

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 156, Apr 2, 1919

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI

VOL. 156

APRIL 2, 1919

CHARIVARIA.

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A Liverpool grocer was fined last week for overcharging for margarine, eggs, cheese, ham, bacon, cocoa, jam and suet. Any other nation, it is pointed out, would have had a man like that at the Peace Conference.

The strike of wives, as proposed by a weekly paper, did not materialise. The husbands' threat to employ black-legs (alleged silk) appears to have proved effective.

A Reigate resident advertises in a daily newspaper for the recovery of a human jawbone. It is supposed that the owner lost it during a Tube rush.

"London from above," says a Daily Mail correspondent, "is gloriously, tenderly, wistfully beautiful." We rather gather that it is the lid of Carmelite House that gives it just that little note of wistfulness.

"How to Prepare Marble Beef" is the subject of a contemporary's "Hints to Young Housekeepers," We had always supposed that that sort of thing could be safely left to the butcher.

The demobilised members of a Herefordshire band have all grown too big for their uniforms. The contra-bombardon man, we understand, also complains that his instrument is too tight round the chest.

"The one unselfish friend of man is the dog," said Sir FREDERICK BANBURY, M.P. A less courageous man would certainly have mentioned the PRESIDENT of the United States.

A correspondent who signs himself "Selborne" writes to inform us that about 9 A.M. last Thursday he noticed a pair of labourers building within a stone's-throw of Catford Bridge.

A Hendon man has just completed sixty-two years in a church choir. Few choir-boys can boast of such a record.

One of the young recruits who joined the army last week in Dublin is seven feet two inches in height. It is satisfactory to note that he is on our side.

It is reported that seven cuckoos have been heard in different parts of the country during the past week. It is felt in some quarters that it may be just one cuckoo on a route march.

"Bacon Free Yesterday," says a headline. Somebody must have left the door open.

An American scientist claims to have discovered a harmless germ likely to defeat the "flu" microbe. It is said that some medical men have put up a purse and that the two germs are being matched to fight a ten round contest under National Sporting Club rules.

Those who have said that the unemployment donation makes for prolonged holiday have just been dealt a sorry blow. It appears that one North of England man in receipt of this pay has deliberately started work.

Plans for the housing of 12,000 Government clerks have just been passed. While 12,000 may suffice for a nucleus, we cannot help thinking that once again the Government isn't really trying.

A postman going his rounds at Kingston found a deserted baby on the lawn of a front garden. It speaks well for the honesty of postal servants that the child was at once given up.

We are pleased to announce with regard to the German waiter who, in 1913, gave a Scotsman a bad sixpence for change, that reassuring news has just reached Scotland that the fellow, is still alive.

A morning paper states that a gentleman who had been at the War Office since August 1914 was given a big reception on his return home. The name of the Departmental Chief whom he had been waiting to see has not yet been disclosed.

A morning paper tells us that FRISCO of New York, who is alleged to have invented the Jazz, has declined an invitation to visit London. Coward!

By the way, they might have told us whether the offer to FRISCO came from London or New York. Meanwhile we draw our own conclusions.

With reference to the horse that recently refused at the third jump and ran back to the starting-post, we are asked to say that this only proves the value of backing horses both ways.

"No man," says a writer in a daily paper, "can sit down and see a girl standing in a crowded Tube train." This no doubt accounts for so many men closing their eyes whilst travelling.

Mr. DEVLIN, M.P., has communicated to the Press a scheme for solving the Irish problem. This is regarded by Irish politicians generally as a dangerous precedent.

A defendant in a County Court case heard in London last week stated in his evidence that two of his daughters were working and the other was a typist at the Peace Conference.

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[Illustration: "HOW PLEASANT IT IS, MY DEAR HORACE, TO PLAY WITH ONE'S TOYS WITHOUT INCURRING THE RISK OF HAVING ONE'S ENJOYMENT MARRED BY THE TRAGIC DISCOVERY OF THEIR TEUTONIC ORIGIN!"]

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COMMERCIAL CANDOUR.

From a placard in a shop-window:--

"Do you buy Tea, or do you buy _our_ Tea?"

* * * * *

"Should a customer cut his hair and shave at the same time, the price will be one shilling."--_Advt. in "Daily Gleaner" (Jamaica)_

Not a bit too much for such ambidexterity.

* * * * *

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM.

I thought the cruel wound was whole
Which left my inside so dyspeptic;
That Time had salved this tortured soul,
Time and Oblivion's antiseptic;
That thirty years (the period since
You showed a preference for Another)
Had fairly schooled me not to wince
At being treated like a brother.

When last I saw the shape I wooed
In coils of adipose embedded,
Fondling its eldest offspring's brood
(The image of the Thing you wedded),
I placed my hand upon the seat
Of those affections you had riven
And gathered from its steady beat
That your offence had been forgiven.

And now, to my surprise and pain,
Long past the stage of convalescence,
The wound has broken out again
With symptoms of pronounced putrescence;
And, from the spot where once was laid
Your likeness treasured in a locket,
The trouble threatens to invade
A tenderer place--my trouser pocket.

For AUSTEN (such is rumour's tale),
Faced with a rude financial deadlock,
Is bent on mulcting every male
Who shirks the privilege of wedlock;
With such a hurt Time cannot deal,
And Lethe here affords no tonic;
Nothing but Death can hope to heal
What looks as if it must be chronic.

And yet a solace soothes my brow,
Making my air a shade less gloomy:--
Six shillings in the pound is now
The figure out of which they do me;
But, were we man and wife to-day
(So close the Treasury loves to link 'em),
A grievous super-tax they'd lay
On our coagulated income.

I dare not even try to guess
What is the charge for being single;
It may be more, it may be less
Than if we twain had chanced to mingle;
But though with thrice as heavy a fist
They fall on bachelors to bleed 'em
Yet, when I think of what I've missed,
I'll gladly pay the cost of Freedom.

O.S.

* * * * *

TEA-CUP TWADDLE.

BY THEODOSIA.

(With acknowledgments to the kind of paper that wallows in this kind of thing.)

Fringe and tassels, tassels and fringe! That is the burden of what I have to say to you this time; for indeed and indeed this is to be a fringe-and-tassel season, and you must cover yourself all over with fringe and the rest of yourself with tassels, or else "to a nunnery go."

A propos, I popped into the dressing-room of the ever-delightful Miss Frillie Farrington at the Incandescent the other evening and had the joy of seeing her put on that sweet ickle f'ock she wears for the Jazz supper scene in _Oh My!_ All the materials used are three yards of embroidered chiffon, six yards of tinsel fringe and six dozen tinsel tassels; and anything so completely swish and so immensely tra-la-la you simply never!

The Armistice Smile is quickly giving way to the Peace Face. For the Peace Face the eyes should look calmly straight before one, and the lips should be gently closed, but not set in a hard line. Everybody who is anybody is busy practising the Peace Face, as it is sure to be wanted some day.

Was in a big squeeze the other night coining out of the Opera and overheard Lady Mary Clarges remark to her pretty daughter, "What a crush!" Lady Mary has a big reputation for always saying the right thing.

I don't know whether to laugh or cry when I tell you that spotted

stockings have been seen walking in the park! Oh, no, there wasn't anything spooky or _seancy_ about it; the stockings weren't walking all alone by themselves; they were on the--that's to say, they were worn by a very well-known woman, whose stockings are sure to give the lead to _multitudes_ of other stockings!

Am told that the "Back from France" fancy-dress dance at Widelands House, in honour of Captain Lord Widelands, was a huge success. Winnie, Lady Widelands (grandmother of the hero of the night) was enormously admired as a boy-scout.

I hear that there's been a great big noise at Middleshire Park. Lord Middleshire found that Lady M. had asked LENIN and TROTSKY to join her house-party at Easter. Lady Middleshire, who is one of the most beautiful and gifted of our young go-ahead hostesses, assured her husband that she meant no harm and had no Bolshie leanings, but simply wanted to be even with Lady Oldacres, who has secured the Eskimo Contortionists from the Palladrome for her Easter party.

I've received _mountains_ of letters asking about sucking the thumb, as introduced by dainty Miss Vanity Vaux in _Draw it mild, Daisy_. Only the _tip_ of the thumb should be sucked; those of you who put the _whole_ thumb into your mouths must not complain if you see smiles exchanged round you. Where the eyes are large and widely opened and the right cast of feature exists, the thumb may be sucked by girls up to forty-five.

Passed the beautiful young Countess of Southshire walking near Belgrave Square yesterday. As usual, she was _parfaitement mise_. Was sorry for _her_ sake, but glad for my own, to hear her sneeze twice, for she is considered to have easily the most musical sneeze in London. Talk of sneezing, during the 'flu epidemic Madame Fallalerie has been giving a course of lessons, "How to sneeze prettily" (twenty guineas the course), and her reception-rooms in Bond Street have been simply packed.

Absolutely _everybody_ seemed to be lunching at Kickshaw's yesterday! Lord and Lady Oldacres were at a table with some of their children, which reminds me of the fact that family parties are rather good form just now. It's not at all unusual to see husbands and wives together, and children, both small and grown-up, are quite _often_ with their parents.

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MR. PUNCH'S "SPORPOT."

The sum of L91 11_s_. 0_d_. generously collected by various schools in South Africa for the "Sporpot" (savings-box) fund, which was suggested in these pages by Mr. Punch's friend, the late Mr. BERTRAM SMITH of Beattock, has been distributed amongst the Belgian refugees who have spent four and a half years of exile at Beattock and have just left to return to their own country.

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[Illustration: A SPRING DEFENSIVE.

JOHN BULL. "I DON'T SAY IT QUITE MEETS THE CASE, BUT _(cheerfully)_ IT'S A SIZE LARGER THAN I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO BE."]

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[Illustration: _Sandy (at Victoria Station)_. "GIE ME _THE PEEBLES HERALD_."]

Attendant. "WE DON'T KEEP IT."

Sandy. "THEN JUST GIE ME ONE O' YER LOCAL PAPERS.]"

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MIXED BIOGRAPHY.

The achievement of a certain paper in identifying the late Mr. G.W.E. RUSSELL with Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL ("AE"), the Irish poet, is likely to encourage imitation. The following first attempts have come under our notice:--

It is not generally known that the FOREIGN SECRETARY began life in a Sheffield steel factory. By unremitting toil he became Master Cutler, having first served an apprenticeship as Chief Secretary for Ireland. The inclusion of Mr. ARTHUR BALFOUR in the Coal Commission was particularly happy, and no one will grudge him his well-earned title of Lord BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH.

Sir ANTHONY HOPE HAWKINS, better known as Mr. Justice HAWKINS, like his brother judge, Mr. Justice GILBERT PARKER, combines a profound knowledge of law with a fine literary gift. His well-known treatise on Habeas Corpus, entitled _The Prisoner of Zenda_, will be familiar to all students.

During the absence of the gallant Colonel JOHN WARD at the Front, we understand that Mrs. WARD has been seeing through the Press a new story, which is a return to the earlier manner of her _Robert Elsmere_.

Sir GEORGE ASKWITH, as he will still be remembered long after his elevation to the peerage, first struck the public imagination by his advice to the railwaymen, who, when they asked what would happen if they persisted in striking, received the answer, "Wait and see."

London is becoming herself again. Among well-known persons noticed about yesterday were Mr. MCKENNA, whose retirement from office presumably gives him more leisure for that sequel to _Sonia_ for which we are all waiting; Mr. J.W.H.T. DOUGLAS, Cricket Specialist of _The Star_ ; Sir ERNEST SHACKLETON, on his way to his work at the Ministry of Labour; and Sir HARRY JOHNSON, the famous African pugilist.

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THE BETTER PART.

[It is suggested that one result of army life will be a boom in big-game hunting and visits to the world's most inaccessible spots.]

He may be correct, the observer who says
Henceforth there'll be many a rover
Ambitious to go, in American phrase,
To the edge of beyond and some over;
But I, for my part, harbour other designs;
My wanderlust's wholly abated;
With travel on even luxurious lines
I'm more than sufficiently sated.

Having roamed into Egypt, according to plan,
Along with my fellows (a merry Co.),
Having carried a pack from Beersheba to Dan
And footslogged from Gaza to Jericho,

I'll not seek a fresh inaccessible spot
In order to slaughter a new brute;
To me inaccessible's anywhere not
To be found on a regular tube route.

For barbarous jungles or desolate streams
I don't give a tuppenny damlet;
For, candidly, London revisited seems
A very enduring hamlet;
Though others may find her excitements too mild
And sigh for things gladder or madder,
I'm fully resolved that the call of the wild
Shall find me as deaf as an adder.

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"Trousers maker wanted; constant."--_Jewish Chronicle_.

A very desirable quality in a composer of continuations.

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"STRANGE BIGAMY STORY.

"MUNITIONER SAID TO HAVE POSED AS A WEALTHY MAN."

Evening News.

The strange thing, of course, is that he should have needed to pose.

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THE TRAGEDY OF THE SUPER-PATRIOT.

If you happen to be standing upon the platform of Ealing Common station at about nine o'clock on a week-day morning you will see a poor shrunken figure with a hunted expression upon his face come creeping down the stairs. And as the train comes in he will slink into a carriage and hide himself behind his newspaper and great tears will come into his eyes as he reads the correspondence column and thinks of the days when his own letters used to be published over the signatures of "Volunteer," "Patriot," or "Special Constable of Two Years' Service." And this sorry figure is Mr. Coaster, whose patriotism proved his undoing.

Before he lived in Ealing he had a little cottage at Ramstairs, on the Kentish coast. Every morning he would travel up to the City, and every evening he would return to Ramstairs, not to the carpet slippers and the comforts of home, but to the brassard and the rigorous routine of the drill-hall.

And the little drill-hall was filled with the noise of war as the Men of Kent marched hither and thither, lashed by the caustic tongue of the Territorial sergeant, with all the enthusiasm of the early Saxons who flocked to HAROLD'S standard in order to repel the Danes.

For Mr. Coaster was as great a patriot as any of the old Saxons. In a burst of enthusiasm he joined the Special Constables; in an explosion of wrath, following the bombardment of Scarborough, he enlisted in the Kentish Fencibles, and in a wave of self-sacrifice he enrolled himself in the Old Veterans' Fire Brigade. And he had badges upon each lapel of his coat and several dotted all over his waistcoat.

He belonged to a noble company of patriots. All true Men of Kent who were past the fighting age joined one or other of these institutions,

but luckily not more than one.

On a certain fatal night a general alarm was given. In due course a notification of it was conveyed to Ramstairs, and instantaneously the members of the Special Constabulary, the Kentish Fencibles and the Veterans' Fire Brigade were summoned from their beds. Then did Mr. Coaster realise his terrible position. Since he belonged to all three, to which of them should he now report? After some agonising moments of doubt he hung up his three types of headgear upon the hat-stand and, shutting his eyes, he twirled himself round twice and made a grab at them. His hand touched the helmet of the Veterans' Fire Brigade. Fate had decided. Seizing his fireman's axe he rushed off down the street.

The result of this was inevitable. He was dismissed with ignominy from the Special Constables and was condemned to death, with a recommendation to mercy, by a court-martial of the Kentish Fencibles. His old friends among the Men of Kent cut him dead; the tradesmen of his platoon refused to serve him. He had to leave Ramstairs and he retired to Ealing. The catastrophe ruined his health. But he still gets a little solace when, as he wipes the tears from his eyes after reading the correspondence column of his penny paper, he sees upon his waistcoat the crossed axes surmounted by a fire bucket, the emblem of the Veterans' Fire Brigade.

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[Illustration: _Aunt (guardian of little nephew who has run away)_.
"EVERY COMFORT ALBERT 'AD--INCLUDIN' WHITE MICE IN 'IS BEDROOM."]

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PARADISE REGAINED.

"Lady tired of her clothes wishes to sell them all very cheaply."--_Pioneer (Allahabad). _

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A STAYER.

"In this race County Cricket was left at least eight lengths and yet managed to cover up ground and was only beaten by half a week, greatest surprise to all those who noticed it."----_Bombay Chronicle_.

We gather that it was only noticed by a few spectators who happened to be staying on over the week-end.

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From a publisher's advertisement of Mr. CHESTERTON'S works:--

"A SHILLING FOR MY THOUGHTS, Fcap. 8vo. _2s_. net."

Is "G.K.C." also among the profiteers?

* * * * *

"Private Frank Edwards, Canadian Forces, a native of Berwick, has been presented to the King as the oldest soldier on active service with the B.E.F. He enlisted as a private in the 50's and went right away to fight in France."--_Edinbro' Evening News_.

We calculate that he is entitled to at least fifty-nine blue chevrons and one red.

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[ILLUSTRATION: BATTALION INSPECTION IN FRANCE.

MEN ARE BEING DEMOBILISED FASTER THAN OFFICERS.]

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"CLEAR THE GALLERIES."

In response to the growth of dissatisfaction at the continued closing of certain picture galleries and museums, either wholly or in part, the Government has appointed a special commission to investigate the matter, under the presidency of Sir Tite Barnacle (fifth baronet). A report of the first session follows, during which the cases for the public and culture, and for the Government as against both, were fully stated.

The first witness was Lord HARCOURT, who said that he had done all he could, both in the House of Lords and in the columns of The Times, where, he was glad to say, large type was given him, to bring the Government to its senses on this matter. So long as the War was on, he and his fellow-critics had refrained from interfering. But now that it was over they demanded that the museums and galleries should be cleared at once of flappers and typewriters and thrown open again to their rightful users, the public.

Sir Buffer Stayte, K.C.B., O.B.E., speaking for his own Government department, said that, although in a manner of speaking the War was over, it was also not over. There was a heritage of trouble which required endless attention, and the best place to attend to it was in the museums and galleries. Experience had taught them that buildings filled with works of art acquired by the nation, either by purchase or gift, for the nation, and held as a national trust, were the most suitable places in which a clerical staff could perform clerical duties.

Lord HARCOURT begged to suggest that such a disregard of a national trust was a treachery.

Sir Buffer Stayte said that, although in ordinary times such might be the case, it was not so in war-time or while the Defence of the Realm Act was in force. Under Dora's sanction all black was white. Personally he had every belief in the efficiency of the staffs now employed in the various public galleries and museums. He had seen them arrive late and leave early--he meant arrive early and leave late--and could not sufficiently admire their willingness to put up with the dismal surroundings of pictures and curiosities.

Mr. ROBERT WITT, one of the Trustees of the National Gallery, said that it was inconceivable to him as a business man that even if so many clerks should still be required there was not a more reasonable place for them than Trafalgar Square.

Sir Thomas Tannin, K.B.E., speaking for his own Government department, said that it was evident that Mr. WITT did not fully realise the position. These were historic and abnormal times and abnormal measures were necessary. We thought in high numbers, and therefore high numbers of clerks were needed. Trafalgar Square was as conveniently central a spot as could be found; hence their presence there. It had also been pointed out by the chiefs of the Government Clerks' Tea Advisory Board that the facilities for obtaining more water for boiling were unusual on account of the proximity of the two great fountains. If anybody could suggest a better place for the accommodation of all these young

ladies he would be glad to know of it. The only suggestion yet made had reference to buildings which, having been designed for office work, were obviously unsuitable. Another reason for keeping them on was their cost. Economy in one direction might lead to economy in another, and the whole fabric of the now bureaucracy would be threatened. It was therefore useless to hope for any early change.

Sir SIDNEY LEE pointed out that, owing to the occupation of a large part of the National Gallery, all the National Portrait Gallery, all the Tate Gallery, and all Hertford House, where the Wallace Collection is, by Government clerks, these national institutions were not open to our soldiers from the Dominions and the provinces, who might never again have the opportunity of refreshing their eyes by gazing upon some of our most beautiful possessions. In their interest alone he pleaded for the rapid conversion of the buildings to their proper ends.

Sir Yutely Taryan, K.C.V.O., speaking for his own Government Department, said that in his opinion a great deal of nonsense was talked about art, both its educational value and its power of giving pleasure. Speaking for himself, even in normal times, he would rather see a picture gallery given up to living clerks than to dead canvases. If he had his way there should be no pictures but those that stimulated people to greater activity. He had, for example, never seen any beauty in WHISTLER'S portrait of his (WHISTLER'S) mother until it was reproduced as a War-savings poster, with words scrawled across it. A few of the placards which American business men pinned up in their offices, such as, "To Hell with Yesterday," were better than all the Old Masters.

Continuing, Sir Yutely said that he could not permit himself to accept the view that any privation was being suffered by our brave lads from overseas. From conversations that he had had with some of them he found that the only pictures that they knew anything of or cared about were those in the cinemas. From his own recollections of his only visit to the National Gallery some years ago he should say that these noble fellows were better outside that place than in. One painting that he saw there was so scandalous in its nudity that he blushed even now when he thought of it. Better far that our defenders from the Dominions should continue to walk up and down the Strand.

On the motion of the Chairman, who said that he thought the case for the Government and the continued closing of the galleries and museums had been adequately made out, the Commission adjourned *_sine die_*, and Lord HARCOURT, Sir SIDNEY LEE and Mr. WITT were left sharpening their pens.

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[Illustration: *_Manager of Coliseum (Ancient Rome)_*. "YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY, I REGRET THAT, OWING TO THE SUDDEN INDISPOSITION OF BIBULUS TERTIUS, HIS COMBAT WITH THE TWO NUBIAN FOREST-BRED LIONS IS UNAVOIDABLY POSTPONED. WITH YOUR MAJESTY'S KIND PERMISSION THE TURN WILL BE TAKEN BY THE WELL-KNOWN BUCOLICUS CALVUS, WHO WILL GIVE A FEW OF HIS WONDERFUL FARMYARD IMITATIONS."]

* * * * *

THE ARMY ORACLE.

I cannot conceal from myself that I am a great acquisition to the Army of Occupation. My knowledge of the language being far and away superior to that of any other British officer for miles around, I am looked upon by the natives as a sort of high military authority in whom they may have the privilege and the pleasure of confiding all

their troubles. According to the intensity of their various desires I am addressed _crescendo_ as "Herr Ober-Leutenant," or "Herr Hauptmann," or "Herr Majeur," or "Herr Commandant." They always approach me in a becomingly servile attitude--cap or hat in hand--and await with obvious tension my weighty pronouncements. They hide round corners and wait behind doors or down narrow passages until I come past, and then they spring out on me.

"What about the coal we are burning? The electric light we are using? Who is going to pay?" "So-and-so's charlady, who was out obliging another lady, had a breadknife pinched while she was away from home. Was it one of my _Soldaten_, perhaps? Did I know anything about it, and if so, would I punish the evildoer and restore the implement?"

The village expert in calf-delivery wants to know whether, in the case of the happy event taking place after 9 P.M. (which it usually does), I would give him permission to leave his home after closing hours, so that he might assist at the function.

The local yokels of this spot and its neighbouring villages want to resume their bi-weekly choral society meetings but cannot reach the rendezvous until 8.45 P.M., which leaves them just a quarter-of-an-hour to have their practice and to take cover for the night. "Would the high-well-born be so fearfully gracious as to allow them to continue until 10 P.M.?"

To be suddenly taken unawares and to have such conundrums volleyed at you in a strange tongue is apt to be rather exhausting. However I have a reputation to live up to and must be as frightful as possible. I find the best thing to do is to refer them to the nearest notice-board, which reads:--

HALT!

VORSICHT!

ALLES VERBOTEN!!!

* * * * *

THE MUD LARKS.

The Visiting Brigadier cracked a walnut and glanced towards the General. "I wonder if you remember a French interpreter by the name of de Blavincourt, Sir? He was with you once, I believe."

The A.P.M. across the way paused in the act of tapping a cigarette on his case. "Little gunner man, wore red plush bags and a blue velvet hat? Yes, up in the salient in '17."

The General puffed three perfect smoke rings towards the chandelier (an accomplishment he had acquired thirty-five years previously at the "Shop" and was still proud of) and smiled. "De Blavincourt? why, yes, I remember him. He knew more about cooking than all the _chefs_ in Europe and taught my poisoner to make rations taste like food. Of course I remember him. Why?"

"Because he came my way just at the end of the War and had rather a curious adventure," said the Brigadier, stirring his coffee. "I thought you might be interested."

"I am," the General replied. "What happened?"

The Brigadier cleared his throat. "We were in front of Tournai at the

time, scrapping our way from house to house through Faubourg de Lille, the city's western suburb. My Brigade Major stumped into H.Q. one afternoon looking pretty grim. 'We'd best move out of here, Sir,' said he, 'before we're waffed.'

"'What's the matter now?' I asked.

"'That unutterable little fool de Blavincourt has walked into Germany with a large scale-map in his hand, showing every H.Q. mess and billet.' He tapped a despatch from the forward battalion.

"De Blavincourt, it appeared, had been at work all the morning evacuating unfortunate civilians from the cellars. At noon or thereabouts he sidled along the wall, past a Lewis gun detachment that was holding the street. The corporal shouted a warning, but de Blavincourt sidled on, saying that he was only going to the first house round the corner to rescue some old women he heard were in it. And that was the last of him. Seeing that the Bosch opened fire from the said house seven minutes later his fate was obvious.

"It was also obvious what our fate would be if we continued in those marked billets, so we moved out, bag and baggage, into a sunken road near by and spent the night there in the rain and muck, and were most uncomfortable. What puzzled us rather was that the Hun did not shell our old billets that night--that is, nothing out of the ordinary. 'But that's only his cunning,' we consoled ourselves; 'he knows we know he knows, and he's trying to lure us back. Ah, no, old friend.'

"So we camped miserably on in that sunken sewer. He dropped a lucky one through a barn the same afternoon and lobbed a few wides over during the next night, but again nothing out of the ordinary.

"We were more and more puzzled. Then, just about breakfast-time on the second morning, in walks de Blavincourt himself, green as to the complexion and wounded in the arm, but otherwise intact. I leapt upon him, snarling, 'Where's that map?'

"'I got 'im, Sir,' he gulped, 'safe' (gulp).

"This was his story. He had remembered the corporal shouting something, but so intent on his work was he that he hardly noticed the warning until suddenly, to his horror, he perceived a party of Huns creeping out of a passage _behind him_. He was cut off! They had not seen him for the moment, so quick as thought he slipped into the nearest house, turned into a front room--a sort of parlour place--and crouched there, wondering what to do.

"He was not left wondering long, for the Bosches followed him into that very house. There was a small table in one corner covered with a large cloth. Under this de Blavincourt dived, and not a second too soon, for the Bosches--seven of them--followed him into that very room and, setting up their machine gun at the window, commenced to pop off down the street. Charming state of affairs for little de Blavincourt--alone and unarmed in a room full of bristling Huns with that fatal map in his possession.

"Sweating all over he eased the map out of his pocket and slowly and silently commenced to eat it.

"You know what those things are like. A yard square of tough paper backed by indestructible calico--one might as well try to devour a child's rag book.

"Anyhow that's what de Blavincourt did. He ate it, and it took him forty hours to do the trick. For forty hours day and night he squatted

under that table, with the Huns sitting upon and around it, and gnawed away at that square yard of calico.

"Just before the dawn of the third day he gulped the last corner down and peeped out under the tablecloth. The Bosch on guard was oiling the lock of the machine-gun. Two more he could hear in the kitchen clattering pots about. The remaining four were asleep, grotesquely sprawled over sofas and chairs.

"De Blavincourt determined to chance it. He could not stop under the table for ever, and even at the worst that map, that precious map, was out of harm's way. He crept stealthily from his hiding-place, dealt the kneeling Bosch a terrific kick in the small of the back, dived headlong out of the window and galloped down the street towards our Lewis gunners, squealing, ' _ Friend! Ros'bif! Not'arf!' _--which, in spite of his three years of interpreting, was all the English he could muster at the moment. The Huns emptied their automatics after him, but only one bullet found the target, and that an outer.

"'I weesh it vos t'rough my 'eart,' he told me later, tears rolling down his cheeks. 'Vot more use to me my life, hein? My stomach she is for ever ruin.'"

The General laughed. "Stout fellow for a' that."

"I grant you," said the Brigadier, "but a fellow should be stout along accepted lines. 'To Lieutenant Felix Marcel, Comte de Blavincourt, the Military Cross for eating his map.' No, Sir, it can't be done."

The Horse-master, who was helping himself to old tawny, nodded vigorously and muttered "No, by Jove, it can't."

"You speak with feeling, Coper," remarked the General.

"I do, Sir. I sat up the best part of three nights last March trying to write for official consumption the story of a fellow who seemed to me to qualify for the 'Stout' class. It was a wash-out, though; too absurd."

"Well, give the port a fair wind and let's have the absurdity now," said the General.

The Horse-master bowed to the command.

"I was with the Fifth Army last year when the wave swept us. We were fairly swamped for the moment and all nohow. One evening, retreating on my own line, I came upon some little village--can't remember the name just now, but you know the sort of thing--typical Somme hamlet, a smear of brick-dust with a big notice-board on top, saying, 'THIS IS LE SARS,' or 'POZIERES,' or whatever its name was. Anyway, in this village I found a Divisional H.Q., four Brigade H.Q.'s, and oddities of all sorts sitting one on top of t'other waiting for the next thing to happen. The next thing was a single wounded lancer who happened in about four in the morning with the glad tidings that Bosch tanks were advancing on us". Questioned further he admitted that he had only actually seen one and that in the dark. But it was the great-grandfather of all tanks, according to the chap; it stood twenty foot high; it 'roared and rumbled' in its career, and it careered by steam.

"It wasn't any manner of use assuring him that there wasn't a steam tank on anybody's front. He said there was, and we couldn't move him.

"'I saw steam coming from it in clouds,' be mumbled, 'and sparks and smoke.' Then he crumpled slowly on the floor, fast asleep.

"The Divisional General was properly mystified.

"'If only I had a single field-gun or even some gelignite,' he groaned; then turning to me, 'I must get the strength of this; it may be some new frightfulness the Hun is springing. You're an old horse-soldier, I believe? Well, jump on your gee and go scout the thing, will you?'

"I scratched together a rag and bobtail patrol of grooms and pushed off just before daybreak. Our people had the edge of the village manned with every rifle they could collect. A subaltern lying ear to earth hailed me as I passed. 'It's coming,' he called.

"A quarter of a mile further on I could hear the roaring and rumbling myself without lying on the road.

"Light was breaking fast, but there were wisps and shreds of fog blowing about which made observation exceedingly difficult. Still, observation I was out to get, so, spreading my bobbery pack, I worked closer and closer. Suddenly one of my patrol shrilled, 'There y'are, Sir!' and I saw a monstrous shape loom for a moment through a thinning of mist, and rock onwards into obscurity again.

"'It's an armoured car. I seed wheels under it,' gasped one groom. 'More like a blasted Dreadnought,' grunted another. 'Cheer-o, chaps, the 'Un fleet 'as come out.' But nobody laughed or felt like laughing; this mysterious monster, thundering westward wrapped in its barrage of fog, was getting on our nerves."

The Horse-master paused and carefully removed the long ash from his cigar.

"Then the mists rolled up and revealed what I at first took to be a walking R.E. dump, but secondly discovered to be a common ordinary domestic British steam-roller with 'LINCOLN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL' in dirty white lettering upon its fuel box, a mountain of duck-boards stacked on the cab roof, railway sleepers, riveting stakes and odds and ends of lumber tied on all over it. As I rode up an elderly head, grimy and perspiring, was thrust between a couple of duck-boards and nodded pleasantly to me. "Ello,' it said, 'seen anythin' o' the lads?'

"I was too dumbfounded to say anything excepting that the lads were in the next village waiting for him.

"'Ah'm right glad o' that,' said he; 'been feeling a bit lonesome-like these last two days;' adding, in case I might not appreciate the situation, 'These yer Germans 'ave been after me, you know, Sir.'

"I replied that my only wonder was that they had not captured him long since.

"'Very nearly did once or twice,' he admitted, and wagged his elderly head; 'but t'owd lass is a great one to travel when she's sweet, an' ah've 'ad a lot o' luck pickin' oop these bits o' firin' along the road;' and he jammed a bunch of riveting stakes into the furnace.

"'Oh, ah reckon we're just keepin' ahead of 'em. Well, best be gettin' along now, s'pose. Good day to you, Sir.'

"He wrenched at a lever and 't'owd lass' rumbled off down the highway towards Albert, rearguard of His Britannic Majesty's Armies in the Field."

PATLANDER.

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[Illustration: STRIKE NERVES.

SHOCKING EXPERIENCE IN OXFORD STREET OF JAMES SIMPKINS, ESQ., A LARGE EMPLOYER OF LABOUR.]

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[Illustration: _He (new to the Jazz and eager to learn)._ "WHICH STEP IS THIS?"]

* * * * *

MISTRESS AND MAID.

(New Style).
_

My wife burst into the room, her face aglow with the joy of success.

"Oh, George, isn't it simply splendid?"

"Absolutely top-hole, I am sure, my dear; but supposing you let me know what it's all about?"

"How silly I am," she murmured as she sank into a chair. "I quite forgot I had not seen you all day, and it happened just after you left for the office. You had not been gone five minutes when Jane came up and gave notice. I determined to be firm and told her she could go when she liked, and then I marched straight off to Mrs. Smith's Registry Office. I found the dear old thing just as amiable and ready to please as ever, but she told me I must not mind if the methods of her establishment were a bit changed. In the old days, you know, we used to sit in a small room and interview the servants she wanted places for. But now the position is reversed, and the servants interview you and ask you questions. I was told to go in and see a nice-looking girl. She was not a bit shy and, after asking me to take a chair, began to put questions--our income? your profession? what other servants we kept? wages? margarine or butter in the kitchen? etc.

"She seemed quite satisfied with everything until we came to the matter of her afternoons out. I said that two a week and every other Sunday was my usual custom, and that I hoped this would prove agreeable. She snapped me up at once and said she must have at least four, as well as the whole of every other Sunday.

"My heart sank, because I did not see how we could possibly give her all that, so I just said how sorry I was and got up to go--in fact I was half-way to the door--when she called me back and said, 'I like your face, and perhaps for the present two afternoons and the Sunday will be enough. If you will wait a minute I will have another talk to Mrs. Smith about you,' and off she went.

"It seemed ages before anyone came, and then old Mrs. Smith walked in, saying, 'I'm glad to tell you, Madam, that you have been approved of.'

"Isn't it too glorious, George? You and I have been approved of. We have got a situation."

* * * * *

"OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN--"

When, moved a few brief seasons back,
To brave the battle's brunt,
On Britain's shores I turned my pack
And "somewhere" found a Front;

Said I; as in my tympanum
I heard the cannon's roar,
"Twill be a wonder if I come
Impervious through the War."

Yet bomb, shell, bullet and grenade
Made no great hit with me;
And now I'm--well, I've just been paid
My war gratuity.

But at the sight of civil life,
If "life" it can be called,
With all its agonising strife,
I simply stand appalled.

And "Oh!" in utter fear I cry,
"How horrors never cease;
'Twill be a miracle if I
Ever survive the Peace."

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[Illustration: THE PERIL WITHOUT.]

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ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, March 24th--The Archbishop of CANTERBURY sought from the Government a clear statement of policy regarding the repatriation of enemy aliens, and incidentally paid a high tribute to the British Press, which, we were glad to hear, contains "nobody who desires to fabricate baseless statements."

He was supported by Lord LAMBOURNE, who as a member of the Advisory Committee knows all about aliens, and declared that "Repatriate them all" was a foolish cry, if it meant that we were expected to present Germany with the British wives and children of the dear deported.

Lord JERSEY, for the Government, desired to treat even Germans justly, but could not see why anyone should wish in these times to increase our alien population. His speech did not please a batch of noble sentimentalists, drawn from both sides, but seemed to give great satisfaction to Lord LINCOLNSHIRE, who quoted with approval the brave words on the subject uttered by the LORD CHANCELLOR at the General Election, before his style had been mollified by the Woolsack.

In the Commons Mr. BONAR LAW regretfully explained that it was impossible for the Government to do anything to reduce the high prices now being charged for furniture in the East End. His own experience as a Cabinet-maker has been entirely confined to the West End.

Nor could the Government take any direct steps to ameliorate the overcrowding on the Underground railways. But, as it was stated that large quantities of leather are still being purchased on Government account, there are hopes that more accommodation for strap-hangers may shortly be available.

Tuesday, March 25th--The Lords spent three hours of almost

unrelieved gloom in discussing the financial condition of the country. On that old problem of the economists, "What is a pound?" Lord D'ABERNON delivered an erudite discourse, from which I gathered that it was at present about ten shillings and still shrinking. The only comfort is that at that rate the National Debt has already been halved.

Lord MILNER made a fairly cheerful speech in the circumstances; but I hope that potential strikers will not take too literally his observation that the one thing most needed at the present moment was "economy of national energy."

Mr. CHURCHILL came down heavily upon Sir DONALD MACLEAN'S attempt to delay the adoption of compulsion in the new Military Service Bill. When rather more than half of Europe was seething with unrest, which might require military intervention, it would be fatal to let our army disappear; yet the right hon. gentleman seemed to think that everyone ought to be disarmed except LENIN and TROTSKY.

For the first time since 1914 private Members had an evening to themselves. They utilised it in endeavouring to obtain from the Government a direct statement of its future fiscal policy. On Imperial Preference Mr. BONAR LAW was quite explicit; the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER was already considering how to incorporate it in the next Budget. As to the Government's fiscal policy generally it had already been outlined in the PRIME MINISTER'S letter to himself, and would be definitely declared as soon as the time was ripe--a cautious statement which, as was perhaps intended, left Free Traders and Protectionists still guessing.

[Illustration: THE BONAR LAW ORACLE WILL SPEAK ON FISCAL POLICY "AS SOON AS THE TIME IS RIPE."]

Wednesday, March 26th.--After Lord DESBOROUGH'S vivacious attack upon the Cippenham Motor Depot, it is doubtful whether anyone could have enabled the Government to wriggle out of the demand for an independent inquiry. At any rate Lord INVERFORTH was insufficiently agile. The innumerable type-written sheets which he read out laboriously may have contained a complete reply to Lord DESBOROUGH'S main allegations, even if they included no refutation of the stones of the bricks imported by the hundred thousand into a district containing some of the best brick-earth in the country, or of the four pounds a week paid for the services of a railway pensioner aged ninety-two. But as hardly anyone could hear the recital it created little impression.

The Ministry are evidently unwilling to stake their political lives on Mr. CHURCHILL'S approval of the project, for Mr. BONAR LAW announced that the Government Whips would not be put on for the forthcoming division on the subject.

Mr. G. ROBERTS furnished an interesting analysis of the nine shillings now charged for a bottle of whisky. Three-and-sixpence represents the cost of the spirit plus pre-war taxation. The other five-and-sixpence is made up of interest to manufacturers, insurance and rent; increased price of bottles and corks; margins of profit to blenders and bottlers, merchants and other traders; and increase of taxation. By some oversight nothing appears to have been charged for the extra water, but no doubt this will be remedied in the next Budget.

Thursday, March 27th.--To those who remember the debates on the Parliament Act, _circa_ 1911, it was amusing to hear Lords CREWE and BUCKMASTER complaining of the unceremonious manner in which the Lords' amendments to the Rents Bill had been treated in "another place;" and being entreated not to pick a quarrel with the Commons by those ancient champions of the Upper Chamber, Lord CURZON and the LORD

CHANCELLOR.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER announced the names of the Royal Commissioners who are to consider how the income-tax can be improved. Several Members complained that there is only one woman among them, and that, pending their report (expected some time next year), the glaring anomaly by which husband and wife are regarded for taxable purposes as a single entity is apparently to be continued. The idea of presenting Mr. CHAMBERLAIN with a box for The Purse Strings, in the hope that it would convert him, has unfortunately been frustrated by the withdrawal of the play.

Mr. BONAR LAW'S determination to leave the Cippenham question to the free judgment of the House led (as possibly he anticipated) to its expressing no judgment at all. Sir DONALD MACLEAN and others served up a rather insipid rechauffe of Lord DESBOROUGH'S indictment, and Mr. CHURCHILL repeated Lord INVERFORTH'S defence, but put a little more ginger into it. Incidentally he mentioned that a prolonged search for the nonagenarian pensioner had produced nobody more venerable than a comparative youngster of sixty-five. Deprived of this prop the Opposition felt unequal to walking through the Lobbies.

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THE FAIRIES' FLITTING.

There's a family of fairies lives inside our pigeon-cot,
Down the garden, near the great big sumach-tree,
Where the grass has grown across the path and dead leaves lie and rot
And no one hardly ever goes but me;
Yes, it's just the place for fairies, and they told the pigeons so;
They begged to be allowed to move in soon;
It's a most tremendous honour, as of course the pigeons know;
It was all arranged this very afternoon.

There's a family of fairies lives inside our pigeon-cot--
Oh, the bustle and the sweeping there has been!
For the pigeons didn't scrub their house (I think they all forgot),
And the fairies like their home so scrup'lous clean;
There are fairy dusters hanging from the sumach as you pass;
Tiny drops are dripping still from overhead;
Broken fairy-brooms are lying near the fir-tree on the grass,
Though the fairies went an hour ago to bed.

There's a family of fairies lives inside our pigeon-cot,
And there's cooings round about our chimney-stack,
For the pigeons are all sitting there and talking such a lot
And there's nothing Gard'ner does will drive them back;
"Why, they'll choke up those roof-gutters if they start this nesting fuss;
They've got a house," he says, "so I don't see--"
No, he doesn't know the secret, and there's no one does but--us,
All the pigeons, and the fairy-folk and ME!

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[Illustration: ENFIN SEULS!]

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WHAT EVERY MINISTER SHOULD KNOW.

The Times is much concerned with the chaotic condition of the Air Ministry and the strange designs with which the political heads of the Department are credited. "These suspicions we believe to be without any real foundation, but they are active, though Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL

and General SEELY may be wholly unconscious of them. We believe they are, and if they are the sooner they are told what is said about their intentions the better."

So The Times proceeds to describe these nefarious if nebulous designs and appeals to Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL in particular, "if he has no such intentions, to disclaim them publicly and in a way which will leave no breeding-ground for future rumours."

The Times has done a great service by its splendid candour, but it has only gone about one-fortieth part of the way. There are still, we believe, some eighty Ministers, and all without exception ought to know what is being said about them, to enable them to confirm or disavow these disquieting speculations. The papers simply teem with secret histories of the week, diaries of omniscient pundits and so forth, in which these rumours multiply to an extent that staggers the plain person.

Take the PREMIER to begin with. Is it really true that he has decided, as the brain of the Empire can only be located in Printing House Square, to resign office and become home editor of The Times, leaving foreign policy to be controlled by Mr. WICKHAM STEED? Is it true that he meditates appointing Mr. AUGUSTUS JOHN Minister of Fine Arts? Is it true that he flies every day from Paris to Mentone, to receive instructions from a Mysterious Nobleman who is shortly to be raised to ducal honours? Is it true that until quite recently he had never heard of JOAN OF ARC and thought that VICTOR HUGO was a Roman emperor?

Then there is Mr. BONAR LAW. He surely ought to know that it is said by The Job and The Morning Ghost that he informed Mr. SMILLIE, during one of their recent conversations, that he hoped, in the event of a general strike, to be allowed to get away to the small island in the South Pacific which he has purchased as a refuge in case of such a contingency. Probably such an idea never entered his head. But this is what he is supposed to be planning. Let him therefore disclaim the intention promptly and publicly.

Grievous mischief again is being done by the persistent rumours current about the intention of the LORD CHANCELLOR to take Orders with the view of becoming Archbishop of Canterbury at the earliest possible opportunity. There may be absolutely nothing in it. Mr. HAROLD SMITH scouts the notion as absurd. But very great men do not always confide in brothers. NAPOLEON, as we know, thought poorly of his.

Lastly, is it true that, although Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN is still nominally Chancellor of the Exchequer, he is really a prisoner in the Tower, conveyed under guard to and from the House, and that the reprieve of the sentence of capital punishment passed on him by The Daily Mail may expire--and he with it--at any moment?

These are only a few of the things which are said about them that Ministers ought to know--if they don't know them already. And if they do, and basely pretend not to, we feel that we have done a truly patriotic service in rendering it impossible for them to avoid enlightening the public. It is always well to know the worst, even about politicians.

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WANTED, A HEBE.

"Tablemaid (thoroughly experienced) required middle of March; god wages."--Scots Paper.

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"'Eh, what?' queried Lawrence in astonishment. 'What are you doing here, my dear? Are you French?'

"'Je suis Belgique, M'sieu,' replied the girl, whose knowledge of English seemed limited."--_Weekly Paper_.

But not so limited as her knowledge of French, we hope.

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"St. Ives, Cornwall.--Artists visiting this town will find their requirements in Artists' Materials well catered for. All manufacturers' colours stocked. Canvases sketched at shortest possible notice. ----, Artists' Colourman."--_The Studio_.

Surely there are no "ghosts" in "the Cornish School!"

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[Illustration: _Jock_. "OCH, IT'S WONDERFU'. THE MANNIE MANEEPULATES THE BLACK AN' WHITE NOTES WI' EQUAL FACEELITY."]

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AT THE OPERA.

In these dull days of reaction, when, in the intervals of jazzing, we have nothing to satisfy the spiritual void left by the War except the possibility of an industrial cataclysm at home and the triumph of Bolshevism abroad, we owe a large debt of gratitude to Sir THOMAS BEECHAM for his efforts to revive the Town. And the Town is at last appreciating at their full worth his services both to the cause of popular education in music and to the encouragement of native talent.

It was perhaps a little unfortunate that _Aida_ should have been given on the night of the Guards' march through London, for the parade of the Pharaoh's scratch soldiery suffered badly by comparison. The priesthood of Isis, too, furnished more humour than could, I think, have been designed, and I doubt if even Mr. WEEDON GROSSMITH could have given us anything funnier than the spectacle presented by the Egyptian monarch when making his announcement of an Ethiopian raid. Nor shall I easily forget the figure of the King of Ethiopia, with a head of hair like a Zulu's, and swathed in a tiger-skin. I should myself have chosen the hide of a leopard, for the leopard cannot change his spots nor the Ethiopian his skin, and when you get the two together you have an extraordinarily durable combination.

It would be false flattery to say that Miss ROSINA BUCKMAN quite looked the part of _Aida_, or Miss EDNA THORNTON that of _Amneris_, but they both sang finely, and the orchestra did great work under Mr. EUGENE GOOSSENS, Sen.

In _Louise_, again, it was the orchestra, cleverly steered by Sir THOMAS BEECHAM through the difficult score for the choruses, that sustained us through the banalities of an opera which has only one dramatic moment--when her father hastens the eviction of _Louise_ by throwing a chair at her, very well aimed by Mr. ROBERT RADFORD, who only just missed his mark. I suppose it is hopeless to expect that the makers of "Grand" Opera (whose sense of humour is seldom their strong point) will consent to allow the trivialities of ordinary speech in everyday life ("How do you do?" "Thank you, I am not feeling my best," and so on) to be said--if they _must_ find expression of some sort--and not sung.

By way of contrast to the modern realism which makes so unlikely a material for serious opera, the fantastic irresponsibility of *The Magic Flute* came as a great relief. Its simpler music, serenely sampling the whole gamut of emotions, grave to gay, offered equal chances (all taken) to the pure love-singing of Miss AGNES NICHOLLS as *Pamina*, and Mr. MAURICE D'OISLY as *Tamino*, the light-hearted frivolity of *Papageno* (Mr. RANALOW), and the solemn pontifics (*de profundissimis*) of Mr. FOSTER RICHARDSON'S *Sarastro*. A most delightful and refreshing performance.

O.S.

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JAZZ--TWO VIEWS.

Terpsichore, tired of the "trot,"
And letting the waltz go to pot,
In the glorious Jazz
Most undoubtedly has
Discovered the pick of the lot.

There was an exuberant "coon"
Who invented a horrible tune
For a horrible dance
Which suggested the prance
Of a half-epileptic baboon.

* * * * *

"The Prime Minister threw aside precedent to such an extent that he got out of his depth and went on his knees when we were on the rocks."-- *Letter in "The Globe"*.

When we get out of our depth we never think of kneeling on the bottom.

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AT THE PLAY.

"VICTORY."

MR. MACDONALD HASTINGS has invented, and committed, yet another new sin--that of attempting to do a CONRAD novel into a three-act play. Fifteen, possibly; but three? We hardly think. What every Conradist knows is that you can't compress that master of subtlety without losing the master's dominant quality--atmosphere; that it's not so much the things he says but the queer way and the odd order in which he says them that matter. He is not precisely a filmable person.

And yet, all things considered, the potter has produced a tolerable pot, and we may write down his fault of extreme foolhardiness as venial. What, however, Mr. CONRAD himself thought of the rehearsals, if he attended them--but perhaps we need not go into that.

It is easy to see the attraction, for the players, of the series of star parts provided by the exciting story. You have first the eccentric, misjudged Swede, *Heyst* (the adapter makes him an Englishman, perhaps wisely, as our stage takes no account of Swedes), come from self-banishment on a far Pacific island--a complex Conradian personality. Then his arch-enemy, *Schomberg*, lieutenant of reserve, shady hotel-keeper, sensualist and craven, with his insane malice. To these enter as pretty a company of miscreants as ever sailed the Southern seas: the sinister *Jones*, misogynist to the point of fine

frenzy, nonconformist in the matter of card-playing, and thereafter frank bandit with a high ethic as to the superiority of plain robbery under arms over mere vulgar swindling--a gentleman with a code, in fact; his strictly incomparable "secretary," _Ricardo_ of the rolling eyes and gait and deathly treacherous knife, philogynist _sans phrase_; and _Pedro_, their groom, a reincarnated _Caliban_. It may also be noted that _Heyst_ has a freak servant, the disappearing _Wang_, whom the adapter uses, I suppose legitimately, as a kind of clown. And then, finally, there is a charming and unusual heroine, _Lena_, still in her teens, but of real flesh and blood, innocent and persecuted, daughter of a drunken fiddler (deceased), herself fiddling in a tenth-rate orchestra at _Schomberg's_ hotel, wherein it is not intended that the music shall be the chief attraction to the guests.

Heyst is Perseus to _Lena's_ Andromeda, carrying her off to his island out of lust's way. But dragon _Schomberg_ has a sting left in his malicious tale, told to the unlikely trio of scoundrels, to the effect that _Heyst_ has ill-gotten treasure hoarded on his island. Dragon _Ricardo_ persuades his chief to the adventure of attacking it. A fine brew of passion and action forsooth: _Lena_ passionately adoring; the aloof _Heyst_ passing suddenly from indifference to ardour; the bestial _Ricardo_ in pursuit of his startled quarry; and gentleman _Jones_ intent on non-existent booty and rapt out of himself by cynical fury at the discovery of an unsuspected woman in the case. And while Mr. CONRAD in his novel drives all these to a relentless doom Mr. HASTINGS contrives a happy ending, which goes perilously near an anticlimax, with the hero on his knees and the heroine pointing up to heaven and claiming a "victory" quite other than their creator intended. But then he knew perfectly well that nobody wants to come to see Miss MARIE LOEHR killed.

[Illustration: THE LAGGARD LOVER. _Lena_ (Miss MARIE LOEHR) to Heyst (Mr. MURRAY CARRINGTON). "OH YES, YOU SMILE ALL RIGHT; BUT ONE MAY SMILE AND SMILE AND YET GET NO FORRARDER."]

On the whole I can't think the cast was up to its extremely difficult task, if you estimate that task, as it seems to me you must, to be the reproducing of the original _Victory_ characters. Perhaps Mr. SAM LIVESEY'S _Ricardo_ was the nearest, though the primitive savagery of his wooing had to be toned down in the interests of propriety. Mr. GAYER MACKAY made his _Jones_ interesting and plausible in the quieter opening movements. In the intended tragic spasms one felt that he became rather comic than sinister. Not his fault, I think. He had no room or time to work up his part. That should also apply to Mr. GARRY'S _Schomberg_, though he doesn't seem to have tried to fit himself into the skin of that entertaining villain. Mr. MURRAY CARRINGTON had an exceedingly tough task with his _Heyst_. But was he even as detached and eccentric as the average modern don? Certainly he was not the man of mystery of the original pattern, but rather the amiable comely film-hero.

Miss LOEHR had her interesting moments, the best of them, perhaps, in the First Act. In her big scene, where the knife is to be won from _Ricardo_, she was no doubt hampered by the tradition that it is necessary to play down to the carefully cultivated imbecility of the audience in order that they should not misunderstand the most obvious points. It's not flattering to us, but it can't be helped. Probably we deserve it. But need she have been quite so refined? Only very occasionally does she remember that _Lena_ is fine matter in a "common" mould, which is surely of the essence of the situation. I do seriously recommend a re-reading of what should be a character full of blood, which is ever so much more amusing than sawdust, however charmingly encased. I feel sure she could shock and at the same time please the groundlings if she let herself go.

And where, by the way, did she get that charmingly-cut skirt in the Second Act? She certainly hadn't it in her bundle when she left the hotel. And yet the stage-manager will go to the trouble, for the sake of a quite misguided realism, of making the hotel orchestra play against the dialogue as if the persistent coughing of the audience were not sufficient handicap to his team.

Miss BALVAIRD-HEWETT gave a clever rendering of the hotel-keeper's sombre _Frau_; and Mr. GEORGE ELTON contributed an excellent Chinese servant.

But you can't, you really can't, get a gallon into a pint pot, however strenuous the potter.

T.

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HYGIENIC STRATEGY.

"What has to be done is to draw a sanitary cordon to bar the road to Bolshevism."--_M. PICHON in the French Chamber_.

The need of this policy is strengthened by the simultaneous announcement that the Bolsheviks have crossed the Bug on a wide front.

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"Mr. ---- has for twenty-one years been illustrating 'A Saunter Through Kent.'"--_Sunday Pictorial_.

The artist seems to have caught the spirit of his subject.

* * * * *

"This was seconded by Mr. Mackinder, who said the barque of British trade had to steer a perilous course between the scylla of the front Opposition bench and the charybodies as represented by the Government."--_Western Daily Press_.

This is the first intimation we have yet received of any noticeable tendency to penurious economy on the part of the Government.

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[Illustration: THE IRREPRESSIBLE.]

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THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY COLLAR.

Mr. Bingley-Spyker pleaded surprise. He pointed out that he had been in bed for a fortnight, "laid aside," as he said, "through the prevailing epidemic." In the meantime the revolution had taken place, and he had heard nothing about it.

"Well," said the President gruffly, "we can't 'elp that, can we, comrades? While this 'ere citizen 'as been restin' in the lap o' luxury, so to speak, we workers 'ave been revolutin'. An' that's all there is to it."

"But fair play," persisted Mr. Bingley-Spyker gently, "is a jewel. At least so I have always understood."

"Not so much of it, me lad," interrupted the President sharply. "Now

then, comrade, wot's the charge?"

An unkempt person stepped up to the front and, clearing his throat with some emphasis, began:--

"About ten-thirty this morning I see this gentleman--"

"_What?_" The interruption came simultaneously from several members of the tribunal.

"--this party walkin' down Whitehall casual-like, as if the place belonged to 'im instead of to us. 'What ho!' I says to myself, 'this 'ere chap looks like a counter-revolution'ry;' and with that I comes closer to 'im. Sure enough he was wearin' a 'igh collar, about three inches 'igh, I should say, all white an' shiny, straight from the lomdry. I could 'ardly believe my eyes."

"Never mind your eyes, comrade," the President said; "tell us what you did."

"I accosted 'im and said, 'Ere, citizen, wot do you mean by wearin' a collar like that?'"

"An' what was the reply?"

"He looked at me 'aughty-like, an' says, 'Get away, my man, or I shall call the police.' An' thereupon I said, 'P'r'aps you don't know it, citizen, but I _am_ the p'lice, an', wot's more, I arrest you for wearin' a white collar, contrairy to the regulations in that case made an' perwided."

"Very good, comrade," murmured the President, "very good indeed. Did he seem surprised?"

"Knocked all of a 'eap. So I took him into custody and brought him along."

"You did well, comrade. The Tribunal thanks you. Step down now, me lad, and don't make too much noise. Now then, prisoner, you've 'eard the charge; what have you got to say about it?"

"Only this," said Mr. Bingley-Spyker firmly, "that I am not guilty."

"Not guilty?" shouted the President. "Why, you've got the blooming thing on now!"

"Yes," said the prisoner mildly. "But observe."

Somewhat diffidently he removed his collar and held it up to view. "You call this a clean, white, shiny collar? Well, it's not. Fawn-colour, if you like; speckled--yes; but white--clean? No! Believe me," continued Mr. Bingley-Spyker, warming to his subject, "it's years since I've had a genuinely clean collar from my laundry. Mostly they are speckled. And the specks are usually in a conspicuous position; one on each wing is a favourite combination. I grant you these can be removed by a penknife, but imperfectly and with damage to the fabric. When what I may call the main portion of the collar is affected, the speckled area may occasionally be concealed by a careful disposition of one's tie. But not often. The laundress, with diabolical cunning, takes care to place her trade-mark as near the top rim as possible. I have not by any means exhausted the subject," he concluded, "but I think I have said enough to clear myself of this particular charge."

It seemed then to Mr. Bingley-Spyker that all the members of the Tribunal were shouting together. On the whole he gathered that he had

not improved his position. He had been "attacking the proletariat."

"'Ard-working gyurls," panted a woman-member excitedly, "'toilin' and moilin' at wash-tubs and mangles for the likes of 'im! It's a rope collar he wants, Mr. President. Make it a 'anging matter, I should."

"Silence, comrades!" commanded the President. "Let me deal with 'im. Prisoner, the Tribunal finds you guilty of wearing a collar, contrary to the regulations. Collars are the 'all-marks of a slave civilization; they 'ave no place in a free state. The sentence of the Court is that you be committed to a State laundry for ten years, with 'ard labour, principally at mangles. Remove the prisoner."

So they removed Mr. Bingley-Spyker....

He was glad when he woke up to find himself in his own room in his own Government office at Whitehall, with the afternoon sun streaming deliciously through the windows. Involuntarily he felt for his collar.

* * * * *

THE HANWELLIAD.

When I come into my kingdom, which will happen very soon,
I shall ride a milk-white palfrey from the Mountains of the Moon;
He's caparisoned and costly, but he did his bit of work
In a bridle set with brilliants, which he used to beat the Turk.

Then they called their Uncle Edward and they blew without a check,
Keeping time with much precision, down the back of Uncle's neck,
Till he fled to get an iceberg, which he providently found
Half on land and half in water, so he couldn't well be drowned.

Oh, his gait was very silent, very sinuous and slow--
He had learnt it from a waiter whom he met about Soho;
He was much the best tactician of the migratory band
And he earned a decent living as a parcel packed by hand.

"Sergeant James," we said, "how goes it?" but the Sergeant looked askance;
Not for him the mazy phalanx or the military dance;
He could only sit and suffer, with a most portentous frown,
While a crowd of little gipsies turned the whole thing upside down.

Aunt Maria next surprised us: for her massive back was grooved,
And her adenoids gave trouble, so we had them all removed;
If we hadn't done it neatly she'd have gone and joined the dead,
As it is she hops politely while she walks upon her head.

So we'll all fill up a cheque-form on some celebrated Banks--
It's a pity that a cheque-form should be made so much of blanks--
And we'll give the Bank of England all the credit that is due
To her hoards of gold and silver; and I wish they weren't so few.

* * * * *

"Mr. ---- has been actively connected with the last two Victory
Loan drives, in the last one raising \$15,282,000. As an
appreciation of his work the salesmen presented him with a
(fifteen million dollar) diamond ring."--_Canadian Paper_.

We are glad that something was left for the Loan.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Small Boy (who has been promised a visit to the Zoo

to-morrow)_" I HOPE WE SHALL HAVE A BETTER DAY FOR IT THAN NOAH HAD."]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

I found myself as much taken with the title of _The Great Interruption_ (HUTCHINSON) as with any of the dozen short war-stories that Mr. W.B. MAXWELL has collected in the volume. Yet these are admirable of their kind--"muffin-tales" is my own name for them, of just the length to hold your attention for a solitary tea-hour and each with some novelty of idea or distinction in treatment that makes the next page worth turning. The central theme of all is, of course, the same: the War in its effect upon people at the fighting front and elsewhere. Perhaps it was inevitable that Mr. MAXWELL should betray a certain faintly cynical amusement in his dealings with the people of elsewhere. Two of the stories especially--"The Strain of It" and "What Edie Regretted"--are grimly illustrative of some home-keeping types for whom the great tragedy served only as an opportunity for social advancement or a pleasantly-thrilling excuse for futilities. There will be no reader who will not smilingly acknowledge the justice of these sketches; not one of us whose neighbours could not supply an original for them. Fortunately the book has other tales of which the humour is less caustic; probably of intention Mr. MAXWELL'S pictures of war as the soldier knew it, its hardships and compensations, contrast poignantly with the others. On the active-service side my choice would undoubtedly be for the admirably cheery and well-told "Christmas is Christmas" (not exactly about fraternization), as convincing a realisation of the Front at its best as any I remember to have read in more pretentious volumes.

I am bound to admit that for all my appreciation of Mr. J.D. BERESFORD as a literary craftsman I did find _The Jervaise Comedy_ (COLLINS) a bit slow off the mark. Here is a quite considerable volume, exquisitely printed upon delightful paper, all about the events of twenty-four hours, in which, when you come to consider it afterwards, nothing very much happened. The heroine thought about eloping with the chauffeur, and the onlooker, who tells the tale, thought about falling in love with the sister of the same. In both cases thought is subsequently translated into action, but only after the curtains fall. Meanwhile an affair of hesitations, suggestions, moods and (as I hinted above) rather too many words. It is a tribute to Mr. BERESFORD'S art that out of all this we do eventually emerge with some definite idea of the characters and a pleasantly-amused interest in their fate. There is, of course, plenty of distinction in the writing. But I could have wished more or earlier movement. Even the motor-car, whose appearance promised a hint, the merest far-off possibility, of farcical developments, shared in the general lethargy and refused to move from its ditch. In spite, however, of this procrastination I wish it to be understood that the story is in some ways one of unusual charm; it has style, atmosphere and a very sensible dignity. But, lacking the confidence that I fortunately had in my author, I question whether I should have survived to the point at which these qualities became apparent.

* * * * *

An author who in his first novel can deliberately put himself in the way of temptation and as unhesitatingly avoid it must be worth following. And so, if for no other reason, one might look forward to Mr. BERNARD DUFFY'S next book with uncommon interest. His hero comes into the story as a foundling, being deposited in a humble Irish home

and an atmosphere of mystery by some woman unknown; he is supported thereafter by sufficiently suggestive remittances, and he passes through a Bohemian boyhood and a more normal though still intriguing early struggle and fluctuating love-story to eventual success, always with the glamour of conventional romance about him, only to turn out nobody in particular in the end. Congratulations! One was horribly afraid he would be compelled to be at least the acknowledged heir to a title. Quite apart from this, too, Oriel (FISHER UNWIN) is after an unassuming fashion one of the most easily and happily read and, one would say, happily written books that has appeared for many a long day, with humour that is Irish without being too broadly of the brogue, and with people who are distinctive without ever becoming unnatural. The dear old tramping quack-doctor, Oriel's foster-father, in particular might well be praised in language that would sound exaggerated. Mr. DUFFY'S work, depending as it does mainly on a flow of charming and even exquisite side incident, suggests that he is no more than beginning to tap a most extensive reservoir. I greatly hope that this is the case.

* * * * *

I gather that The Son of Tarzan (METHUEN) is the fourth of a Tarzan series by Mr. EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS, who specialises in an exciting brand of hero, half ape, half man. Tarzan pere had been suckled and reared by a proud ape foster-mother, and after many jungle adventures had settled down as Lord Greystoke. This latest instalment of the Tarzan chronicles finds the Greystokes somewhat anxious about the restlessness and unconventional tastes of their schoolboy son, who inherits not only his father's vague jungle longings but all his explicit acquired characteristics, so that when, with the decent old ape, Akut, disguised as his invalid grandmother, he sails away from England and plunges into the wild he promptly becomes the terror of the jungle and bites the jugular veins of hostile man and beast with such a precision of technique that he becomes king of the ape-folk, as his father, Tarzan, had been before him. Plausibility, even within the limits of his bizarre plan, is not Mr. BURROUGHS' strong suit, but exciting incident, ingeniously imagined and staged, with swift movement, undoubtedly is. If the author wouldn't let his favourites off so easily and would give their enemies a better sporting chance, he would more readily sustain the illusion which is of the essence of real enjoyment in this kind of fantasy. But I imagine the normal human boy will find nothing whatever to complain of, and to him I chiefly commend this yarn.

* * * * *

The Tale of Mr. Tubbs (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) is one of those which hover agreeably between low comedy and refined farce, in a world which, being frankly to the last degree improbable, makes no urgent demand for belief. Sometimes indeed (as I have observed before with Mr. J.E. BUCKROSE) the characters themselves are more credible than the way in which they carry on. Thus while Mr. Tubbs, the middle-aged and high-principled champion of distress, is both human and likeable, I was never persuaded that any more real motive than regard for an amusing situation would compel him to saddle himself with the continued society of a squint-eyed maid-servant and her yellow cat, turned adrift through his unfortunate attempts to befriend them. I think I need not tell you all, or even a part of all, that happens to Mr. Tubbs and Belinda and the yellow cat after their arrival as fugitives at the pleasant village of Holmes-Eaton, or do more than hint at the trials of this poor knight-errant, mistaken for a burglar and a libertine, till the hour when (the book being sufficiently full) he is rewarded with the hand of beauty and the prospect of what I will venture to call a Buckroseate future. They were no more than his due for remaining a consistent gentleman amid

the temptations of farce. One word of criticism however; surely Mr. BUCKROSE has made a study of _The Boy's Own Paper_ less intimate than mine if he supposes that a story with such a title as "The Red Robbers of Ravenhill" could ever have gained admittance to those chaste columns.

* * * * *

John Justinian Jellicoe, the hero's father in _The Quest of the Golden Spurs_ (JARROLD), possessed a secretive and peculiar disposition. Not only did he conceal his true nature from his son, but he also left a will with some remarkable clauses which made it necessary for _J.J.J., Junior_, to work and wait for his inheritance; and it is the tale of his search for it that Mr. SHAUN MALORY tells us here. Perhaps I have known treasure-hunts in which I have followed the scent with a more abandoned interest. But we are given some fine hunting, with a surprise at the end of it, and what more can treasure-hunters, or we who read of them, possibly want? The date of this quest is modern, and more than once I found myself thinking that the twentieth century was not the fittest period in which to lay such a plot as this. But I am content to believe that Mr. MALORY knows his business better than I do, and as--like a good huntsman--he has left me with a keen desire to go a-hunting with him again, I beg to thank him for my day's sport.

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[Illustration: "ELLO, DOROFEE WATKINS, I SEE YER HIDING THERE!"]

* * * * *

OUR ERUDITE CONTEMPORARIES.

"After the tremendous battles of the present war, even such actions as Marlborough's victories--Dettingen, Luicelles, Vittoria, Waterloo, and Inkerman--seem insignificant by comparison."--_Daily Paper_.

We don't suppose the shades of GEORGE II., WELLINGTON and RAGLAN will worry much about this annexation of their triumphs, but Lord LAKE'S ghost will be seriously annoyed at the misspelling of Lincelles.

* * * * *

Extract from a letter received from a well-known wholesale tobacconist:--

"We think that if you will apply to either of the three tobacconists, whose names and addresses we append, you will have no difficulty in obtaining an inadequate supply for your requirements."

Judging by our own experiences we are jolly well sure of it.

END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI, VOL. 156, APR 2, 1919

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