

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 156, April 30, 1919

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

VOL. 156.

APRIL 30, 1919.

CHARIVARIA.

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An alarming rumour is going the rounds to the effect that Printing House Square refuses to accept any responsibility for the findings of the Peace Conference.

"Mystery," says a news item, "surrounds the purchase of fifty retail fish shops in and about London." The Athenaeum Club is full of the wildest rumours.

The statement of the Allied Food Commission, that there are more sheep in Germany to-day than in 1914, has come as a surprise to those who imagined that the loud bleating noise was chiefly Herr SCHEIDEMANN.

"Get your muzzle now!" says _The Daily Mail_. It is felt, however, that the PRIME MINISTER scored a distinct hit by saying it first.

"There is absolutely no reason," says a Health Culture writer, "why Members of Parliament should not live to be one hundred." We think we could find a reason if we were pressed.

To-morrow a man in the North of England is to celebrate his hundredth birthday. He will be the youngest centenarian in the country.

At Ealing it appears that a rabid dog dashed into a pork butcher's shop and snapped at a sausage. The sausage was immediately shot.

The War Office, says a contemporary, is to have another storey built. In order that the work shall not cause any sleepless days it is to be undertaken by night.

It is reported that a burglar who has been drawing unemployment pay has decided to return to work.

The New Zealand Government has decided to check the introduction of influenza, and every passenger arriving there is to be examined. All germs not declared are liable to be confiscated by the Customs.

Nearly all the Bank Holiday visitors to Hampstead Heath, it is stated, chose a silver-mounted bridge-marker in preference to nuts.

Two days before his wedding a man at Uxbridge was summoned to Wales by his wife for desertion. It is said that his second wedding went off quietly.

It is understood that the Home Office does not propose to re-arrest DE VALERA. The official view is that in future the Irish must provide their own entertainment.

We hear that all imprisoned Sinn Feiners have been instructed to give a day's notice in future before escaping, so that nobody shall do it out of his proper turn.

Citizens of Clarkson, Washington, U.S.A., have appealed to the Government to protect them against a plague of frogs. The Federal authorities have informed the Press that these insidious attempts to distract the Government from its Prohibition programme must not be taken seriously.

From an American newspaper we gather that a New York plutocrat has by his will cut his wife off with twelve million dollars.

"Is the Kaiser Highly Strung?" asks a weekly paper headline. We shall be able to answer this question a little later.

The report that an early bather was seen executing the Jazz-dance on the beach at Ventnor on Easter Monday seems to have some foundation. It appears that his partner was a large crab with well-developed claws.

We hear that visitors at a well-known London hotel, who have patiently borne the extension of the gratuity nuisance for a considerable time, now take exception to the notice, "Please tip the basin," which has been prominently placed in the lavatory.

On many golf-links nowadays the caddies are expected to keep count of the number of strokes taken for each hole. One beginner whom we know is seriously thinking of employing a chartered accountant for this purpose.

What cricket needs, says a sporting contemporary, is bright breezy batting. The game should no longer depend for its sparkle on impromptu badinage between the umpire and the wicket-keeper.

People who think they have heard the cuckoo before the first of May, declares a well-known ornithologist, are usually the victims of young practical jokers. The conspicuous barring of the bird's plumage should, however, make any real confusion impossible.

* * * * *

[Illustration: ABSENT-MINDED PHYSICIAN SENT BY HIS WIFE TO BUY "TWO GOOD SOUND BIRDS."]

* * * * *

"Striking testimony as to the popularity of the Cataract Cliff
Grounds--when it is remembered that the period embraces the complete
term of the war--is the fact that during the past five years an
aggregate of 428,390 persons was bitten by a snake."

Tasmanian Paper.

The snake may be fairly said to have done his bit.

* * * * *

PEACE AT THE SEASIDE.

[The public are being passionately warned against the threatened
crush at watering-places in August of this year of Peace.]

Stoutly we bore with April's icy blizzards;
"The worst of Spring," we said, "will soon be through;
Summer is bound to come and warm our gizzards
And we shall gambol by the briny blue."

But even as we put the annual question,
"Where shall we water? on what golden strand?"
Warnings appear of terrible congestion,
Of lodgers countless as the local sand.

Lucky the man, the hardened strap-suspender,
Who with a first-class ticket, there and back,
Finds a precarious seat upon the tender,
A rocky berth upon the baggage-rack.

Should he arrive, the breath of life still in him,
His face will be repulsed from door to door;
He'll get no lodging, not the very minim,
Save under heaven on the pebbly shore.

In vain he pleads for stall-room in the stable;
The cellars are engaged; 'tis idle talk
To ask for bedding on the billiard-table--
Two families are there, each side of baulk.

Next morn he fain would wash in ocean's spray (there's
Balm in the waves that helps you to forget),
And lo! the deep is simply stiff with bathers;
He has no chance of even getting wet.

He starves as never in the age of rations;
The fishy produce of the boundless sea
Fails to appease the hungry trippers' passions
Who barely pouch one shrimp apiece for tea.

"I came," he says, "to swallow priceless ozone
Under Britannia's elemental spell;
She rules the waves, as all her conquered foes own;
I wish she ruled her seashores half as well.

"I don't know what the beaten Bosch may suffer
Compared with us who won the late dispute,
But if it equals this (it can't be tougher),
Why, then I feel some pity for the brute."

So by the London train upon the morrow
From holiday delights he gets release,
Conspuing, more in anger than in sorrow,
The pestilent amenities of Peace.

O.S.

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GREAT BEARD MYSTERY.

Where do men go when, they want to grow beards? This is a question as yet unanswered, and the whole subject is shrouded in impenetrable mystery.

One sees thousands of men with beards, but one never sees anyone growing a beard. I cannot recall, in a life of varied travel, having ever encountered a man actually engaged in the process of beard-cultivation. The secret is well kept, doubtless by a kind of freemasonry amongst bearded men, but there can be little doubt that somewhere there are nurseries where a _bona-fide_ beard-grower who is in the secret can retire until he is presentable.

I have frequently been annoyed by the way in which these men flaunt their beards at one; their whole manner seems to convey an air of superiority; they seem to say, "Look at my beard. You can't grow a beard because you haven't the moral courage to appear in public while it's growing. Wouldn't you like to know the secret? Well, I won't tell you."

Determined to suffer these contemptuous glances no longer, I set out on a voyage of discovery to unravel the mystery of England's beard-nurseries.

I asked bearded men if they knew of anywhere in the country where one could slip away in order to grow a beard, but they always gave me evasive replies, such as: "Why not have an illness and stay in bed for three months?" But when I went on to ask where they had grown theirs, they either made an excuse to leave me or said evasively, "Oh, I've always had mine."

I once went to the enormous expense of making a bearded Scotch acquaintance intoxicated in order to drag the secret from him, but the question as to where he grew his beard instantly sobered him, and nothing would induce him to touch another drop.

I have bribed barbers without success. I have vainly shadowed men for a month who looked as if they intended growing beards. I even took advantage of Armageddon to join the Navy, where beards are permitted; but when I tried to start growing one I was instantly reprimanded for not shaving by a bearded Commander, who had the same triumphant gleam of superiority which I had noticed ashore.

In the Old Testament there was no secrecy on the subject. Somebody said, "Tarry in Jericho until your beards be grown." But I am quite satisfied in my own mind that modern beard-growers do not go to Jericho; I have established this fact. No, there are in England properly organised beard-nurseries, and the secret of their whereabouts is jealously guarded; but I have by no means relaxed my determination to discover them, and to give to the world the results of my research.

* * * * *

GRAND REFUSALS.

At the private reception the night before Miss CARNEGIE'S wedding, "the

ironmaster," so we read in our _Daily Mail_, "entertained his guests with numerous reminiscences of his life, and it was observed that he interrupted a story concerning King EDWARD and Skibo to whisper something in his daughter's ear concerning her dowry. He was telling the guests how the King offered to make him a Duke if he would bring about a coalition between England and the United States. 'I told King EDWARD,' said Mr. CARNEGIE, 'that in these United States every man is King. Why should I be a Duke?'"

It is pleasant to read of the heroic refusal of the staunch Republican to compromise the principles which he so eloquently vindicated in his _Triumphant Democracy_; but it is only right to add that this is not an isolated case.

Thus it is a literally open secret that when a famous ventriloquist was offered the O.B.E. for his services in popularising the Navy, he refused the coveted distinction on the ground that it would be derogatory to a Prince to accept it.

When Sir HENRY DUKE retired from the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland he was offered a Viscounty, but declined the proffered distinction, wittily observing that as he was born a Duke he did not see why he should descend to a lower grade of the peerage.

Then there is the notorious case of Mr. KING who, on being offered a peerage if he would desist from his criticisms of Mr. LLOYD GEORGE and his Ministry, pointed out that other monarchs might abdicate, but that those who thought _he_ would do so clearly knew not JOSEPH.

As for the titles, decorations and distinctions offered by the EX-KAISER to Mr. HAROLD BEGBIE if he would bring about a _rapprochement_ between England and Germany, and patriotically declined by the eminent publicist, their name is legion.

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[Illustration: THE MENACE OF MAY.

AUSTEN CHAMBERMAID _(to John Bull)._ "YOUR TEA AND THE MORNING PAPER, SIR."]

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[Illustration: _Charlady (on the subject of appearance)._ "OF COURSE I DON'T BOTHER NOW--BUT I USED TO BE ABLE TO TREAD ON MY 'AIR."]

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CIVILIAN FLYING, 1930.

"You're late," said Millie, as John entered the hall and shook himself free of his flying coat.

"Yes, dear; missed the 5.40 D.H. from the Battersea Park Take-off by a minute to-night. Jones brought me home on that neat little knock-about spad he's just bought. Small two-seater arrangement, you know. Then I walked from the 'drome just to stretch myself. They don't give you too much move space in those planettes."

"Oh, I'd just love to have an aeroplanette like that!" exclaimed Millie.

"Mrs. Smith says she simply couldn't do without hers now; it makes her so independant. She can pop up to town, do her shopping and get back in a short afternoon."

"Um--yes," calculated John. "Less than seventy miles the double

journey--she'd manage that all right."

"And that pilot of theirs," went on Millie, "seems just as safe with the 'pup' as he is with that great twin-engined bus her husband is so keen on."

"Yes," said John; "must be quite an undertaking getting Smith's tri-plane on the sky-way. It's useful for a family party, though. I hear he packed twenty or thirty on to it for the picnic they had at John-o'-Groat's last week. By the way," added John, as he moved upstairs, "aren't the Robinsons coming to dinner?"

"Yes, you'd better hurry up and change," advised Millie.

The Robinsons were very up-to-date people, John decided as they sat down to the meal a little later. He hadn't met them before. They were Millie's friends.

"Very glad to know such near neighbours," he said cordially. "Why, it's under forty miles to your place, I should think."

"Forty-seven kilos, to be exact," Robinson volunteered, "and I should say we did it under twenty minutes."

"Quite good flying," said John.

"We came by the valley route, too," put in Mrs. Robinson. "John was good enough to consider my wretched air-pocket nerves rather than his petrol."

"It's a couple of miles further," explained Robinson, "but my wife isn't such a stout flier as her mother, though the old lady is over seventy. My pilot was bringing her from Town one afternoon last week--took the Dorking-Leith Hill air-way, you know, always bumpy over there--and I suppose from all accounts he must have dropped her a hundred feet plumb, side-slipped and got into a spinning dive and only pulled the old bus out again when the furrows in a ploughed field below them had grown easily countable."

"Yes, it makes me shivery to think of," ejaculated Mrs. Robinson; "but mother really has extraordinary nerve. She wasn't in the least upset."

"No, not a little bit, by Jove!" added Robinson. "The old sport just leaned forward in her seat and, when James had adjusted his head-piece, she coolly reprimanded him for stunting without orders. Of course she doesn't know anything about the theory of the thing, you see."

With the dessert came letters by the late air post.

"Oh, please excuse me," said Millie, as she took them from the maid, "I see there's a reply from Auntie--the Edinburgh aunt, you know," she explained. "I wrote her this morning, imploring her to come over to-morrow for the bazaar. She's so splendid at that sort of thing."

"What my wife's aunt doesn't know about flying isn't worth knowing," remarked John with finality. "Why, she qualified for her ticket last year, and she'll never see forty again. How's that for an up-to-date aunt?"

"I doubt if she'll fly solo that distance, though," said Millie; "I don't think she ought to, either."

"Of course," said Robinson, "it's a bit of a strain for a woman of middle age to negotiate three hundred odd miles, even with a couple of landings for a cup of tea _en route_."

Millie rose. "Now, don't you men sit here for an hour discussing 'flying speeds,' 'gliding angles,' and all that sort of thing. I object to aero-maniacs on principle. I--" At that moment a peculiar noise, evidently in the near vicinity of the house, arrested the attention of the party.

"Sounded like something breaking," said Millie, going to the window, which overlooked the garden and a good-sized paddock beyond. John had already gone out to investigate.

In a minute or two he reappeared ushering in a very jolly-looking old gentleman in a flying suit.

"A thousand pardons, Mrs. Smith," said the new arrival; "John collected me in the paddock. Ha! ha! You know my theory about the paddock."

The guests having been introduced, explanations followed.

"You know my theory," began old Mr. Brown.

"Yes, rather; I should think we do," interrupted Millie, leading him to the most comfortable armchair "But," she quoted, "you are old, Mr. Brown; do you think at your age it is right?"

"Well, the theory's smashed, anyhow," said John decisively, "and so's my fence."

"No! no! I won't hear of it," laughed Brown; "I admit the fence, but not the theory. You see," he went on, turning to Mrs. Robinson, "I've always insisted, as Smith knows, that there's plenty of landing space in his paddock, provided you do it up wind. The fact is I glided in to-night from east to west. Thought I should be dead head on; but I believe I was a couple of points out in my reckoning and so failed to bring the old 'bus to a stand short of the fence. You know, Smith," he added, with an injured air, "you ought to have a wind-pointer rigged up so's there'd be no doubt about it."

"Just to encourage reckless old gentlemen to smash up my premises, I suppose," retorted John. "But I admit I found some consolation for my smashed fence when I observed the pathetic appearance of your under carriage, after your famous landing."

"And now," said Millie to Mr. Brown, "all will be forgotten and forgiven if you'll come into the drawing-room and let Mr. and Mrs. Robinson hear you sing that jolly song about

"Come and have a flip
In a big H Pip,' etc.

"You know."

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"The egg shortage notwithstanding, the Easter egg rolling carnival at Preston, which dates back to mediaeval times, was, after a lapse of four years, celebrated with great musto."

Midland Paper.

Pre-war eggs, apparently.

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ANOTHER CANDID CANDIDATE.

"---- BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

"Mrs. ---- desires to thank all who voted so splendidly, placing her at the top of the pole."

Provincial Paper.

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"The queue at one part of the morning extended from the booking office, past the Midland Station entrance, into City Square, along the front of the Queen's Hotel, to the top of yesterday."--_Yorkshire Paper_.

Better than the middle of next week, anyhow.

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[Illustration: _Voice_. "IS THAT THE GREAT SOUTHERN RAILWAY?"

Flapper. "YES."

Voice. "ARE YOU THE PASSENGER DEPARTMENT?"

Flapper. "NO, I'M THE GOODS.]"

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[Illustration: _The Village Oracle_. "YOU MARK MY WORDS--THESE 'ERE GERMANS 'LL DO US DOWN AT THIS FINISH. THEY'LL PAY THE BLOOMIN' SIX THOUSAND MILLIONS, OR WOTEVER IT IS, IN THREEPENNY BITS; AND THEN 'OO THE 'ELL'S GOING TO COUNT IT?"]

* * * * *

"AS YOU WERE."

A MEMORY OF MI-CAREME.

Chippo Munks is a regular time-serving soldier, as distinguished from the amateurs who only joined the Army for the sake of a war. His company conduct-sheet runs into volumes, and in peace-time they fix a special peg outside the orderly-room for him to hang his cap on. At present he systematically neglects the functions of billet-orderly at a Base town in France.

A month or two ago he came across Chris Jones.

"Fined fourteen days' pay," said Chippo; "an' cheap it was at the price. But the financial embarrassment thereby followin' puts me under the necessity of borrowing the loan of a five-spotter."

"How did it happen?" said Chris, playing for time.

"'Twas this way," said Chippo. "The other night I was walking down the Roo Roobray, thinking out ways of making you chaps more comfortable in the billet, as is my custom. Suddenly out of the gloom there looms a Red Indian in full war-paint.

"'Strange,' thinks I. 'Chinks an' Portugoose we expects here, likewise Annamites and Senegalese an' doughboys; but I never heard that the BUFFALO BILL aggregation had taken the war-path.'

"He passes, and a little Geisha comes tripping by. I rubs my eyes an'

says, 'British Constitootian' correctly; but she was followed by a Gipsy King and a Welsh Witch. Then I sees a masked Toreador coming along, and I decides to arsk him all about it. The language question didn't worry me any. I can pitch the cuffer in any bat from Tamil to Arabic, an' the only chap I couldn't compree was a deaf-an'-dumb man who suffered from St. Vitus' Dance, which made 'im stutter with his fingers.

"Hi, caballero,' says I, 'where's the bull-fight?'

"It isn't a bull-fight, M'sieur,' he replies. 'It's Mi-Careme.'

"If he's an Irishman,' I says, 'I never met him; but if it's a kind of pastry I'll try some.'

"Then he shows me a doorway through which they was all entering, and beside it was a big yellow poster which said, 'Mi-Careme. Grand Bal Costume. Cavaliers, 2 francs. Dames, 1 franc 50 centimes.'

"I'd love to be a cavalier at two francs a time,' I remarks. 'Besides, I want to make the farther acquaintance of little Perfume of Pineapple Essence who passed by just now.'

"It will be necessary to 'ave a costume, M'sieur,' says Don Rodrigo.

"Trust me,' I answers with dignity; 'I've won diplomas as a fancy-dress architect.'

"I goes to my billet and investigates the personal effects of my colleagues. My choice fell on a Cameron kilt, a football jersey and a shrapnel helmet. These I puts into a bundle an' hikes back to the Hall of Dance.

"May I ask what M'sieur represents?' said the doorkeeper as I paid my two francs.

"I haven't started yet,' I answers asperiously. 'I assumes my costume as APPIUS CLAUDIUS in the dressing-room.'

"Well, when I'd finished my toilette--regrettin' the while that I hadn't brought a pair of spurs to complete the costume--I entered the ball-room. It was a scene of East-end--I mean Eastern--splendour. Carmens an' Father Timeses, Pierrots an' Pierrettes, Pompadours an' Apaches was gyrating to the soft strains of the orchestra, who perspired at the piano in his shirt-sleeves.

"All of a sudden I saw my little Geisha, my Stick of Scented Brilliantine, waltzing with the Toreador, an' my heart started beating holes in my football jersey. When the orchestra stopped playing to light a cigarette I sought her out.

"O Choicest of the Fifty-seven Varieties,' I says, 'deign to give me your honourable hand for the next gladiatorial jazz.'

"The Bull-fighter looked black, but she put her little hand in mine an' we trod a stately measure. Every now an' then a shadow passed o'er the ballroom, an' I knew it was the Toreador scowling. But I took no notice of him, an' we danced nearly everything on the menu, Don Rodrigo only getting an odd item now an' then to prevent him dying of grief.

"By-an'-by the Geisha said she must be going, so I offered to escort her home. Don Roddy tried to butt in, and when he got the frozen face he used langwidge more like a cow-puncher than a bull-fighter. I didn't trouble to change my clothes, because it seemed to be the custom to walk about like freaks at Mi-Careme, and we had a lovely promenade in the pale moonlight.

"When I returned the revelry was nearly over an' the orchestra was getting limp. I went into the cloak-room to change my clothes, but I couldn't find 'em anywhere. What annoyed me most about it was that there was five francs in my trouser pockets which I was saving to pay you back the loan I borrowed last week."

"I wondered when you were going to say something about that," said Chris Jones.

"It fair upset me," continued Chippo. "And then all at once I saw my old pal the Toreador sneaking out of the door with a bundle an' the leg of a pair of khaki trousers hanging out of it. I gave a wild whoop an' was after him like the wind.

"Don Roddy was some runner. He doubled down the Roo Roubray, dodged round a corner an' made for the Grand Pont. I was gaining on him fast when I plunked into the arms of two Military Police.

"What particular specie of night-bird do you call yourself?' said one of 'em, holding my arm in a grip of iron.

"I'm a Sergeant-drummer in the Roman-Legion,' says I, trying to get away. 'An' I'm in a hurry.'

"Well, where's your pass?"

"We don't wear 'em in our battalion,' I says. 'For heving's sake let me go. There's a chap over there trying to pinch my wardrobe.'

"It was no use. They held me tight, notwithstandin' me struggles, till the Toreador disappeared from view over the bridge.

"That's done it. I'll go quietly,' I groans to the M.P.'s in despair. 'That's Chris Jones's five francs gone west, and nuthen else matters.'"

"Well," said Chris Jones, "what then?"

"The rest you knows," said Chippo plaintively, "exceptin' that later my clothes was mysteriously dumped at th' billet with the pockets empty. But I think the distressing circumstances are such as warrants me in arsking fer the loan of another five francs."

"They would be," said Chris Jones, fumbling with his wallet, "only I happened to be the Toreador myself. But you can have the same old five francs back, an' be 'as you were!'"

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[Illustration: "CAN I 'AVE THE AFTERNOON OFF TO SEE A BLOKE ABAHT A JOB FER MY MISSIS?"

"YOU'LL BE BACK IN THE MORNING, I SUPPOSE?"

"YUS--IF SHE DON'T GET IT."]

* * * * *

HOW TO PLAY GOLF WITH YOUR HEAD.

"He cocked his head up when playing his approach and hit it all along the carpet."

Evening Paper.

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AS YOU LIKE IT OR DON'T.

SCENE.--_Bois do Boulogne_.

Enter Orlando.

_Orlando (reading from sheet of paper). _

I should be extremely gloomy
If they pinched from me my Fiume.

[_ Pins composition on tree. _

Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love. [_Exit_.

* * * * *

ANOTHER IMPENDING APOLOGY.

"If this pianist is not heard again in Shanghai, he will carry away
with him the grateful thanks of our music-lovers."

Shanghai Mercury.

* * * * *

"This debate will immediately precede the introduction of the
Budget, and will, let us hope, inaugurate a campaign for national
entrenchment."--_Provincial Paper._

Ah! if only, as taxpayers, we could dig ourselves in!

* * * * *

THE HOUSING QUESTION.

Someone estimated the other day that England is short just now of five
hundred thousand houses. This is a miscalculation. She is really short
of five hundred thousand and one, the odd one being the house that we
are looking for and cannot find.

We have discovered many houses in our tour of London, but none that
gives complete satisfaction. Either the locality or the shape or the
price is all wrong; or, as more often happens, the fixtures. By the
fixtures I mean, of course, the people who are already in the place and
refuse to come out of it; London is full of houses with the wrong people
in them.

"I wonder," says Celia, standing outside some particularly desirable
residence, "if we dare go in and ask them if they wouldn't like to
move."

"We can't live there unless they do," I agreed. "It would be so
crowded."

"After all, I suppose they took it from somebody else some time or
other. I don't see why we shouldn't take it from _them_."

"As soon as they put a 'TO LET' board outside we will."

Celia hangs about hopefully for some days after this, waiting for a man
to come along with a "TO LET" board over his shoulder. As soon as he

plants it in the front garden she means to rush forward, strike out the "TO," and present herself to the occupier with her cheque-book in her hand. It is thus, she assures me, that the best houses are snapped up; but it is weary waiting, and I cannot take my turn on guard, for I must stay at home and earn the money which the landlord (sordid fellow) will want.

Sometimes we search the advertisement columns in the papers in the hope of finding something that may do.

"Here's one," I announced one morning; "'For American millionaires and others. Fifteen bathrooms--' Oh, no, that's too big."

"Isn't there anything for English hundredaires?" said Celia.

"Here's one that says 'reasonable offer taken.'"

"Yes, but I don't suppose we reason the same way as he does."

"Well, here's one for four thousand pounds. That's not so bad. I mean as a price, not as a house."

"Have you got four thousand pounds?"

"No; I was hoping you had."

"Couldn't you mortgage something--up to the hilt?"

"We'll have a look," I said.

We spent the rest of that day looking for something to mortgage, but found nothing with a hilt at all high up.

"Anyhow," I said, "it was a rotten house."

"Wouldn't it be simpler," said Celia, "to put in an advertisement ourselves, describing exactly the sort of house we want? That's the way I always get servants."

"A house is so much more difficult to describe than a cook."

"Oh, but I'm sure you could do it. You describe things so well."

Feeling highly flattered, I retired to the library and composed.

For the first hour or so I tried to do it in the staccato language of house-agents. They say all they want to say in five lines; I tried to say all we wanted to say in ten. The result was hopeless. We both agreed that we should hate to live in that sort of house. Celia indeed seemed to feel that if I couldn't write better than that we couldn't afford to live in a house at all.

"You don't seem to realise," I said, "that in the ordinary way people pay me for writing. This time, so far from receiving any money, I have actually got to hand it out in order to get into print at all. You can hardly expect me to give my best to an editor of that kind."

"I thought that the artist in you would insist on putting your best into everything that you wrote, quite apart from the money."

Of course after that the artist in me had to pull himself together. An hour later it had delivered itself as follows:--

"WANTED, an unusual house. When I say unusual I mean that it mustn't look like anybody's old house. Actually it should contain three

living-rooms and five bedrooms. One of the bedrooms may be a dressing-room, if it is quite understood that a dressing-room does not mean a cupboard in which the last tenant's housemaid kept her brushes. The other four bedrooms must be a decent size and should get plenty of sun. The exigencies of the solar system may make it impossible for the sun to be always there, but it should be around when wanted. With regard to the living-rooms, it is essential that they should not be square but squiggly. The drawing-room should be particularly squiggly; the dining-room should have at least an air of squiggleness; and the third room, in which I propose to work, may be the least squiggly of the three, but it must be inspiring, otherwise the landlord may not obtain his rent. The kitchen arrangements do not interest me greatly, but they will interest the cook, and for this reason should be as delightful as possible; after which warning anybody with a really bad basement on his hands will see the wisdom of retiring from the queue and letting the next man move up one. The bathroom should have plenty of space, not only for the porcelain bath which it will be expected to contain, but also (as is sometimes forgotten) for the bather after he or she has stepped out of the bath. The fireplaces should not be, as they generally are, utterly beastly. Owners of utterly beastly fireplaces may also move out of the queue, but they should take their places up at the end again in case they are wanted; for, if things were satisfactory otherwise, their claims might be considered, since even the beastliest fireplace can be dug out at the owner's expense and replaced with something tolerable.

"A little garden would be liked. At any rate there must be a view of trees, whether one's own or somebody else's.

"As regards position, the house must be in London. I mean really in London. I mean really in central London. The outlying portions of Kensington, such as Ealing, Hanwell and Uxbridge, are no good. Cricklewood, Highgate, New Barnet and similar places near Portman Square are useless. It must be in London--in the middle of London.

"Now we come to rather an important matter. Rent. It is up to you to say how much you want; but let me give you one word of warning. Don't be absurd. You aren't dealing now with one of those profiteers who remained (with honour) in his own country. And you can have our flat in exchange, if you like--well, it isn't ours really, it's the landlord's, but we will introduce you to him without commission. Anyway, don't be afraid of saying what you want; if it is absurd (and I expect it will be) we will tell you so. And if you must have a lump sum instead of an annual one, well, perhaps we could manage to borrow it (from you or somebody); but smaller annual lumps would be preferred."

When I had written it out I handed it to Celia.

"There you are," I said, "and, speaking as an artist, I don't see how I can make it a word shorter."

She read it carefully through.

"It does sound a jolly house," she said wistfully. "Would it cost a lot as an advertisement?"

"About the first year's rent. And even then nobody would take it seriously."

"Oh, well, perhaps I'd better go and see another agent." She fingered the advertisement regretfully. "It seems a pity to waste this," she added with a smile.

But the artist in me was already quite resolved that it should not be wasted.

A.A.M.

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[Illustration: _Lady_. "POOR DEAR! AND SO THEY REJECTED IT? IT'S A SHAME--THEY OUGHT TO SET YOU SIMPLER SUBJECTS."]

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A THREATENED SOURCE OF REVENUE.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL and the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER are at this moment the most melancholy of men. For the last few months they had been quietly chuckling to themselves over one of the most brilliant ideas that ever adorned the annals of Government. But the best laid schemes gang aft agley.

While publicists and economic experts were shaking their grey hairs over the prospect of national bankruptcy, the P.M.G. and the C. of E. were weeping jazz tears of joy as the national debt lifted before their eyes "like mist unrolled on the morning wind." And then certain unsophisticated Members of a new, a very new, House of Commons began their deadly work. As a result the main scheme of national solvency is in danger.

There are those who still think that the franchise was extended to women merely as an objective piece of political justice. I hate cynicism, and I should be the last to throw cold water on an ideal, but, as I said, the real fruits of that political master-stroke are in danger.

While millions of enfranchised women were quietly engaged in writing twice a week to their particular Member, at three half-pence a time (or more), they were unconsciously assisting the considered policy of His Majesty's Government, which was that such letters should be written and remain unanswered; that more letters and still more should be written, stamped and posted to demand an answer, and that still more should be written to friends and relations exposing the grave lack of courtesy at Westminster.

But, alas! certain Members, with monumental naivete, have thought fit to take their correspondence seriously. They have put questions to Ministers. They have in so many crude words openly on the floor of the House referred to "the increase in the number of letters which Members now receive from their constituents on parliamentary matters, owing to the recent additions to the franchise and its extension to women." They have pleaded for the privilege of "franking" their answers. Could perversity go further? What woman will continue to write to a Member who satisfies her curiosity? And what of the unwritten, unstamped, unposted letters of just indignation to friends and relations?

The P.M.G.'s laconic answer to this monstrous request, "I do not think it would be expedient," was highly commendable as a feat of Ministerial restraint. But the gloom that has settled on him is only too solidly grounded. These afflicted Members are out to raise a sentimental public opinion in support of their silly demand. Then, of course, the Government will capitulate, and the country will go Bolshevik from excessive taxation.

Will not all patriotic women constituents write at once to their Members and point out the folly of this agitation?

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[Illustration: "I SHALL NEVER FIND ANYONE ELSE LIKE YOU. YOU SEE, YOU'RE SO DIFFERENT FROM OTHER GIRLS."

"OH, BUT YOU'LL FIND LOTS OF OTHER GIRLS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER GIRLS."]

* * * * *

OLD SOLDIERS.

They dug us down and earthed us in, their hasty shovels plying,
Us the poor dead of Oudenarde, Ramillies, Waterloo;
We heard their drum-taps fading and their trumpet fanfares dying
As they marched away and left us, in the dark and silence lying,
Home-bound for happy England and the green fields that we knew.

We slept. The seasons went their round. We did not hear the rover
Winds in our coverlets of grass, the plough-shares tear the mould;
We did not feel the bridal earth thrill to her April lover
Nor hear the song of bees among the poppies and the clover;
Snow-fall or sun to us were one and time went by untold.

We woke. The soil about us shook to the long boom of thunder--
War loose and making music on his crashing brazen gongs--
The sharp hoof-beat, the thresh of feet stirred our old bones down under;
Wheels upon wheels ground overhead; then with a glow of wonder
We heard the chant of Englishmen singing their marching songs.

Blood of our blood! We heard them swing a-down the teeming highways,
As we swung once. We heard them shout; we heard the jests they cast.
And we dead men remembered then blue Junes in Devon by-ways,
Star-dusted skies and women's eyes, women with sweet and shy ways.
These were their race! We strove to rise, but the strong clay held us fast.

Year in, year out, along the roads the ceaseless wagons clattered;
Listened we for an English voice ever, ever in vain;
Far in the west, year out, year in, terrible thunders battered,
Drumming the doom of whom--of whom? Hope in our hearts lay shattered....
Then we heard the lilt of Highland pipes and English songs again.

On, ever on, we heard them press; their jaunty bugles blended
Proudly and clear that we might hear, we dead men of old wars,
How the red agony was passed and the long vigil ended.
Now may we sleep in peace again lapped in a vision splendid
Of England's banners marching onwards, upwards to the stars.

PATLANDER.

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[Illustration: THE MILITARY MUZZLE.

FRITZ. "AFTER ALL, IT'S NOT MUCH GOOD BARKING WHEN THEY'VE STOPPED MY BITE."]

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[Illustration: OUR SENSITIVE YOUTH.

Cadet. "'SCUSE ME, SIR--ARE YOU A DOCTOR? THERE'S A BOY FAINTED."

Doctor. "AH--FATIGUE, I SUPPOSE?"

Cadet. "No, SIR. THE SERGEANT SPLIT AN INFINITIVE."]

* * * * *

BRAINS AND BALDNESS.

BY OUR MEDICAL EXPERT.

(_With acknowledgments to "The Times" _).

Baldness among men is undoubtedly on the increase, and various reasons have been assigned for its appearance in an exacerbated form. In particular the stress and strain of the War have been mooted, and the argument is reinforced by such words as Chauvinism, which, Mr. LLOYD GEORGE is probably not aware, is derived from _chauve_. War is a solvent of equanimity; in the cant but expressive phrase it becomes harder to keep one's hair on. Again, _inter arma silent Musae_. Fewer people have been playing the pianoforte, an exercise which has always exerted a stimulating effect on the follicles. Our political correspondent at Paris writes that M. PADEREWSKI'S once luxuriant _chevelure_ has suffered sadly since he has taken to politics, but that after playing for a couple of hours to Mr. BALFOUR a distinct improvement was noticeable.

But no very clear exposition of the subject has yet been forthcoming, and this is all the more extraordinary when it is considered that baldness is really a very unsightly and distressing condition.

The sensitiveness of JULIUS CAESAR on this score is notorious. CIMABUE, of whom Mr. LLOYD GEORGE has probably never heard, was a martyr to _alopecia seborrhoica_, and the case of the Highland chieftain MacAssar is too well known to call for detailed survey. Yet the strange fact remains that hitherto sustained scientific investigation has been lacking, though there is assuredly a great, if not perhaps a vital, need for it. No one can afford to say that, if this apparently, simple malady were studied, facts of the utmost value to hatters would not be forthcoming. One can only express regret that those fortunate interviewers who have been allowed to describe the cranial developments of eminent men should have failed to profit by their opportunities for examining the "area of baldness," which corresponds to the distribution of the Vth nerve, the branches of which come out from the brain by the eye-sockets. Such investigations will never be properly carried out and co-ordinated without the establishment of a Hair Ministry, which is one of the clamant needs of reconstruction. It is an open secret that the question was discussed a year ago and set aside for the curious reason that of the three persons whose candidature was most powerfully supported two were bald, and the third was the Member for Wigan.

Meanwhile a start has been made by the unofficial activities of a small committee of experts in trichology, and their conclusions, published in an interim report, are worth recording. They are as follows: "That the 'area of baldness,' should an illness supervene, will certainly suffer to a greater extent than the more vigorous ones. Illness, as is well known, tends to interfere with the nourishment of the skin and to establish an atrophic diathesis of the follicular ganglia. The patient's hair may all come out, or, and this often happens, it may come out only in one area--the area of baldness."

In a minority report, signed by only one of the committee, the strange theory was expounded that genius developed in a direct ratio with the loss of hair between the temporal regions and the crown of the head. It was also pointed out that in a great number of TURNER'S pictures a special feature was the prominence given to bald-headed fishermen in high lights. This observation does not seem to represent a scientific attempt to handle the problem; but it should not be rashly dismissed on that account.

In a further article we hope to deal with the effect of hard hats on the conductivity of the branches of the Vth nerve, the mentality of the Hairy Ainus and other cognate questions.

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[Illustration: _Mr. 'Iggins (describing his first experience in lawsuit). _""IS LORDSHIP SEZ, 'YOU CAN GO. THE CASE IS ADJOURNED _SINE DIE_. WELL, I WASN'T GOING TO LET 'IM THINK I DIDN'T RUMBLE 'IS LAW-TALK, SO I JUS' GIVES 'IM A WINK AN' SEZ, 'RIGHT-O! GOOD BYE-EE!"]

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BOLSHEVISMUS.

Valparaiso, April 18th. (By special cable to _The Daily Thrill_.)--Three men, named Fedor Popemoff, Leon Strunski and Igor Wunderbaum, were arrested here this morning on suspicion of being Bolshevist agents. Their lodging was searched and a quantity of seditious literature, a portmanteau full of Browning pistols and some hanks of dried caviare removed. At a preliminary examination they claimed that they had been sent to Chile by the Siberian Red Cross to establish a co-operative guinea-pig ranch for indigent Grand Dukes. The police believe that Wunderbaum is no other than the notorious McDuff, the Peebles anarchist, who, when not actively engaged in preaching revolution, used to earn a precarious livelihood contributing to the Scottish comic papers.

Moscow, April 17th (delayed). (By the Special Correspondent of _The Morning Roast_.)--By intervening in Russia at once the Allies can destroy Bolshevism at a blow. Three days hence the Red hordes may be sweeping across Western Europe in an irresistible flood. At the present moment Trotsky has less than one thousand one hundred and thirty-five trustworthy troops all told, mostly Chinese, with a smattering of Army Service Corps. In a month's time he will have a million and a half of well-trained soldiers at his beck. Don't ask me how he does it. He has plenty of money and his Army is well paid. Only yesterday I saw a private of the Red Guards pay five roubles for a hair-cut. Will it be another case of "Too late"?

New York, April 18th. (By special cable to _The Daily Thrill_.)--While truffle-tracking in the Saratoga forest a corporal and three men of the United States Marines came upon what is believed to be a _cache_ of Bolshevist arms. The _cache_ contained six 9-inch howitzers, two hundred thousand rifles and a million rounds of ammunition, and was skilfully concealed under the bole of a tree. Secret service men claim that this is part of a gigantic plot for the disorganization of traffic, the nationalization of cocktails and the wresting of Ireland from the strangulating grip of the Anglo-Saxon party. Two men have been arrested in Seattle in connection with the affair. On one of them was found Bolshevist literature and two hundred million francs in notes of the Deutsche Bank. He admitted that his name was not Devlin and said that the money had been given to him to hold by an Australian soldier who had not returned for it.

Moscow, April 19th. (From the Special Correspondent of _The Daily Blues_.)--I have just had a chat with Hackoff, the confidant of Trotsky. He indignantly denied that Russia was in a state of anarchy and pointed out that one hundred and twenty-three thousand one hundred and nine persons had already been executed for conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace. There can be no question that the man is sincere. He was very despondent, and stated that, owing to false reports spread by the Allies, the Bolshevist paper money had become worthless, except in Paris, where they would take anything you had on you. He urged that unless an arrangement could be made with the United States for a loan or Colonel Wedgwood would consent to take command of the Red Army the counter-revolution could no longer be resisted. Hackoff is a shrewd fellow, but neither he nor Trotsky can cope with the situation much

longer. Only last week I telegraphed Mr. Lloyd George that England must act at once if we are to save Bolshevism from being nothing better than a Utopian dream.

Wilna, April 20th. (By special cable to The Morning Roast.)--Five hundred thousand Red Guards, well supplied with heavy artillery and German engineers (Wurmtruppen), are advancing on the town. The Church Lads Brigade are parading the streets day and night to prevent looting. Outwardly the Burgomaster remains calm, but this morning he told me, with tears in his eyes, that unless three carloads of potatoes reached the doomed city before next Friday nothing could save it. "Ah," he cried, "if only rich England would send us some of her tinned milk!"

Stockholm, April 21st. (From the Special Correspondent of The Daily Thrill.)--An extraordinary incident has come to light here. While the baggage of Mlle. Orloff, the famous danseuse, was being unloaded at the pier a heavy trunk dropped from the sling and crashed on to the wharf. Rendered suspicious by the lady's unaccountable agitation, Customs officers searched the trunk and found at the bottom of it six hundred million pounds in bank-notes and a Russian named Oilivitch, who at first claimed to be a scenic artist, but finally admitted that he had been appointed by Lenin ambassador to the Netherlands. Communication with Scotland Yard has now established the astounding fact that he is the Abram Oilivitch who in 1914 kept a fish-and-chips shop in Lower Tittlebat Street, Houndsditch. Oilivitch first came under suspicion when it was discovered that Litvinoff had been seen to purchase a haddock at his shop. He was also known to have contributed eighteen-pence to the funds of the Union of Democratic Control, but afterwards recovered the sum, claiming that he had paid it under the erroneous belief that the Union of Democratic Control was an institution for extending philanthropy to decaying fishmongers. After disappearing from sight for a while Oilivitch was next heard of in the Censor's Department, from which he was removed for suppressing a number of postal orders, but afterwards reinstated and transferred to the Foreign Office. He left the Foreign Office in June, 1918, as the result of ill-health, and was given a passport to Russia, where his medical adviser resided.

Later.--It now transpires that Oilivitch was also employed at the Admiralty, the War Office and the National Liberal Club. It has also been established that he was born in Duesseldorf and that his real name is Gustaf Schnapps. He is being detained on suspicion.

Moscow, April 23rd. (By special cable to The Daily Blues.)--The situation here, thanks to the preposterous conduct of the Allies, is desperate. Food is unobtainable and Trotsky has only one pair of trousers. Unless something is done the Soviet Committee will disintegrate and chaos ensue. Already grave unrest is manifesting itself in various parts of the country. Hackoff, the able Minister of Justice and Sociology, tells me that he has already raised the weekly executions of bourgeoisie from six to ten thousand, in a desperate endeavour to prevent disorder on the part of the populace. It is not too late for the Peace Conference to act. Trotsky admitted to me yesterday that, on receipt of fifty thousand pounds and a new pair of trousers as a guarantee of good faith, he would allow the Big Four to present their case to him. He is firm on the subject of an indemnity and the execution of Mr. Bottomley. Otherwise he is moderation itself. But the Allies must act at once. To-morrow will be too late.

ALGOL.

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[Illustration: Pupil. "WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, AM I A BASS OR A BARITONE?"

Teacher. "NO--YOU'RE NOT."]

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INTELLIGENT ANTICIPATION.

"If births can be arranged would not mind taking charge of children
in lieu of passage."

_Advt. in "Statesman." (Calcutta). _

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"It is unsafe even to curry favour with the French just to spite
your own Prim Minister."

Sunday Paper.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE has been called a lot of things in his time, but--prim!

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From a concert programme:--

"Recitatif et Grand air D'oedipe a Cologne."

It was after the long march to the Rhine, no doubt, that the hero
acquired the nickname of "Swellfoot."

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THE DREAM TELEPHONE.

I go to bed at half-past six
And Nurse says, "No more funny tricks;"
She takes the light and goes away
And all alone up there I stay.

And, as I lie there all alone,
Sometimes I hear the telephone;
I hear them say, "Yes, that's all right,"
Then, "Buzz, buzz, buzz," and then "Good-night."

And sometimes as I lie it seems
That people come into my dreams;
I hear a bell ring far away,
And then I hear the people say:

"Have you a little girl up there,
The room that's by the Nursery stair?
We are the people that she knew
Before she came to live with you.

"Tell her we know she bruised her knee
In falling from the apple-tree;
Tell her that we'll come very soon
And find the missing tea-set spoon.

"She knows we often come and peep
And kiss her when she's fast asleep;
We think you'll suit her soon all right."
Then, "Buzz, buzz, buzz," and then, "Good-night."

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ANOTHER KNOCK FOR "THE TIMES."

"_WE_ ARE BACKING NORTHCLIFFE."

Poster of "John Bull."

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[Illustration: "I SUPPOSE YOUR LANDLORD ASKS A LOT FOR THE RENT OF THIS PLACE?"

"A LOT! HE ASKS ME FOR IT NEARLY EVERY WEEK."]

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DOGS' DELIGHT.

SCENE.--_Interior of shop devoted to the sale of cutlery, leatherware and dogs' collars, leads, etc. Customers discovered lining the counter, others in background leading puzzled and suspicious dogs. The proprietor is endeavouring to serve ordinary purchasers, answer questions, punch holes in straps and give change simultaneously. A harried assistant in a white coat is dealing, as well as he can, with overwhelming demands for muzzles._

Proprietor. Yes, Sir, you'll find that razor-strop quite... Six holes wanted in that strap? (_To Assistant_) Right--leave it here and--Sorry, Madam, I can't attend to you just now.... Don't happen to have a _ten_-shilling note, do you, Sir? No? Well, I may be able to manage it for you.... If you'll speak to my assistant, Madam; _he_'s attending to the muzzling.

The Owner of a subdued nondescript (calling Assistant). Will you ask this lady to kindly keep her dog from trying to kill mine, please?

The Other Lady (whose dog, a powerful and truculent Airedale, seems to have conceived a sudden and violent dislike for the nondescript). Yours must have done _something_ to irritate him--he's generally such a good-tempered dog.

Assistant (to the Airedale, which is barking furiously and straining at his lead). 'Ere, sherrup, will you? Allow me, Mum. I'll put 'im where he can 'ave 'is good temper out to 'imself. _ (He hustles the Airedale to a small office, where he shuts him in--to his and his owner's intense disapproval. A fox-terrier in another customer's arms becomes hysterical with sympathy and utters ear-rending barks.)_ Oh, kindly get that dawg to sherrup, Mum, or we'll 'ave the lot of 'em orf; or could you look in some day when he's more collected?

Another Lady. I say, I want a muzzle for my dog.

Assistant (sardonically). You surprise me, Mum! We're very near sold out, but if you'll let me 'ave a look at your dawg, p'r'aps--

The Lady. Oh, I haven't _brought_ him. Left him at Barnes.

Assistant. 'Ave yer, Mum? Well, yer see, I can't run down to Barnes--not just now I can't.

The Lady. No, but I thought--he's rather a large dog, a Pekinese spaniel.

Assistant. Then I couldn't fit 'im if 'e was 'ere, cos 'e'd want a short muzzle and we've run out o' them.

A Customer with a Pekinese. Then will you find me a muzzle for _this_ one?

Assistant (with resigned despair). You jest 'eard me say we 'ad no short muzzles, Mum. If you don't mind waiting 'ere an hour or two I'll send a man to the factory in a taxi to bring back a fresh stock--if they've got any, which I don't guarantee.

The Customer with the Pekinese. But I saw some leather muzzles in the window; one of those would do beautifully.

Assistant. I shall 'ave great pleasure in selling you one, Mum, on'y Gover'ment says they've got to be wire. 'Owever, it's _your_ risk, not mine. Well, since you ask me, I think you _'ad_ better wait.

A Customer (carrying a large brown-and-white dog with lop ears and soulful eyes). I've been kept waiting here two hours, and I think it's high time--

Assistant. If you'll bring 'im along to the back shop, Mum, I _may_ have one left his size.

A Lady with a lovely complexion and an unlovely griffon (to her companion). So fussy and tiresome of the Government bringing in muzzles again after all these years!

Her Companion. Oh, I don't _know_. We've had a mysterious dog running about snapping in our district for days.

The Lady with the complexion. Ah, but _this_ poor darling _never_ snaps, and, besides, he hasn't been used to muzzles in Belgium. You needn't _mention_ it, but I got a friend of mine to smuggle him over for me--such a _dear_ boy, he'll do anything I ask him to.

Assistant (after attempting to fit the soulful-eyed dog with a muzzle and narrowly escaping being bitten). There, that's enough for _me_, Mum. Jest take that dawg out at once, please.

Owner of the dog (which, having gained its point, affects an air of innocent detachment). I shall do nothing of the kind. It was the brutal way you took hold of her. The _gentlest_ creature! Why, I've _had_ her three years!

Assistant. I don't care if you've 'ad her a century. They're all angels as come 'ere; but I ain't going to 'ave _my_ thumb bit by no angels, so will you kindly walk out?

Owner. Without a muzzle? Never!

Assistant. Then I shall 'ave to call in a constable to make you. I'm not bound to sell you nothing.

Owner (with spirit). Call _a_ constable then! _I_ don't care. Here I stay till I get that muzzle.

Assistant (giving up his idea of calling a constable). Then I should advise you to take a chair, Mum, as we don't close till seven.

Owner (retreating with dignity). All _I_ can say is that I call it perfectly disgraceful. I shall certainly report your conduct; and I only hope you won't sell a single other muzzle to-day!

Assistant. If I didn't I could bear up. _(To a lady with an elderly Blenheim)_ If it's a muzzle, Mum--

The Owner of the Blenheim. That's just what I want to know. _Must_ he have a muzzle? You see, he's got no teeth, so he couldn't possibly bite anyone--now, _could_ he?

Assistant. I _dunno_, Mum. You take 'im to see the Board of Agriculture. _They'll_ give you an opinion on 'im. __(To Staff Officer who approaches)_ Sorry, Sir, but our stock of muzzles--

Staff Officer. All I want is a new leather band for this wrist-watch. Got one?

Assistant (with joy). Thank 'eaven I _'ave_! Gaw bless the Army!

F.A.

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[Illustration: _Helen's elder Sister_. "YOU KNOW, ALL THE STARS ARE WORLDS LIKE OURS."

Helen. "WELL, I SHOULDN'T LIKE TO LIVE ON ONE--IT WOULD BE SO HORRID WHEN IT TWINKLED."]

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THE REVOLT.

There is a cupboard underneath the stair
Where moth and rust hold undisputed sway,
And here is hid my old civilian wear,
And my wife sits and plays with it all day,
Since Peace is imminent and, I'm advised,
Even the bard may be demobilised.

She is a woman who was clearly born
To be the monarch of a helpless male;
And when she says, "This overcoat is torn,"
"These flannel trousers are beyond the pale,"
"You can't be seen in any of those shirts,"
I acquiesce, but, goodness, how it hurts.

For they are rich with memories of Peace,
The soiled habiliments my lady loathes.
I do not long for trousers with a crease;
I _do not want_ another crowd of clothes--
Particularly as you have to pay
Seventeen guineas for a suit to-day.

We are but worms, we husbands; yet 'tis said,
When the sad worm lies broken and at bay,
There comes a moment when the thing sees red,
And one such moment has occurred to-day;
"Look at this hat," I said, "this old top-hat;
I will not wear another one like that.

"This is the hat I purchased in the High,
Still crude and young and ignorant of sin;
I wooed you in this hat--I don't know why;
This is the hat that I was married in;
In it I walked on Sunday through the parks,
And even then the people made remarks.

"Now it is dead--the last of all its line--
Nothing like this shall mar the poet's Peace;
What have the nations fought for, wet and fine,

If not that ancient tyrannies should cease?
What use the Crowns of Europe coming croppers
If we are still to be the slaves of 'toppers'?

"It speaks to me of many an ancient sore--
Of calls and cards and Sunday afternoon;
Of hideous wanderings from door to door
And choking necks and patent-leather shoon;
'The War is won,' as Mr. ASQUITH said,
And all these evils are or should be dead.

"It moves me not that other men with wives
Have fall'n already in the old abyss,
Have let their women ruin all their lives
And ordered new atrocities like this.
President WILSON will have missed success
If other men determine how I dress.

"Yonder there hangs the helmet of a Hun,
And I will hang this horror at its side;
Twin symbols of an epoch which is done,
These shall remind our children----" My wife sighed,
"You'll have to get another one, I fear;"
And all I said was, "Very well, my dear."

A.P.H.

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COMMERCIAL CANDOUR.

Notice in a cobbler's window:--

"Will customers please bring their own paper for repairs?"

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"Miss Carnegie wore a gown of white satin and point applique lace,
with a lace veil falling from a light brown coiffeur almost to the
end of the train."--_Daily Mirror_.

It doesn't say whether the light-brown coiffeur was a page or the best
man.

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From an account of the British sailors' reception in Paris:--

"Sous les clamations de la foule, les marins gagnent par les
Champs-Elysees, la rue Royale et le boulevard Malesherbes, le Lycee
Carnot, ou M. Breakfast les attend."--_French Local Paper_.

Hospitality personified!

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AT THE PLAY.

"BUSINESS BEFORE PLEASURE."

The return of _Abe Potash_ and _Mawruss Perlmutter_ to London is not
an event to be regarded indifferently. The light-hearted pair have
evidently been through some anxious times. _Rosie Potash_ can never have
been a very easy woman to live with. She has not improved. And now that
she has infected _Ruth Perlmutter_ with her morbid jealousies the alert

and as yet unbroken _Mawruss_ begins to know something of what his long-suffering, not to say occasionally abject, partner, _Abe_, has had to endure these many years.

It was bad enough in the dress business. But now they have gone into films it is indefinitely worse. Every reasonable person must know that you can't produce really moving pictures without an immense amount of late office hours, dining and supping out and that sort of thing, a fact which the _Rosies_ and _Ruths_ of this world can't be expected to appreciate. So that it would be as well, think the ingenuous _entrepreneurs_, if _The Fatal Murder_ were, so far as the ladies' parts are concerned, cast from members of the two households. Besides, what an excellent way of keeping the money in the family. However _The Fatal Murder_ is a dud; _Rosie_ and _Ruth_ are not the right shape; and film acting, with the necessary pep, is not a thing you can just acquire by wishing so.

What is wanted, says the voluble young hustler in the firm, who alone seems to know anything of the business, is real actresses as distinguished from members of the directors' families, and above all a good vampire. A vampire is the very immoral and under-dressed type of woman that wrecks hearts and homes, and without which no film with a high moral purpose is conceivable. You must have shadows to throw up the light. And on this principle all the uplift and moral instruction of that potent instrument of grace, the cinematograph, is based--a fact which will not have escaped the notice of cinema-goers.

When _Rita Sismondi_ appears in an evil Futurist black-and-white gown by Viola you can tell at once she is the goods. But naturally _Abe's_ first thought is, "What will _Rosie_ say?" His second, shared by _Mawruss_: "Hang _Rosie_! We shall both like this lady." Finances are not flourishing, but the crooked manager of the very unbusinesslike bank that is financing the P. and P. Film Co. harbours designs on the virtue of _Rita_, who has this commodity in a measure unusual with film vampires (or usual, I forget which), and is just a slightly adventurous prude out for a good time. He accordingly advances more money for _The Guilty Dollar_ on condition that _Rita_ be engaged, and yet more money on condition that she be not fired by any machinations of jealous wives.

Rosie, indeed, says a good deal when she turns up at a rehearsal and finds the vampire clad in the third of a gown hazardously suspended on her gracious shoulders by bead straps, and _Mawruss_ and _Abe_ demonstrating how in their opinion the kissing scenes should be conducted so as to make a really notable production. However, the vampire's film vices make the success of the company, and her private virtues bring all to a happy ending.

The story need hardly concern us. It is not plausible, which matters nothing at all. Mr. YORKE and Mr. LEONARD are the essential outfit, and it seems to me they are better than ever. One simply _has_ to laugh, louder and oftener than is seemly for a self-respecting Englishman. No doubt their authors, Messrs. GLASS and GOODMAN, give them plenty of good things to say, but it is the astonishing finish and precision of their technique which make their work so pleasant to watch. If it throws into awkward relief the amateurishness of some of their associates that can't be helped. Miss VERA GORDON'S _Rosie_ is a good performance, and Miss JULIA BRUNS, the vampire, seemed to me to make with considerable skill and subtlety a real character (within the limits allowed by the farcical nature of the scheme) out of what might easily have been uninvitingly crude.

T.

* * * * *

OUR FRIEND THE FISH.

"What is a sardine?" was a question much before the Courts some few years ago, not unprofitably for certain gentlemen wearing silk, and the correct solution I never heard; but I can supply, from personal observation, one answer to the query, and that is, "An essential ingredient in London humour." For without this small but sapid fish--whatever he may really be, whether denizen of the Sardinian sea, immature Cornish pilchard, or mere plebeian sprat well oiled--numbers of our fellow-men and fellow-women, with all the will in the world, might never raise a laugh. As it is, thanks to his habit of lying in excessive compression within his tin tabernacle, and the prevalence in these congested days of too many passengers on the Tubes, on the Underground and in the omnibuses, whoever would publicly remove gravity has but to set up the sardine comparison and be rewarded.

Why creatures so remote from man as fishes--cold-blooded inhabitants of an element in which man exists only so long as he keeps on the surface; mute, incredible and incapable of exchanging any intercourse with him--why these should provide the Cockney, the dweller in the city of the world, with so much of the material of jocoseness is an odd problem. But they do. Herrings, when cured either by smoke or sun, notoriously contribute to the low comedian's success. The mere word "kipper" has every girl in the gallery in a tittering ecstasy. But outside the Halls it is the sardine that conquers.

In one day this week I witnessed the triumph of the sardine on three different occasions, and it was always hearty and complete.

The first time was in a lift at Chancery Lane. It is not normally a very busy station, but our attendant having, as is now the rule, talked too long with the attendant of a neighbouring lift, we were more than full before the descent began. We were also cross and impatient, the rumble, from below, of trains that we might just as well be in doing nothing to steady our nerves.

But help came--and came from that strange quarter the mighty ocean, from Chancery Lane so distant! "Might as well," said a burly labourer (or, for all I know, burly receiver of unemployment dole)--"might as well be sardines in a tin!"

Straightway we all laughed and viewed our lost time with more serenity.

Later I was in a 'bus in Victoria Street, on its way to the Strand. As many persons were inside, seated or standing on their own and on others' feet, as it should be permitted to hold, but still another two were let in by the harassed conductress.

"I say, Miss," said the inevitable wag, who was one of the standing passengers, "steady on. We're more than full up already, you know. Do you take us for sardines?"

And again mirth rocked us.

Finally, that night I was among the stream of humanity which pours down Villiers Street from the theatres for half-an-hour or so between 10.40 and 11.10, all in some mysterious way to be absorbed into the trains or the trams and conveyed home. After some desperate struggles on Charing Cross platform I found myself a suffering unit in yet another dense throng in a compartment going West; and again, amid delighted merriment, some one likened us to sardines.

It is not much of a joke, but you will notice that it so seldom fails that one wonders why any effort is ever made to invent a better.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "I DIDN'T KNOW YOU KNEW THE FUNNY MAN, SIS."

"I DIDN'T. BUT BY THE TIME I DISCOVERED THAT I DIDN'T--WELL, I DID."]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

Madam Constantia (LONGMANS) is a war story, but of an earlier and more picturesque war. A simple tale, I am bound to call it, revolving entirely round a situation not altogether unknown to fiction, in which the hero and heroine, being of opposite sides, love and fight one another simultaneously. Actually the scene is set during the American struggle for independence, thus providing a sufficiency of pomp and circumstance in the way of fine uniforms and pretty frocks; and the protagonists are _Captain Carter_, of the British service, and _Constantia Wilmer_, daughter of the American who had captured him. Perhaps you may recall that the identical campaign has already provided a very similar position (reversed) in _Miss Elizabeth's Prisoner_. It is only a deserved tribute to the skill with which Mr. JEFFERSON CARTER has told this adventure of his namesake to admit that I am left with an uncertainty, not usual to the reviewing experience, whether it is in fact a true or an imagined affair. In any event its development follows a well-trodden path. We have the captive, jealous in honour, susceptible and exasperatingly Quixotic, doubly enchained by his word and the charms of his fair wardress; the lady's conspicuous ill-treatment of him at the first, a slight mystery, some escapes and counterplots, and on the appointed page the matrimonial finish that hardly the most pessimistic reader can ever have felt as other than assured. Fact or fiction, you may spend an agreeable hour in watching the course of _Captain Carter's_ courtship overcoming its rather obvious obstacles.

* * * * *

Because I have so great an admiration for their beneficent activities, I have always wanted to meet a novel with a lot about dentists in it, and now Miss DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON, in _The Tunnel_ (DUCKWORTH), has satisfied my desire. Dentists--a houseful of them--spittoons, revolving basins; patients going upstairs with sinking feelings; wondering at the pattern on the wallpaper; going down triumphant. Teeth. Appointment books. Dentists everywhere. This is not a quotation, but very like one, for Miss RICHARDSON affects the modern manner. Though one of the dentists is quite the most agreeable person in the book, he isn't the hero, because the author is much too clever to have anything of the sort. Her method, exploited some time ago in that remarkable book, _Pointed Roofs_, is to get right inside one _Miriam Henderson_ and keep on writing out her thoughts with as little explanation of her circumstances as possible, so that _The Tunnel_, to anyone who has missed the earlier books, must be very nearly unintelligible. Even the sincere admirer of Miss RICHARDSON'S talent will begin to wonder how many more books at the present rate of progress must be required to bring _Miriam_ to, say, threescore years and ten. My own belief is that if her creator is ever so ill-advised as to put her beneath a 'bus or drop her down a lift-well, she herself will be gone too; and for that I should be sorry, since I agree with almost all the nice things Miss MAY SINCLAIR says of the earlier books in an appreciation here reprinted from _The Egoist_. Miss RICHARDSON has evolved a way of writing a novel which somehow suggests the Futurist way of painting a picture; but _The Tunnel_ has left me wondering whether she has not carried her method a little too far. It seems to me that some of her heroine's thoughts were not worth recording; but perhaps when another four or five books have

been added to Miriam's life-history I may discover what the scheme may be that lies behind them all, and change my mind.

* * * * *

More than once before this I have enjoyed the dexterity of Miss VIOLET HUNT in a certain type of social satire; but I regret to say that the expectation with which I opened The Last Ditch (STANLEY PAUL) was doomed to some disappointment. The idea was promising enough--a study of our British best people confronting the ordeal of world-war; but somehow it failed to capture me. For one reason it is told in a series of letters--a dangerous method at any time. As usual, these are far too long and literary to be genuine; though they keep up a rather irritating pretence of reality by repetitions of the same events in correspondence from different writers. Moreover, letters whose concern is the progress of recruiting or the novelty of war can hardly at this time avoid an effect of having been delayed in the post. But all this would have mattered little if Miss HUNT had chosen her aristocrats from persons in whom it was possible to take more interest. But the plain fact is that you never met so tedious a set. They are not witty; they are not even wicked to any significant extent. They simply produce (at least in my case) no effect whatever. Perhaps this may all be of intention; the author may have meant to harrow us with the spectacle of our old nobility expiring as nonentities. But in that case the picture is manifestly unfair. And it is certainly dull--dull as the last ditch-water.

* * * * *

In America in France (MURRAY) Lieut. Col. FREDERICK PALMER, a member of the Staff Corps of the United States Army, sets out to tell the story of the making of an army. This is the first book by Colonel PALMER that has come my way, but I find that he has written four others, all of which I judge by their titles to be concerned with the War. Be that as it may, I welcome America in France both because it gives a narrative of America's tremendous effort, and because the book is written with a modesty which is very pleasing. America came to the job of fighting as a learner. Her soldiers did not boast of what they were going to do, but sat down solidly to learn, in order that she might be useful in the fighting-line. How she achieved her purpose the world now knows. If any fault is to be found with the author's style, it is that the limpidity and evenness of its flow make great events less easy of distinction than perhaps they might be; but most people will hail this as a merit rather than a fault, and I agree with them. Colonel PALMER records the names of the first three Americans who died fighting. The French General to whose unit they were attached ordered a ceremonial parade and made a speech in which he asked that the mortal remains of these young men be left in France. "We will," he continued, "inscribe on their tombs, 'Here lie the first soldiers of the United States to fall on the soil of France for Justice and Liberty' ... Corporal Gresham, Private Enright, Private Hay, in the name of France I thank you." As another matter of historical interest it may be stated that the first shot of the War on the American side was fired by Battery C of the 6th Field Artillery, "without waiting on going into position at the time set. The men dragged a gun forward in the early morning of October 23rd, and sent a shell at the enemy. There was no particular target. The aim was in the general direction of Berlin. The gun has been sent to West Point as a relic."

* * * * *

I must assume that Such Stuff as Dreams (MURRAY) was written by C.E.W. LAWRENCE with a purpose, but it remains obscure to me. A smart young married clerk in the oil business falls off the top of a bus on to his head and, from a confirmed materialist, becomes something not unlike a confirmed lunatic, with a faculty for seeing flaming emanations which

enable him to place the owners of them in the true scale of human and spiritual values. He discovers that his wife's uncle, a whimsical but essentially tedious drunkard, is a better man than the egregious New Religionist pastor--a discovery I made for myself without falling off a bus. I was forced to the conclusion that these and equally dull, or duller, folk must exist or have existed, and that it could not possibly have been necessary to invent them. And if I am right then it obviously needs a greater sympathy than I can command to do justice to this type of narrative, with its presuppositions and inferences. Sir A. CONAN DOYLE has much to answer for.

* * * * *

I do not remember the precise number of murders which occur in _Droonin' Watter_ (ALLEN AND UNWIN), but readers of this sensational story can accept my assurance that Mr. J.S. FLETCHER has a quick and decisive way of meting out justice (or injustice) to his characters. In fact, from the very start, when a man with a black patch over his eye walks into Berwick-upon-Tweed and takes lodgings with _Mrs. Moneylaws_ (the mother of the man who tells the tale), the pace is red-hot. It is easy enough to discover improbabilities in such a yarn as this, but the only important question is whether one wants to discover what happens in the end, and I confess without a blush that I did want to follow Mr. J.S. FLETCHER to the last page. Let me however beg him in his next book to give the word "yon" a rest; four "yons" in eleven lines is a clear case of overcrowding; and I invite the attention of the Limited Labour Party to this scandal.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Young Sub (a very earnest pilgrim). _ "PLEASE SEND A LARGE BUNCH OF ROSES TO THE ADDRESS ON THAT CARD AND CHARGE IT TO ME."

Florist. "YES, SIR--AND YOUR NAME?"

Sub. "OH, NEVER MIND MY NAME--SHE'LL UNDERSTAND."]

* * * * *

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