

Punch, or The London Charivari, Vol. 153, November 7, 1917

Various

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PUNCH,

OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

VOL. 153.

November 7, 1917.

CHARIVARIA.

No sooner had the _Berliner Tageblatt_ pointed out that "Dr. MICHAELIS was a good Chancellor as Chancellors go" than he went.

The Daily Mail is very cross with a neutral country for holding up their correspondent's copy. If persisted in, this sort of thing might get us mixed up in a war.

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A Highgate man has been fined forty shillings for feeding a horse kept solely for pleasure upon oats. His plea, that the animal did not generate sufficient power on coal-gas, left the Bench quite cold.

A ratcatcher has been granted three pounds of sugar a week until Christmas by a rural Food Control Committee, whom he informed that rats would not look at poison without sugar. The rats' lack of patriotism in refusing to forego their poison in these times of necessity is the subject of unfavourable comment.

There is no foundation for the report that a prominent manufacturer identified with the Liberal Party has been offered a baronetcy if he will contribute five pounds of sugar to the party funds.

No confirmation is to hand of the report that Commander BELLAIRS, M.P., has been _spurlos versnubt_.

"Why can't the Navy have a Bairnsfather?" asks _The Weekly Dispatch_. This habit of carping at the Senior Service is being carried to abominable lengths.

Charged with failing to report himself, a man who lived on Hackney Marshes stated that he did not know there was a war on, and that nobody had told him anything about it. A prospectus of _The Times'_ History of the War has been despatched to him by express messenger.

Efforts of the Industrial Workers of the World to establish themselves in this country have received no encouragement, says Sir GEORGE CAVE. They were not even arrested and then released.

We trust there is no truth in the rumour that the Air Ministry Bill has gone to a better pigeon 'ole.

No information has reached the Government, it was stated in the House of Commons recently, that toasted bread is being used as a substitute for tea. The misapprehension appears to have been caused by an ungarded admission of certain tea merchants that they have the public on toast.

We felt sure that the statement declaring that Mr. CHURCHILL had in a recent speech referred to "my Government" would be contradicted. The slight to _The Morning Post_ would have been too marked.

In a case at Bow Police Court it was stated that it took fifteen

policemen and an ambulance to remove a prisoner to the police-station.
It is supposed that the fellow did not want to go.

Too much importance must not be attached to the report emanating
from German sources that Count REVENTLOW has been appointed Honorary
Colonel to the Imperial Fraternisers Battalion.

According to _The Evening News_ a gang of thieves are "working"
the West End billiard saloons. So far no billiard tables have been
actually stolen, but a sharp look-out is being kept on men leaving the
saloons with bulgy pockets.

Addressing a Berlin meeting Herr STEGERWALD said, "We went to war at
the side of the Kaiser, and the All Highest will return from war with
us." If we may be permitted to say anything, we expect he will be
leading by at least a couple of lengths.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Film Producer_ (_to cinema artist hesitating on the
threshold_). "YOU'D SOONER NOT, EH? WHAT DO YOU THINK I GOT YOU
EXEMPTED FOR?"]

* * * * *

COMMERCIAL CANDOUR.

From a Native Tender for Works:--

"In last we hope to be favoured with your orders, in the
execution of which we will neglect nothing that can cause
you any inconvenience."

* * * * *

"In the past quarter there were 19 births (6 males and 13
females), comprising 10 between 1 and 65 years, and 9 65
and upwards."--_Huntingdonshire Post_.

The method of dodging the Military Service Acts adopted by these
elderly infants strikes us as distinctly unpatriotic.

* * * * *

LOOKING AHEAD.

"Comfortable Home for young lady as paying guest; every
convenience; near Cemetery."--_Local Paper_.

* * * * *

"Nothing which happens in Russia ... can alter the bare fact
that Germany is _in extremis_. I am not sure that _articulo
mortis_ wouldn't be the correct term."--_John Bull_.

We, on the other hand, are quite sure it wouldn't.

* * * * *

"Is it fresh, salt, Danish, or what?' one of the shop assistants was asked.

'Don't know,' he replied, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow, and into the heap of butter with his pats."--_Evening Paper_.

The vogue of margarine is now explained.

* * * * *

"Servant (general), lady, two gentlemen; no starch."--_Scotsman_.

We are glad to see that mistresses are taking a firm line against the prevailing stiffness of manners below stairs.

* * * * *

"Of 9,048 houses in Newport only 5,130 are occupied by one family."--_The Western Mail_.

If full advantage were taken of the housing accommodation it appears that Newport would contain almost two nowadays.

* * * * *

GERMAN OFFICIAL.

"Only a slight gain near Poelcapelle, 300 inches deep by 1,200 inches wide, remains to the enemy."--_Nottingham Evening Post_.

But by this time the Germans have discovered that, when they give him an inch, Sir DOUGLAS HAIG takes an ell.

* * * * *

MORE TALK WITH GERMAN PEACEMONGERS.

(_ Including an incidental reference to Mr. H.G. WELLS._)

[The writer has received a pontifical brochure by Mr. WELLS, reprinted from _The Daily News_, sold by the International Free Trade League and entitled "A Reasonable Man's Peace", in which the following passage occurs:--"The conditions of peace can now be stated in general terms that are as acceptable to a reasonable man in Berlin as they are to a reasonable man in Paris or London or Petrograd.... Why, then, does the waste and killing go on? Why is not the Peace Conference sitting now? Manifestly because a small minority of people in positions of peculiar advantage in positions of trust and authority, prevent or delay its assembling."]

When with another winter's horror nearing
Once more you send along the old, old dove
And frame with bloody lips that hide their leering
A canticle of love;

It has no doubt a most seductive cadence,
But we who look for argument by fact
We miss conciliation's artful aidance,
We note a want of tact.

Your words are redolent of pious unction;
Your deeds, your infamies, by sea and shore,
Go gaily on without the least compunction

Just as they went before.

We are not caught with olive-buds for baiting;
Something is needed just a shade less crude,
Something, for instance, faintly indicating
The penitential mood.

While still the stain is on your hands extended
We'll hold no commerce with your frigid spells,
Even though such a move were recommended
By Mr. H.G. WELLS.

Rather, without a break, like _Mr. Britling_
(Though the brave wooden sword his author drew
Seems to have undergone a certain whittling),
We mean to "see it through."

O.S.

* * * * *

THE GREAT MAN.

What am I doing, Dickie? Well, I'll tell you. I'm one of those subalterns you hear of sometimes. You know the kind of things they do? They look after their men and ask themselves every day in the line (as per printed instructions), "Am I offensive enough?" In trenches they are ever to the fore, bombing, patrolling, raiding, wiring and inspecting gas helmets. Working-parties under heavy fire are as meat and drink, rum and biscuits to them. Once every nine months, and when all Staff officers have had three goes, they get leave in order to give excuse for the appointment of A.P.M.'s. There are thousands of us, and we are supposed to run the War. These are the things which I am sure (if you get newspapers in Ceylon) jump into your mind the moment I mention the word subaltern, and I may as well tell you that in associating me with any one of these deeds at the present time you are entirely wrong.

I sit in a room, an office papered with maps in all degrees of nakedness, from the newest and purest to those woad-stained veterans called objective maps. In this room, where regimental officers tread lightly, speak softly and creep away, awed and impotent--HE sits. "HE" is a G.S.O.3, or General Staff Officer, third grade. He it is who looks after the welfare of some hundred thousand troops (when everybody else is out). I am attached to him--not personally, be it understood, but officially. I am there to learn how he does it (whatever it is). High hopes, never realised, are held out to me that if I am good and look after the office during mealtimes I shall have a job of my very own one day--possibly two days.

And he is very good to me. He rarely addresses me directly, except when short of matches, but he often gives me an insight into things by talking to himself aloud. He does this partly to teach me the reasoning processes by which he arrives at the momentous decisions expected of a G.S.O.3, and partly because he values my intelligent consideration.

This morning, for instance, furnished a typically brilliant example of our co-operation. "I wonder," he said (and as he spoke I broke off from my daily duties of writing to Her)--"I wonder what about these Flares? Division say they want two thousand red and white changing to green--oh no, it's the other lot; no, that _is_ right--I don't think they _can_ want two thousand _possibly_. We might give them half for practice purposes, or say five hundred. Still, if they say they want two thousand I suppose they do; but then there's the question of what

we've got in hand. All right, _let them have them_."

That was one of the questions I helped to settle.

"Heavens!" he went on, "five hundred men for digging cable trenches! No, no, I don't think. They had five hundred only the other night--no, they didn't; it was the other fellows--no, that was the night before--no, I was right as usual. One has so many things to think of. Well, they can't have them, that's certain; it can't be important--yes, it is, though, if things were to--yes, yes--_we'll let them have them_."

You will note that he said "we." Co-operation again. I assure you I glowed with pleasure to think I had been of so much assistance.

I had hardly got back to my letter when we started off again.

"Well, that's my morning's work done--no, it isn't--yes, no, by Jove, there's a code word for No. 237 Filtration Unit to be thought out. No, I shan't, they really _can't_ want one, they're too far back--still they _might_ come up to filter something near enough to want one--no I _won't_, it's sheer waste--still, I suppose one ought to be prepared--oh, yes, give them one--give them the word 'strafe'; nobody's got that. Bong! That's all for to-day."

And now you know what part I play in the Great War, Dickie.

Yours, JACK.

P.S.--Just off for my morning's exercise--sharpening the Corps Commander's pencils.

* * * * *

A "PUNCH" COT.

Some time ago Mr. Punch made an appeal on behalf of the East London Hospital for Children at Shadwell. He has now received a letter from the Chairman, which says: "By a unanimous resolution the Board of Management have desired me to send you an expression of their most grateful thanks for your help, which, it is no exaggeration to say, has saved the Hospital from disaster." He adds that the Board "would like to give a more practical proof of their gratitude," and proposes, as "an abiding memorial," to set aside a Cot in the Hospital, to be called "The Punch Cot."

It gives Mr. Punch a very sincere pleasure to convey to those who so generously responded to his appeal this expression of the Board's gratitude, and he begs them also to accept his own.

The sum so far contributed by Mr. Punch and his friends amounts to L3,505.

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[Illustration: INTERLUDE.

ST. PATRICK, "THAT'S NOT THE WAY I DEALT WITH POISONOUS REPTILES. WHAT'S THE GOOD OF TRYING TO CHARM IT?"

MR. LLOYD GEORGE, "I'M NOT TRYING TO CHARM IT. I'M JUST FILLING IN THE TIME."]

* * * * *

THE RECORDER.

[At the concluding session of the Museums Association Conference in Sheffield, Councillor Nuttall, of Southport said it was desirable that every town should make a voice record of every soldier who returned home from the wars, describing his experience in fighting. It would be a valuable record for future generations of the family to know what their ancestor did in the Great War.]

In an Expeditionary Force whose vocabulary included several lurid words there was a certain Battalion renowned for the vigour of its language. And in that Battalion Private Thompson held a reputation which was the envy of all. Not only had he a more varied stock of expletives than anyone else, but he seemed to possess a unique gift for welding them into new and wonderful combinations to meet each fresh situation. Moreover he had an insistent manner of delivering them which alone was sufficient to place him in a class by himself. It was not long before many of his friends gave up trying altogether and let Private Thompson do it all for them. It is even rumoured that on occasions men in distant parts of the line would send for him so that he might come and give adequate expression to feelings which they felt to be beyond their range.

To show you the extent of his fame, it is only necessary to mention that Lieutenant ---- composed an ode all about Private Thompson and got it published in _Camouflage_, the trench gazette of the Nth Division. Two of the verses went, as far as I can remember, something like this:--

As Private Thompson used to say,
He couldn't stand the War;
He cursed about it every day
And every night he swore;
And, while a sense of discipline
Carried him on through thick and thin,
The mud, the shells, the cold, the din
Annoyed him more and more.

The words with which we others cursed
Seemed mild and harmless quips
Compared to those remarks that burst
From Private Thompson's lips;
Haven't you ever heard about
The Prussian Guard at X Redoubt,
How Thompson's language laid them out
Before we came to grips?

Anyhow, after bespattering the air of France and Flanders with a barrage of anathemas for the best part of a year, Private Thompson did something creditable in one of the pushes, and retired to a hospital in England, whence he emerged a few months later with a slight limp, a discharge certificate and a piece of coloured ribbon on his waistcoat. Having expressed his opinion on hospital life, he returned to his native town.

His first shock was when he was met at the station by the local band and conducted up the Station Road and down the beflagged High Street to the accompaniment of martial and patriotic strains. His second was when he was confronted at the steps of the Town Hall by the Mayor and an official gathering of the leading citizens, with an unofficial background of the led ones, and found himself the subject of speeches of adulation and welcome.

He was too dumbfounded to grasp all that was said, but he recovered his senses in time to hear the Mayor assuring his audience that it

gave him great pleasure, indeed he might go so far as to say the very greatest pleasure, to welcome on behalf of their town one who had upheld with such distinction and bravery the reputation and honour of the community. And that, although he did not wish to keep them any longer, yet he must just add that he was going to ask Mr. Thompson then and there, while the remembrance of his terrible hardships was still fresh in his mind, to impart them to a phonograph, so that the archives of the town might not lack direct evidence of the experiences, if he might so express it, of her bravest citizen, and future generations might know something of the noble thoughts that surged in so gallant a breast in times of danger, and the fine and honourable words with which those thoughts had been uttered.

The Mayor's peroration annoyed Thompson; the cheers that followed it annoyed him still more, and the subsequent shower of congratulations and vigorous slaps on the back threatened to move him to reply in a speech which might have been unintelligible to the ladies present.

Fortunately the danger was averted. Before he could come into action a select committee of two, specially appointed for the purpose, had seized him by the arms and was conducting him up the steps of the Town Hall. The rapidity and the unexpected nature of the movement threw him out of gear, and he was forced to adopt an attitude of sullen silence during the progress of the little party across the Council Chamber and through a doorway leading into a small room.

This room was furnished only with a table and a chair. On the former stood a phonograph; into the latter the Committee deposited ex-Private Thompson and explained to him that he was desired to sit there and in his own words to recount into the trumpet of the machine his experiences at the Front. That becoming modesty, they added, which hitherto had sealed his lips should now be laid aside. Posterity must not be denied the edification of listening to a hero's story of his share in the Great War. The phonograph was then turned on and the disc began to revolve with a slight grating sound that set Thompson's teeth on edge. He was about to address a few remarks to the Committee when they tactfully withdrew, leaving him alone with the instrument.

For a few seconds he was silent. The machine rasped unchallenged through a dozen revolutions. Then he took a deep breath and, leaning forward, thrust his head into the yawning mouth of the trumpet.

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His Worship has sampled the record. The session was a secret one, but the Town has been given to understand that the disc has been sealed up and put away for the use of posterity only.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "HERE, STICK YOUR HEAD DOWN, CHARLIE."

"WHAT--IS THERE AN ORDER COME ROUND ABOUT IT?"]

* * * * *

COMMERCIAL CANDOUR.

Letter recently received from a firm of drapers:--

"Madam,--With reference to your blue Silk Mackintosh, our manufacturers have given the garment in question a thorough testing, and find that it is absolutely waterproof. If you will wear it on a dry day, and then take it off and examine it you will see that our statement is correct.

Assuring you of our best services at all times,

We are, Madam,

Your obedient Servants,

---- & SONS, Ltd."

* * * * *

A DEAL WITH CHINA.

Fritz having killed the mule, it devolved upon the village Sanitary Inspector to see the carcass decently interred, and on application to the C.O. of the nearest Chinese labour camp. I presently secured the services of two beautiful old ivory carvings and a bronze statue, clad in blue quilted uniforms and wearing respectively, by way of head-dress, a towel turban, a straw hat and a coiffure like an early Victorian penwiper. It was the bronze gentleman--the owner of the noticeable coiffure--who at once really took charge of the working party.

He introduced himself to me as "Lurtee Lee" (his official number was thirty-three), informed me he could "speake English," and, having by this single utterance at once apparently proved his statement and exhausted his vocabulary, settled down into a rapt and silent adoration of my tunic buttons.

Before we had proceeded thirty yards he had offered me five francs (which he produced from the small of his back) for a single button. At the end of one hundred yards the price had risen to seven twenty-five, and arrived upon the scene of action the Celestial grave-digger made a further bid of eight francs, two Chinese coins (value unknown) and a tract in his native tongue. This being likewise met with a reluctant but unmistakable refusal, the work of excavation was commenced.

Now when three men are employed upon a pit some six feet square they obviously cannot all work at the same time in so confined a space. One man must in turn stand out and rest. His rest time may be spent in divers ways.

The elder of the two ivory carvings spent his breathing spells in philosophic reverie; the younger employed his leisure in rummaging on the neighbouring "dump" for empty tobacco tins, which he concealed about his person by a succession of feats of legerdemain (by the end of the morning I estimated him to be in possession of about thirty specimens). Lurtee Lee filled every moment of his off time in the manufacture of a quite beautiful pencilholder--his material an empty cartridge case, his tools a half-brick and a shoeing nail.

Slowly the morning wore on--so slowly, indeed, that at an early period I cast aside my tunic and with spade and pick endeavoured by assistance and example to incite my labourers to "put a jerk in it." Noon saw the deceased mule beneath a ton or so of clay, and Lurtee Lee, whether from gratitude or sheer camaraderie, gravely presented me with the now completed pencil-holder. No, not a sou would he accept; I was to take it as a gift.

At this moment a European N.C.O. from the Labour Camp came upon the scene and kindly offered to save me a journey by escorting Lurtee Lee and Company to quarters. They shuffled down the road, and I turned to put on my tunic. One button was missing.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Jock_. "MAN, IT'S AN AWFU' PUIR DAY FOR FECHTIN'."]

Donal'. "AY. BUT IT'S AN AWFU' GUID DAY FOE GETTIN' THE FU' WARRUMTH AN' COMFORT OOT O' THE RUM RATION."]

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MORE GERMAN FRIGHTFULNESS.

"Hindenburg sent a great number of bug guns to General Boroevics."--_Daily Paper_.

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ANOTHER IMPENDING APOLOGY.

"Early in the operations a jet of water struck the Chief Officer of the Fire Brigade directly in the right eye, completely blinding him for the time; and he had to be assisted away but returned shortly after. The Brigade are to be complimented on their work."--_Rangoon Times_.

* * * * *

"The complete cessation of the exports of opinion from India to China is a distinct landmark in the moral progress of the world."--_South African Paper_.

This seems rather sweeping. What about Sir RABINDRANATH TAGORE?

* * * * *

THE STEW.

FRAGMENT OF A SHAKSPEAKEAN TRAGEDY.

["There are many things with which a stew can be thickened."--_Extract from Regimental Order_.]

SCENE I.--_Battalion Orderly-Room._

Flourish. Enter Colonel _and_ Adjutant.

Colonel. I do mistrust the soft and temperate air
That hath so long enwrapped us. No "returns
Of bakers," visitations of the Staff,
Alarms or inquisitions have disturbed
Our ten days' rest. Nothing but casual shells
And airy bombs to mind us of the War.

Adjutant. Oh, Sir, thy zeal hath mated with thy conscience
And bred i' the mind mistrustful doubts and fears,
A savage brood, which being come to manhood
Do fight with sweet content and eat her up.

Colonel. Alas! it is the part of those who govern
To play the miser with their present good
For fear of future ill. But who comes here?

Enter Messenger.

Messenger. So please you I am sent of General Blood
To bid you wait his coming.

Colonel. When?

Messenger. To-morrow.
He purposes to visit your command
About the dinner-hour. [_Exit._]

Colonel. Now let th' occasion
Be servant to my wits. "The dinner-hour."
Twice hath he come; and first upon parade
Inspected all the men; the second time
The transport visited. Surmise hath grown
To certainty. He will inspect the dinners!
Go, faithful Adjutant, stir up the cooks
And bid them thicken stews and burnish pots.

Adjutant. I take my leave at once and go. [_Exit_ Adjutant.]

Colonel. Farewell.
Now with elusive Chance I'll try a fall
And on the fateful issue risk my all. [_Flourish. Exit._]

SCENE II.--_A kitchen. In the middle a dixie. Thunder._

Enter Three Cooks.

First Cook. Thrice the dreadful message came.

Second Cook. Thrice the mystic buzzer buzzed.

Third Cook. Sergeant cries, "'Tis time, 'tis time."

First Cook. Round about the dixie go;
In the dense ingredients throw--
Extra bully, every lump
Pinched from some forbidden dump,
Biscuits crunched to look like flour,
Cabbage sweet and onions sour--
Make the broth as thick as glue.
The General will inspect the stew.

All. Fire burn and dixie bubble,
Double toil or there'll be trouble.

Second Cook. 'Taters in the cauldron sink,
Peeled by hands as black as ink;
Portions of a slaughtered cat,
Piece of breakfast-bacon fat,
Bits of boot and bits of stick--
Make the gruel slab and thick.

All. Fire burn and dixie bubble,
Double toil or there'll be trouble.

Third Cook. German sausage won in fight
On some dark and stormy night,
Dim and murky watercress
Stolen from a Sergeants' Mess,
Slabs of cheese and chunks of ham,
Lumps of plum and apple jam,
Bits of paper, ends of string,
Mixed with any damned thing,
In the cauldron mingle quick
So the stew be dense and thick.

All. Fire burn and dixie bubble,
Double toil or there'll be trouble. [_Exeunt._]

SCENE III.--_Outside kitchen. Alarums._

Enter Orderly Corporal.

Orderly Corporal. Here's a pretty pass. Eyewash,
eyewash, eyewash. And such a running to and fro and a go
this way and a go that way, and a burnishing up of old
brass and a shouting of horrid words, as though the Devil
himself were inspecting his own furnace. Faith, an I
were eyewashing Beelzebub I could catch it no hotter.

[_Shouting within._]

Anon, anon. I will eyewash it no further. [_Exit._]

Flourish. Enter Colonel, Adjutant, Quartermaster
and Sergeant-Cook.

Colonel. Is all prepared?

Sergeant-Cook. The dinners would content
RHONDDA himself.

Quartermaster. The General comes.

Flourish. Enter General _and_ Attendants.

General. Good Colonel,
Our greetings are the warmer for the thought
Of visits past.

Colonel. The service that we owe
In doing pays itself. Will you inspect
The dinners?

General. First we'll greet the Adjutant,
Whom well we recollect.

Adjutant. This is an honour
Which makes our labours light. Will you be pleased
To inspect the dinners?

General. Yes, but let us first
Discuss the general welfare of the troops
Whose good's our care.

Sergeant-Cook (aside to Colonel). The time is getting long;
The stew's congealing fast.

Colonel. Good General,
Your grace toward our people doth confound
Th' expression of our gratitude. The hour
For dinner is at hand. An you would grace
The issue with your presence it would make
The meal the sweeter.

General (aside). There doth seem to be
More than politeness in these invitations.
(_To Colonel_) I am no cook to judge by sight and touch
The flavour of a dish. Issue the dinners
To all the rank and file, that so my pleasure

In marking their expressions of content
Be equal to the praise I shall bestow.

Voice within. Help! help! The cooks have fainted in the stew.

Adjutant. They'll not be noticed.

Colonel. Now hath fortune proved
My master. I'll not live a slave to Chance.

[_Eats some of the stew and dies._]

General. Conscience hath claimed her toll and is content.
We'll go inspect another regiment.

CURTAIN.

* * * * *

A member of the Chancery Bar consults us on the following point: "I was awakened," he says, "by my dog during a recent air-raid. He was so annoyed that he consumed the whole of Lewin on Trusts and commenced Tudor on Wills, and is now suffering from severe indigestion. Have I or has the dog any equitable remedy?"

* * * * *

[Illustration: TERRORS OF THE SCOTTISH LANGUAGE.

Housemaid in Glasgow Hotel. "YE CANNA GANG TO THE BATHROOM THE NOO."

Sassenach. "WHY NOT?"

Housemaid. "THERE'S A BODY IN THE BATH."]

* * * * *

THE NEW MRS. MARKHAM.

IV.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER LXXI.

Mary. You spoke, Mamma, of CHAUCER being the Father of English poetry. Was there any English poetry before the discoveries of Lord EDWARD MARSH?

Mrs. M. Certainly, my dear. CHAUCER was our first eminent poet, but, as a distinguished American critic has observed, he could not spell. This greatly interfered with his popularity. Then there was SHAKSPEARE, who wrote quaint old-fashioned plays quite unsuitable for filming, but nevertheless enjoyed a certain fame until it was proved that he never existed and that SHAKESPEARE was the name of a syndicate; or that if he did exist he was somebody else; when all interest in his work naturally evaporated. The abolition of rhyme, about the year 1920, gave a fresh impetus to English poetry, and now, as you know, almost anyone can write it fluently, whereas formerly the easiest poems were written with the greatest difficulty. Indeed one reads of some old poets who were not able to produce a mere hundred lines in a day. Under the "free-verse" system, some of the Palustrine (or Marshy) School have been known to produce as many as three thousand lines in a day and to earn in a week as much as MILTON, an old poet of the seventeenth century, received for the whole of his greatest work, on which he was engaged for years.

Richard. You have often talked about people going into sanctuary. What does it mean?

Mrs. M. Originally every church, abbey, or consecrated place was a sanctuary, and all persons who had committed crimes or were otherwise in fear of their lives might secure themselves from danger by getting into them. But in the reign which we have been discussing it came to be used specially of the House of Commons from the number of tiresome and objectionable people who sought refuge there, because of the freedom from legal penalties which they enjoyed. Once safe in the House of Commons they said and even did things which, if they had been said or done in public, or even in private, would have exposed them either to prosecution or personal chastisement. Ultimately the nuisance became so great that the privilege of sanctuary was abolished, and the tone of the House of Commons greatly improved.

Mary. I could not quite understand that story about the King and the public jester.

Mrs. M. In earlier reigns it was customary for kings and nobles to have in their retinue some one whose business it was to play the fool, and who was privileged to say or do anything that was ridiculous for the sake of diverting his master. Although this practice had died out the privilege was usurped by a certain number of writers and speakers, who sought to attain notoriety by making themselves as unpleasant or ridiculous as possible on every occasion. It requires some cleverness to be a great fool, and though some of these public buffoons were clever men the majority had more malice than wit, and in time exhausted the patience of the people. Finally, in order to protect them from the violence of the infuriated populace, the Government were obliged to deport the chief offenders to the Solomon Islands, where cannibalism then prevailed.

George. Did they play on anything else besides mouth-organs in those days?

Mrs. M. They had many curious musical instruments which are now entirely obsolete. Of these the most popular was the pianoforte, a large wooden box with a long horizontal keyboard, which the player struck with his fingers. Considerable and sometimes even distressing dexterity was attained by the performers, who indulged in all sorts of strange antics and gestures. The exercise was found to be remarkably beneficial to the growth of the hair, but it had compensating disadvantages, leading to cramps, dislocations and other troubles. Ultimately pianoforte playing was suppressed, largely owing to the exertions of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Elephants, the tusks of that animal being in great request for the manufacture of the keys.

Richard. I shall never go to the Zoological Gardens without rejoicing over the suppression of the pianoforte.

Mrs. M. Another favourite instrument was the violin, a small and curiously shaped apparatus fitted with four strings, which, when rubbed or scraped with horsehair tightly stretched on a narrow wooden frame, were made to produce sounds imitating the cries of various animals, especially the mewling of a cat, to perfection. But as the timbre of the instrument did not lend itself to successful mechanical reproduction by the gramophone it fell into disuse.

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[Illustration: SCENE.-- Basement during an air-raid. Loud noise without_.

The Right Kind of Boy (_with great animation_). "MUMMY, ARE WE WINNING?"]

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PUNCH'S ROLL OF HONOUR.

We are very sorry to learn that Captain A.W. LLOYD, Royal Fusiliers, who for some time illustrated the Essence of Parliament, has been badly wounded in East Africa. We join his many friends in England and South Africa in sending him our sincerest hopes for his restoration to health and strength.

* * * * *

"HE-WHO-MUST-BE-OBEYED."

SIR ARTHUR YAPP, Sir ARTHUR YAPP,
He is a formidable chap;
He says the best of this year's fashions
Is to obey his rule for rations.
To every man and every maid
Of every sort of social grade,
Sir ARTHUR YAPP, Sir ARTHUR YAPP.
He _is_ --to put the thing with snap--
He-Who-_Must_-Be-Obeyed.

Sir ARTHUR YAPP, Sir ARTHUR YAPP,
He simply doesn't care a rap
For any one--his only passion's
Compelling us to keep our rations;
Downrightly he demands our aid;
He will not have the troops betrayed.
Sir ARTHUR YAPP, Sir ARTHUR YAPP,
He _is_ --the right man in the gap--
He-Who-_MUST_-Be-Obeyed.

Sir ARTHUR YAPP, Sir ARTHUR YAPP,
He says the way to change the map--
The way that all of us can smash Huns--
Is simply sticking to our rations;
Whereas the Hun will have us flayed
Unless the waste of food is stayed.
Sir ARTHUR YAPP, Sir ARTHUR YAPP,
He _is_ right through this final lap--
He-Who-_MUST_-Be-Obeyed.

W.B.

* * * * *

"TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE TIMES.'

Sir,--Last Sunday evening I read your leader of October 24 as part of my sermon to my village congregation. It went home."--_Times_.

The Times leader-writer should cultivate a brighter style, more calculated to hold the interest of a congregation.

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[Illustration: AT BAY.

ENGLAND AND FRANCE (_to their comrade_). "STICK TO IT!"]

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[Illustration: _Tommy_. "WHERE DID YOU GET THAT BUNCH?"

Australian. "OH, I DIDN'T GET 'EM--THE DAWG BROUGHT 'EM IN."]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, October 29th.--For once Parliament repelled the gibe of its critics that it has ceased to represent the people. Lords and Commons united in praise of our sailors and soldiers and all the other gallant folk who are helping us to win the War, and passed the formal Votes of Thanks without a dissentient voice.

As no eloquence could be adequate to such a theme--not even that of PERICLES or LINCOLN, as Mr. ASQUITH tactfully remarked--fewer and briefer speeches might have sufficed. The PRIME MINISTER painted the lily a little thickly, though no one would have had him omit his picturesque narrative of the first battle of Ypres--I hope some of its few survivors were among the soldiers in the Gallery--or his tributes to the Navy and the Merchant Service. Nor did one grudge Mr. REDMOND'S paean in praise of the Irish troops. It's not his fault, at any rate, that there aren't more of them.

Seen at its best in the afternoon, the House descended to the depths on the adjournment, when Mr. PONSONBY, Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD and Mr. KING badgered the HOME SECRETARY for the best part of an hour because in the exercise of his duty he had had some of their friends' correspondence opened and read. In ordinary times Members are very jealous, and rightly so, of this official espionage. The case of Sir JAMES GRAHAM and MAZZINI'S letters was raked up and quoted for all it was worth--and a little more; for, as Sir GEORGE CAVE reminded us, even on that occasion a Select Committee supported the action of the Government. The fact is that, when you are fighting for freedom _en gros_, individual liberties must of necessity be curtailed. Knowing that our letters in war-time are liable to inspection, the wise among us stick to postcards. As Mr. PONSONBY assures us that he and his friends have nothing to conceal, let them do likewise.

One missed Mr. SNOWDEN, usually to the fore on these occasions. An incident earlier in the afternoon perhaps accounted for his absence. By way of bolstering up a charge of harshness against the HOME SECRETARY he mentioned that a deported German had "a son serving in the British Army." The Minister frankly admitted it. "The son," he said, "a British subject, who endeavoured to avoid military service, was arrested, and is serving in a noncombatant unit." _Exit_ Mr. SNOWDEN.

Tuesday, October 30th. I strongly suspect Major NEWMAN and Mr. REDDY of collaborating, like the "Two Macs" of music-hall fame. No other theory will explain the gallant Major's well-feigned annoyance at what he called "the assumption of military rank by clergymen and members of the theatrical profession" connected with cadet-corps. Mr. MACPHERSON supplied the official answer, namely, that gentlemen holding cadet-commissions are entitled to wear service dress; but the real object of the question was revealed when Brother REDDY from the backbenches piped out, "Does that apply to sham officers wearing uniform in this House?" There was a roar of laughter, and Major NEWMAN blushed his appreciation.

I can imagine no more hopeless task than to plead the cause of Bulgaria in present circumstances; yet Mr. NOEL BUXTON cheerfully essays it whenever he gets an opportunity. This time he attempted to

read into a recent utterance of the FOREIGN SECRETARY agreement with his own views.

Mr. BALFOUR'S reply, in effect, was "What make you here, you little Bulgar boy?" He maintained that, while not as "dull and cautious" as he had meant it to be, the speech referred to in no way bore out Mr. BUXTON'S assertions. Then he proceeded in characteristic fashion to knock together the heads of the pro-Bulgarians and the other Balkan theorists, and declared in conclusion that, while sharing the desire that Bulgaria should come out of the War without a grievance, he was not going to purchase that satisfaction by the betrayal of those who had sacrificed everything they possessed in the cause of the Allies--a declaration which, in view of recent rumours, the House as a whole heard with relief.

Wednesday, October 31st.--No future GILBERT shall be able to write that--

"The House of Peers, throughout the war,
Did nothing in particular,
And did it very well,"

for, thanks to the pertinacity of Lord LOREBURN and Lord SELBORNE, their lordships have done something very particular. They have proposed that the PRIME MINISTER shall announce, with any honour conferred, the reasons why he has recommended it, having previously satisfied himself that a contribution to party funds was not one of them. If Lord LOREBURN had had his way the resolution would have been a good deal stronger, but Lord CURZON, upon whose majestic calm this subject has a curiously ruffling effect, refused to allow the retention of words implying that any Minister had ever been a party to a corrupt bargain.

The debate was anything but dull, and some piquant revelations--of course all at second-hand--were made by the highly respectable peers who took part in it. It would have been livelier still if some of the more recent creations could have been induced to tell the full story of "How I got my Peerage." But they are modest fellows, and unanimously refrained.

Thursday, November 1st.--A full House heard Sir ERIC GEDDES make his maiden speech, or rather read his maiden essay, for he rarely deviated from his type-script. A very good essay it was, full of well arranged information, and delivered in a strong clear voice that never faltered during an hour's recital. If we were to believe some of the critics the British Navy is directed by a set of doddering old gentlemen who are afraid to let it go at the Germans and cannot even safeguard our commerce from attack. The truth, as expounded by the FIRST LORD, is quite different. Despite the jeremiads of superannuated sailors and political longshoremen, the Admiralty is not going to Davy Jones's locker, but under its present chiefs, who have, with very few exceptions, seen service in this War, maintains and supplements its glorious record. Save for an occasional game of "tip and run"--as in the case of the North Sea convoy--enemy vessels have disappeared from the surface of the oceans; and "the long arm of the British Navy" is now stretching down into the depths and up into the skies in successful pursuit of them. If the nation hardly realises yet what it owes to the men of the Fleet and their comrades of the auxiliary Services it is because their work is done with "such thoroughness and so little fuss," and, as Mr. ASQUITH put it, "in the twilight and not in the limelight."

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[Illustration: SCENE: Charing Cross.--"BUY A BIT O' SHRAPNEL,

MISTER?"]

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"Alderman ---- was fined L5 for aiding and abetting his game-keeper in feeding pheasants with guano."--_Liverpool Daily Post_.

He must have thought it would be good for their crops.

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From a New Zealand official report:

"When sawing a piece of timber F----'s left thumb came into contact with saw, cutting it."

People with thumbs like this ought not to be allowed to handle delicate instruments.

* * * * *

"The first draft sale of the Gloucestershire Old Spots speaks volumes for the black and white pig.. .. Nor must the beautifully-marked pig 'Bagborough Charm VII.,' farrowed 1817, be forgotten."--_Farmer and Stockbreeder._

It seems, however, to have been overlooked for some time.

* * * * *

"'By heavens, it's the Germans!' cried Captain Jansson later, at last awake to the truth. 'Call all hands and make for the boats.' He turned the wheel hard astern and stopped the ship."--_Daily Mail._

Something had gone wrong, we suppose, with the foot-brake.

* * * * *

"---- ---- was born in 1883, and received his musical education, first in Dresden, and subsequently in England with one of the most orthodox of the English professors, as a result of which he entered the Diplomatic Service in 1909 as Honorary Attache."--_The Chesterian_.

We hope this will silence the complaints as to the insufficiency of our diplomatists' education.

* * * * *

HOW TO BRIGHTEN UP THE THEATRE.

"You want, I take it," said the stranger to the manager, "to make your theatre the most interesting in London?"

"Naturally," the manager replied. "I do all I can to make it so, as it is."

"Perhaps," said the stranger; "we shall see. But I have it in my power to make it vastly more interesting than any theatre has ever been."

"You have a play?" the manager inquired; amending this, after another glance, to "You know of a play?"

"Play? No. I'm not troubling about plays," said the caller.
"Plays--what are plays? No, I'm bringing you a live idea."

"But I don't wish to make any change in the style of my performances," said the manager. "If you're thinking of a new kind of entertainment for me--super-cinema, or that 'real revue' which authors are always threatening me with--I don't want it. I intend to keep my stage for the legitimate drama."

The stranger had been growing more and more restless. "My dear Sir," he now protested, "do let us understand each other. Have I ever mentioned the word 'stage'? Have I? No. Your stage is nothing to me; it doesn't come into the matter at all. Do what you like on the stage, but let me tackle the front of the house. That's the real battle-ground. My scheme, which I bring to you first of all, because I think of you as the least unenlightened of all London managers, is concerned solely with the audience. Will you promise not to mention it for a week if I unfold it to you?"

The manager promised.

"Very well," said the other, settling down to business, "Let us begin by looking at audiences. What are they made of? Human beings. What kind of human beings? The nobs and the mob. What is the favourite occupation of the nobs? Recognising other nobs. What comes next? Seeing who the other nobs have got with them. What is the favourite occupation of the mob? Identifying nobs and saying how disappointed they are with their appearance. Isn't that so?"

"More or less," said the manager.

"Very well," the other continued. "Now, then, what do you do for the audiences in your theatre between the Acts?"

"There is an excellent orchestra," said the manager.

"I have heard it," replied his visitor drily. "Most of the music played is composed by the conductor, who conducts with the bow of his violin. No, Sir, that is not enough to do for an audience in the intervals. I warn you that the whole question of intervals will come up soon, and the cleverest manager will be the one who does most to make them amusing. But that's another matter. My scheme for you is to provide more than mere amusement, it is to enable your theatre to partake of some of the quality and some of the success of the great picture newspapers."

"How do you mean?" the manager asked, leaning forward. The word "success" galvanised him.

"Like this," said the enthusiast. "You grant that the proper study of mankind is man--as the POPE recently said? You grant an intense curiosity as to everybody else being implanted in the human breast? Very well. This, then, is my scheme. You must have each stall legibly numbered so that the whole house behind it and above it can see the number. The boxes must be numbered too. You then instal a printer with a little press somewhere behind the scenes, and to him is brought soon after the curtain rises a list of the names of all the box and stall holders, which he will print off in time for the assistants to sell them all over the house after Act I. This distribution will dispose of the first interval, and incidentally bring in a nice little sum for cigars and champagne for your business visitors, a new hat for your leading lady, and so forth."

"By the way," said the manager, "won't you smoke? These are mild."

"Thank you," said the other. "Very well," he continued, "the next interval will be wholly spent in the exciting and delightful task of identifying the nobbs, in which the nobbs themselves will take a part. And if there is still a third interval it will be equally amusingly filled by conversation as to the pasts or costumes of the more famous of the female nobbs who are present--an interchange of opinion as to the lowness of their necks, conjectures as to the genuineness of their hair, and so forth. Do you see?"

The manager went to the sideboard and brought back some glasses and a bottle. "Yes," he said, "I see. There's something in what you say. But you don't explain how the names are to be obtained?"

"How?" exclaimed the other. "Why, ask for them, to be sure. You'll have to begin with a few blanks, of course, but directly it gets known that you're publishing them during the evening they'll all come in. Bless your soul, I know them! and if the nobbs don't tumble to it the snobs will, and they're numerically strong enough to keep any play running. You won't have to worry about the play. As for the back rows of the stalls, where you put the people from the other theatres, why, they'll absolutely push their visiting-cards at you. What do you say?"

"I think it's ingenious," said the manager, "and not to be dismissed lightly. But I don't see anything to prevent all the other managers copying it."

"There isn't," said the inventor. "Nothing ever has been done or will be done that can prevent theatrical managers from copying each other. It's chronic. But you'll be the first, remember that; and the pioneer often has some credit. You'll get the start, and that means a lot. For some months, at any rate, it will be your theatre to which the snobs will crowd."

Such was the interview.

What the manager will decide cannot yet be stated, for the week has not expired.

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[Illustration: _First Mite_. "AIN'T 'E JUST LIKE THE PICTURES, LIZ? I BETCHER 'E'S A COWBOY."

Second ditto. "GARN! 'E'S ONLY A SOLDIER."]

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[Illustration: HUMOURS OF A REMOUNT CAMP.

Staff Officer. "I RODE THIS HORSE YOU SENT ME ON TUESDAY AND HE WAS ALL RIGHT. BUT WHEN I RODE HIM ON WEDNESDAY HE WAS MUCH TOO FRISKY."

Remount Officer. "WELL, WHY NOT RIDE HIM ONLY ON TUESDAYS?"]

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"GOOSE.--Remembrance and many thanks for war dividends."--_Daily Telegraph_.

This is the best it can do under present conditions. Golden eggs are "off."

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"It was Tennyson who told us that there are 'books in running

brooks and sermons in stones."

But it was SHAKSPEARE who said it first.

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LINES ON A NEW HISTORY.

Weary of MACAULAY, never nodding,
Weary of the stodginess of STUBBS,
Weary of the scientific plodding
Of the school that only digs and grubs;
I salute, with grateful admiration
Foreign to the hireling eulogist,
CHESTERTON'S red-hot self-revelation
In the guise of England's annalist.

Here is no parade of erudition,
No pretence of calm judicial tone,
But the stimulating ebullition
Of a sort of humanized cyclone;
Unafraid of flagrant paradoxes,
Unashamed of often seeing red,
Here's a thinker who the compass boxes
Standing most at ease upon his head.

Yet with all this acrobatic frolic
There's a core of sanity behind
Madness that is never melancholic,
Passion never cruel or unkind;
And, although his wealth of purple patches
Some precisians may excessive deem,
Still the decoration always matches
Something rich and splendid in the theme.

Not a text-book--that may admitted--
Full of dates and Treaties and of Pacts,
For our author cannot be acquitted
Of a liberal handling of his facts;
But a stirring proof of Britain's title,
Less in Empire than in soul, of "Great,"
And a frank and generous recital
Of "the glories of our blood and State."

* * * * *

JOURNALISTIC CANDOUR.

"Mrs. ----, to her latest days, was a devoted student of the 'Recorder.' Her end came through continuous 'eye strain' in reading the Conference news for several hours together."--_Methodist Recorder_.

* * * * *

"Barons Court.--To let, furnished, an attractive little artist's House, well fitted throughout."--_The Observer_.

A flapper writes to say that she would like to know more about this attractive little artist.

* * * * *

SIX-AND-A-PENNY-HALFPENNY.

"This," I said, "is perfectly monstrous. It is an outrage. It--"

"What have they done to you now?" said Francesca. "Have they forbidden you to have your boots made of leather, or to go on wearing your shiny old blue serge suit, or have they failed in some way to recognise your merits as a Volunteer? Quick, tell me so that I may comfort you."

"Listen to this," I said.

"I should be better able to listen and you would certainly be better able to read the letter if you didn't brandish it in my face."

"When you've heard it," I said, "you'll understand why I brandish it. Listen:--"

"Sir,--I understand that on the 15th instant you travelled from Star Bond to our London terminus without your season-ticket, and declined to pay the ordinary fare. One of the conditions which you signed stipulates that in the event of your inability to produce your season-ticket the ordinary fare shall be paid, and as the Railway Executive now controlling the railways on behalf of the Government is strict in enforcing the observance of this condition, I have no alternative but to request you to kindly remit me the sum of 6s. 1-1/2d. in respect of the journey in question.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

H.W. HUTCHINSON.'

"This," I said, as I finished reading the letter, "comes from the Great North-Southern Railway, and is addressed to _me_. What do you think of it?"

"The miserable man," said Francesca, "has split an infinitive, but he probably did it under the orders of the Railway Executive."

"I don't mind," I said, "about his treatment of infinitives. He may split them all to smithereens if he likes. It's the monstrous nature of his demand that vexes me."

"What can you expect of a Railway Company?" said Francesca. "Surely you didn't suppose a company would display any of the finer feelings?"

"Francesca," I said, "this is a serious matter. If you are not going to sympathise with me, say so at once, and I shall know what to do."

"Well, what will you do?"

"I shall plough my lonely furrow--I mean, I shall write my lonely letter all by myself, and you shan't help me to make up any of the stingers that I'm going to put into it."

"Oh, my dear," she said, "what is the use of writing stingers to a railway? You might as well smack the engine because the guard trod on your foot."

"Well, but, Francesca, I'm boiling over with indignation."

"So am I," she said, "but--"

"But me no buts," I said. "Let's boil over together and trounce Mr. Hutchinson. Let us write a model letter for the use of season-ticket holders who have mislaid their tickets. We'll pack it full of sarcasm and irony. We will make an appeal to the nobler sentiments of the Board of Directors. We will remind them that they too are subject to

human frailty, and--"

--we will not send the letter, but will put it away until we've finished our boiling-over and have simmered down."

"Francesca," I said, "am I not going to be allowed to communicate to this so-called railway company my opinion of its conduct? Are all the pearls of sarcasm with which my mind is teeming to be thrown away?"

"Well," she said, "it would be useless to cast them before the Railway Executive."

"Mayn't I hint a hope that the penny-halfpenny will come in useful in a time of financial stress?"

"No," she said decisively, "you are to do none of these things. Of course they've behaved in a mean and shabby way, but they've got you fixed, and the best thing you can do is to get a postal order and send it off to Mr. Hutchinson."

"Mayn't I--"

"No, certainly not. Write a short and formal note and enclose the P.O.; and next time don't forget your ticket."

"If you'll tell me how to make sure of that," I said, "I'll vote for having a statue of you put up."

"Does everybody," she said, "forget his season-ticket?"

"Yes," I said, "everybody, at least once a year."

R.C.L.

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HERBS OF GRACE.

VIII.

SOUTHERNWOOD.

Some are for Camphor to put with their dresses,
"Lay Russia-leather between 'em," say some;
Some are for Lavender sprinkled in presses,
Some are for Woodruff, that moths may not come;
I am for Southernwood, Southernwood, Southernwood
(_Gardy-robe_ called, they do say, by the French),
Whisper of summertime, summertime, summertime,
Southernwood, laid wi' the clothes of a wench.

Some are for Violets, some are for Roses,
Some for Peniriall, some for Bee Balm,
When they go church-along carrying posies
(Smell 'em and glance at the lads in the psalm);
I am for Southernwood, Southernwood, Southernwood
(_Lad's Love_ 'tis called by the home-folk hereby),
All in the summertime, summertime, summertime--
Lad's Love 'tis called, and for lad's love am I.

W.B.

* * * * *

THE POET.

[Commenting upon the fact that Mr. Justice Salter objected to Mr. Wild, K.C., reading poetry in court, a contemporary gossip-writer remarks, "Why do people write poetry?"]

The following communications, evidently intended for our contemporary, were inadvertently addressed to Mr. Punch:--

DEAR SIR,--I took up poetry because I was once bitten by an editor's dog and I determined to be avenged.

DEAR SIR,--Two years ago I lost Sidney, my pet silkworm, and as I had to take up some hobby I decided on poetry.

DEAR SIR,--With me it is a gift. It just came to me. On the other hand my friends often suggest my seeing a doctor, as they think there may be a piece of bone pressing on the brain.

DEAR SIR,--I used to suffer from red hair, and gradually I am getting the stuff turned grey. By the way, can you give me a rhyme for "Camouflage"?

DEAR SIR,--I began writing lyrics for ragtime revues, because I wanted to see what would happen if I just took hold of the pen and let her rip.

* * * * *

From a calendar:--

"October 31. Wednesday.

August to October Game Certificates expire,
Mystical carpeted earth, with dead leaves of desire,
Disrobing earth dying beneath love's fire."

The rhymes are all right, but the scansion of the first line is susceptible of improvement.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Fair Lecturer_ (_to Food Economy Committee_). "OF COURSE I HAD TO MAKE IT AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE TO REACH A RATHER LOW LEVEL OF INTELLECT. I HOPE YOU ALL UNDERSTOOD."]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(_BY MR. PUNCH'S STAFF OF LEARNED CLERKS_.)

It would seem that "BARTIMEUS" occupies the same relative position towards the silent Navy of 1917 that JOHN STRANGE WINTER did towards the Army of the pre-KIPLING era. All his men are magnificent fellows, his women sympathetic and courageous. The Hun, depicted as an unsportsman-like brute (which he is), invariably gets it in the neck (which, I regret to say, he doesn't). And so all is for the best in the best of all possible services. In the Navy they are nothing if not consistent and, while the military storyteller who did not have his knife into the higher command would be looked upon as a freak, "BARTIMEUS" loyally includes amongst his galaxy of perfect people Lords of the Admiralty no less than the lower ratings. No one knows the Navy and its business better than "BARTIMEUS," and he owes his popularity to that fact. Yet he tells us very little about it, preferring to dwell on the personal attributes of his individual

heroes, throwing in just enough incidental detail to give his stories the proper sea tang. Of late a good many people have been busy informing us that the Navy, like GILBERT'S chorus-girl, is no better than it should be. But the fault, if there be one, does not lie with the men that "BARTIMEUS" has selected to write about in his latest novel, _The Long Trick_ (CASSELL), which will therefore lose none of the appreciation it deserves on that account. And with such a leal and brilliant champion to take the part of the Navy afloat, the Navy ashore, whether in Parliament or out of it, may very well be left to take care of itself.

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Although Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE calls his collection of detective stories _His Last Bow_ (MURRAY), and also warns us that _Sherlock Holmes_ is "somewhat crippled by occasional attacks of rheumatism," there is not in my lay opinion any cause for alarm. If I may jest about such an austere personage as _Sherlock_, I should say that there are several strings still left to his bow, and that the ever amenable and admiring _Watson_ means to use them for all they are worth. At any rate I sincerely hope so, for if it is conceivable that some of us grow weary of _Sherlock's_ methods when we are given a long draught of them no one will deny that they are palatable when taken a small dose at a time. _Sherlock_, in short, is a national institution, and if he is to be closed now and for ever I feel sure that the Bosches will claim to have finished him off. And that would be a pity. Of these eight stories the best are "The Dying Detective" and the "Bruce-Partington Plans," but all of them are good to read, except perhaps "The Devil's Foot," which left a "most sinister impression" on dear old _Watson's_ mind, and incidentally on my own.

* * * * *

Every now and then, out of a mass of War-books grown so vast that no single reader can hope even to keep count of them, there emerges one of particular appeal. This is a claim that may certainly be made for _An Airman's Outings_ (BLACKWOOD), especially just now when everything associated with aviation is--I was about to say _sur le tapis_, but the phrase is hardly well chosen--so conspicuously in the limelight. The writer of these modest but thrilling records veils his identity under the technical _nom de guerre_ of "CONTACT." With regard to his method I can hardly do better than repeat what is said in a brief preface by Major-General W.S. BRANCKER, Deputy Director-General of Military Aeronautics: "The author depicts the daily life of the flying officer in France, simply and with perfect truth; indeed he describes heroic deeds with such moderation and absence of exaggeration that the reader will scarcely realise," etc. But he will be a reader poor indeed in imagination who is not helped by these pages to realise some part of the debt that we owe to these marvellous winged boys of ours; As for the heroic deeds, they are of a kind to take your breath--tales of battles above the clouds, of trenches captured by aeroplane, of men fatally wounded, thousands of feet above the enemy country, recovering consciousness and working their guns till they sank dead, while their battered machines planed for the security of friendly lines. Surely the whole history of War has no picture to beat this in devotion.

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EVELYN BRANSCOMBE PETTER has much that is interesting to say about men and women, and packs her thought (I risk the "her") into a quasi-Meredithian form of phrasing which does not always escape obscurity. But how much better this than a limpid flow of words without notable content! _Souls in the Making_ (CHAPMAN AND HALL) is mainly an analysis of two love episodes in the life of a young man, the liberally educated son of an ambitious self-made soapmaker.

The first--with _Sue_, the pretty waitress--is thwarted by a very persistent and unpleasant clerk; the second--with _Virginia_, a girl of birth and breeding--is threatened by the intrusion of the girl's cousin, a queerly morbid ne'er-do-well. There is no action to speak of, so one can't speak of it. I can only say that the interest of the shrewd analysis held me, and that if my guess as to the sex of the writer be sound it is noteworthy that more pains and skill are bestowed upon the characters of the men than of the two girls, who are some thing shadowy--charming unfinished sketches. There is a vigour and an effect of personality in the writing that put this novel above the large class of the merely competent.

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Odd what a vogue has lately developed for what I might call the ultra-domestic school of fiction. Here is another example, _Married Life_ (CASSELL), in which Miss MAY EDGINTON, following the mode, unites her hero and heroine at the beginning and leaves them to flounder for our edification amid the trials of double blessedness. I am sorry to say it, but her great solution for the eternal problem of How to be Happy though Married appears to be the possession of a sufficient bank-balance to prevent the chain from galling. In other words, not to be too much married. All this love-in-a-cottage talk has clearly no allurements for Miss EDGINTON. With her, the protagonists, _Osborne_ and his young wife, are no sooner wed than their troubles begin--troubles of the domestic budget, of cooking and stove lighting and the rest. (By the way, for all its carefully British topography, I strongly suspect the whole story of an exotic origin, chiefly from certain odd-sounding words that seem to have slipped in here and there. Does our island womanhood really talk of a _matinee_, in the sense of an article of attire? If so, this is the first I hear of it). To return to the _Kerr_ household. In the midst of their bothers _Osborne_ is given a post as traveller in motor-cars at a big salary. So off he goes, while _Marie_, like the other little pig of the poem, stays at home, and enjoys herself hugely. When he returns she hardly cares about him at all; and might indeed have continued this attitude of indifference--who knows how long?--had not some Higher Power (perhaps the Paper Controller) decreed a happy ending on page 340. A lesson, I am sure, to us all; but of what character remains ambiguous.

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In such a title as _The North East Corner_ (GRANT RICHARDS) there is something bleak and uninviting, something suggestive of the bitter mercies of an average English April, that is by no means confirmed in the story itself. Windy it certainly is--it runs to 496 pages--for I do not remember any other recent volume where the characters really do talk so much "like a book," and though, of course, this may be a true way of presenting the customs of a hundred years ago, one feels that it can be over-done. _Frank Hamilton_, the magnanimous friend, facile politician and all-but hero, was the worst offender, not only making love to the _Marquis's_ unhandsome daughter in stately periods, and invariably addressing pretty _Sarah Owen_, who was much too good for his and the author's treatment of her, in the language of a Cabinet meeting (as popularly imagined), but being hardly able even to lose his temper decently in honest ejaculation. _Rolfe_, his friend, was a Jacobin of the blackest, who preached sedition and the right of tenants to vote as they chose; and the _Hamiltons_ were renegades who gained titles and honours by supporting a failing Ministry, from the most opportunely patriotic of motives. The general drift of the plot is neither very readily to be summarised nor indeed very satisfactory, and one might disagree with Mr. JOHN HERON LEPPER at several points. At the same time, as his many friends would expect, there is much to be grateful for in this quiet study of Irish times and politics very different from our own. There is a ring of sincerity for one thing,

matched by a literary grace that saves his chapters from ever becoming irritating even when they move most slowly.

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If the vintage to which "Miss KATHARINE TYNAN'S" novels belong is so old that some of its flavour has departed, there is no doubt that many of us are still glad enough to sample it. In these nervous times it is in fact very restful to read a book as calm and detached as _Miss Mary_ (MURRAY). Not that _Mary_ refrained from allowing her heart to flutter in the wrong direction, but even the simplest of us couldn't really be alarmed by this excursion. Mrs. HINKSON seems to take all her nice characters under her protective wing, and to include you and me (if we are nice) in a pleasant family party. So at little outlay you have the chance to go to Ireland and stay quietly and decorously with the _de Burghs_. There you will meet a very saint in _Lady de Burgh_, and you will breathe the right local atmosphere, and have, on the whole, a good and tranquillizing time.

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[Illustration: DURING THE HOSPITABLE AIR-RAID SEASON THE MONTMORENCY-BROWNS MAINTAIN THEIR HABITUAL EXCLUSIVENESS.]

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