

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 156, June 25, 1919

Various

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PUNCH,

OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

VOL. 156.

June 25, 1919.

CHARIVARIA.

A man has written to the papers offering to buy five thousand pounds of Joy Loan if the Government will get him a case of whisky. The simple fellow does not seem to realise that if the Government had anything as valuable as a case of whisky it would not have to raise a loan.

The successful trans-Atlantic flight and the large number of public-houses in Galway threaten to make prohibition in U.S.A. nothing

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less than a farce.

Smoking, says a Church paper, is on the increase among boys. Boys will be girls these days.

Smoking and bad language seem to go together, says Professor GILBERT MURRAY. In the case of some cheap cigars we have often seen them going together.

A bazaar has been held in Dublin for the purpose of securing a fresh stock of wild animals for the Zoological Gardens. It is not believed, however, that the popularity of Sinn Fein can be seriously challenged.

"Serbia," says an Italian news agency, "is purchasing large quantities of war material and aeroplanes." It is feared, however, that these elaborate Peace preparations may yet turn out to be premature.

Two German machine guns, it is stated, have been placed in a provincial library. Even this, it is thought, will not prevent Mr. H.G. WELLS from doing what he conceives to be his duty.

Labour unrest is reported from Spitzbergen. There is also a rumour that the Greenlanders are demanding the nationalization of blubber and a 180-day year.

There is said to be some talk at Washington of the House of Representatives inviting President WILSON to visit America shortly.

A Chicago Girls' Club has decided that its members shall have nothing to do with young men. It is certainly getting to be an effeminate habit.

The Daily Mail has presented a golden slipper for the actress with the smallest feet. The slipper, we understand, is quite new and has never been used on anybody.

An American gentleman is about to offer for sale his corkscrew, or would exchange for something useful.

A very mean theft is reported from West Ealing. Not content with stealing the loose silver a burglar is reported to have stolen the muzzle from off the watch-dog.

The New Cross Fire Brigade have been awarded a Challenge Cup for the quickest work. This brigade is now open to book a few orders for fires during August, when they have several open dates.

We understand that a couple of young cheeses were kidnapped from a Crouch Hill warehouse last week.

It is a surprising fact, says a contemporary, that when LENIN was born his parents were practically penniless. The greater mystery is that his parents decided to keep him.

A statistical expert has estimated that if all the questions asked by Mr. SMILLIE at the Coal Commission's sittings were placed one before the other they would lead to nowhere.

Over one hundred posters illustrating the danger of house-flies have been exhibited in the Enfield district. It is doubtful whether this will have the desired effect, for it is well known that flies cannot read.

The price of a first-class interment, says a contemporary, has risen from L3 18s 0d. to L5 15s. 0d. The result is that many people have decided to try to do without one this year.

The arrival in England of a rare mosquito is reported by the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies. It seems that the insect had worked its passage to the British Museum. We think that a sharper look-out should be kept on mosquitoes arriving at our ports.

A painful episode is reported from Yarmouth. It appears that a visitor, desirous of taking home a souvenir of his holiday, thoughtlessly filled a bottle with sea water at low tide, with the result that just before high tide the bottle burst, inflicting serious injuries on the passengers in the railway carriage in which he was travelling.

Out of nine applicants for the post of Language Master at a well-known Public school, eight were proficient in at least five languages. However, as the ninth man proved to be an ex-Sergeant-Major, the eight immediately retired in his favour.

We now hear that the question regarding the possession of Kladzatiffagtaliofatoffka, in Poland, which has caused so much of the delay at the Peace Conference, has been satisfactorily settled. The four Big Powers are to have a couple of syllables each and the remaining three will be raffled for.

On account of the large number of robberies of safes that have taken place in London during the last few weeks it is possible that an effort will shortly be made to do away with these cumbersome articles in order to stamp out the epidemic.

The bacteriologist of the Oyster Merchants' and Planters' Association claims to have discovered a means of purifying polluted mussels. To ascertain if a mussel requires to be purified examine the whites of its eyes.

Newspapers have appeared again in Buenos Ayres. No other troubles are anticipated.

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[Illustration: "I'VE CALLED TO SEE IF YOU COULD MAKE A MINATURE OF ME."]

* * * * *

AMERICA AND SINN FEIN.

[Being a Republican's apology for the recent anti-British agitation in the States.]

Oh, never let it mar the mutual love,
That now unites us eye to eye,
If, superficially, we seem to shove
Our fingers in your Irish pie--
An action which, if you should so behave,
Would make old MONROE wriggle in his grave.

How loath we are by nature to intrude
In things outside our own concern
Is witnessed by the European feud
In which we lately took a turn;
Ere WILSON'S mind was fixed to see you through it,
For years he wondered if he ought to do it.

And, when for Ireland's good we intervene
In matters patently remote,
You must not count our loyalty less keen--
We simply want the Irish vote;
'Tis an election stunt, this lion-baiting,
Designed for local Kelts who need placating.

So, when our Yankee delegates rehearse
Their tale of Erin's bitter woe,
Of crimes, almost too bad to quote in Erse,
Committed by the Saxon foe,
Please understand why our apparent bias is
In favour of these nimble Ananiases.

And also why, for Ireland's dear, dear sake
(Meaning of course "Ourselves Alone"),
A lot of us would gladly let her take
Our WILSON for her very own,
To worship, like a god inside a tin fane,
As WOODROW ONE, First President of Sinn Fein.

O. S.

* * * * *

GOING TO THE BANK.

She thought she had got a bargain. It was only marked "20/-," and would have been double the price at any of the West-end places. So she whipped out her Japanese note-case, paid for it, and carried it off like a whirlwind lest the shopman should find he had made a mistake.

But it was she who had made a mistake, and she broke the news to me at breakfast on the following morning.

Two of her one-pound notes (or, to be exact, my one pound notes) must have stuck together. She had paid the West-end price after all.

Then, instead of blaming her own carelessness, as I should have done, what must she do but attack Mr. LLOYD GEORGE?

"It's all his fault, this horrid dirty paper-money... Spreading infection wherever it goes!"

It devolved upon me to defend the Government, which I did with some heat, drawing forth another one-pound note casually, as though I were made of them, and flourishing it in my hand.

"And anyway," I argued, "Mr. LLOYD GEORGE is not to blame. The note does not bear his signature, but that of Sir JOHN BRADBURY. And a fine bold signature it is--why, it's dirt-cheap for the lesson in handwriting alone."

She did not appreciate that, because hers is a small scrabbed writing. But I continued mercilessly--

"I bet he doesn't bite his lips when he's signing his name."

"Extremely bad writing, I should call it," she retorted. "Look, you cannot tell where the 'u' ends and the 'r' begins."

"But aside from that," I resumed (I was very proud of this expression, having picked it up from President WILSON)--"aside from that, turn the note over, feast your eyes on the picture of the Houses of Parliament. It too is thrown in for nothing. This at least ought to appeal to you, with your enthusiasm for Gothic architecture."

If looks could annihilate, that would have been my last boiled egg.

"You think yourself very clever," she said, "and you are supposed to understand all about money matters. Surely you know of a bank where I can take these wretched notes and get gold instead, the good old English gold that was worth its face-value all the world over?"

I did not know she could be so eloquent. I rose and went to the window. It was a noble morning.

"Yes," I said after a little reflection, "put on your best hat and collect your paper-money. But try and pack it all into the kit-bag if you possibly can." (She winced a little.) "I know a bank where you will be able to get all the gold you want..."

* * * * *

Shoulder to shoulder we fought the good fight for the motor-bus.

"Two to the Bank," I gasped.

But it was at Charing Cross station I made her descend. She looked

extraordinarily mystified, and I explained that the Bank's country branches are the only ones where gold is still to be had.

* * * * *

She and an empty milk-can and I were all that got out at the little station in the hills. However, a cuckoo introduced himself boldly by name. He seemed so near he might have been in the booking-office. But the booking-office was deserted.

"There can't possibly be a bank in this out-of-the-world place," she protested.

"Patience," I replied, leading her down a steep path between high thick hedges to a small gateway. Through this we went, and I heard her draw in her breath.

From our feet, as it seemed, up to the blue sky itself, one golden glowing bank of buttercups and cowslips... and cowslips. It was almost like trying to gaze at the noonday sun.

"There," I crowed, "you will be able to get all the gold you want. Did I not say, 'I know a bank'?"

She did a curious thing. She put her arms round my neck and kissed me.

"Dear old Mr. Sententious," said she, "did you think you could take _me_ in? I knew my _Midsummer Night's Dream_ by heart while you were still discovering 'THE-HOG-IS-IN-THE-PIT!'" And she sang quite softly:--

"I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips--"

Though I was very angry at the way she had deceived me, I must admit that her voice was not displeasing.

* * * * *

IN A GOOD CAUSE.

The National Baby Week Council, which for many years has done admirable work in promoting the Welfare of Infancy and Motherhood, is to hold its annual "Week" from July 1st to 7th. Among other London celebrations a Conference will be held at Kingsway Hall, under the Presidency of Dr. ADDISON, on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Applications for admission (one guinea, to include proofs of papers to be read and a copy of the Report; or ten shillings, without printed matter) should be addressed to Miss HALFORD, Secretary, National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality, 4 and 5 Tavistock Square, W.C.1.

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[Illustration: A REDRESS REHEARSAL.

OUR MR. MONTAGU _(practising on dummy)._ "THE LATEST LINE IN WESTERN HEAD-WEAR, SIR, AND, IF YOU WILL ALLOW ME TO SAY SO, VERY BECOMING TO YOU. THANK YOU, SIR, AND THE NEXT ARTICLE?"]

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[Illustration: _Son of the House (after being introduced to professor of mathematics)._ "NOW WHAT SHALL I TALK TO YOU ABOUT?"]

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A TANGLED TRIANGLE.

The Patisserie Delarue et Salon de Consommations is situated just on the edge of Europe. Being a place of extreme military importance I dare not indicate its position with greater exactitude, but may go so far as to say that it can be found by stepping off the boat, crossing the bridge and then inquiring of the Military Police. Its importance is due to the quality of its *_creme eclairs_*, which attract the gilded Staff in such large numbers that the interior is usually suffused like an Eastern sunset with a rich glow of red tabs and gilt braid. Within its walls junior subalterns, now, alas, a rapidly diminishing species, dally with insidious ices until their immature moustaches are pendulous with lemon-flavoured icicles and their hair is whitened with sugared rime.

There it was that Frederick discovered Percival feebly and mournfully pecking at a vanilla ice.

"Greeting, old Spartan," said he. "Training for the Murman coast?"

"Would that I were!" replied Percival. "I'm refrigerating my sorrows. I've tried to drown them, but they float; so I'm by way of freezing them under."

"Poor Perce!" murmured Frederick. "I suppose it's Cox again?"

"*_Au contraire_*, I'm *_his_* sorrow. My present trouble is that I've got to find a wife."

"Nothin' easier, old thing. Your photo in the illustrated papers, with appropriate letterpress--"

"You misunderstand me," interrupted Percival. "It's someone else's wife I've got to find. *_Ecoutez_*. Teddy Roker has got permission for his wife to visit him out here. He's expecting her by this afternoon's boat and has got a billet fixed up all right, but he's been suddenly rushed away on a court-martial case, so he's asked me to meet her, and I've never seen her before."

"But didn't he give you the specifications--kind of descriptive return?"

"That's just it!" groaned Percival. "He was only married last leave, and his description goes like a Shakspearean sonnet. I gather that I've got to look out for a combination of *_Titania_*, GLADYS COOPER and HELEN OF TROY. I tried to nail him down to externals, but he only went off into another rhapsody.

"What does she wear?" I asked.

"Wear?" said he dreamily. 'Oh! beautifully draped garments nebulous as summer clouds and filmy as gossamer webs. Nothing really definite.'

"That sounds probable enough, as the present fashions go," said I.

"Seems to me," said Frederick, "that this is a case to refer to higher authority. The sleuth-hound instinct of one Frederick is indicated. Having absorbed the available data I will e'en amble round myself to assist you."

"There speaks my stout-hearted haricot!" said Percival. "But be careful. Teddy won't like it if he gets the wrong wife. He made a point of that. So in case we miss each other your instructions are briefly these: you will meet what you honestly think to be Mrs. Roker outside the Customs House, explain Teddy's absence, take her to his rooms at 10 *_bis_*, Rue Dufay, make her comfortable and report to me here at 6.15."

Punctually at 6.15 they met again in the Patisserie Delarue. Both were radiant.

"'Tis done!" said Percival proudly; "and without the assistance of the puissant Frederick. At 5.0 o'clock I was outside the Customs House and saw her looking round with an anxious eye. 'Mrs. Roker, I believe?' said I. She confessed right away, so I rattled her off in a cab to 10 _bis_, Rue Dufay, and left her there nibblin' biscuits and drinkin' tea as happy as a flapper."

"Percival," replied Frederick slowly, "for sheer imbecility you have surpassed yourself. I myself met Mrs. Roker outside the Customs House at 5.30, being detained _en route_. I took her to 10 _bis_, Rue Dufay, where at the present moment she is partaking of coffee and chocolate caramels. Shortly, no doubt, she will discover the spurious female that you have decoyed thither and the First Act of a triangle drama will be rung up."

"By Jazz," exclaimed Percival, "I'd stake my gratuity on the genuineness of my Mrs. Roker. She knows Teddy's favourite breakfast food."

"No," said Frederick decidedly, "mine is the only authentic article. All others are imitations. She knows dearest Edward's size in gloves."

"Well, we can't both be right."

"Did Teddy say anything about expecting _two_ wives?" asked Frederick hopefully.

"Idiot!" said Percival. "As I see the situation, one of us--presumably you--will presently be the central figure in a court-martial or police court on a charge of abducting an innocent female. The remaining reels in the film will be devoted to Teddy chasing you with a 5.9 howitzer for jeopardizing his connubial happiness. But these unhappy concluding incidents may be averted if you return the wrongful lady to her rightful owner before Teddy gets back. So we'll take the necessary action immediately."

"But which one are we going to discard if they both claim to be the genuine Mrs. R. ? Hadn't we better wait for Teddy? He'd be almost sure to be able to decide."

"You make me tired. It's got to be settled before he comes back."

It was a brace of dejected subalterns that wended their way to 10 _bis_, Rue Dufay. Percival knocked at the door of the drawing-room and in response to an invitation they entered. A pretty and extremely composed young lady greeted them.

"_My_ wife!" said Percival and Frederick simultaneously.

"Excuse me," said the lady with dignity; "the only husband I possess at present is Mr. Roker."

"What I mean to say is," explained Percival lamely, "that you are the wife of Mr. Roker that I met at the Customs--I mean, Mr. Roker's wife that--"

"Me too!" broke in Frederick.

"Well, that's easily explained," said the lady, addressing Percival. "After you had kindly escorted me here I suddenly remembered that I had left my keys at the Customs House. Feeling confident of finding my way about I returned for them. On emerging I was claimed by your fascinating friend who is at this moment engaged in winding up his monocle [Frederick guiltily stowed it away in his fob pocket]. He seemed so delighted at having discovered me that I hadn't the heart to explain

that I'd been found before. Of course I'm excessively grateful to both of you--Oh, here's dear old Teddy at last!"

During the scene of rapturous greeting that followed Frederick showed that he indeed had his moments of inspiration.

"What about a vanilla ice at the Patisserie Delarue, old bean?" said he to Percival.

And, unnoticed by the happy couple, they stole silently away.

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[Illustration: _Lady who has been handed the card of wife of new baronet-profiteer)._ "ER--LET ME SEE. DO I KNOW LADY HOGGINS?"

Butler. "YOUR LADYSHIP HAS NOT RECEIVED HER SINCE THE CREATION."]

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"Surplus Government Property for sale:--Brass Islets."--_Disposal Board "Surplus" Magazine_.

But why is the geographical position of this alluring archipelago not given? Is it for enemy reasons?

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[Illustration: FORCE OF HABIT--THE SCRUM HALF.]

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THE NEED OF OUR TIMES.

["The modern world is badly in need of a Pindar. Alone of the poets, Pindar could do justice to the exploits of the day."--_The Times._]

"We're badly in need of a Pindar"
To fan in these tropical days
Our stock of emotional tinder
With gusts of tempestuous praise;
To foster the flame, not to check it
Or let it die suddenly down,
In honour of HAWKER and BECKETT,
Of ALCOCK and BROWN.

We do not require a CATULLUS
(We've MASEFIELD and WAUGH and SASSOON)
Nor pastoral pipers to lull us
To rest with a sedative tune;
But the worship of beer and of Bacchus
In verses familiar and free
Might win for a latter-day FLACCUS
A Knighthood (B.E.).

Bland VIRGIL'S beyond resurrection;
The voice of the moment is harsh;
The nightingale's golden perfection
Offends the young ravens of MARSH;
ARISTOPHANES, grossly facetious,
Is but a "compulsory" god,
And HOMER as well as LUCRETIUS
Too frequently nod.

There's scope for the truculent passion

Of JUVENAL'S masculine muse
To flagellate folly and fashion
In dress and in manners and views;
But we've plenty of prophets and poets;
We've few who are sober and sane;
We don't want another DE BLOWITZ;
We want a DELANE.

* * * * *

"BETTER BEER ON THE HORIZON."

Daily Express.

A beer in the hand is worth ten on the horizon.

* * * * *

A TUBE NIGHTMARE.

Have you ever dreamed a dream of a terrible tube journey, in which every one of the appalling things which might happen does actually occur? I dreamed one last night.

The journey began with a disaster. On reaching the booking-office window I could not find any money, and it was only when the waiting crowd behind me, which had mounted to hundreds, was becoming offensively hostile that I succeeded in producing a five-pound note.

The booking-clerk took her own time to count out the change, and on leaving the window I found four policemen struggling to keep back an infuriated mob of people, all shrieking imprecations and asking for my blood.

There was but one thing for it--to get to a train before this angry horde could secure its tickets; so I made a wild dash for the moving-staircase, shedding Bradburys _en route_ like a paper-chase.

As I rushed past the ticket-puncher she made a vicious lunge at my out-stretched hand with an enormous pair of pincers, missing the ticket and partially amputating my thumb.

As I have always expected to do, but have never yet done, I missed my footing at the top of the escalator, and my desire to outstrip my enemies was realised beyond my wildest hopes as I crashed, by a series of petrifying somersaults, down the entire flight, to be belched forth like a sausage from a machine at the bottom.

Tattered, torn and in unspeakable agony I picked myself up and found my steering-gear so damaged that I could only move sideways, crab-fashion, and in this manner I crawled on to the platform just as a train was beginning its exit.

I make a leap for it. The gates crash to! Am I inside them or out? Neither. I am pinned there with the first half of my body struggling inside the car while the second half protrudes over the fast-receding platform.

I remember how in my agony it flashed across my mind that I would never again slay a wasp with my fork.

I must have been pulled into the car just in time to stop the tunnel (which is a dreadfully close fit) from bisecting me, for the next thing I remember was being dropped into a corner seat and severely admonished by the guard for getting into the train whilst it was in motion.

I was now a quivering and shapeless mass; nobody pitied me, nobody helped me, so loathsome a spectacle did I present.

Of course the train passed my station, and at the next I was thrown out like a mail-bag, to be trodden on by massed formations of travellers fighting to enter and leave the car by the same door at the same time.

When the multitudes had dispersed and I was alone, by superhuman efforts I contrived to wriggle on my stomach to the foot of the ascending stairway, but not having sufficient strength to wriggle off on arrival at the top, my long-dreaded horror of being sucked under the barrier, where moving stairways disappear, was realised.

By now immune to pain, I regarded the next process (akin to being passed through a mangle) as child's play. To my amazement, after a few minutes amongst giant cog-wheels, I again found the light on the down-going staircase, which precipitated me to the spot from which I had started.

Having thrice performed this revolution, by which time I was as flat as a pancake, I was eventually scraped off by a porter and upbraided for joy-riding.

Finding that those rebukes left me unmoved, for I was practically lifeless, certainly boneless, and, to their horror, ticketless, they folded me up and put me in a drawer pending the arrival of the police.

I was still there when the dream mercifully stopped.

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[Illustration: _Motor Cyclist_. "WHY THE DEUCE DON'T YOU DRIVE ON THE PROPER SIDE OF THE ROAD?"]

* * * * *

BIRD-LORE.

II.--PEACOCKS.

Peacocks sweep the fairies' rooms;
They use their folded tails for brooms;
But fairy dust is brighter far
Than any mortal colours are;
And all about their tails it clings
In strange designs of rounds and rings;
And that is why they strut about
And proudly spread their feathers out.

R.F.

* * * * *

"Wanted.--Good stage electrician. No good stage electrician."--_The Stage_.

There ought to be no difficulty in finding the latter.

* * * * *

CROSS COUNTRY.

A Commander in the Senior Service is the man who gets things done; and long experience has formulated for him a golden rule: "If you want to get things done you must _see_ them done." This laudable maxim applies in a lesser degree to all his subordinates, right down to the

newly-joined boy, who can't very well help seeing _some_ things done, unless he makes a habit of working with his eyes shut--a practice which does not appeal particularly to P.O.'s.

The Commander of His Majesty's Battleship _Ermyntrude_ is far from being an exception to the rule; he is a martyr to it. So are his officers. In their enthusiasm they have let the rule run riot. You will soon see that for yourself.

The idea germinated in the practical head of the gunner. It pushed its way into the upper air under the plain cap of the A.P. It budded under the (slighted tilted) head-dress of Number One, and blossomed forth into a full-blown project under the gilded oak-leaves that thatch the Bloke.

He said, "The ship's company will run across country."

The ship's company girded up its loins and awaited further orders.

The course was decided upon. It ran from the signalling station on the south of the island straight to the town on the north. There was no possibility of making a mistake, because you could see the semaphore from anywhere, and you would know when you got to the town because the road stopped there. The various divisions of the ship were to compete against each other. If you came in first you were to be given a ticket numbered "one"; if second, a ticket numbered "two," and so on; and the division which had the smallest total of pips at the end would be the winner.

At 8.15 the ship's pinnace landed the gunner on the town jetty at the north end of the island. He had come to deal with the competitors when they arrived at the winning-post. He had brought with him the bo'sun and the carpenter, his own mate, the bo'sun's mate and the carpenter's mate, four P.O.'s, the sergeant of Marines, a few leading stokers and half-a-dozen hands; fifty fathoms of hawser-laid four-inch white rope; six stout stakes (ash); bags, canvas, twelve (one to collect the tickets earned by each division); and one thousand eight hundred tickets, numbered from one to one thousand eight hundred. (There were only six hundred and fifty runners, but it is well to be on the safe side.)

He dug his stakes into the ground in a V-shaped formation just beyond the place where the road ended and almost opposite the first cottage. Further north he posted his canvas bags, which he fixed at a convenient height above the ground by depending them from the necks of his subordinates. He then rigged his rope around the stakes in such a way that the runners, entering the wide end of the V, would be shepherded one by one through a narrow aperture at the bottom, thus avoiding all suspicion of overcrowding in giving out the tickets. He explained his plan of campaign to his party and took up his post at the foot of the V.

Scarcely had he done so when the A.P. appeared upon the scene. He had brought with him a few friends--a couple of subs, two or three senior snotties and the Captain's secretary, a brace of stewards with the luncheon baskets, and the cutter's crew, who carried between them two large trellis-work screens which the carpenter had knocked up for him.

He passed the time of day with the gunner, marched fifty yards further down towards the starting-point and had his screens deposited in the middle of the road, in such a way that several could enter one end of the enclosure they formed, but only one at a time could go out at the other; this, he explained, would enable the men to pass the winning-post in single file. He then lit a cigarette and took his stand at the narrow end, producing from his pocket seven hundred and fifty neat red tickets (numbered from one to seven hundred and fifty) which the chief writer had made out for him the night before.

At 8.45 Number One arrived. To help him he had brought a couple of watch-keepers, a surgeon, three engineers, a naval instructor and the captain of Marines. He only paused to borrow one side of the gunner's V and all but forty of the A.P.'s tickets, and passed on down the road. When he had reached a suitable point about a hundred yards south of the A.P. he had the purloined rope stretched slantwise, in such a way that the only means of passing it was a little passage a yard wide between the rope and the ditch on the right of the road. A little nearer still to the starting-point he had a large placard erected with the words "Keep to the Right" painted on it.

Punctually at 9.0 the Commander arrived with a piece of string and the P.M.O. They took up their stand one on each side of the road opposite the placard. The Bloke produced a small gold pencil, but, as he had forgotten to bring any paper, he commandeered the placard and began feverishly to write down all the numbers he could think of from one to six hundred and fifty.

You are no doubt anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Owner at 9.15. Well, I'm afraid I must disappoint you. Still, although he did not come in person, yet he made his presence felt, as every good skipper should. At 9.15, as the ship's company were lining up for the start by the semaphore, he made the signal from the ship:--

"Sailing at 13.30. Return immediately."

* * * * *

SONGS OF SIMLA.

V.--PELITI'S.

I troll you no song that will hinder you long,
I pen you no ponderous treatise,
The theme that I sing is a gossamer thing
As light as the cakes at PELITI'S.

Grey roofs mid the pines and a heaven that shines
As blue as the water where Crete is,
The malachite green of a misty ravine,
That's the balcony view at PELITI'S.

There are mortals, may be, who abominate tea
(One's poison another man's meat is),
Who shy at the touch of a crumpet--for such
There is music and love at PELITI'S.

See that G.S.O.2 with the lady in blue;
Has she noticed where one of his feet is,
Or the issue that hangs on the plate of meringues
Which he buys her each day at PELITI'S?

Here the rulers of Ind, from the Salween to Sind,
Take their ices and wafers (MCVITIE'S)
And elaborate schemes over chocolate creams
At five-o'clock tea at PELITI'S.

And I think, when we die and the wraiths of us fly
To that peace which depends not on treaties,
The joys which we find will but serve to remind
Of the hours that we spent at PELITI'S.

J.M.S.

* * * * *

"Thomas ---- was fined L5 Lat LOswestry yesterday for selling goods to a German prisoner.

The chairman said defendant had sold goods to the value of 11s, 1-1/2d. Where the German had got that large sum of money from was quite a mystery."--_Daily Paper_.

It seems pretty evident from the report that there was a good deal of money about somewhere.

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[Illustration: "I'M TOLD SHE'S ALWAYS WRITING TO HER DRESSMAKER ABOUT NEW FROCKS."

"I SUPPOSE SHE ENCLOSED A STAMPED AND ADDRESSED ENVELOPE FOR THAT ONE."]

* * * * *

A CRUSADER.

One hears sometimes of pure altruists, but on analysing their purity an alloy is perceptible. Although their work is for others, an element of personal gratification is present.

Personal gratification or self-indulgence is of course inevitable; as it can even enter into grief and pain; but now and then it is reduced to a minimum: as, I hold, in the latest activities for her fellow-creatures in which my friend Mrs. Delta has embarked.

During the War Mrs. Delta was indefatigable (I am not often sure of my words, but I use this without a tremor of misgiving) in promoting charities and collecting money to sustain them. At no time of day was it safe to meet her, for you had to stand and deliver. There were no privations due to the War which she was not out to mollify or remove, and her ingenuity in discovering worthy objects was uncanny.

As, however, War was raging and most people are, underneath, kinder than not, she escaped very severe criticism and amassed some good round sums. And, since all her various Funds had committees and meetings and minutes, Mrs. Delta, although that may have been only the least among her motives, was the recipient of certain expressions of gratitude. Organised charity cannot elude votes of thanks.

But that Mrs. Delta likes work for work's sake, apart altogether from honeyed praises, is now beyond question, for the campaign she has just inaugurated is unlikely to yield them.

"You must," she said to me yesterday, "give me something for my new scheme."

"I hope I shall have enough strength of mind not to; but what is it?"

"You have noticed in what a dreadful state so many of the shop windows in London now are?" she asked.

"The iniquitous prices of the goods?"

"Oh, no; I didn't mean that. I mean the dropped letters. Where they have glass letters stuck on, you know, and some have gone. Surely you must have noticed?"

"Yes, of course," I replied; "but I thought the shop-keepers were too lazy or careless to bother. The War has increased carelessness, you

know."

"No, it isn't that," she said. "The poor fellows are so understaffed and overworked that they can't find time. My idea is to raise a fund so that it can be done for them. My heart aches. Only this morning I saw a barber's with ASH AND RUSH UP on it; and a confectioner's"--she referred to her notebook--"with ICE REAMS, and an undertaker's with PINKING ONE ERE."

"What is pinking?" I asked. "I always wanted to know."

"And," she continued, again consulting her book, "a tobacconist's with BEST OLDEN VIRGIN , and a dentist's with PA LESS EXTRACTION. Something really must be done. Don't you agree?"

I murmured that there were other abuses that were possibly more in need of immediate redress, but Mrs. Delta again turned to her book.

"And a dairyman with FAMILIES UP LIE , and a stationer's with LUE LACK INK. Isn't it distressing?--and so bad for growing children to see so much slovenliness. And what can foreigners think of us? The Americans, for instance, who are always so spick and span, and--"

The means of rescue came to me in the shape, of a vast monster on wheels, bright with yellow and scarlet, thundering over the road. "That's my bus," I said, and ran.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Father (to troublesome small boy_). "NOW LOOK HERE, TONY. I SHAN'T WARN YOU AGAIN. THE VERY _NEXT_ TIME YOU MISBEHAVE YOU GO _STRAIGHT_ UPSTAIRS TO BED."]

Small Sister. "AND THAT'S _THAT_. ISN'T IT, DADDY?"]

* * * * *

THOSE DRESSES.

(Being a Midsummer Night's Dream, or thereabouts.)

More gay than day and plumier
Than Birds of Paradise,
It was no Court Costumier
That made them look so nice;
No milliners nor drapers
On mortal business terms
Of those sweet modes were shapers,
Though several evening papers
Mention the actual firms.

But fairies wove that raiment
Of starshine and of flowers;
They asked no better payment,
They craved no shorter hours;
With eglantine and lilies
They worked a June night long,
And that is just where "Phyllis"
In "Ascot frocks and frillies"
Goes absolutely wrong.

'Neath beech-tree and 'neath cedar,
In rings of moonlit green....
What bilge, you say, good reader?
My very dear old bean,

Think of the state of Prices,
Think of the slump in Trade,
Turn to the Paris Crisis,
Ponder the cost of ices
And buns and gingerade.

New War-loans shriek for money;
All work is at an end;
It seems extremely funny
There's any cash to spend;
Yet still the tide of laces,
The foam of fluff and silk
Comes round in cardboard cases
To lots of people's places
As punctual as the milk.

While, sworn to get revenge in,
And waiting at the door,
That grim three-handed engine
Prepares to strike once more,
Who built these gowns we mutely
Admire on lawn and lea?
Who bought them (think acutely),
With England absolutely
As broke as she can be?

Therefore I say the fabric
Was wrought of faery woof,
Not made in walls of drab brick
Nor won with mortal oof;
Delicate, dream-like, pretty
As sunshine after rain,
Worn by Miss Hodgson ("Kitty")--
It seems a dreadful pity
She spilled the iced champagne.

Therefore I say that, toiling
With wild white roses' bloom--
No printers' vats a-boiling
Nor labour of the loom--
With fern and foxglove chalice
On tiny feet or wings
Titania's elves made sallies,
And that's how Lady Alice
Had on those lovely things.

EVOE.

* * * * *

A HAPPY THOUGHT.

"When the blessing had been pronounced and the bridal pair were kneeling at the altar Dame Nellie Melba, wearing a blue dress and hat, crept from the side chapel to the choir and to the joy of the audience sang the pathetic 'Ave Maria' that Desdemona sings in the last act of Verdi's Othello when she feels her predestined doom approaching."--"Evening Standard" on a Society wedding_.

* * * * *

"Mr. Bottomley objects to By Jingo."

Daily Paper.

Yet in one or another of his "powerful" articles we seem to have seen something like "Damn the Kaiser" and "To Hell with Hindenburg."

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE PHILANDERER.

SINN FEIN. "BE MINE."

PRESIDENT WILSON. "I DO HOPE I HAVEN'T GIVEN YOU TOO MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT--BUT I CAN NEVER BE MORE THAN A BROTHER TO YOU."]

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[Illustration: First Australian. "'OO's YER SWELL PAL, DIGGER?"]

Second Ditto. "I DUNNO HIS NAME, BUT I REMEMBER HIS FACE. I GIVE HIM A BIT OF BACON JUST OUTSIDE ST. QUENTIN."]

* * * * *

WHY DRAG IN MRS. SIDDONS?

DEAR MR. PUNCH,--Nothing annoys me more than the assumption that wit, learning, fancy, etc., were the monopoly of the past. For example, a correspondent of one of our leading dailies has been trotting out Mrs. SIDDONS' use of blank verse in familiar conversation, and quoting from LOCKHART:--

"John Kemble's most familiar table-talk often flowed into blank verse; and so indeed did his sister's [Mrs. Siddons]. Scott (who was a capital mimic) often repeated her tragic exclamation to a foot-boy during a dinner at Ashestiel--

'You 've brought me water, boy,--I asked for beer!'

Another time, dining with a Provost of Edinburgh, she ejaculated, in answer to her host's apology for his piece de resistance--

'Beef cannot be too salt for me, my lord.'

This is all very well, but just as good blank verse is commonly used by eminent men and women to-day; indeed some of them excel in impromptu rhymes. Thus in Mr. HAROLD WESTMORELAND'S interesting volume, Eavesdroppings, there is this charming story of the first meeting of Madame CLARA BUTT and Miss CARRIE TUBB. They were introduced at a garden-party at Fulham, and Mr. WESTMORELAND overheard the memorable quatrain in which Madame CLARA BUTT greeted her sister-artist:--

"In our names we 're alike
But in minstrelsy--ah no!
For I'm a contralto
And you're a soprano."

To the same veracious chronicler I am indebted for a specimen of the impromptus which Lord READING frequently throws off, to the delight of his friends. Mr. WESTMORELAND was having a pair of boots tried on at a famous Jermyn Street bootmaker's when Lord BEADING was undergoing a similar ordeal, and electrified the courteous assistant by observing:--

"The right-foot boot to me seems rather tight;
The left, per contra, feels exactly right."

But perhaps the finest exponent of the art is a famous General, whose

obiter dicta in verse are innumerable. I have only space to quote one, spoken to a soldier with whom he had shaken hands:--

"You are the proudest man in France,
Or at any rate in Flanders,
For you've shaken hands, in a great advance,
With the greatest of Corps Commanders."

Surely in the light of these examples, which might be indefinitely multiplied, there is no need for the present to fear comparison with the past in the sphere of conversational verse?

I am, dear Mr. Punch,

Yours faithfully,

NOSTRI TEMPORIS LAUDATOR.

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CULTURE IN THE STY.

"Yorkshire Pork Pies, possessing character and individuality, 5 lb. Price, 15s.--Daily Express."

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"COLUMBUS OF THE AIR.

Captain Alcock's Story of his Great Atlantic Flight."--Dublin Evening Telegraph."

Would not Vimy-bus be better?

* * * * *

Slough Verdict: Dulce est de-Cippenham in loco."

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AT THE PLAY.

"THE CINDERELLA MAN."

The importation of theatrical sweet-stuff from America is of course a growing industry. The latest consignment, The Cinderella Man, first arrived in this country in the form of a novel, and the difficulty it offered was that the struggling hero, Anthony Quintard, whose fate depended, in the absence of common-sense, on his winning a ten thousand dollar prize for an opera libretto, seemed to me, from samples of his work exhibited, to be an unlikely competitor. But I must say that when at the play I saw our Mr. NARES in his garret sucking at his pipe in that masterful manner and modifying what might so easily have been a too sticky situation with a charmingly light touch, I began to think better of Anthony's chances and therefore necessarily of Mr. EDWARD CHILDS CARPENTER'S general idea. For the author obviously may claim the credit of this reading, even if I harbour an obstinate private suspicion that it was only by a very deliberate and steadfast determination on the part of Mr. NARES as hero and Mr. HOLMAN CLARK as matchmaker that this particular reading prevailed.

Mr. CARPENTER doesn't believe in mystifications. He explains everything with the completest candour in his first Act, from which you gather that a millionaire's daughter, returning from Paris to the immense stuffy New York mansion, is desperately lonely, and has also cut herself free from

an unsatisfactory affair of the heart; that a young poet, a friend of the millionaire's sentimental lawyer, is also lonely, living like Cinderella (isn't this wrong?) in an attic next-door, proud as poor; that another friend of the millionaire has offered a prize for a libretto. Having thus put the rabbit, the bird-cage and the flowerpot into the hat in front of you he proceeds in a leisurely manner to take them out again.

The young millionairess, posing as a poor "companion," visits the starveling poet via the snow-covered roof and the attic window, bringing food, stoves, coverlets, wool to mend his socks and ideas to mend his opera. Naturally here were opportunities of unlimited business, during which Marjorie (Miss RENEE KELLY) looked perfectly sweet, as I heard more than one ardent young lady declare to approving lieutenants.

Miss KELLY has indeed all the air of a heroine of honeyed romance. In particular she played one episode, the trying over of a new song, in a winningly natural manner. I found the way in which she flapped her eyelids a subject of puzzled study. I have not observed that maidens in real life indulge in these calisthenics. This is perhaps as well; they are evidently very deadly. Within a fortnight of their being brought into action poet Quintard is in the Kamerad stage. Not Anne Whitfield herself exhibits more explicitly the urgency of the life force, the will to wed.

Mr. OWEN NARES, who has a following more than sufficient to justify his recent assumption of management, gave a very attractive and indeed, within the limits imposed by the piece, a distinguished performance as the proud and hungry poet. An extreme naturalness of pose and intonation, without over-stresses or affectations, characterised this agreeable study. Mr. HOLMAN CLARK, that finished actor in the bland manner, very adroitly, as I have hinted, settled the mood of the piece and made the good appear the better line and the ordinary line good. Mr. SYDNEY VALENTINE had a Valentine part ready made. It would take more than an indisposition, which he pluckily ignored, to put him off his stroke. Mr. TOM REYNOLDS was effective as a maudlin serving-man who had once butled a real gentleman and could never forget it. Miss ANNIE ESMOND gave a depressingly clever rendering of a quite unbelievably appalling landlady.

[Illustration: A Fairy Godmother (Miss RENEE KELLY) reduced to tears by the unsusceptibility of her Godchild (MR. OWEN NARES).]

Altogether a pleasant wholesome evening's entertainment. Young men and maidens of our day needn't hesitate to take their parents.

"ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGONS."

There is much more of the substance of wit and truth in Mr. EDEN PHILLPOTTS' "Devon comedy" at the Kingsway. The St. George of the title is not the Cappadocian, but that somewhat irreverent Father in God, St. George Loftus, Bishop of Exeter; the dragons are two quite unsuitable suitors for the hands of Monica and Eva (daughters of his dull old friend, Lord Sampford), who don't believe in class distinctions. Monica's young man is the son of a yeoman farmer, personable, certainly, on horseback and of a blood older than the Sampfords', but an essential resilient, and altogether impossible when playing the concertina or after mixing his drinks (or both). Eva's follower is a brilliant raw young man from Glasgow, recently ordained, with professional ambitions as pronounced as his accent.

The parents try the now exploded method of direct opposition. St. George's weapons are smooth words and a heart chokefull of guile. Does his god-daughter Monica want to elope with her yeoman? By all means

let love have his sacred way. But his lordship will contrive in the _role_ of a strayed and bogged fisherman to be at Stonelands Farm before the young couple arrive _en route_ for London and the registry-office, and he will see to it that _Monica_ learns what the daily life of a working farmer is like, and what the beer (or bad champagne for festal occasions) and rabbit pie in the kitchen; with sudden frank explanations as to the imminence of the crisis in the interesting condition of _Snowdrop_ the Alderney; what, too, is the Stonelands' notion of music and the dance, with Teddy's braying concertina and cousin Unity's quavering treble and the ragged bass and candid speech of old _Caunter_, the head man.... So much for _Monica_.

And _Eva_ thinks she wants to tie herself to this crude Glaswegian. Well, here it will be best to insinuate to the young man how unfortunate it is that the vacant chaplaincy to the Bishop of Exeter is designed for a celibate, and to the young woman that to marry so brilliant (and ingenuous) a youth is to hang a millstone round his neck. For, after all, muses the prelate, revealing dreadful depths of low cunning and perfidy, it's easier to change a chaplain than a husband.

A thoroughly amusing affair. Of course Mr. PHILLPOTTS shirks his problem, _Teddy Copplestone_ need not have been a bounder (the odds indeed were against it), nor need his cigars, his champagne or his music have been so bad. But then we should have missed a diverting piece of fun and have been saddled with a solemn problem-play unsuited to the (alleged) gaiety of the hour.

The general level of the playing was high, and, after a somewhat nervous opening (and perhaps just a few affectations of the fourth-wall school), the piece swung into a pleasant rhythm.

Mr. ERNEST THESIGER interprets with consummate ability Mr. PHILLPOTTS' amusing and original creation, this puss-in-gaiters Machiavelli, _St. George Exon_. Miss LILLAH MCCARTHY (_Monica_), in the familiar _role_ of beauty in revolt, had an easy task, which she fulfilled very agreeably. Miss ALBANESI (_Eva_) put brains and fire and (not at all a negligible gift of the gods) precise enunciation into her work. Mr. FEWLASS LLEWELLYN and Miss MARY BROUGH were quite delightful as old _Copplestone_ and his wife. Mr. CLAUDE KING as _Teddy Copplestone_ had perhaps the most difficult task, a part that by no means played itself, but needed a sustained skill, duly forthcoming. But I think the performance that pleased me most was that of Miss EVELYN WALSH HALL, a name new to me, in the small part of _Unity Copplestone_, played with a directness and sincerity which was quite distinguished.

Let me add that the flapping of eyelids (to which I have referred in my remarks on _The Cinderella Man_) is here also a feature. One member of the cast (of my own sex, too) gave a display of virtuosity in this _genre_ which was technically superb.

Two insignificant details of management caused me some amusement. The solemn clang of a gong presaging doom as dire as OEDIPUS'S (and incidentally inaudible to cigarette smokers in the foyer) gives notice of the resumption of the play, while at the end of the Acts the curtain flutters up and down at a feverish pace as if the idea was to get in as many "calls" as possible before the applause stops. Are we as guileless as all that, I wonder? And, anyway, no such manoeuvre was necessary. The applause was hearty, the laughter spontaneous, and anybody who cares for plays made and played with brains should go and see this engaging piece.

T.

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[Illustration: _Taxi-driver_. "WHERE ARE WE ALL OFF TO?"]

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THE SPREAD OF DEMOCRACY.

"The Earl of Loudoun, whose English seat it is, possesses eight jeerages."--_Field_.

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ANOTHER IMPENDING APOLOGY.

"'Honour among thieves' is an old saying, but the pickpocket who stole Lieut.-Commander Grieve's watch during his reception was an exception to the rule."--_Illustrated Leicester Chronicle_.

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A correspondent asks us if there is any truth in the statement that Peace will be signed in time for the Peace Celebrations. At the moment of going to press it is still doubtful.

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"NOTE.--The Swan used in this Production is supplied by the well-known firm of Messrs. Swan and Edgar, Piccadilly Circus, London."--_Programme of Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool_.

We understand that the business is in the charge of Mr. EDGAR during his partner's absence.

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

Jinny the Carrier (HEINEMANN) was, as Mr. ZANGWILL lets us know in a felicitous epistle-dedicatory to an evidently charming lady, designed as a "bland" and leisurely book, free from any trace of war's horrors or modern perplexities, the sort you could read comfortably with a sore throat on you. I think if I had not been in such rude health I might have managed the five hundred and eighty odd close-set pages without getting just a little tired of his worthy Essex peasants of the time of the great Hyde Park Exhibition. _Jinny_ herself is a perfect darling, of real wit and character, and her business as the local carrier gives a plausible machinery for the introduction of an enormous number, a truly Dickensian profusion, of subsidiary characters. _Jinny_ indeed is above criticism, but the trouble with many, indeed with most, of the others, seemed to me to be their exaggerated sprightliness of speech, just a little too clever to be credible and not quite amusing enough to be palatable in large doses. To me the real pleasure of the book comes from the author's craftsmanlike use of words and the humour and imagination of his descriptions and asides. But if I may be humbly candid beyond the custom of my trade I must confess to an uncomfortable impression that sounder qualities in the reviewer would have discovered greater qualities in the work.

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I rather suspect Mrs. GERTRUDE ATHERTON of having written _The Avalanche_ (MURRAY) either for the amusement of exercise in an unfamiliar medium, or, well, for any motive that might explain a production certainly not quite up to her own standard. Its publishers (who may be prejudiced) consider _The Avalanche_ as "a brilliant and

engaging study of mystery and romance;" me it impressed as a melodrama dependent on one long-heralded sensation, which proves on tardy arrival an affair of disappointment. I suppose I must be careful not to give away the mystery, such as it is. _Price Rugler_ was anxious to discover why his attractive wife assumed a worried look when money was mentioned and fainted on being told that she was not to wear the family ruby at a particular masque. All this happened (you may not be astonished to hear) in San Francisco, amongst that luxurious, idle, over-moneyed society whose manners Mrs. ATHERTON knows and describes so well. _Price_ had already found out, with the assistance of a not too brilliant detective, that his wife's mother derived her income from a gambling saloon; the remaining problem was how to link up this knowledge with the odd behaviour of _Mrs. Price_. Perhaps you see it already. She had been--No, I said I wouldn't, and I won't. Of course the discovery couldn't be called cheerful, though it was fortunately made in time to prevent any great harm. But it was nothing like an avalanche.

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[Illustration: UNRECORDED HISTORY.

INCONSIDERATE FLAPPER WAYLAYS KING JOHN ON HIS RETURN FROM SIGNING MAGNA CARTA AT RUNNYMEDE.]

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It is much harder, I am afraid, to be a good Bengali than a good Englishman. _Nikhil_, the Rajah of Sir RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S *The Home and the World* (MACMILLAN), persists in treating _Sandip Babu_ (a convinced Nietzchean in philosophy and a Nationalist of the most inflammable type) as an honoured guest of his household, in spite of the fact that he differs from the fellow profoundly on every conceivable topic and is well aware, moreover, that _Sandip_ is rapidly winning the heart of his Rani, _Bimala_. _Nikhil_, you see, considers that "all imposition of force is weakness," and that "only the weak dare not be just." Most Westerners, I think, would have kicked the rhapsodical and rather plausible agitator out-of-doors and felt all the better for it from the boot-toe upwards. The real truth is that the story, which is written in the form of a triple autobiography (_Nikhil_, _Sandip_ and _Bimala_ all taking a hand at telling it in turn) is an exposition of two views of Suadeshi, or what may be called the Sinn Fein movement in India. _Nikhil_ is the apostle of "self-realisation" as a moral force; _Sandip_ believes in grabbing whatever you can. The latter first deifies his country (_Bande Mataram_, or "Hail, Mother!" is the Nationalist motto) and then identifies _Bimala_ with the object of his worship, which seems a very convenient theory. As for _Bimala_, she wavers between the two. The romantic interest of the book (which is, by the way, a translation) breaks down rather badly when it becomes clear that _Sandip_ is not really a big enough man to make a complete conquest of the Rani; but from every other point of view it is supremely interesting. And if _Nikhil_ might perhaps have been improved by a little less force of character and more of shoe-leather, _Bimala_, at any rate, is a delightful personage.

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Even "KATHARINE TYNAN" must sometimes fall below her own standard, and *The Man from Australia* (COLLINS), though written with considerable grace and charm, is too thin in plot to be altogether satisfactory. _John Darling_, a youngish man of wealth and an extremely liberal disposition, came from Australia to visit his connexions in the West of Ireland and--if opportunities occurred--to help them. Opportunities did offer themselves in abundance. The *Adairs* in their various ways were ripe for a benefactor of the *Darling* type to appear, and *John* soon got busy. In the course of his activities--for it would have been unkind

(and very dull) to bring him all the way from Australia to Ireland just to serve as a travelling relief-fund--he is made to fall in love with one of the _Adair_ girls. And that's almost the whole story. One may always trust Mrs. HINKSON to get her atmosphere right; but she is not so happy in her attempt to contrast the preternaturally unselfish _Darling_ who, like an earlier _Mr. Darling_, would have been content to live in a kennel) with the inordinately self-indulgent father of the _Adairs_.

* * * * *

[Illustration: EPILOGUE]

THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS.

"I assume," said the Cynic, "that you are sufficiently sanguine to rejoice in the prospects of Peace."

"I derive a certain satisfaction from those prospects," replied Mr. Punch on a note of reserve.

"But you ought to be jazzing for joy, like the other fools in their Paradise of nigger minstrelsy."

"My years excuse me from choric exercises," said the Sage. "And, anyhow, it doesn't take me that way."

"Then you are not in the movement. You are not in touch with the spiritual pulse of our throbbing Metropolis; you take no active part in the New Life that is springing from the seed of England's sacrifices. True, your years, as you say, are against you, however well you wear them: it is to the young that we look first for signs of the great Regeneration. And in particular we look to those who are to be the mothers of that future race which should reap the full harvest of our blood and tears.

"And what do we find?" continued the Cynic. "We find a contempt for the old virtues of simplicity and reticence; we find the distinction of sex wiped out, and with it all reverence and sense of mystery. Nature is a back number with them; they must for ever be plastering their noses with powder--not just privily, as used to be the better way of faded charmers, but shamelessly in public places. In dress they barely keep within the bounds of decency prescribed by the police. They make their own advances, rounding up and capturing their 'boys' for partners, lest the haunts of jazzery should be closed against them. And in this competition for their favours the good modest fellows who only a little while ago were fighting our battles for us are now giving themselves the airs of spoilt beauties. What do you make of all this in your scheme of Renaissance?"

"I admit much of what you say," said Mr. Punch, "but I ascribe it, in part at least, to a natural reaction from the strain and horror of War."

"'Reaction!'" snorted the Cynic. "A very comfortable word. But what were the sufferings from which they are 'reacting'? The loss, you will say, of the flower of our chivalry in battle? Well, one would think that might have steadied them. Is this what our manhood died for--to make a British carnival?"

"I don't pretend to understand that side of it," said the Sage, "but I know that during the War we respected the silence of their grief; and I know that nature must choose its own way of recovering from a loss and reasserting its claim to happiness. Remember, too, that War must always have its demoralising features, however splendid the cause for which you are fighting. 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,' says the soldier in his brief intervals of release. And some of us at home went

more than half-way to meet him, imitating an attitude excusable in him but not in us. And that attitude is bound to survive for a little time the causes that induced it. But you must not forget that many of the type which you are now attacking did noble work in the War; and they will do it again."

"That may be," said the Cynic; "but is it necessary to have an orgy of _Carmagnole_ in between?"

"I think perhaps it is like the case of a crew or a team going out of training. They permit themselves a certain relaxation before they start training for the next contest. But I think too that there is something to be said for your reference to the _Carmagnole_. We are passing through a phase of Revolution, very natural after a great upheaval. The sense of freedom--the very thing for which we have been fighting--is apt to turn the heads of the young and thoughtless. There is a spirit of rebellion in the air, which at its worst takes the form of Bolshevism, but here is seen in a relatively harmless shape as a general revolt against social restriction, a general passion for what is known as 'a good time.' In any case it is only a passing phase. Already there are signs of a reaction from this reaction; of a return to the decency of other days. They tell me, for a slight but significant indication, that the waltz is coming back; that we may even look to see a revival of the, minuet and pavane."

"Then it is just a question of a cycle of vogues? We are to be swayed by recurring gusts of fashion, and not inspired by a fixed ideal."

"Fashion counts with us, of course, for we are human and some of us are feminine. There was a fashion of patriotism as there is now a fashion of something that might easily be mistaken for its opposite. But the range of its influence is largely confined to a rather negligible element in London, the most provincial of capitals. The Press--and notably the Photographic Press--gives it a prominence out of all relation to its importance. The great majority are untouched by it. They talk little and they advertise less. But in a thousand quiet ways they are setting themselves to make good."

"To make good money, you mean. Our world seems made up of profiteers and of those who would be profiteers but can't, and so abuse those who can. Can you name to me a period when there was a wilder rush for wealth, or a more blatant display of luxury? Sometimes I wish the War back; England was at her best when the call for sacrifice came home to her. But how--we hear great talk of Reconstruction, but I am reminded rather of the Restoration."

"My friend," said the Sage, "I shall believe that this too is only a temporary phase. Memory is not our strong point, but you can perhaps throw back your mind to a year ago and recall how near we came to the ruin of our hopes. Victory took us by surprise; and we were less prepared for Peace at that moment than we ever had been for War. And, just as in the first days of the fighting we went astray, running after the cry, 'Business-as-usual,' so to-day we are making as bad a mistake when we run after 'Pleasure-as-usual'--or rather more than usual. But we soon revised that early error, and we shan't waste much time about revising this. For though we lacked imagination then, and still lack it, we have the gift, perhaps even more useful if less showy, of common sense. And when common sense is found in natures that are honest and hearts that are clean it may make mistakes, but not for long."

"No, I am an optimist, and an incorrigible old fool, if you like, but I am certain that the spirit which won the War is not going to fail us at this second call. Perhaps we have only been waiting for the actual consummation of Peace to settle down to our new and greater task."

"And now I must excuse myself from further dialogue, having a mission to perform in connection with this very task. I go to distribute a corrective for some of the evils of Peace, as indicated by you. My motor-lorry, stuffed with samples, awaits me without."

"And what is the nature of your patent medicine?" said the Cynic, very cynically.

"It is," replied Mr. Punch, very confidently but also very modestly,--"it is a little thing of my own. It is, in fact; my

[Illustration: ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIXTH VOLUME".]

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