

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 156, June 18, 1919

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI

VOL. 156

JUNE 18, 1919

CHARIVARIA.

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Professor THATCHER of New York describes President WILSON as one of the five greatest men in the world. Sir ERIC GEDDES is anxious to know who the other three are.

"The Jazz boom is dying out," says Mr. HERMAN DAREWSKI, "but the next boom will be an Oriental one." There seems nothing to do about it except to bear up.

The fact that for some time no arrest was made for the Plaistow safe robbery seems to indicate that the thieves desired to remain anonymous.

Like soothing balm from the dear old days comes the intimation that Sir THOMAS LIPTON is confident of lifting the America Cup in 1920.

Up to the time of going to Press it had not been officially decided what new uniform will be designed for the R.A.F. to be worn during the Peace Celebrations.

The City of Philadelphia has decreed that sitting-out places in ball-rooms must be adequately lighted. Following upon the unauthorised publication of the Peace Terms, this is a further blow at secret covenants.

Forty thousand children visited the Zoo on Whit-Monday, and one anxious father who had mislaid a couple of infants stayed for a long time in the reptile-house, looking suspiciously at the swollen appearance of the boa constrictor.

"The people of London have never understood that wisdom is not concentrated here," said Sir GEORGE LUNN at the conference of Associated Education Committees. These cheap sneers at Sir FREDERICK BANBURY are beneath his notice.

The Vicar of South Acton suggests that a huge prize should be offered for the invention of a good temperance drink. We regret to say that this is not the first studied insult that has been offered to Government ale.

A new race, who had never seen a white man before, is reported to have been found on Prince Albert Land, and one of them is being taken to Maine, U.S.A. That ought to teach them to be discovered again.

Incidentally so many errors have been made of late in executing people in Russia that in future all orders for executions will be signed by LENIN and will bear the words, "Errors and Omissions Excepted."

The Bolsheviks have their trials just like human beings. One of them last week was mistaken for a bourgeois and shot.

Civil servants engaged by the various Ministries will in future be required to have special qualifications for their work. We have always thought that this would be an advantage.

Senor FERNANDEZ denies the allegation that Mexico is not now at war with any nation. It is supposed to have been spread by jealous rivals.

In the Isle of Sheppey there is not a single person who is drawing the unemployment donation. There seems to be no excuse whatever for this apathy. Full particulars have appeared in the Press.

The embargo on the export of gold from the United States is to be raised almost immediately; meanwhile all shipments will be carefully watched, the stuff being now nearly worth its weight in coal.

County Tyrone has a dog specially trained to trace whiskey. Several people in this country have already offered it a good home, where it will be treated as one of the family.

Asked to describe the cuckoo the other day, a small boy said it was the bird which put its eggs out to be laid by another bird.

At last an obliging taxi-driver has been discovered. His clock registered six shillings and his passenger had only five-and-sixpence, so he offered to reverse his engine in order to wipe off the deficit.

We now hear that the authorities have decided that, if a child should fall into any lake or river and be in peril of drowning, any dog may be allowed to remove its muzzle for the purpose of effecting a rescue.

During the removal of a safe weighing three hundredweight some burglars last week used cushions and mats to deaden the sound. We are greatly pleased to note a tendency to study residents a little. After all it is most irritating to be awakened by noisy burglars in the house.

The No-Treating Order was revoked on June 4th, and it is generally expected that this date will be made an annual, public holiday in Scotland.

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[Illustration: _Small Bagsnatcher_. "RIGHT-O, GUV'NOR. I SEE YER BEEN WOUNDED. I SHAN'T KNOCK 'YER ABAHT."]

* * * * *

There was an impenitent duke
Who would not submit to rebuke--
Not even from SMILLIE,
But called him a wily
Text-mongering Bolshi-Bazouk.

* * * * *

"PERSONAL.

"Major C. ----, late R.A.V.C., who is now disembodied, has returned to ----, and will resume his practice as heretofore."--_Yorkshire Observer_.

Now then, Sir OLIVER LODGE and Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, get busy.

* * * * *

THE BALAAM STAKES.

They were speeding along in the train to the Dispersal Area, and, having moved heaven and earth to achieve demobilisation, were now absolutely miserable on nearing their goal.

"Like to pick your fancy for the Derby, Docker?" asked Jimmy Ferguson, proffering his daily paper with an air of acute cheerfulness.

"Not fer me," said Docker Morgan dismally; "I sworn off after the Balaam Stakes."

"I never 'eard tell of that race," said Jimmy.

"Well, it ain't one of the classic events. It were run over there." Docker jerked a thumb vaguely in the direction of France. "At a 'Concours Hippique,' which is posh fer 'Race Meeting.' Our oficers arranged it just afore our troops left the area, and nacherally fixed it fer the most awkward time fer me an' Nigger Rolf, being just between paydays. After payin' to go on the course we'd only got five francs left fer investment purposes. Nigger wanted to plunge right away, but I stopped 'im.

"'No,' says I; 'we don't know 'orses, but we does know mules, leastways as much as anyone does know mules. Let's scoop on this.'

"'An' I showed 'im the programme, which said:--

"'5.30.--THE BALAAM STAKES. For Government Mules ridden or driven by British N.C.O.'s and men during the War.'

"We walked round the course an' tumbled acrost Ping Brown, got up _ong chevalier_.

"'Aw-aw, Donoghue' says I, 'is it worth while backing you for a cool thou for the Balaam?'

"'Well,' says he, 'I'm riding Perishing Percy. If it was a clog-dancing competition it 'ud be easy money, but bein' a race, back any one, even the starter, sooner than me.'

"Then I met Spruggy Boyce, who useter drive with me in the Umpteenth Field Ambulance.

"'Glory, Docker,' says he, falling on my neck, his top-boots being a bit loose, 'I was looking for you.'

"'I ain't got no money,' says I.

"'But you _can_ 'ave,' he whispers confidential, like they do in the pictures. 'I'm riding Red Liz in the Balaam.'

"'Well,' I replies, 'I'm not denying that Red Liz is a perfect lady; but that's 'er trouble--she's too ladylike to pass anyone.'

"'Docker,' he hisses, 'do you remember driving 'er one day down the Menin Road when Fritz started shelling?'

"'Don't I just! Why, she didn't fetch up till nearly at St. Omer, and the shells lost heart becoss they couldn't catch 'er. But,' I says regretfully, it takes shells to start Red Liz, an' we ain't got none.'

"'No, we 'aven't got shells,' whispers Spruggy, 'but I 've got some crackers; an' if you sprinkle some on the course, it's a cert.'

"'Right-o!' says I. 'Me an' Nigger will see it through, if you'll lend us another five francs to invest.'

"Then I went to _cherchay_ a bookie, but I couldn't find one anywheres.

"'They don't 'ave 'em 'ere,' says Nigger. 'You invests at the sheds over there--the _Paree Mutual_.'

"'That's an insurance company,' answers I. 'I want to put a bit on, not take out a life policy.'

"'That's the place, I tells you,' says Nigger; 'the _Paree Mutual_ or the _Total Liza_. If you don't 'urry you won't get it on before the race starts.'

"So I fights my way through the surging mob to the counter.

"'What odds for Red Liz in the five-thirty?' says I.

"'_Je ne comprong pas_,' says the bet merchant, and before I could say another word the crowd swept me away. I went back to Nigger.

"'Look 'ere, Nigger,' says I indignantly, 'I don't like this way. I likes to speckerlate with a bookie--one with a wooden leg as can't run for preference--who tells you what odds 'e's going to give an' doesn't 'ave to work it out in vulgar fractions afterwards.'

"'You 'eart-breaking turnip!' says Nigger; 'give me the money.'

"'E came back in a few minutes with a bit o' card that looked like a pawn-ticket.

"'That's done,' he says. 'If it wins we just takes this ticket an' 'e pays out on it. An' now let's go an' see 'em come out.'

"There wus ten starters, and four changed their minds at the post. Perishing Percy did some neat an' effective steps that would 'ave gone better with music, an' then stopped dead to listen for the applause. Whips nor spurs weren't allowed in the race, an' peaceful persuasion don't go far with a mule; but about five of 'em pursued the narrow and

straight path that leads to the winning-post. A big, raw-boned animal, named Gentle Maggot, floundering along with one foot in the franc side an' tother in the enclosure, with two other feet that couldn't be simultaneously located, was leading, an' a chestnut named Coughdrop was a good second. Red Liz was flapping her long ears an' coming along very genteelly in the rear. When they was nearly level to us, Nigger whispers to me to get the cracker ready; but me hands were trembling so with excitement that I couldn't light it.

"Give 'em to me, you idjut!" says Nigger, and he plunked one neatly by Red Liz's ribs. She started, and Nigger plants another one behind 'er. Then she put 'er 'ead down and tore along like mad. She passed three, got level with Coughdrop, passed 'er, an' thirty yards from home was neck with Gentle Maggot. Both Jocks were whooping like mad, but just as everyone was swearing it was going to be a dead-heat, I thumped Nigger hard on the back an' yelled out, 'We've won!'

"Spruggy 'ad jerked Red Liz's head down just at the post, an' she 'ad won by an ear!"

"Well, that was good enough, wasn't it?" said Jimmy, as Docker finished his narrative with a mournful downward inflexion of voice.

"It would 'ave been," replied Docker; "only Nigger 'ad put the ticket in 'is mouth while 'e lighted the cracker, an' when I thumped 'im on the back it startled 'im, an'--'_'e swallowed it_."

* * * * *

SONGS OF SIMLA.

IV.--MRS. HAWKSBEES.

Hazards beset her social groove;
Dilemmas rise--she wriggles free;
Landslip or earthquake cannot move
Her imperturbability.

Where 'er she goes her presence thrills,
And in her youthfulness there shines
The everlasting of our hills,
The evergreenness of our pines.

Hung in a poise that knows no law
The kestrels watch above the trees,
But never was kestrel yet that saw
The half that Mrs. Hawksbee sees.

Rosy and smiling mid her furs
Along the Mall her way she trips
With subalterns whose worship stirs
The cynic swiftness of her lips.

When Jakko-wards her rickshaw sweeps,
The monkeys scamper o'er the grass,
And breathlessly each rascal peeps
To see the Queen of mischief pass.

Our Viceroy knows the call of Fate;
Our Generals pass nor question why;
Councils dissolve and Staffs migrate,
But Mrs. Hawksbee shall not die.

J.M.S.

* * * * *

"So far from the wage-earning classes being shown the necessity for a revival in our industry, the Prime Minister talks nonsense about 'removing the sceptre of unemployment.'"--_Morning Paper_.

This will comfort those who were afraid that it was permanently enthroned.

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[Illustration: THE FINISHING TOUCH.]

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[Illustration: _Small Brother (to rejected lover)._ "BUT JOHN, DIDN'T YOU TELL HER YOU'D PLAYED FOR ESSEX?"]

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THE POET.

In a distant country, at a remote epoch, was born of humble parents a poet. "Born" advisedly, since the poet is always born, not made. Even before he could write he composed little poems, which he would recite aloud. The simple pleasures of the poor, among whom he grew up--intoxication, pugilism, funeral merry-makings--furnished the themes of his verse.

Upon reaching man's estate he adopted the calling of night-watchman, an occupation which provided him at once with a livelihood and ample opportunities for meditation. It is to this period that the "Nocturnes" belong.

Now it happened that the poet's work reached the eye of the Prince, who, anxious to encourage genius, appointed him to some minor place about Court and endowed it with a pension. Moreover, to complete his happiness he gave him in marriage a beautiful and accomplished maiden, for whom the poet had long cherished an ardent but hopeless passion. So, as by enchantment, the course of the poet's existence was changed. He no longer waked while others slept. On the contrary he seldom left his couch until a late hour in the morning, and when at last he rose it was often to pass the rest of the day in a Turkish bath.

Yet in spite of altered circumstances he still remained a poet, for the poet is born, not made, or unmade. The tenor of his poetry however was changed. Instead of the rude and vigorous subjects which formerly engaged his lyre he would now employ his art in verse of the daintiest, to celebrate flowers, ladies' eyebrows and similar trivialities.

This style however was not altogether to the taste of the munificent Prince. He had expected something stronger, something more in the grand manner. So he consulted a Wise Man, an adept in the ways of poets, one greatly in demand as a writer of biographical prefaces to poetical reprints.

The Wise Man heard him to the end and replied as follows: "Sire, you have been ill-advised. Who ever heard of a happy poet? Poetry and prosperity are incompatible. Instead of trying to make your _protege_ joyful you should have heaped sorrow upon him. It is well known that sorrow ennobles a man and enlarges his emotional experience. 'Poets learn in suffering what they teach in song' sang one of them who knew.

"However it is not too late. When next he seeks your Presence, indicate to him with that tact which is the birthright of princes that he no

longer enjoys your favour. At the same time stop his pension and allow him to taste once more the life from which your bounty removed him. Could you contrive that he loses the affection of his wife, and that he falls into a consumption, so much the better. In addition, if it please your Highness, I will arrange that all his work is unfavourably noticed in the Press and that calumnies concerning his private life are circulated in the personal paragraph columns."

"Thanks very much," said the Prince, and dismissed the Wise Man with a handsome fee.

A few days later, when the poet presented himself at Court, the monarch rose from his throne, took a short run and kicked him in a vulnerable part. Breathless the poet was borne by lackeys from the royal presence, wherein he never again showed himself. At the next meeting of the Council the Prince annulled his pension by a stroke of the pen. Thus the poet was thrust back into the cold world.

Now began a period for him of intense unhappiness. Having lost his old business connection he could no longer obtain employment in his original vocation. He had therefore no alternative to avert starvation but to follow the precarious calling of a cab-runner. These events, it will be recalled, happened in a bygone age, before the motor superseded the horse. Often, after a weary trail half across the town behind a luggage-laden Cab, only to find that the family kept a man-servant, he would return to the cellar that was now his home, penniless and exhausted.

Long hours spent over the washtub, to eke out their scanty earnings, had rendered his wife--once the "Fay" of the "Love Songs"--both muscular and short-tempered. On such occasions she would lay hands on the poet and thrash him till he wept. But throughout all he remained a poet, for the poet is born not made. Every tear in falling turned to a sonnet. His sorrows were transmuted into poems--poems now suffused with the concentrated emotions of the human race.

Nevertheless each one as it appeared was brutally slated in the organs controlled by the literary adviser to the Crown, and himself belittled and ridiculed. When, as luck would have it, his wife eloped with a wrestler, a flood of melody poured from his soul which, connoisseurs have assured us, ranks high amongst the lyrical masterpieces of the world. These verses will be found amongst the collection known as "Swan Songs," published posthumously, for, not long after, the poet unfortunately developed phthisis and died.

But though he was thus cut-off in early manhood his name will live for ever. It is borne by a square in the boarding-house quarter of the capital and by a cravat which, though, alas, no longer in the fashion, is still worn every Sunday by countless artisans.

His poems too have achieved immortality. Showily bound they make a favourite school prize and have given entertainment to generations of cultured refined persons, who have never paused in their reading to give a thought to the author of their enjoyment, the sagacious Prince to whose action they owe their emotional treat. His royal Highness's reward was his own aesthetic satisfaction. "By Heaven, this is more like," he rapturously exclaimed as he laid down the last volume of the collected works; "this verse has got some stuff in it." And on the occasion of his next birthday he conferred the Companionship of a Household Order upon the poet's publisher.

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"Lord Basil's scratching is said to be due to soreness."--_Daily Sketch_.

It frequently is.

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[Illustration: OUR WEALTHY WORKERS.

Host (to guest with Socialistic opinions). "I hope you'll be careful what you have to say about the moneyed classes. Our maid is very sensitive."]

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BIRD-LORE.

I.--THE CUCKOO.

The Cuckoo is a tell-tale,
A mischief-making bird;
She flies to East, she flies to West
And whispers into every nest
The wicked things she's heard;
She loves to spread her naughty lies;
She laughs about it as she flies:
"Cuckoo," she cries, "cuckoo, cuckoo,
It's true, it's true."

And when the fairies catch her
Her busy wings they dock,
They shut her up for evermore
(She may not go beyond the door)
Inside a German clock;
Inside a wooden clock she cowers
And has to tell the proper hours--
"Cuckoo," she cries, "cuckoo, cuckoo,
It's true, it's true."

R.F.

* * * * *

"THE SILENT SERVICE."

"Horace ----, labourer, was charged with using insulting language. He was said to be training for the Navy and the case was accordingly dismissed."--_Local Paper_.

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"If people would wear the same underclothing all the year round, and with or without the aid of a thermometer against their bedroom window vary their outer garments only, they would never be inconvenienced by changes of temperature."--_Letter in Daily Paper_.

And they would make an appreciable saving in their laundry bills.

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THE MUD LARKS.

"_Gurr finny,"_ says T. Atkins, and there seems no doubt about the well-known War being over at last. Home-keeping folk, who imagine it ended when the whistle blew at the eleventh hour of November 11th, are wide, very wide, of the mark. We have experienced some of its direst horrors since then. Why, at one time (and not so long ago) we were

without the bare necessities of life itself.

I have seen hardy old soldiers; banded like zebras with wound-stripes and field-service chevrons, offering to barter a perfectly good horse for a packet of Ruby Queen cigarettes, or swap a battery of Howitzers for a flagon of Scotch methylated. Then came the Great Downfall. Nabobs, who for years had been purring about back areas in expensive cars, dressed up like movie-kings, were suddenly debussed and dismantled. Brigadiers sorrowfully plucked the batons from off their shoulder-straps and replaced them in their knapsacks. The waste-paper baskets brimmed with red flannelette and gilt edging. Field officers cast down their golden crowns and crept slowly back to their original units as substantive lieutenants.

And now all are gone, some home to England to write for The Times (Appointments Required column) and some to watch the Rhine and see that it gets up to no irregularities, such as running the wrong way or dry. Here, on the fringe of the old battle-grounds, only the merest handful of us remain, deserted by the field armies, apparently forgotten by the management.

It has happened before. Bob, our Camp Commandant, swears that a battalion of his regiment, while garrisoning some ocean isle, got mislaid for years and years, and they would have been there to this day, chatting to the crabs and watering the palm-trees with their tears, if some junior subaltern had not sent his birthday-book to KITCHENER with the request that the Field-Marshal would inscribe some verses therein.

Occasionally the boom of explosions coming from the devastated areas tells us that our brave allies the Chinese are still on deck, salvaging ammunition after their own unique fashion of rapping shells smartly over the nose-caps with sledge-hammers to test whether they be really duds or no.

Although a very courageous man, I do not linger in their whereabouts unless I have to. I don't follow their line of thought. One of them unearthed a MILLS bomb the other day. It gave off blue smoke and fizzed prettily. When last seen he was holding it to the ear of a chum, who was smiling entrancedly, as a child smiles at the croon of a conch-shell.

By the way, whilst we are on the subject, who is this MILLS? The illustrated papers have shown us THE MAN WHO WON THE WAR, the thousand-and-one sole and only inventors of Tinribs the Tank; their prattle-pages are crammed daily with portraits of war-worn flag-sellers, heroic O.B.E.'s, and so on; but what of our other benefactors, the names of whom are far more familiar to the average Atkins than are those of the Twelve Apostles or his own Generals? I confess, to a great desire to behold the features of Mr. MILLS, the bombster (I picture him a benevolent-looking old gentleman with a flowing white beard), Mr. STOKES of the gun, Mrs. AYRTON of the gas-fan, and Messrs. ARMSTRONG and NISSEN, the hutters. Can no enterprising picture-paper supply the want?

But to return to ourselves. With the exception of the faithful Celestial, the land is empty of human interest. The roads that once rumbled unceasingly with wheels and swarmed with merry men now run bare under a sad sky. The deepway side drains, in which our lorries used to play at submarines, now harbour nothing more exciting than tadpoles. We are hard-pressed to find mischief for our idle hands to do.

Sherlock the Sleuth keeps himself in fair fettle by prowling round the countryside and trying to restrain the aborigines from pinching what little British material they have not already pinched. Yesterday he came upon a fatigue party of Gauls staggering down a by-way under the shell of an Armstrong hut. He whooped and gave chase. The Gauls, sighting the A.P.M. brassard, promptly dumped the hut and dived through a wire fence.

Sherlock hitched his horse to a post and followed afoot, snorting fire and brimstone. They led him at a smart trot over four acres of boggy plough, through a brambly plantation, two prickly hedges and a richly-perfumed drain and went to ground inextricably in some mine buildings. He returned, blown, battered and baffled, to the starting-point, to find that some third party had in the meantime removed the Armstrong hut--also his horse.

Ronald, our only remaining Red Hat, saves his soul from boredom by keeping all the H.Q. departments open and conducting, on his own, a brisk correspondence between them. As there are about thirty of these and he conducts them all himself it will be understood that this entails a certain amount of movement on his part.

Bob, the Camp Commandant, spends his time trying to square his returns and interviewing Violet. Violet is a middle-aged gentleman who came to us from some Labour unit and refuses to leave. He has an enormous head, a walrus moustache, a hairy nose, and feet which flap as they walk. His metier is to keep the place tidy and the incinerator fires burning. He prowls about at night, accompanied by a large ginger tom-cat, harpooning loose scraps of paper. Any dust he meets he deals with on the blotting-paper principle, by rolling in it and absorbing it. When his clothes are so stiff with dirt that they will stand up without any inside assistance from Violet, they are sawn off him and consigned to the incinerator and he is given a new suit. Whenever his back hair has grown so long that it is liable to impede his movements, a posse of grooms is despatched to his lair to rope, throw and shear him with horse-clippers. Last time they did it they swear they lost the instrument twice and that two bats and an owl flew out of his tresses.

He is allowed out only at night, because the German prisoners laugh at him, which is bad for his moral and good for theirs. He lives, he and his cat, deep in the chateau woods in a tiny semi-subterranean cabin he has constructed of odds and ends of tin and tar-paper. He was supposed to have been demobilised ages ago, but we cannot get him off the premises.

Bob goes and interviews him on the subject about three times a day--all to no avail. "'Tain't a bit o' use you comin' an' flappin' them there paperses at me, Mister" (all officers, irrespective of rank, are "Mister" to Violet), says he to Bob; "you know very well I aren't no scholard an' I won't sign nothin' I can't read, even if I could sign, which I can't, bein' no scholard; so there's the end of it, as I've told you scores of times before, with all due respect, of course, as the sayin' is."

He doesn't want to go home and he won't go home, he says. His wife beats him "somethink crool," he says; in fact he never knew what real peace meant until war broke out. Furthermore she has been putting on a lot of muscle of late and demobilisation means certain death. He is going to stay where he is. What with the ginger cat's poaching proclivities and the bully beef he has buried in the plantation he can hold out almost indefinitely, he says; so there is no cause for us to be anxious on his behalf. When we come back for the next war we shall find him on the old stand, ready to resume business, he says, and for his part the next war can't break out any too soon.

The remainder of Bob's time, as I said before, is occupied in trying to square his establishment returns. Some time ago he discovered that he was a water-cart short. This was serious, very. A water-cart is a large and expensive item, and as far as he could see it would end in his having to make good the loss out of his own pocket, which at that moment contained ten centimes and a corkscrew.

However he was determined he would see what a little applied cunning

would do first. He locked himself into his office and took thought. After an hour's violent mental disturbance he penned a letter to the authorities, saying that his establishment was complete in all details, with the exception of one water-bottle. As, however, he had come by several superfluous knives, spoons and forks considerably exceeding the water-bottle in value, might they be taken in exchange and the account squared? The Government would be greatly the gainer thereby.

Four days later he was notified that the transaction was approved. After waiting till he was reasonably certain that the correspondence was safely lost, burnt or consigned to impenetrable archives, he sent the following wire:--

"Reference my R.L.217, dated April 1st, for 'bottle' read 'cart.'"

The reply came back, "Noted."

PATLANDER.

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[Illustration: ANOTHER TUBE CRUSH.]

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[Illus: _Instructress_. "ALL YOU WANT NOW IS A LITTLE POLISHING."]

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OUR WONDERFUL WORLD.

"Three Geese and Gander, Four Chicks and Drake; all laying."--
Bolton Evening News

* * * * *

"Mr. Marston, the President [of the Policemen's Union], stated that the time for action will arrive after the tripe alliance at Southport on June 24."----_Provincial Paper_

An offal prospect.

* * * * *

"The pages were in the khaki uniform of the Cadet Corps of the 1st-5th crepe de chine, trimmed with cream lace and blue crepe de chine, trimmed with cream lace and blue ribbons, and carried directoire silver-knobbed sticks, tied with blue ribbon and pink roses, gifts of the bridegroom."--_Mid-Devon Times_.

The 1st-5th have always been famous for their dressiness.

* * * * *

THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS; OR, THE FIGHT AGAINST REACTION.

MY DEAR KNOTT,--It has occurred to me that since the closing of our little V.A.D. depot there is a good deal of energy in Filby without a suitable outlet, and I am writing to you on the matter as I feel sure you will have some helpful suggestion to make.

Of course a great deal of this energy might be profitably expended on the ever-increasing spiritual needs of the parish, but I feel that if some society of a secular character were got up just now it would be helpful, especially to the female portion of our community.

Miss Timlin has suggested a Philatelic Society, and I shall be pleased to hear your views on her proposal.

Believe me,

Yours ever sincerely,

THEODORE BLAND.

DEAR VICAR,--I have your letter and quite agree as to the advisability of starting some society for working off the latent energy which has accumulated since the demise of the War and the consequent closing down of War activities. I do not however fancy Philately as a safety-valve. I suppose one could stand up to stick stamps in a book, and would get a certain amount of physical exercise in going about swapping duds and duplicates, but generally speaking it is a sedentary occupation and, to my mind, a selfish one.

As you ask for a suggestion from me, I propose an Archaeological Society. The pursuit of Archaeology has this advantage: it connotes digging, an aptitude for which has been distinctly fostered here by the allotment habit.

As for our objective, without going further than Filby there is the alleged tunnel leading from the ruins of the nunnery to no one knows where. It would be interesting to know whether the thirteenth-century Lord of Filby had a private way (on the score of feudalities) to the Ursuline convent, or whether the good nuns had a back-way to the Old Swan for the conveyance of mead, sack and such other strong waters as the times and licensing laws afforded. But perhaps the tunnel, like most things, is controlled, and a mandamus (which, I take it, is a kind of ecclesiastical coupon) would be required before we could touch it.

Of course there are a mound and the foundations of an old wall in my paddock which the Society are welcome to tackle. Don't you think they would do to begin on?

Yours sincerely,

ARCHIBALD C. KNOTT.

MY DEAR KNOTT,--Many thanks for your valuable help. I think you may expect quite a good turn up of members on Tuesday. I have always thought that the tumulus in your field might yield some interesting archaeological find. The land and a former mansion were part of the Convent demesne, as you probably know. I am sorry that I shall not be present as I have to attend the Bishop's Conference at Bray Chester, which is expected to last a week or two.

Wishing you all success and with kind regards to yourself and Mrs. Knott,

I am,

Yours ever sincerely,

THEODORE BLAND.

MY DEAR VICAR,--Thanks for yours. I am very sorry you have been

called away at such a time.

The first meeting was so successful that a second was fixed for Wednesday. But enthusiasm seemed to flag on Wednesday evening, as nothing of interest had been discovered.

A few die-hards agreed to put in some hours' digging on Thursday, when Colonel Stacey and Mrs. Cottingham each dug up a Roman bronze coin (both denarii, I fancy) from the mound. This of course acted as a great stimulant, and we had a bumper meeting on Friday. Stacey, I understand, intends to read a paper, at the first indoor meeting of the society, on the Roman occupation of Filby-in-the-Wold. The mound is now levelled, and the wall foundations have all been dug up and carted away; but the latter yielded nothing of interest.

Hoping that the Conference is going as you would wish,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

ARCHIBALD C. KNOTT.

P.S.--Couldn't you touch up the Bishop on the subject of the Convent tube?

DEAR VICAR,--We have had an archaeological strike. The mound is levelled, the wall foundations have disappeared, and so have the diggers. I am afraid the Society are now awaiting your return to give them a lead. My grounds, alas, have produced nothing beyond the two denarii.

Yours sincerely,

ARCHIBALD C. KNOTT.

[Extract.]

DEAR BOY,--Your mother and I are delighted that you will be demobbed in about a week from now.... By the way you will be glad to hear that we can start making that second tennis-court in the paddock as soon as you get back. I have had the remains of what was known as Knott's Folly in your great-grandfather's day removed, at a total cost of two denarii (which had been lying in a drawer in my dressing-room for years); not so bad, considering the present cost of labour. But of this more anon.

Your affectionate

FATHER.

* * * * *

A CRICKET BARGAIN.

(Before the match.)

We meet as foes, my James, this summer weather,
But sterner summers saw us twain in league;
Shoulder to shoulder have we stood together
On Q.M.S. fatigue.

So, when (ninth wicket down) to-day I enter

Upon my tenure of the crease and gaze
Nervously at you, having taken centre,
Remember bygone days.

Abate your skill, so shall my nerves grow firmer,
Till driving seems the easiest of jobs,
And passers-by shall pause and haply murmur,
"Golly, can that be HOBBS?"

Do this for me, and you'll discover later
How fame awaits the generous and good;
A few long hops shall win a glory greater
Than ever break-back could.

If for a ball or two you let me smite you,
Running amok with dashing bat and bold,
My Muse shall have instructions to requite you
Even an hundredfold.

You shall she hymn in strains that do not falter,
Proclaim of you for all who run to read:--
"He sacrificed his length on friendship's altar;
He was a pal indeed."

* * * * *

FOR THE CHILDREN.

At this season, when their own children are already counting the days that lie between them and their holidays, Mr. Punch appeals to his kind readers not to forget the greater needs of the children in our elementary schools. The cost of sending them away to the sea or countryside for fresh air and change of scene is constantly increasing and the Children's Country Holidays Fund cannot keep up its good work without generous help. There can be no better way of making a Peace-offering than by helping to build up the health and strength of the new generation. Mr. Punch begs that liberal gifts may be sent to the Secretary of the Fund at 18, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.2.

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SCENES FROM OUR GREAT FILM: "AUDACITY DOWN THE AGES."

[Illustration: MYTHICAL ENGINEER MAKING A SUGGESTION TO SISYPHUS.]

[Illustration: GLADIATOR CALLING FOR MORE AND LARGER LIONS.]

[Illustration: ANCIENT BRITON DEFYING HIS CHIEF, AND REFUSING TO WOAD.]

[Illustration: ROMAN COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER TRYING TO SELL SAFETY RAZORS TO THE DRUIDS.]

[Illustration: KNIGHT, ABOUT TO UNDERGO THE "TRIAL BY COMBAT," OFFERING TO BACK HIMSELF "TO WIN OR A PLACE."]

[Illustration: AMBIDEXTROUS FLOWER-GIRL SELLING RED AND WHITE FAVOURS DURING THE WARS OF THE ROSES.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Milliner_. "THAT MODEL IS FIFTEEN GUINEAS, MODOM."

Customer. "HOW MUCH WOULD IT BE IF THE FEATHER WERE REMOVED?"

Milliner. "FIFTEEN-AND-A-HALF GUINEAS, MODOM. YOU SEE, LABOUR IS SO

DEAR."]

* * * * *

ON THE HIGH C.'S.

Doubtless you have often heard
Of the thrush, that gladsome bird,
Who will warble any day,
Be it cold or wet or gray.
I suppose her mother taught her
That the worms are fond of water,
So that neither sleet nor slush
Bridles that eupeptic thrush.

Such a one was Johnny Carr
(Sub-Lieutenant R.N.R.).
I have never caught him yet
Out of sorts when it was wet;
He will hum when tempests howl,
Whistle midst the thunder's growl,
And I've seen him sing for joy,
Clinging to a punctured buoy,
While his gallant T.B.D.
Sank beside him in the sea.

No one knows exactly when or
Why he came to call it tenor,
But the fact remains he sang
With a subtle nasal twang
Just because he liked to do so
(He was Carr, but not CARUSO),
And with such a force of lung
That, whatever tune he sung,
It was like a projectile
With a range of twenty mile.

'Twas the thirty-first of May.
On that memorable day,
Flitting like a restless ghost
Somewhere off the Danish coast,
His destroyer, all agog,
Butted through the clinging fog,
When for just a space the gray
Mists of morning rolled away.
Ah! but how their pulses beat
When they saw the High Seas Fleet
Nosing noiseless as a dream
Barely half-a-mile abeam;
Then the filmy mists anew
Blotted everything from view.
John, astounded at the sight,
Sang aloud with all his might.

But the German, seeing nought,
Only hearing what he thought
Must be twelve-inch guns at least
Firing at him from the East,
Felt that it was time to hook it,
Saw his chance and boldly took it.

Northward fast he sailed once more
Till he heard the Lion roar,
And before he could retreat he
Found himself engaged with BEATTY,

Who, as you already know,
Led him on to JELLICOE.
There I leave him, for, you see,
All the rest is history.

All the rest? Well, not quite all;
For perhaps you may recall
How, when night was falling fast,
A reverberating blast
Far away was dimly heard
Which, the sailormen averred,
Was the Germans who had strayed
In amongst the mines we laid.

They were wrong. The fighting over,
Johnny's ship returned to Dover,
And the sound they heard afar
Was the jocund voice of Carr
Singing fit to burst his torso,
Like the song-thrush (only more so).

* * * * *

"ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS FUND.--At the Savoy Hotel, on June 11, at
8 p.m. Service dress--khaki with trousers--or evening dress, with
miniatures."--_Times._

The price of clothes was bound to lead to something of this sort.

* * * * *

From an article on "The Representative Man":--

"Gladstone and John Bright alike came out of Lancashire. How natural
to imagine either of those startling opposites proclaiming with
entire conviction, that when he sampled himself he found himself to
be a 'Typical Englishman.' The diversity of types however does not
help us much."--_Indian Paper._

True, we find it most confusing.

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[Illustration: IN THE SUBSCRIPTION LISTS.

SAINT GEORGE COLLECTS FOR MERRIE ENGLAND.]

* * * * *

THE PUFF UNIVERSAL.

["A Father," writing in _The Times_ of June 10th, protests
vigorously against the cult of "powdered noses."]

When the deadly sky-rover
Came frequently over
And London was darkened at night,
Girls powdered their noses
(Or so one supposes)
As lamp-posts were painted with white;
But now when full moons
Bring no bombs or maroons,
I ask is it proper or right?

Amanda's complexion
Will challenge inspection--
 'Tis healthy and rosy and fine;
But she says that if powder
Were never allowed her
 Her nose would infallibly shine.
Did Victorian Flossie
Or Gladys, when glossy
 Of nose, to such methods incline?
No, they patiently scrubbed it,
Rough-towelled and rubbed it
 Until it was brought into line.

We have long been acquainted
With ladies who painted
 To mimic a juvenile mien;
But I'd ban _sans_ compassion
The powdering fashion
 When practised by sweet seventeen;
And I wish that wise mothers
And sensible brothers
 Would let their abhorrence be seen.

I'm only "a father,"
Old-fashioned and rather
 Deficient in stiffness of spine,
So, feeling unequal
To facing the sequel,
 My name I'm unwilling to sign;
For the call for more powder
Grows stronger and louder
 From every daughter of mine,
And any restriction
Of puffs or nose-friction
 Would end in a general "shine."

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Vicar_. "I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT YOUR HUSBAND IS IN GAOL AGAIN, MRS. STIBBS. STEALING A WATCH, EH?"

Mrs. Stibbs. "YES, SIR. BUT 'TAIN'T 'IS FAULT THIS TIME. THE MAGISTRATE SAID 'ISSELF THAT JOE DIDN'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'MEUM AND TOOUM,' AN' IN 'IS IGNORANCE 'E'D DONE A BIT O' 'TOOUMING.'"]

* * * * *

OUR MOVIE-MINISTERS.

(_Deductions by a Political Expert.)_

The admirable plan of transplanting Ministers admittedly doing excellent work in their departments just as they are settling down in the saddle, though generally commended by supporters of the Government, is meeting with a certain amount of criticism. Appointments which show "imagination" are, it is urged, shorn of their possibilities when the holders are moved on just when they are beginning to provide the public with sensation.

Speculations are rife as to the appointment of a new Minister of Education, and the best-informed opinion inclines to the view that Sir ERIC GEDDES, who has occupied his present position for quite a number of weeks, will succeed Mr. FISHER. Some experts however hold that the PREMIER has a magnificent opportunity for displaying his imagination by the choice of Mr. WELLS, who is burning to disprove the recent

astounding allegation of General WILSON that the War could not have been won without the Universities. The chief objection to Mr. WELLS, however, is that he cannot be transferred, because he is not already in office; and this drawback also operates in the case of Mr. SMILLIE and Mr. BOTTOMLEY.

In this context it is to be noted that Lord READING (so at least we understand from the peculiarly plaintive smile which he wears in recent photographs) is much disappointed that the claims of Mr. T.P. O'CONNOR to the post of Ambassador at Washington have so far failed of due recognition. American antagonism over the Irish Question has not been conciliated by this strange oversight.

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THINGS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORDED DIFFERENTLY.

From the official organ of the Surplus Government Property Disposal Board:

"Sales by Auction of Surplus Horses by arrangement with the Food Production Department of the Board of Agriculture."

* * * * *

"A grand Mahogany Bedstead, 9-1/2' x 8', with posts and testers complete, meant for Rajas and Zemindars. Can also accommodate 4 middle-class people comfortably. Going for Rs. 500."--_Advt. in Indian Paper_.

Mr. KENNEDY JONES will kindly call the attention of the Middle Classes Union to this proposed congestion.

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[Illustration: PLAYING THE 18TH--LAST ROUND OF THE DAY.

"YOU FOOL, CADDIE! HOW CAN I PLAY FROM THAT LIE WITH A WOODEN CLUB?"

"SORRY, SIR. I'VE JUST CLEANED THE IRONS.]"

* * * * *

THE ROOFS OF THE MIGHTY.

At the meeting held recently in the hall of the Worshipful Company of Hatters in Tile Street, the Chair was taken jointly (as in the old monarchical days at Brentford) by the Bishop of LINCOLN and Mr. ARNOLD BENNETT, and among the company were the SPEAKER, Lord RIBBLESDALE, Sir SQUIRE BANCROFT, Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL and Mr. EUGENE CORRI.

The two Chairmen, speaking almost in unison, stated that the meeting had been convened in order that the views of the enlightened might be gathered regarding the proposed revival of the tall hat or topper. A recrudescence of this form of covering for the hair (or otherwise) was threatened under the name of the Victory Derby, and a paragraph in _The Times_ announced that "so remarkable has been the revival in the silk-hat trade that old men who had gone into retirement in the Denton and Stockport districts are being asked to come back and give what productive energy they possess." What the meeting desired to ascertain was the views as to this revival that were held by those empowered to offer opinions.

Lord RIBBLESDALE said that there was no doubt that a tall hat was the most becoming headgear for a gentleman. But a certain regard for

idiosyncracies was important. No gentleman should take without scrutiny what the hatter offered. Hats were individual things, and as the character changed and developed so should the hat. The hat that suited one at forty might be a sad anachronism at fifty. He himself had endeavoured not only to make his life correspond to his hats, but his hats correspond to his life. (Loud applause.) As the Master of the Buck-hounds he wore, as any visitor to the National Gallery at the present moment might see, at the head of the staircase on the left, a tall hat that was slightly lower than that which he wore to-day, now that he had relinquished that responsible and romantic post. He urged his hearers to encourage the silk hat revival.

Sir SQUIRE BANCROFT concurred with the illustrious nobleman who had just spoken. The choice of a hat should be the subject of the most earnest thought, even of prayer. (Cheers.) Not only the shape but the colour. There were hats that were black and hats that were white. (Shouts of "Hurrah!") There were even white hats with black trimming. (Sensation.) The older he grew the more convinced he was that an Englishman's hat was his castle.

Miss DAISY ASHFORD, author of *The Young Visitors*, said that she was all in favour of the top hat. No one who had read her famous novel could doubt that. In the society of *Mr. Salteena* and his friends to wear a tall hat was always the ideal.

Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL said that none of the speakers had mentioned the most essential desideratum of a hat, and that was that it should be too small. Whether it began by being too small, or became in time too small, depended upon the wearer; but there was something smug and cowardly about a hat that fitted. It suggested failure.

Mr. H.B. IRVING said that he was an impenitent advocate of the soft or Southern hat. It was the duty of a hat to afford not only covering for the head but shelter for the eyes, and no topper did this. A hat should have a flexible brim, which neither topper nor bowler possessed. It was absurd to wear a hat which could not sustain damage without showing it. Let there be a revival in the silk-hat industry by all means, but there must be no imposition of any one kind of hat on the public. The individual must be allowed perfect freedom to wear what he liked. (Hear, hear!) He personally hoped never to be seen either in a pith helmet or a Tam-o'-shanter, but if the whim took him to wear either--or indeed both--he claimed the right to do so. (Loud cheers.) Meanwhile he should adhere to his soft hat.

Mr. MASKELYNE, who followed, urged upon the company the desirability of the silk-hat mode. If tall hats, he said, went out of fashion, what would become of conjurers? Rabbits could be satisfactorily extracted only from tall hats. (Prolonged cheering.) An omelette made in a sombrero was unthinkable. (Renewed cheering.)

Mr. ARNOLD BENNETT said that all this talk about toppers was pernicious nonsense. The topper had become obsolete and should not be disinterred. The only honest form of hat for an honest straightforward man was a white bowler. A white bowler and a blue serge suit made as stylish and effective a garb as anyone needed. Soft hats no doubt were comfortable, but they were also slovenly. Moreover they were not practical. At a horse sale, for example, you could not rattle them. As for the plea that tall hats were of value to conjurers, he had no use for such arguments. Conjurers dealt in illusion and all illusion was retrograde. (Oh! Oh!).

The Bishop of LINCOLN said that he felt bound to dissociate himself from his partner's remarks. He himself looked upon a silk hat as an essential. (A voice, "With rigging?") Yes, Sir, with rigging. But that was not why he advocated it. He advocated it because it was the proper coping-stone of a gentleman.

The SPEAKER, after eulogising the white tall hat, added that although he was glad that they had Sir SQUIRE BANCROFT with them (Hear, hear) he was bound to remark that not infrequently of late he had seen that illustrious hystion wearing in the streets of London a cloth cap more suitable to the golf-links or the Highlands. For the devotee of the white hat of a blameless life thus to descend gave him pain. So distinguished an edifice as Sir SQUIRE, he contended, should not trifle with its top-storey. (Cheers.)

Sir SQUIRE BANCROFT, rising again, expressed regret that his cloth cap should have caused any distress, He wore it, he was bound to admit, for convenience (Oh!) and comfort (Sensation). But he would not offend again. (Loud cheers.)

At this point the meeting adjourned, but doubtless, taking a hint from the Coal inquiry, it will often be resumed during the coming year.

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[Illustration: JONES, WHO MAKES A POINT OF PADLOCKING HIS NEW CAR BY THE FRONT WHEEL TO A LAMP-POST, REALISES THE JUSTICE OF THE MAKERS' CLAIM THAT THE SPARE WHEEL WITH WHICH IT IS FITTED "CAN BE FIXED BY ANYONE IN TWO MINUTES."]

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"I Zingari will play a Household Cavalry team at Windsor on Saturday, June 21st. This was in years gone by an annual fixture, finishing up Ascot week. King Edward VI., when Prince of Wales, used to attend the match and go on to Virginia Water afterwards."--_Local Paper._

Apart from the interest this paragraph will excite in the historians of the Army, the Turf, and the Cricket-field, it shows that HENRY VIII. must have been a more indulgent father than is generally suspected.

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AT THE PLAY.

"L'AIGLON."

In a note given away with the programme Mr. LOUIS N. PARKER, describes _L'Aiglon_ as "the Hamlet of the nineteenth century." Certainly they had in common the habits of introspection, and indecision; but the egoism of _Hamlet_ was at least tempered by a knowledge of the world; he was a student; he had travelled and seen men and things outside the bounds of Elsinore; and he was capable of throwing off some quotable generalities out of his stock of philosophy. On the other hand the _Eaglet_, mewd in his Austrian cage, knew nothing of life at large, and had small chance of learning anything beyond the bowdlerised history which his tutors and warders thought good to have him stuffed with.

Somehow he had contrived surreptitiously to pick up the dates and leading facts of his father's campaigns (making a speciality of the Battle of Wagram), but the vague ambitions which they inspired only helped his little mind to prey upon itself. It was not "the times" (as with _Hamlet_) but his own nose that he found to be "out of joint."

The appeal of _Hamlet_ is to the intelligence; that of _L'Aiglon_, so obviously pathetic in his own eyes, is rather to the heart. Indeed the intelligence of the audience is here often in trouble; for a certain acquaintance with history is required and both actors and stage-management offer little aid to the average ignorance. While

the more obvious and melodramatic situations--such as the death of _L'Aiglon_ or the business of the sentry--are treated at great leisure, it is assumed that all historical allusions, however necessary to an understanding of the situation, will be as tedious to the audience as to the players, and they are rushed through--as in the mirror scene---at a pace that baffles our halting pursuit.

If any male character lends itself to interpretation by a woman, it is such a character as _L'Aiglon_, who, for all his spasms of martial ardour, was half feminine. And to this side of him, and not this side alone, Miss MARIE LOEHR did justice in a performance of which her high spirit had not underrated the difficulties. But it is a long and exigent part, and there were times in the play when her physical strength was overtaxed. It would have taken the voice of a strongish _basso_ to drown the roar of a whole battlefield of ghostly warriors, with a military band thrown in.

I am not sure that Miss LOEHR quite realised for us the _Duke of Reichstadt's_ personality. I should not care to have the task myself, for a good many complicated elements were mixed in his nature. As Mr. Louis PARKER reminds you, a French father supplied him with ambition and love of action, an Austrian grandfather with hesitancy, and Spanish ancestors with fatalism, a very trying combination for even the original _Eaglet_ to handle--a mere boy who had never so much as heard of President WILSON'S League of Nation's. So it was excusable if Miss LOEHR failed to make us completely realise a personality which was almost certainly too much for the comprehension of its actual owner.

But she was always an intriguing figure. Perhaps, indeed--for the apparel does not always proclaim the man, and the _Eaglet_ was no _Hamlet_ in the matter of his clothes--her rather striking costumes were a source of too much distraction.

[Illustration: THE LITTLE EAGLE TRIES TO FLY.

Miss MARIE LOEHR.]

In a very large cast, whose identities were here and there a little shadowy, the interest was so distributed that nobody except Miss LOEHR had very much chance. But Mr. FISHER WHITE made a touching picture of the weak old Austrian Emperor, torn between love of his grandchild and fear of _Metternich_. _Metternich_ himself, in the person of Mr. HENRY VIBART, seemed hardly sinister, enough for the part he had to play in keeping the _Eaglet_ under the talons of the "two-headed fowl." But it is perhaps difficult to look really sinister in the full official uniform of a Chancellor.

Mr. LYN HARDING, as _Flambeau_, veteran of NAPOLEON'S Army, introduced a faint suggestion of badly-needed humour, and relieved the general atmosphere of Court artificiality by a touch of nature which almost reconciled us to the improbable burst of eloquence that ROSTAND, with his reckless prodigality, assigned to this rough soldier.

Miss LETTICE FAIRFAX gave a pleasant air of irresponsibility to the shallow _Maria Louisa_, and made her bear very lightly her cross of widowhood (with bar). The briefest possible vision of Miss BETTY FAIRE as _Fanny Elssler_ made me want to see much more of her; but Mr. Louis PARKER had been Napoleonically ruthless with the text. His translation sounded well, though the delivery of it sometimes left me doubtful as to what was prose and what was verse. As for his production of the play, it showed the old skill of a Past-Master of Pageantry.

Altogether Miss MARIE LOEHR has been justified of her courage. In a happy little speech from which we learnt that every one of the voices (off) in the Wagram scene was a demobilised voice from the fighting fronts, she

told us that her revival of L'Aiglon was intended as a tribute to Art after all these years of War. We were not, I think, meant to take this as a reflection upon the part played by the British Theatre in sustaining the nation's soul during the War. Anyhow, I for one shall read into her words just a brave promise--not, I hope, too sanguine--of what we may expect from the new birth of the Arts of Peace.

O.S.

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ANOTHER PENDING INDEMNITY.

It has been said that the man who for his daily shave resorts habitually to a barber has already become a subject for a drastic moral operation. That may or may not be so, but having chambers in Ryder Street and Alphonse residing within the precincts of St. James's, I would rather have been carved morally into mincemeat than have robbed such an artist of his self-expression.

That is how I felt about it in 1914 and in many preceding years, during which, under the magic spell of Alphonse, the razor fell upon my cheek like thistledown. Even to be lathered by him was an alluring form of hypnosis. Alphonse was a Hokusai of barbers, but he was also a true son of France; and there were Alsace and Lorraine and the arrogance of 1870 still to be accounted for. So Alphonse went, and in his place reigned Ferdinand.

Ferdinand, what there was of him, was a good fellow. He was an old fire-eater. He had lost a leg in Algeria and an eye somewhere else, and he could not comprehend why such trivial matters should disqualify a man for killing pigs. He was, as I have said, a good fellow, but his methods of using a razor were mediaeval. However we were not long for one another, and, as the R.N.V.R. tolerate such things, I grew a beard, an equable, regulation torpedo beard.

Omitting several super-emotional lifetimes, let us speak of a certain day not very remote when I stood, bereft of all sea power, at the top of St. James's Street, considering what was the very best worst thing to do to a body which was bored with the reaction that follows four years' strife upon the narrow seas. I fingered my beard meditatively. Yes, after all there was Alphonse. I had almost forgotten him. I turned my steps towards his exclusive retreat. I entered in, and behold! there as of yore, clothed in his samite raiment, stood the incomparable Alphonse. He had returned. Yet in appearance he was not quite the Alphonse of old. There was something less resilient about him, something more enduring had crept into his personality; his elasticity had somehow turned to bronze. He was slightly grey. Nevertheless he greeted me with a Gallic warmth that gave refreshment to my jaded spirit.

"But M'sieu would be shaved.... Yes, a beard was permissible in time of War, but in Peace--pouf! it was barbaric."

I allowed myself to be robed and tucked comfortably into the chair. Alphonse busied himself with the instruments of his profession.

"Five years ago it was another world, M'sieu," he said, churning a wooden bowl to mountains of lather. "It is never again the same. The Marne ... Verdun ... Soissons. If M'sieu permits I would like to tell him of those years."

I nodded and he advanced upon me with the brush. He spoke of the retreat to Paris and the strategy of JOFFRE which so nearly overthrew three Prussian armies. He brandished his razor and swept the Boches back over the Marne, he swept them through Senlis, he swept them across the Aisne.

His intensity was inspiring. The smouldering fires of bygone battles leapt into his eyes. But it was not the mesmeric shave of 1914. He apologised humbly and applied small pieces of plaster.

The next morning we fought a swaying battle in front of Rheims, and for some few following mornings we skirmished about painlessly in the same vicinity. Then came a sanguinary excursion to Flanders which nearly put me into blue overalls.

A few weeks of trench warfare gave me some respite and allowed my worst wounds to heal.

Then came the epic of Verdun. At least it was to have come, but at the last moment I lost my nerve.

To hear the story of that heroic defence from the lips of one who was concerned so intimately with it is one of my greatest desires. But I am a coward. I cannot face the extravaganza that Alphonse would improvise, neither dare I approach him for a mere haircut and so confess to having deserted his other form of artistry.

Yesterday I purchased a safety-razor and a packet of new blades.

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[Illustration: _Mary (stricken with remorse as minnow approaches her hook). _ "OH! OH! OH! I DON'T WANT TO CATCH IT; ITS MUMMY WOULD MISS IT SO."]

* * * *

A LITTLE SUPPER WITH THE BORGIAS.

"FRUIT SALAD.

"Make some syrup by boiling three-quarters of a pint of water, 1/2 lb. of castor sugar, and the juice from a tinned pineapple. Lay the pineapple in a glass bowl cut in small slices."--_Weekly Paper_.

* * * *

ART IN THE ARCTIC.

To know that you can't draw and to be told so by your friends are two very different things. Honnell can't draw, but hates his inseparable Swan to tell him so. Honnell's sketches have hitherto been criticised only by people who also wanted their drawing flattered. Swan learned bluntness on the Yukon. So they are an odd pair to be chumming now in the Arctic circle. They are so friendly that they will tramp together for half a day and exchange scarcely so much as a grunt of conversation.

Swan, of course, feels quite at home in North Russia and smiles at the people who call it cold and its distances big. Honnell has lived in Edinburgh, so doesn't notice the temperature, though he misses the tramway system. Both can say about six words--the same--in Russian, and both have bought a pair of moccasins--Swan because he likes them, and Honnell because he would like to.

Recently they set off together from Kola on the Murman Coast to try to find a village from which jolly little Laplanders and Laplanderesses come sliding and skidding to market behind their stout-hearted reindeer. They left all their picturesque Arctic gear behind them except their moccasins, Swan being one of those trying people who don't care how they look, if only they "mush" along fast enough. Their provisions consisted of a tin of bully and four edible tiles or army biscuits, with some

margarine in a Y.M.C.A. envelope.

The story they told on their return--for they did return and in good time for dinner--was mostly Honnell's, but I must admit that Swan could not be got to refute it. As they approached the village--some huts on a white hillside above a frozen lake--a representative of the dog-colony came to meet them, waving his tail with an anti-clockwise circular motion impossible to the dog of temperate zones. Having inspected them he escorted them on their way in a perfectly civilised and even courteous manner.

So far from being resisted, their entry was ignored save by the little fur-capped boys, who collected at their heels as if they had formed the vanguard of a circus, and the little brightly-kerchiefed girls, who bolted for cover. All the adult male inhabitants, fiercely-bearded little men like trolls done up in reindeer-skin from top to toe, appeared to be engrossed in the manufacture of sleighs, although the village was already littered and cluttered up with them; and all the ladies were indoors sewing reindeer-skin into trousers or making tea.

Having exchanged a noise like "_Sdrastetye_" (which in these parts seems to mean "_Bon jour_") with everybody they saw, our two friends sat on a log, and rested, while Honnell set about sketching, as he calls it, the primitive wooden church. The little boys, of course, formed a sort of pyramid on his shoulders to watch. Whether because his fingers were cold and so not completely under his control, or because the vibrations of the human pyramid communicated to his pencil some lucky jerks, the marks Honnell committed to (or on) his note-book were such as supplied the simple children of the snow with a clue as to his intentions, and he was intensely gratified to hear one say to another, "_Tzerhof_"--knowing that noise to signify "church" in the local tongue.

Swan, perceiving the moral damage likely to be done to his friend by this flattering incident, sought to puncture Honnell's unhealthy pride by saying, "_Plaho?_" (or "bad") as a suggestion to the critics; but this only caused them to say repeatedly and with emphasis, "_Dobra_"--which was one of Honnell's six words and means "good."

Thus the mischief was done. Honnell returned to his billet a man changed and as it were possessed. To hear him talk now one would suppose culture had fled from the Temperate to the Arctic zone. Of the Lapps' habits and their houses he knows nothing, cares nothing; all his enthusiasm is reserved for the honesty and the innate artistic perception of their children. So seriously has he been affected by this unaided and impartial recognition of the subject of his drawing that some of us wonder if he will not settle down amongst those who alone understand and appreciate him. Returning home what can he hope to be? At best a hero of the Relief Force. But in his Lapp village he could imagine himself an Artist.

* * * * *

"Canon Cooper O'Filley, known as the 'Walking Parson,' has decided to celebrate his seventieth birthday by walking from Yorkshire to Madrid."--_Sunday Paper_.

An even better-known "Walking Parson," Mr. COOPER, of Filey, will have to look to his laurels now that this Irish pedestrian has entered the lists.

* * * * *

"Mr. J.B. Fagan has decided to revive 'Twelfth Night' with the original cast at the Court Theatre."--_Daily Graphic_.

We trust that when Mr. FAGAN revives the "original cast" he will not omit to provide also against the inevitable call of "Author!" and settle the BACON-SHAKSPEARE controversy once for all.

* * * * *

THE VEGES ON STRIKE.

(_A Dream._)

A noise arose of earnest men
Refusing imitation duck;
It was a dreadful moment when
The Beetroot-eaters struck,
And all around untasted stood
Rations of Mr. Kilo's favourite food.

For some forsook the sacred rules
And pulled, despite their master's word,
Ham sandwiches from reticules;
On every side one heard
The sharp staccato lettuce-crunch
Merged in the howls of carnivores at lunch.

And one conspirator leaped up
Amid the clash of tinkling spoons
And poured into a protose cup
His helping of stewed prunes;
And, blood-red presager of doom,
Half a tomato hissed across the room.

And angry "Pshaws" and long "Tut-tuts"
Proceeded from that concourse dense,
And "Nuts," they wailed, "we want more nuts--
More nuts at less expense!"
Till Mr. Ambrose Kilo came
And hushed the berserk banqueters to shame.

"Heroes," he cried, with lifted hand,
"And comrades of the meatless life,
Shall the great cause for which we stand"
(Here someone dropped a knife)
"Fall into disrepute?" (Loud roars
Of "No, not it," from contrite nucivores).

"Bearing aloft a stainless shield
That none may smirch without remorse,
This management declines to yield
To crude displays of force;
Yet, since it seems the general wish,
Mock-cutlets will be five-pence less per dish."

He ceased, and trembling fingers cleared
All vestiges of meat away;
The smiling handmaids reappeared
With mounds of buttered hay;
Silence replaced the storm-tossed scenes;
There was no sound save masticated beans.

EVOE.

* * * * *

From "Answers to Correspondents":

"A bellion, according to the French and American method of numeration, is a thousand millions, or 1,000,000,000. According to the English method, it is a million millions, or 1,000,000,000."--_Irish Paper_.

We should have liked to know the estimated value of a re-bellion, according to the Irish method, but we understand that there is no accounting for that.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Cinema Photographer_. "WOULD YOU MIND DOING THAT BIT AGAIN? I FORGOT TO TURN THE HANDLE."]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(_By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks_.)

A book of little novels, or long-shorts, from the pen of Mr. ROBERT HICHENS, will be welcomed with pleasure by a very large public. _Snake-Bite_ (CASSELL) contains a half-dozen various tales, all but one of which are eminently characteristic of their author. It sounds unkind to add that this one is for artistry the best of the bunch; but I mean no more than that Mr. HICHENS has here done very well a slight and delicate sketch of a style not generally associated with his work. In the name-piece his admirers will find themselves on more familiar ground--none other indeed than that well-known desert in which they have enjoyed such delicious thrills in the same company already. When Mr. HICHENS' characters get the sand in their eyes almost anything may be expected of them. Here he has given us a new version of the ancient scheme of two men and a woman, complicated in this instance by a cobra; the problem being, whether a doctor should cure his wife's lover of a snake-bite. More original is the longest story in the collection, one called "The Lost Faith," an affair of mental healing and love and crime too complex for compression. It is admirably told. It leads up to a situation as novel as it is dramatic--the confession of a young fanatic, who believes in a lady-healer so implicitly that he puts typhoid germs into the drink of a celebrated general in order to provide her with an impressive subject. As a sensation this wants some beating; though it failed to shake my own preference for the other story, which you will observe I have purposely left unnamed. You will, I hope, enjoy finding it for yourself.

* * * * *

Heritage (COLLINS) gives me much the same impression that one obtains from the spectacle of a man wire-walking in a sack or painting pictures with his toes--attempting, in short, any task under conditions of the greatest possible handicap. That certainly is what Miss V. SACKVILLE-WEST has been at pains to impose upon herself. With a straightforward, simple and interesting tale and some considerable gifts for reproducing character, she has deliberately sacrificed these advantages by telling her story in the most roundabout and awkward manner imaginable. The theme is the influence of heredity, as shown in the working out of a strain of Spanish blood in a Sussex peasant stock, the victims of this inconvenient blend being _Ruth_ and the young cousin whom half-unwillingly she marries; with devastating results. _Ruth_, as I say, was attracted to _Westmacott_ with only part of her being; the better (or at least less Spanish) elements in her were employed in making soft eyes at two other men, one of whom, _Malory_, is supposed to relate portions of the affair to the quite superfluous outsider who puts them down. This _viva-voci_ recital is subsequently rounded off by _Malory_, in what is surely the least credible of all the unlikely

letters in fiction, nearly a hundred printed pages of it. So you see the obstacles that Miss SACKSVILLE-WEST has placed in her own and her reader's path. That, despite them all, the interest, and passion of this first novel do get home is an encouraging omen for her success when she has learnt a greater simplicity of attack.

* * * * *

Wings of the Morning (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) might have been a most recommendable book, for it is in essentials a pleasant story of a great artist who for the crime of his hot-headed youth suffered imprisonment in the United States, and, having "covered his tracks," came home, fell in love with his delightful sister's delightful step-daughter and, after much suffering for them both, told his history and won his lady. But unfortunately the inessentials--and among these I have the temerity to include the great European War, or, at any rate, very much that is here told of it--are so harrowing that they do not accord with the pleasant story to which they are tacked on. I would not ask to be spared the knowledge of anything faced by other people while I sat immune at home, but there are many incidents which cannot with decency or dignity be served up in fiction to add a thrill to the enjoyment of an hour's light reading. Miss JOAN SUTHERLAND would have done well to have left detail to more serious exponents, and to have discarded entirely one scene of bestial cruelty which has no real bearing on her tale. Never in a novel--and seldom in historical accounts of fighting--have I been asked to wallow in so much gore. It is all the more regrettable because when Miss SUTHERLAND uses her imagination on less horrible subjects she is much more successful.

* * * * *

Mr. ARTHUR TURBERVILLE has taken almost over-elaborate pains with his sketch of a type which must have been common enough in the new armies--the young officer of pacifist leanings, who, intellectually convinced of the futility of war and by no means out of sympathy with the ultralogical or illogical (and anyway impossible) position of the Conscientious Objector, yet joins up and makes the very best of a bad job. Kenneth, Dugdale (METHUEN), the prize prig (according to the verdict of his Mess), became a brave and efficient subaltern; and the author's idea of bringing him by means of the discipline of war-training and war itself to a better understanding of the ordinary spontaneous fighting types, and of bringing these by the same discipline to a readier appreciation of the intellectual and idealist position, is well enough worked out. The character-drawing impressed me less favourably. The author, I should say, finds it rather difficult to understand the ordinary good or indifferent fellow with his qualities and their defects. I doubt the possibility of such a snake in the grass as Lieutenant Seymour carrying on without getting kicked. Nor do I think that that simple soldier man, Fortescue, V.C., would have so tamely accepted Dugdale's betrayal to the woman they both loved of the fact that he had just seen his rival putting a dubious young lady into a cab in Regent Street at midnight. There is a good deal of thoughtful work in this novel which should be interesting to amateur students of the psychology of war and men of war.

* * * * *

The latest of Mrs. J. B. BUCKROSE'S genial little comedies about a comfortable world is concerned with war-weddings, their cause, and some hints for their successful conduct. She calls it Marriage While You Wait (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), and illustrates her theme with the case of a young man and maiden, who dashed, like so many others, into matrimony in the breathless haste of short leave, and came dangerously near repenting at leisure. Only near, of course; Mrs. BUCKROSE is too confirmed an optimist not to make it clear that the blackest boredom

has a silver lining; and I had never any real fear that her nice young couple were becoming more than quite temporarily estranged. Still, things went so far that _Sophia_ left the cottage where she and _Arthur_ and a cooing dove had proposed to live the idyllic life of happiness-ever-after, and betook herself to the mansion of the local villain; while _Arthur_ cut the throat of the dove (there my sympathies were with him entirely) and relapsed into nervous breakdown. But _Denyer_, being only a BUCKROSE villain, which is a very mild variety, packed _Sophia_ home again; _Arthur_, after the usual crisis, recovered; and the symbolic dove was the only inmate of the cottage for whom the little rift remained unhappily permanent. So there you are; with the gentlest short sermon to wind up, and a blessing to all concerned. Perhaps I have read stories more briskly entertaining from Mrs. BUCKROSE'S flowing pen; one feels that her intent here was not solely laughter. But as a smiling homily, preaching much the same moral that Sir ARTHUR PINERO once treated more caustically in perhaps his best play, her story, _Marriage While You Wait_, should have at least two sympathetic readers in many scores of homes.

* * * * *

Whenever I finish a book by Mr. S.P.B. MAIS I am left with the feeling that he has only to enlarge his horizon to write something worth reading and remembering. If _The Education of a Philanderer_ (GRANT RICHARDS) had been written, by an unknown man I should have welcomed it as work of great promise. But the trouble with Mr. MAIS is that he seems to find it perilously easy to write about young school-masters who fall in and out of love with facility and who are financially at their wits' end. _Rupert Blundell_, the philanderer, described here, is a clear and clever picture of a young man who loved where he listed and listed quite a lot. As far as he goes he can be visualized perfectly both at Oxford and as a schoolmaster. But he does not go far enough and he belongs to a type of which one can easily tire. Mr. MAIS is not so callow as he once was in his judgement of people mentally distasteful to him, but he still needs a wider outlook on life and a wider knowledge, and I sincerely hope that he will take steps to remove the limitations which at present prevent him from giving entire satisfaction to his admirers.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Critic (writing a review during a hot spell)._ "TO SPEAK CANDIDLY, THIS BOOK LEAVES US COLD."]

* * * * *

"THE LOST LEADER."

[In this new play, at the Court Theatre, PARNELL is represented as having survived his own death.]

Parnell at the Court sings the very same tune
As the sluggard of old--"You have waked me too soon."

* * * * *

"If, out of hand, one were asked who, now living, knows most about the Brontes in a personal way, the answer would probably be, Lord Crewe."--_The Book Monthly_.

We understand that on the question being put to the Editor of _The Sphere_ his answer was Shorter still.

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