have published her notes. They may well have been painstaking jottings to provide material for polite conversation and have sounded much better than they read in cold print. For myself the real heroine of the book is Maria, the poet's wife, who, on being waked and adjured by her spouse to get up and strike a light for that he had just thought of a good word, replied in un-Victorian mood, "Get up yourself! I have just thought of a bad one."

* * * * *

Love—on Leave (PEARSON) is the sufficiently expressive title that Miss JESSIE POPE has chosen for a small book of little courtship tales. You never saw a volume of its size, more packed with love, which is shown leaping walls, laughing at locksmiths and generally making the world go round in its proverbial fashion. The pace of the revolutions may be found a little disconcerting. You will perhaps be inclined to amend the title and call the collection "Love on Short Leave," to mark the regularity with which the respective heroes and heroines fall into each others' arms at the end of every dozen pages or so. As a matter of fact, the incident that is to my mind the best of the bunch is an exception to this rule of osculation—a happily imagined little comedy of a young wife who thought to avoid the visit of a tiresome sister-in-law by betaking herself for the night to the branches of a spreading beech. Whether in actual life this is a probable course of conduct need not exercise your mind; at least not enough to prevent your enjoyment of her arboreal adventure, which

comes, as I say, with the more freshness as a break in what might else be a surfeit of proposals. In effect, a gallant little florin's worth of _fiancailles_; though, if you wish to avoid feeling like a matrimonial agency, you will be well-advised to take it by instalments rather than in bulk.

* * * * *

Among the pacific warriors in the great 1914-18 struggle there is probably none who did better work, often under conditions of the gravest peril, than Mr. G.M. TREVELYAN for the Red Cross in Italy. Disqualified both by age and health from joining the army of attack, he threw himself into the task—a labour of love—of tending the sick and wounded of that country which he knows so well and of whose greatest modern hero he is the classic biographer. That the eulogist of GARIBALDI should hasten to the succour of Italian soldiers was fitting, and how well he performed the task the records of the Villa Trenta Hospital, near Udine, and of the ambulance drivers under his command, abundantly tell. The story of this beneficent campaign and of much besides is told with too much modesty by Mr. TREVELYAN himself, in a book entitled _Scenes from Italy's War_ (JACK), which gives a series of the vividest impressions of the Italian effort, and is remarkable for the best analysis that I have yet seen of the causes that led to the disaster of Caporetto. The pages in which Mr. TREVELYAN paints the portrait of a typical Italian soldier, home sick and perplexed, are likely to be borrowed by many more pretentious historians of the War for years to come.

* * * * *

Mr. JOHN HARGRAVE, the author and illustrator of _The Great War Brings It Home_ (CONSTABLE) has already a wide reputation in the world of Scouts, gained not only by his enthusiasm but by his profound knowledge of scout-craft. Here he tells us very plainly that the War has brought home to us the fact that, if we are to make good our losses in the ranks of the young and the fit, we have got to give our children a better chance of living healthy, wholesome lives. He urges the need of more outdoor education and as many open-air camps as possible, and shows that, if we are to carry out such a scheme as he lays in detail before us, scoutmasters and still more scoutmasters are wanted. With reason he complains that none of these good fellows is paid one halfpenny, and that nearly all of them are young men who have to get a living. "Offer them," he says, "a living wage and how gladly would they become national scoutmasters in charge of national camps." You may, if you are on the look-out for it, find much that will seem fantastic in Mr. HARGRAVE'S ideas; his appeal, however, is not to those of us who, even in a case of great national urgency, cannot get away from the tyranny of convention. Intrinsicly his idea is sound, and I plead with all my heart for a fair consideration of his schemes and for help in their development.

* * * * *

Mr. REX BEACH is one of the few prolific writers whose stories increase in power as they increase in number, and this though they are essentially novels of action rather than novels of thought. Of his latest effort, _The Winds of Chance_ (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), one may say that there is not a tedious page in it. The scene is laid in Yukon, a very vortex of life and colour and excitement in fiction, whatever it may seem to the actual inhabitants. The true hero of the story, _Napoleon Doret_, the French voyageur, wins his heart's desire in the end and we breathe a sigh of relief. The other hero is left the accepted swain of the daughter of the Colonel of the North-West Mounted Police at Dawson, and this we find a little hard to swallow, seeing what shady, not to say immoral, company, male and female, he

had just been basking in. He is a weak creature and certainly should have married the _Countess Courteau_, an Amazonian lady, who would have kept him in order. But that is to be fastidious. The story is crisp and vivid, and, anyway, those ancient prospectors, _Tom Linton_ and _Jerry McQuirk_, are worth twice the money.

* * * * *

Mr. Punch has great pleasure in commending to his readers two volumes of verse--_Rhymes of the Red Ensign_ (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), by Miss C. FOX SMITH, and _The Poets in Picardy_ (MURRAY), by Major E. DE STEIN--in which they will recognise many poems that have appeared in his pages.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Master_. "BUT, JENKINS, THE NAME OF THE COMPLAINT IS NOT PEWMONIA. SURELY YOU'VE HEARD ME AGAIN AND AGAIN SAY 'PNEUMONIA'?"

Man. "WELL, SIR, I 'AVE; BUT I DIDN'T LIKE TO CORRECT YOU."]

* * * * *

HOW TO SOLVE THE FOOD PROBLEM.

"Superior Working Housekeeper and young Maid for Ladies' College. No cooking; students sleep only."--_Church Times_.

* * * * *

COMMERCIAL CANDOUR.

"The interesting announcement is made that a regular air service for perishable goods and passengers is to be established at Edinburgh."--_Scotsman_.

* * * * *

"The London season has begun with its usual extensive programme of religious services in various London churches."--_Scots Paper_.

The best comment that we have yet seen on this statement occurs in the following (also from a Scots paper):--

"The Commander-in-Chief has borne testimony on behalf of the Grand Fleet to the work that the Scittish Bishops have done for the Navy during the War."

END.

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