

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 156, March 19, 1919

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI

VOL. 156

MARCH 19, 1919

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CHARIVARIA.

President WILSON is stated to have played several keen games of "shuffle-board" on the _George Washington_. As it is an open secret that Lord ROBERT CECIL has been polishing up his "shove-halfpenny" in the billiard-room of the Hotel Majestic interesting developments are anticipated.

Primroses, daisies and wallflowers are in full bloom in many parts of the country and young lambs may now be seen frisking in the meadows. Can the POET LAUREATE be waiting for someone to get sun-stroke?

The Commission on the Responsibilities and Crimes of the War have not yet decided that the ex-Kaiser is guilty. At the same time it is said that they have an idea that he knew something about it.

At a Belfast football match last week the winning team, the police and the referee were mobbed by the partisans of the losing side. Local sportsmen condemn the attack on the winning team as a dangerous innovation.

The L.C.C. is training munition girls to be cooks. We understand that the velocity and range will be clearly stamped on the bottom of all pork-pies.

A Stromness fisherman, on opening a halibut, found a large cormorant in its stomach. Cormorants, of course, are not fastidious birds. They don't mind where they nest.

The eclipse of the sun on May 28th should be a great success, if we may judge by the immense time it has taken over rehearsals.

Inspector J.G. OGHAM, chief of the Portsmouth Fire Brigade, who is about to retire, has attended over two thousand fires. Indeed it is said that most of the local fires know him by sight.

"Ghost stories," says a contemporary, "are being spread about vacant houses in Dublin to decrease the demand for them." The old caretaker's trick of training a couple of cockroaches to jump out at the house-hunter is quite useless to-day.

Hull merchants complain that only one train leaves Hull per day on which wet fish can travel. The idea of bringing the fish to Billingsgate under their own steam has already been ventilated.

Found insensible with a bottle of sherry in his pocket, an East Ham labourer was fined ten shillings for being drunk. It is believed that had he been carrying the sherry anywhere else nothing could have saved him.

An absconding Trade Society treasurer last week hit upon a novel idea. He ran away with his own wife.

"Is nothing going to be done to stop the incursion of the sea at Walton-on-the-Naze?" asks a contemporary. Have they tried the effect of placing notice-boards along the front?

For the first time the public have been admitted to a meeting of the Beckenham Council. It is pleasant to find that the importance of good wholesome entertainment is not being lost sight of in some places.

Asked by the Wood Green magistrates for the names of his six children, a defendant said that he did not know them. It is a good plan for a man to get his wife to introduce him to the children.

It appears that a certain gentleman has managed to overcome the domestic servant problem. He has married one.

A Salford man giving evidence in a local court told the magistrates that his wife had repeatedly stuck pins into him. There is no excuse for such conduct, even with pin-cushions at their present inflated price.

No one seemed to take the rat-plague very seriously in the Isle of Wight until last week, when several rodents were discovered at the Seaplane Station at Bembridge busily engaged in trying on the pilots' flying coats.

It is only fair to remark that, although the Government has recently been found guilty of profiteering, they have never during the War raised the price: of their ten-shilling notes.

Much difficulty is being experienced by the Allies in deciding what to do with the German Fleet. Curiously enough this is the very dilemma that the Germans were faced with during most of the War.

We hear that the officials at Lincoln prison are much impressed by the cleverness of DE VALERA'S escape and are anxious to present him with an illuminated address, but unfortunately they do not know it at present.

A scientific organ points out that in deciding the fate of Heligoland it should not be forgotten that it was once a valuable ornithological observation station. The almost extinct _Pavo Potsdamicus,_ if we remember correctly, was an occasional visitor to the island.

Congress, says a Washington message, is anxious to get back to domestic business. It does not say whose.

* * * * *

[Illustration: STRANGE CASE IN PUGILISTIC CIRCLES.

A REPORTER LEARNS FROM BILL SLOGGS THAT HE IS NOTHING LIKE AS HARD AS NAILS AND NOT THE LEAST CONFIDENT.]

* * * * *

"Easter and Peace will coincide,' declared a member of the Council of Ten to the Central News correspondent in Paris."

"Easter Day this year is on April 20--less than six hours hence."--_Evening Paper, March 12th._

How some of our journalists do jump to conclusions!

* * * * *

THE MUD LARKS.

Yesterday morning, a freckled child, dripping oil and perspiration and clad in a sort of canvas dressing-gown, stumbled into "Remounts" (or "Demounts," as we should more properly call ourselves nowadays) and presented me with a slip of paper which entitled him, the bearer, to immediate demobilisation on pivotal grounds. I handed it back to him, explaining that he had come to the wrong shop--unless he were a horse, of course. If he were and could provide his own nosebag, head-stall and Army Form 1640, testifying that he was guiltless of mange, ophthalmia or epizootic lymphangitis, I would do what I could for him.

He stared at me for a moment, then at the slip, then, murmuring something about the mistake being his, began to feel in the numerous

pouches of his dressing-gown, bringing to light the following items:--

- (1) A. spanner.
- (2) Some attenuated cigarettes.
- (3) A picture-postcard fashioned in silk, with tropical birds and flowers, clasped hands, crossed Union Jacks and the legend "TRUE LOVE" embroidered thereon.
- (4) A handful of cotton waste.
- (5) Some brandy-balls.
- (6) An oil-can.
- (7) The ace of spades.
- (8) The portrait (tin-type) of a lady, inscribed "With kind regards from Lizzie."
- (9) A stick of chewing gum.
- (10) A mouse (defunct).
- (11) A second slip of paper.

He grunted with satisfaction, replaced his treasures carefully in the pouches and handed the last-named item to me. It read to the effect that both he and his car were at my disposal for the day. I wriggled into a coat and followed him out to where his chariot awaited us.

I never pretended to be a judge of motor vehicles, but it does not need an expert to detect a Drift when he sees one; they have a leggy, herring-gutted appearance all their own. Where it was not dented in it bulged out; most of those little knick-knacks that really nice cars have were missing, and its complexion had peeled off in erratic designs such as Royal Academicians used to smear on transports to make U-Boaters imagine they were seeing things they shouldn't and lead better lives.

I did not like the looks of the thing from the first, and my early impressions did not improve when, as we bumped off the drive on to the pave, the screen suddenly detached itself from its perch and flopped into our laps.

However, the car put in some fast work between our chateau gates and the estaminet of the "Rising Sun" (a distance of fully two hundred yards), and my hopes soared several points. From the estaminet of the "Rising Sun" to the village of Bailleul-aux-Hondains the road wriggles down-hill in two sharp hair-pin bends. The car flung itself over the edge of the hill and plunged headlong for the first of these.

"Put on the brakes!" I shouted.

The child did some kicking and hauling with his feet and hands which made no impression whatever on the car.

"Put on the brakes, damme!" I yelled.

The child rolled the whites of his eyes towards me and announced briefly, "Brake's broke."

I looked about for a soft place to jump. There was none; only rock-plated highway whizzing past.

We took the first bend with the nearside wheels in the gutter, the off-side wheels on the bank, the car tilted at an angle of forty-five degrees. The second bend we navigated at an angle of sixty degrees, the off-side wheels on the bank, the near-side wheels pawing thin air.

Had there been another bend we should have accomplished it upside down. Fortunately there were no more; but there remained the village street. We pounced on it like a tiger upon its prey.

"Blow your horn!" I screamed to the child.

"Bulb's bust," said he shortly, and exhibited the instrument, its squeeze missing.

I have one accomplishment--only one--acquired at the tender age of eleven at the price of relentless practice and a half-share in a ferret. I can whistle on my fingers. Sweeping into that unsuspecting hamlet I remembered this lone accomplishment of mine, plunged two fingers into my cheeks and emptied my chest through them.

"Honk, honk," blasted something in my ear and, glancing round, I saw that the child had swallowed the bulbless end of his horn and was using it bugle-wise.

Thus, shrilling and honking, we swooped through Bailleul-aux-Hondains, zig-zagging from kerb to kerb. A speckly cock and his platoon of hens were out in midstream, souvenir-hunting. We took them in the rear before they had time to deploy and sent a cloud of fluff-fricassee sky-high. A Tommy was passing the time o' day with the Hebe of the Hotel des Trois Enfants, his mules contentedly browsing the straw frost-packing off the town water supply. The off-donkey felt the hot breath of the car on his hocks and gained the salle-a-manger (via the window) in one bound, taking master and mate along with him.

The great-great-granddam of the hamlet was tottering across to the undertakers to have her coffin tried on, when my frantic whistling and the bray of the bugle-horn pierced the deafness of a century. With a loud creaking of hinges she turned her head, summed up the situation at a glance and, casting off half-a-dozen decades "like raiment laid apart," sprang for the side-walk with the agility of an infant gazelle. We missed her by half-an-inch and she had nobody but herself to thank.

Against a short incline, just beyond the stricken village, the car came to a standstill of its own accord, panting brokenly, quivering in every limb.

"She's red-'ot," said the child, and I believed him.

From the kettle arrangement in the bows came the sound of hot water singing merrily, while from the spout steam issued hissing. The tin trunk, in which lurks the clockwork, emitted dense volumes of

petrol-perfumed smoke from every chink. The child climbed across me and, dropping overboard, opened the lid and crawled inside. I lit a pipe and perused the current "_La Vie Parisienne_."

The clockwork roared and raged and exploded with the sharp detonations of a machine-gun. Sounds of violent coughing and tinkering came from the bowels of the trunk, telling that the child was still alive and busy. Presently he emerged to breathe and wipe the oil off his nose.

"Cylinder missin'," he announced.

I was not in the least surprised. "Probably dropped off round that last bend," said I. "Very nearly did myself. How many have we got left?"

He gaped, muttered something incoherent and plunged back into the trunk. The noise of coughing and tinkering redoubled. The smoke enveloped us in an evil-smelling fog.

"Think she'll go now," said the child, emerging once more. He climbed back over me, grasped the helm and jerked a lever. The car gave a dreadful shudder, but there was no other movement.

"What's the matter now?" I asked after he had made another trip to the bows.

He informed me that the car had moulted its winding handle.

"You'll 'ave ter push 'er till the engine starts, Sir," said he.

"Oh, will I? And what will you be doing, pray?" I inquired. He replied that he was proposing to sit inside and watch events, steer, work the clutch, and so on.

"That sounds very jolly," said I. "All right; hop up and hold your hat on." I went round to the stern, set my back against it and hove--there seemed nothing else for it. Five hundred yards further on I stopped heaving and interviewed the passenger. He was very hopeful. The engine had given a few reassuring coughs, he said, and presently would resume business, he felt convinced. Just a few more heaves, please.

I doffed my British warm and returned to the job. A quarter of an hour later we had another talk. All was well. The engine had suffered a regular spasm of coughing and one back-fire, so the child informed me. In half a jiffy we should be off.

I shed my collar, tie and tunic and bent again to the task. At Notre Dame de la Belle Esperance we parleyed once more. He was most enthusiastic. Said a few kind words about the good work I was doing round at the back and thought everything was going perfectly splendidly. The car's cough was developing every minute and there had been two back-fires. All the omens were propitious. A couple of short sharp shoves would do it. Courage, brave heart!

I reduced my attire to boots and underclothing, and toiled through Belle Esperance, the curs of the village nibbling my calves, the children shrilling to their mammas to come and see the strong man from the circus.

At Quatre Vents the brave heart broke.

"Look here," said I to the protesting child, "if you imagine I'm going to push you all the way to Arras you're 'straying in the realms of fancy,' as the poet says. Because I'm not. Just you hop out and do your bit, me lad. It's my turn to ride."

In vain did he argue that I was not schooled in the mysteries of either steering or clutching. Assuring him that I precious soon would be, I dragged him from his perch and took station at the helm. Sulkily he betook himself to the stern of the vehicle, and presently it began to move. Slowly at first, then faster and faster. I suddenly perceived the reason of this. We were going down-hill again, a steep hill at that, with wicked hair-pin bends in it.

The engine began to cough, the cough became chronic, developing into a galloping consumption.

"Brakes!" thought I (forgetting they were out of action), and wrenched at a handle which was offering itself. The car jumped off the mark like a hunter at a hurdle, jumped clear away from the child (who sat down abruptly on the pave) and bolted down-hill all out. I glimpsed the low parapet of the bend rushing towards me, an absurdly inadequate parapet, with the silvery gleam of much cold water beyond it.

I have not preserved my life (often at infinite risk) through four and a-half years of high-pressure warfare to be mauled to death by a tin car at the finish. Not I. I got out. As I trundled into the gutter I saw the car take the parapet in its stride, describe a graceful curve in the blue, and plunge downwards out of sight. The child and I reached the parapet together and peered over. Seventy feet below us the waters of the river spouted for a moment as with the force of some violent submarine explosion and then subsided. A patch of oil came floating to the surface, accompanied by my breeches and British warm.

The child looked at me, his eyes goggling with horror. "They won't 'alf fry my liver for this, they won't, not 'alf," he gasped huskily.

I laid a kindly hand upon his shoulder. "Not they, my lad; I'll see to that. Listen. You have that slip entitling you to immediate demobilisation?" He nodded, wondering. "Then demobilise yourself now, at once, instantly!" I cried. "Run like blazes to Calais, Boulogne, Havre, Marseilles--anywhere you like; only run, you little devil, run!"

"But you, Sir?" he stuttered.

"Oh, don't worry about me," I smiled; "I shall be quite all right. I'm going to lay all the blame on you."

He shot one scared glance, at me, then, picking up the skirts of his dressing-gown, scampered off down the road as fast as his ammunition boots would let him, never looking back.

PATLANDER.

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[Illustration: ANOTHER THREATENED INDUSTRY. CHANNEL STEWARD (infected

with the prevailing strike mania_). "ANY MORE TALK ABOUT THIS TUNNEL AND I DOWN BASINS!"]

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[Illustration: THE HUNTER BAULKED OF HIS PREY.]

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COMMERCIAL CANDOUR.

"They were manufacturers of aeroplanes--in their opinion the best aeroplanes in the world and the most suited for commercial lying."--_Provincial Paper_.

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"A hospital nurse interrupted evidence given in Portuguese at Thames Police Court on Saturday."--_Provincial Paper_.

Very rude of her.

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"An experimental air service for Army mails only was begun a few days ago between Folkestone and Boulogne, with intermediate points in Belgium, said Mr. Illingworth, Postmaster-General."--_Daily Chronicle_.

"We are a long way yet from the mastery of the air. Out of fifteen days the Prime Minister's Paris postbag, which it had been arranged should be sent 'via aloft,' had to go by the old land and water route in fourteen days."--_Daily Mirror_.

Even that, we suppose, was quicker than to send it by the circuitous air-route _via_ Belgium.

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"Section-Commander ----, who has had charge of the ---- Special Constabulary since their inception, has been presented by the members with a Sheraton clock at a wind-up dinner."--_Local Paper_.

It was, of course, the clock that had the wind up, not the Section-Commander.

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"FOREIGN DIPLOMATS TAKE TO PRESIDENT. His Ability in Dealing with Them Exceeds the Most Sanguinary Expectations."--_New York Times_.

We shall have to revise our conception of Mr. WILSON as a man of peace.

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[Illustration: _Rearguard Officer of Demobilization (collecting stragglers on route-march)._"WHAT THE DOOCE ARE YOU?" Straggler._

"I'M WOT T' MULES BROKE AWAY FROM."]

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THE PATRIOT'S REWARD.

Narcissus, in that fateful hour
When Britain's belt was tightly buckled
Against the prowling U-boat's power,
Thou earnest to us newly suckled;
And oh! if interest ties the knot
That binds us to our fellow-creatures,
Be sure we loved thee on the spot,
My pigling with the pensive features.

No niggard hand it was that found
Thy punctual fare, nor short the measure
Of garbage brought from miles around
And meal that cost its weight in treasure;
But ever as the U-boat u'd
And lunch grew relatively lighter
We filled thee up with wholesome food
And watched thy tensile skin grow tighter.

Artless as is the wanton faun
And agile as the Hooluck gibbon,
The children "walked" thee on the lawn,
Tied with a bow of orange ribbon;
And aye as irksomer grew the task
Of fending off the Hun garotters
In our mind's eye--if you must ask--
We ate thee up from tail to trotters.

But Fate, as oft, declined to pour
Our cup of grief till it was quite full;
You scarce had turned your seventh score
When straightway Fritz became less frightful;
And argosies came home to port
As safe as though some inland lake on,
Laden from keel to groaning thwart
With tender ham and toothsome bacon.

No need, old sport, to slay thee now,
Yet in our hearts the thought we'll cherish
That for our sakes, Narcissus, thou,
So young, so fair, wast like to perish;
And, as the years of Peace go by
And war becomes a fireside story,
"Thank Heaven," we'll cry, "thou didst not die,
But lived to reap the fruits of glory;

"Assimilating in repose
Thy fragrant fare of tops and peelings,
Or making all the garden close
Echo with-pregustative squealings,
Or basking, when the sun is high,
Within thy chamber's cool recesses
While some fair child with practised eye
Combs with a rake thy tangled tresses."

And ever, as new twilights burn
Low, and our offspring, loudly yelling,
Hurry the well-heaped votive urn
To thy obscure but ample dwelling,
"Ready at need thou wast to give
Thy life," they'll say, "that want might miss us,
For ever, therefore, shalt thou live
With us and be our love, Narcissus."

ALGOL.

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[Illustration: THE SCANDAL.

Tramp (just discharged from workhouse). "AND TO THINK THAT'S WHAT WE
PAYS RATES FOR!"]

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ON THE RHINE.

II.

There is an expression here which I expect will shortly become as familiar as "Na poo," and that is, "Hoot up!" When I first beard our mild and gently-mannered Carfax employ it as a vigorous word of command to a civilian in this small German village, I thought he had gone a little mad. For no good military purpose, it seemed to me, could possibly be served by demanding an imitation of an owl at eleven o'clock on a wintry morning. It argued a perverted sense of humour at least; and in truth I had been expecting a slight lapse from the paths of sanity on the part of our Mr. Carfax for some time. For, you see, he is a pivotal man who cannot get away until others arrive to replace the pivots, and it is difficult to persuade him that all is for the best. But he informed me that "Hoot up" had nothing whatever to do with, the night-cries of owls or any other kind of bird, but was in fact the idiotic way in which the natives of this country pronounce "_Hut ab_" (Hat off).

Now you realise what horrid Huns we are. Civilians are obliged to take off their hats to British officers--a very grim business. In reality, except that we are the hated English, it makes very little difference to the Bosch, for the innkeeper here says that orders concerning the taking off of hats to all and sundry became so stringent in 1918 that the local postman was constantly interrupted in his duties to answer the salutes of people who wished to be on the safe side.

Bosches who have really fought for their country do not object to "Hoot-upping." They of course are the first to realise that inhabitants of occupied countries were forced by them to "hoot up," and that therefore there is a certain justice now in the retaliation. Anyway, from these people the procedure does not greatly interest us; but the overdressed Bosch profiteer, fat and muttoney--to hoot him up in his own village! Really, you know, in some ways the War has been worth while.

But the knowledge that he is carrying out a perfectly definite order does not make the subaltern turn any the less pink the first time he ticks off a civilian for failing to comply with the regulations. No, you can't produce a really good Hun without lots of practice. I made almost a companion of the Sergeant-Major at first, because he used to say it for me; but the second day I got caught. It came as I was picking my way down the main (and only) street of the village. My attention being riveted upon keeping my feet, for there are little streams on either side of the street which freeze and flood it, making life in army boots difficult, I did not notice the approach of the fellow until he was on me. And then I saw it was a real Hunnish Hun; and, oh joy! he had a fur coat and a face which I had not thought could exist outside bad dreams. His wicked little eyes glared insolently at me, and he strolled by with his hat stuck at a rakish angle; and for the life of me, would you believe it? I could not remember the magic words. Turning in desperation I commanded him without further delay to "hot hoop." He appeared surprised. He made no sort of motion to comply with my order. "Hut hop!" I cried, purple with vexation, and still the abominable article of headgear remained jauntily perched over his square ugly face. Advancing threateningly I thundered out that it was my firm intention that he should, under peril of instant arrest, "take his confounded, hat off!" At this final command (the first he had found intelligible) he grabbed hastily at the offending article, slipped up on the ice, and, in my moment of triumph, so did I.

It is a sickening business sitting on the ground opposite a man you don't like, but I had the better of it in the end, for I had sat down where the water was already frozen, and he hadn't.

Our Mr. Carfax too had an awkward incident happen to him. We were walking down the street discussing the Pay Warrant, which gives the young Army of Occupation a bonus from February 1st, and gives us nothing for doing their job until May, when suddenly a civilian passed us with a mere nod. Mr. Carfax went on with his insubordinate conversation, oblivious to the insult.

"Mr. Carfax," I said sadly, "when will you learn that private affairs must never be allowed to interfere with military duties?"

"Sir," he said, surprised and aggrieved, "though a pivotal man of some years' standing I really am taking an interest in my platoon--"

"It is not that," I said; "but do you know you allowed a civilian to pass on your side without taking his hat off?"

Scarlet with chagrin he rushed back after the offender and "hooted him up" more sternly than I could have believed possible for anybody but a Hun to the manner bred.

"I'm most awfully sorry," said the man, "but I've only just got out and didn't know about it." It transpired (as they say) that he was an Englishman who had been interned in the village for four years.

L.

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[Illustration: ["All horses selected from the Expeditionary Forces for

shipment to the United Kingdom must have the letter Y clipped on the off saddle."--_Remount Regulation_]

Elated War-Horse (on completion of operation). "HOME, JOHN!"]

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"Mr. ---- will play the flute obligato for Miss ----, and none better could be found."--_Provincial Paper_.

Very kind of him, no doubt, but most of us would prefer to do without this accompaniment.

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PUNCH'S APPEAL FOR "OUR DAY."

The following letter, dated March 12th, has been received from Sir ARTHUR STANLEY:--

"The completion of the Fund which Mr. Punch has raised in connection with the 'Our Day' appeal gives me the opportunity of again expressing my grateful appreciation of this splendid effort.

"The total remittances we have received from you amount to L11,040 5s. 5d., and the long list of subscribers shows how loyally and generously the readers of _Punch_ have rallied to your appeal.

"On behalf of the Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John, I should like to thank you and your readers most cordially for the welcome assistance you have provided for the relief of the sick and wounded."

* * * * *

"To-day in the garden:--

"Refine the onion-bed thoroughly."--_Daily Mail_.

Have you tried eau-de-Cologne?

* * * * *

NOUVELLES DE PARIS.

Paris, March 1919.

DEAREST POPPY,--I have a piece of news to send you from here that will give you a veritable _frisson d'angoisse_. No, it doesn't concern the Peace Conference; it's something far worse than that. _Figurez-vous_, the new style of _coiffure_ is severe to the point of being absolutely terrifying--that is to the woman who has been shivering on the brink of thirty for any length of time.

Foreheads are coming in again--_que c'est embetant_! I thought they'd been abolished long ago. I wish I could get hold of the _mechant_ (for I know it's a man) who is introducing them now. I had my hair dressed

chez Manet to-day in the new style, and when I saw myself afterwards I sat down and wept like the women of Babylon.

Quel horreur! My locks were strained, brushed, tightened back, and I was left high and dry with my exposed brow revealing four furrows to an unsympathetic world. _C'est navrant_. We're not to be allowed even the _soupçon_ of a wave or the lightest _bouffée_, while side-curls are quite _démodes_.

I think the situation is really tragic. So few women can afford to have a forehead. The result will be that lots of our _debutantes_ of some seasons ago will be "_coiffées à Ste. Catherine_" in more senses than one.

The "jewellery" one wears now is made of wood; we have carved wooden beads, wooden bracelets, even wooden rings. "Therefore it will be cheap!" you exclaim. _Vous vous trompez, mon amie_. I read a story the other day of an American who said that if you want an egg here for breakfast it is cheaper to buy the hen and hope she'll lay next morning, and in any case you've got the hen. _Eh bien_, should you desire a set of wooden jewellery you might save money if you bought a forest.

Paris has done more than extend _le bon accueil_ to the Peace delegates; she is giving their names to the latest thing in _vetements_. Thus we have the Lloyd George _cravate_, the Wilson _gilet_ and the "Bonarlaw" _chapeau melon_. It's surprising how far-reaching are the effects of a Peace Conference.

A number of _nous autres Anglais_ over here started a perfectly _thrilling_ idea. It was really in the way of being an adventure. We have been exploring the quaint little _cafés_ of Paris, with results _tout à fait étonnants_. We were served with provokingly delicious _plats_, at a price absurdly moderate compared with what is extorted from us in the hotels. Of course we were all enchanted. We became _habitues_ of _cafés_ and ceased to take any meals at our hotels beyond the matutinal _café complet_.

And then, quite suddenly, a horrid newspaper article appeared which conveyed suggestions _extrêmement désagréables_. It insinuated, _ma chère_, that "things are not what they seem"--at any rate things in the bill of fare at the moderately-priced eating-house.

It went on to speak of the many uses that domestic animals are put to after their labours on earth are ended. If it was horse that figured in the _boeuf bourguignon_ served up to me, or the _potée de boeuf aux choux_ (of which I will admit I _raffole_) I have no quarrel with it. It's the "_lapin_" I have had occasionally that's giving me the most qualms. I can't look at a cat now without a shudder.

As for Bertie, he says whenever he thinks of the _tripes à la mode de Caen_ he so often favoured, he's very glad that he has even less imagination than his friends credit him with.

Of course the article may have been inspired by the keepers of hotels who were losing our custom. I think it's more than likely. But we've decided for the present to give the hotels the benefit of the doubt.

Toujours,

Your well-devoted ANNE.

* * * * *

DELYSIOUS DETAILS.

A contemporary, hearing of the reported engagement of two well-known persons in the world of Music and the Drama, interviewed the lady and obtained from her the following synopsis of the crucial moment:--

"I was lunching with my costumier this afternoon, and among the people there was M--- After luncheon he asked me to be his wife. I said 'Yes,' and the marriage takes place next week. We've been friends since I was twelve years old, and his music is the finest I have ever heard."

Spurred to emulation by this striking example of journalistic enterprise, correspondents in all parts of the world are composing piquant descriptions of similar contracts. We offer two examples:--

1. Miss Fanny V. Adie consented to give the correspondent of The Poppleton Observer a few particulars of her engagement to Captain Scorcher, O.B.E.:--

"I was sitting on my ambulance having a biscuit and tin of bully with Alphonse (my French poodle), when suddenly there was a terrific crash. It appears, as I learnt later, that Captain Scorcher was motoring to Lille to purchase whisky and other medical comforts, when the steering-gear of his 60-H.P. Rolls-Ford came away in his hands, with the result that he nose-dived into the rear of my ambulance at forty miles per hour. When I came to my senses my head was in the ditch and the rest of me in mid-air. Captain Scorcher, crawling out of the wreckage, said, 'Do you reverse?' and then asked me to be his wife. I said 'Yes,' meaning I reversed, and the marriage takes place as soon as we arrive at the same hospital. We have been more or less bosom-friends for five minutes, and I think his moustache is the sweetest thing I ever met."

2. Asked if she could confirm her reported engagement to Lord Bertie Brasshatte, Miss Fifi Thistledowne--who dances "The Camisole Squeeze" so daintily in "Really, Girls!" (the Mausoleum revue)--recounted to the correspondent of The Jazzers' Gazette the following romantic story:--

"I was having oysters and stout with my chiropodist at his place in Stepney, and among the people there was Lord Bertie Brasshatte, who is a martyr to cold feet, contracted during his visit to Boulogne in 1918. (How can we ever repay these brave men for the hardships they have suffered?) Well, after the tenth oyster he passed me two slips of buff paper, pinned together. On the first was written, 'For information and necessary action, please;' and on the other, 'Are you engaged tomorrow?' I said, 'No,' and the marriage takes place as soon as my agent can make arrangements with the illustrated papers. We've been friends ever since Lord Bertie left a lovely diamond tiara in my waste-paper basket, and I think his suppers are the finest I have ever tasted."

* * * * *

HIMALAYANS AT PLAY.

(Suggested by the sequel to a recent Lecture.)

The Chairman, Sir Norman Everest, after congratulating the lecturer on his interesting address and beautiful photographs, observed that he remained unconvinced by his arguments in favour of approaching Mount Amaranth from the North. The climatic difficulties of that route were in his opinion insuperable, to say nothing of the hostility of the natives of the Ong-Kor plateau and the Muzbakh valley. He still believed that the best mode of approach was from the South-West, following the course of the Sissoo river to Todikat, where an ample supply of yaks could be obtained, and thence proceeding along the Dagyolong ridge to Tumlong.

Sir Francis Oldmead said that he had seldom heard a more interesting lecture or seen a finer collection of photographs. He must be allowed to demur, however, to the lecturer's description of the heavy snowfall in the highlands of Sandjakphu. During his visit to that district, as they would see from the photographs which he would presently show on the screen, he enjoyed uninterrupted sunshine; nor had he met with the slightest difficulty from the Pangolins of Phagdub. As for the best approach to Mount Amaranth he was convinced that the only feasible route was to work up the Yulmag valley to the Chikkim frontier at Lor-lumi, crossing the Pildash at Gonglam, and, skirting the deep gorge of the Spudgyal, ascend the Takpa glacier to Teshi Tsegpa.

Professor Parbatt expressed his keen appreciation of the vivid descriptions of Himalayan scenery given by the lecturer, and the admirably-selected photographs which had enlivened his address. He wished, however, that he could have furnished more details as to his camp equipment. Had he, for example, used Nummulitic beds for his party? Then there was the question of geoidal deformation, on which he had remained unaccountably silent. As for the vital problem of approaching Mount Amaranth, he ventured to differ from all the previous speakers. The Northern, South-Western and Eastern routes were all equally impracticable, as he would conclusively demonstrate from the photographs he had brought with him. But there were at least fourteen routes from the West, of which he would confine himself to four. (1) Starting from Yeh, the party might cross the Tablung-La pass to Gorkpa Nor, and thence follow the Yombo to Chilgat, where they would be only twenty-five miles from the foot of the western face of Amaranth. (2) They could follow the old Buriat pack-road to Amdo, diverge by the narrow defile of Koko-Pir-Panjal to Tumbung, and thence make for Ghapchu-Srong and Chyang-Chub-Gyultshan. (3) They might start from Pongrot and cross the Tok-Tok pass to Pilgatse. (4) They might construct a tube from Darjiling to Grogma-Nop, and thence proceed by aeroplane to the saddle of Makalu, or, better still, to the summit of Amaranth itself. The last route was far the shortest and quickest, but it involved a certain amount of preliminary expense.

The Chairman having expressed his regret that Sir Marcon Tinway was not present to describe his experiments with man-lifting kites and trained albatrosses, the assembly dispersed after singing the Tibetan national anthem.

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[Illustration: HOW TO BRIGHTEN THE PERIOD OF REACTION.

Mother (to son who has fought on most of the Fronts). "DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH YOURSELF, GEORGE? WHY DON'T YOU 'AVE A WALK DOWN THE ROAD, DEAR?"

Father. "AH, 'E AIN'T SEEN THE CORNER WHERE THEY PULLED DOWN SIMMONDSES' FISH-SHOP, 'AS 'E, MA?"]

* * * * *

A hitherto unrecorded incident in the life of M. CLEMENCEAU:--

"A little later in his career--at the time of the Commune, in fact--another man very nearly escaped being shot in mistake for him."--_Egyptian Gazette_.

There are, we understand, several Frenchmen who can boast that they escaped this fate altogether.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Lady (to prospective daily housemaid)_ "THE HOURS WILL BE FROM NINE TO SIX-THIRTY, WITH AN HOUR AND A-HALF OFF FOR DINNER."

D.H. "FOR _LUNCHEON_, I SUPPOSE YOU MEAN. AND I SHOULD HAVE TO LEAVE AT SIX, AS I ALWAYS DINE AT MY CLUB AND HAVE TO DRESS FIRST."]

* * * * *

AN UNHAPPY HERO.

Poor Clayton-Vane's case is one of the most poignant peace tragedies that have come to my notice. He had just acquired an inexplicable but genuine enthusiasm for stockbroking when the War gave him the opportunity of developing into a remarkably brilliant officer. Not only did he attain his majority, but gathered a perfect chestful of decorations, including all the common varieties and several which leave civilians guessing.

Yet strange to say the man who has won these honours in war detests soldiering with all his heart. He fought as a duty, and did his share with furious energy in the hope of so shortening the War. His hatred of the military profession is indeed equalled only by his love of stockbroking and by his natural pride in having scrapped right on from the word "Go!" till November 10th, 1918, when he was sent home slightly wounded.

Now the tragedy of which he is the pathetic central figure is the result of his remarkably youthful appearance. Every time his portrait figures in _The Daily Scratch_, people say, "Why, he looks a mere child! But then these Press photographs always do distort one so." Yet in this instance people are unjust. Clayton-Vane, after a four years' flirtation with death, has the face and figure of a careless chubby schoolboy. When he is in uniform this youthfulness only adds lustre to his blushing honours.

Now my unhappy friend is on the horns of a dilemma. He pines to go

back to broking as sincerely as some men pine to travel or to write poetry, but every time he ventures out in mufti some painful incident warns him what he will have to suffer as a civilian, with his round rosy face, innocent blue eyes, curly hair and bright smile. He hears himself referred to as a chip of the old block. Chance acquaintances ask him if his father or big brothers were at the Front. To-day, he told me very bitterly, he was asked if he did not wish the War had lasted a little longer so that he might have been old enough to go out and fight!

"I can't bear it, old man," he said. "There's something about me that draws out their sentimentality, and they've all got to say something about my youth, and the heritage of peace that the 1917 conscripts won for me. They talk as if I had been busy with a feeding-bottle instead of compressing my silly face in a box-respirator."

His dilemma is a very painful one for a man so sensitive and at the same time so enamoured of stockbroking. Hard as the renunciation will be, I really believe he will end by turning his back on the Exchange for ever and taking a regular commission, though I try to persuade him that if he will only brave the horrors of peace as he braved the horrors of war he will win through in the end and grow out of his face.

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PROMOTION.

"Ex-Batman wanted as General in private house."--_Times_.

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[Illustration: AN IRRESISTIBLE CLAIM.

ROUMANIA. "I HOPE, WHILE THEY'RE FEEDING THEIR STARVING ENEMIES, THEY WON'T FORGET THEIR STARVING FRIENDS."]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

[Illustration: _Duke of Venice (the Lord Chancellor), to Portia_. "YOU ARE WELCOME: TAKE YOUR PLACE."--_Merchant of Venice, Act IV. Sc. 1. _]

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Monday, March 10th--Sir JAMES AGG-GARDNER asked two questions dealing with the distribution of poisons. By a singular coincidence--or was it design?--the hon. baronet was himself, as Chairman of the Kitchen Committee, accused by Mr. BOTTOMLEY of having purveyed poison in the shape of stale fish to sundry Members of the House, thereby causing them serious internal disturbance. Happily he was able to show that the charge was entirely baseless.

Scots legal terminology always puzzles me. The "peremptory diets" which Mr. MACQUISTEN urged upon the attention of the SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY as a remedy for the grievances of Glasgow's financiers are not, as you might suppose, a synonym for forcible feeding; nor have they anything to do with the substitutes for "parritch" to which, as

I gathered from Mr. STURROCK, the people of Scotland are being obliged to resort owing to the high price of oatmeal.

Members rubbed their eyes a little when they heard Colonel AMERY declare that the general policy of the Government regarding Imperial Preference had been "clearly defined" and in the ensuing debate Sir DONALD MACLEAN declared that, on the contrary, their whole fiscal policy was "wrop in mystery."

The veil was lifted to some extent by Sir AUCKLAND GEDDES, the Ministerial "handy man," who, in the absence through illness of Sir ALBERT STANLEY, explained how the Government proposed to regulate imports and exports during the transitional period. Up to September 1st our manufacturers are to enjoy a sort of close-time, free from foreign competition, but after that they must, like the partridges, take their chance.

Later in the evening the House welcomed a new orator in Dr. MURRAY, who sits for the Western Isles. He made a rousing appeal on behalf of the men--practically the whole able-bodied population--who had gone from them to fight the Empire's battles. In his view the SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND was too mild in his methods, and should be "bristling with thistles and flourishing the claymore" when he tackled the reform of the Land Laws. Mr. MUNRO was evidently flattered by this tribute to the martial potentialities underlying his eminently pacific exterior.

Tuesday, March 11th--In moving the Second Reading of his Bill to enable women to become barristers and solicitors, Lord BUCKMASTER thought it necessary to assure the House that there was no danger of its flooding the Inns with prospective Bar-maids. He might have spared his apologetics, for there was no opposition. The LORD CHANCELLOR welcomed the Bill on behalf of the Government, and expressed the conviction that the Benchers, though not "avid of this change," would nevertheless loyally co-operate if Parliament saw fit to adopt it.

Having caught the infection from the Commons the Peers then proceeded to discuss their own procedure. From Lord CURZON we learned, somewhat to our surprise, that the House possesses certain Standing Orders. At present it honours them chiefly in the breach, and in its Leader's view it would do well to imitate the more orderly procedure of another place, even to the adoption of "starred questions" and the abandonment of the practice by which any noble Lord, by the simple process of addressing an inquiry to a Minister, can initiate a full-dress debate. Lord CREWE'S pious hope that these suggestions would enable more noble Lords to take part in the debates was welcomed by Lord AMPHILL, who remarked that, after nearly thirty years in that House, he had never before been made aware of this desire for backbench orations.

As originally introduced the Rent Restriction Bill was strictly limited in its operation. But landlord-baiting is a sport to which the House of Commons is much addicted, and by the time the measure emerges from Committee its own draughtsman will hardly recognise it.

The best of the many Amendments complacently accepted, after a show of reluctance, by the Government spokesmen, was one providing that no increase of rent shall be chargeable except in the case of a house "reasonably fit for habitation." That should make some of our slum-owners sit up and take notice.

Wednesday, March 12th.--An apparently innocent request from Lord SUDELEY for the reinstatement of the system of guide-lecturers in the Museums led to quite a lively debate. Other noble lords used the motion as a peg for a fierce indictment of the Government's treatment of these institutions during the War. Lord CRAWFORD, who has probably forgotten more about Art than some of his critics ever knew, concealed his real sympathy for the motion under a mask of official obstructiveness, but was compelled eventually to give it a strictly provisional acceptance.

In the old days when the possession of a seat was secured by the deposit of a hat it was no uncommon thing, on the morning of a big debate, to see a Member staggering in under a load of toppers, with which he proceeded to secure seats for his friends. To put an end to this nefarious practice the card-system was introduced; but that, it is said, has now been similarly abused. One man one card, however, is in future to be the rule. Colonel WILL THORNE feared that it might still be circumvented by the "stage army" trick; but the SPEAKER thought the attendants might be trusted to recognise and defeat any Member who essayed it.

Rear-Admiral Sir REGINALD HALL, having added to his laurels by defeating a NELSON at Liverpool, took his seat this afternoon, and was loudly cheered for the manner in which he came into action. He and his supporters maintained their "line abreast" and discharged their salvoes of salutes to the Chair with faultless precision.

Later on the gallant Admiral earned further cheers for a capital maiden speech on the Naval Estimates. These were introduced by Mr. LONG, who told the story of the Navy's triumph with all a landsman's enthusiasm. Its future size may to a certain extent depend upon the Judgment of Paris, but he was certain that, come what may, the Nation would always insist on having a Fleet sufficient for our needs--a sentiment which received the welcome endorsement of Mr. BRACE for the Labour Party.

According to Commander NORMAN CRAIG it was anything but sufficient for our needs when war broke out. It lacked docks, destroyers, submarines, air-ships--everything, in fact, save Dreadnoughts, which, in the absence of these accessories, had to belie their name and rush from one unprotected anchorage to another in fear of the German mosquito-craft. Only the courage of the officers and men saved us, and up to the present--that was the tenor of many of the speeches--they have reaped but a scanty reward.

[Illustration: GENERAL SEELY'S NON-STOP FLIGHT.]

Thursday, March 13th.--Ministers left at home to "mind the shop" would rather like, I fancy, to put up a notice over the Palace of Westminster, "Closed till after the Peace Conference." Nearly every problem presented to them depends for its ultimate solution upon the decisions arrived at in Paris. Lord STUART OF WORTLEY, for example, put a series of most pressing questions regarding the present condition and future prospects of Poland; but Lord CURZON in reply could only shrug his shoulders (at considerable length) and refer him to the Conference.

The LEADER of the House of Commons labours under similar disabilities,

which are beginning to try even his amiable temper. Until Paris has spoken he cannot give definite information about the Government's fiscal policy, the amount of the German indemnity and other pressing topics, and, as he told some of his persistent questioners this afternoon, it is no good putting the same question to him every week and expecting a different answer.

The best news of the day is that there will be an ample supply of currants for Whitsuntide school-treats, and _Smith minor's_ translation of "_Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum_" as "Not everyone is lucky enough to find a currant in his war-bun" will no longer be applicable.

Five years ago General SEELY, then Secretary of State for War, asked timidly for a single million for aircraft. To-day, as Under-Secretary for Air, he boldly demanded sixty-six millions, and explained that but for the Armistice the amount would have been two hundred millions. And the House, after hearing his glowing account of the wonderful achievements of our airmen, readily voted the money. A good deal of it is to go, quite rightly, to relieving the hardships of demobilisation, which fall with peculiar severity on men whose special training is not much use to them in civil life. The least we can do when they are forced to descend from their chosen element is to insure them against a bad landing.

* * * * *

TO A VEGETABLE-MARROW.

O monstrous, O Gargantuan, overgrown!
O huge! O gross! O squat!
Whose one redeeming virtue--one alone--
Is that you weigh a lot;
Who will not thrive upon the common soil,
So that the patient digger e'en must toil
To raise a special mound
Above the level ground
That you may sun yourself upon the sloping earth
And, like the wicked, wax to an uncommon girth.

But it is not your vast circumference
That stirs this passing strain;
I would not sing although, to move you hence,
They fetched their biggest crane;
It is that men should shovel tons of _that_
Into the maws of some capacious vat,
Add sugar (half-a-pound)
And stir it round and round;
Then, at the last, throw in some ginger with a spade
And label the result as "Lemon Marmalade."

* * * * *

From a description of the first flight of R 33:--

"Alas, the meteorological conditions, at first considered probable, turned out worse."--_Yorkshire Paper_.

Nothing so likely as the improbable.

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[Illustration: SENSATIONAL SURPRISE STRIKE OF HEROES IN CINEMA-LAND.

PICKETS OF HEROES PREVENT BLACKLEG COLLEAGUE FROM WORKING WHEN THE HEROINE MOST PARTICULARLY NEEDS HELP.]

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THE BIBLE IN PAIN.

MR. H.G. WELLS' new novel, based on the Book of Job, and Mr. ARNOLD BENNETT'S new play dealing with the story of JUDITH and HOLOFERNES, by no means exhaust the Biblical and Apocryphal motives from which our popular writers are now drawing inspiration.

Mrs. HUMPHRY WARD'S next novel will be a minutely analytical study of the contrasted temperaments of ESAU and JACOB, the one standing for revolt and the other for a rather smooth and supple orthodoxy.

Mr. E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM is turning his attention to a new spy romance woven about the experiences of CALEB and JOSHUA.

Professor CHALMERS MITCHELL has long been engaged on a monograph on the Ark and its inmates, in which the famous zoologist will explain the conditions under which the animals lived, the segregation and food problems, and how the complexities following disembarkation were dealt with by NOAH and his family. Lord PIRRIE is contributing a chapter on the structure of the vessel, and there will be an appendix on the dangers of overcrowding by Sir ARTHUR NEWSHOLME.

Mr. GALSWORTHY has also been turning his attention to the Ark, and the inhumane congestion of the creatures that were packed into it. The result should be a very interesting psychological and sociological work, the leading character being HAM'S wife, whom the novelist figures as a protester to her father-in-law against his treatment of all the animals, but in particular of the two Pekinese spaniels.

Mr. ALEC WAUGH has nearly completed an indictment of private tuition based on the story of SAMUEL and ELI.

Mr. H.B. IRVING, turning aside for the moment from the study of more recent turpitude, is preparing an analytical memoir on the first murder, that of ABEL by CAIN. With all his well-known thoroughness he reconstructs the crime and shows in what particulars CAIN, although an innovator, proved himself also an adept.

Mr. GEORGE MOORE is meditating a revised version of the story of JOSEPH and his Brethren, which in his opinion is sadly in need of re-writing, suffering as it does from an unsophisticated simplicity of diction and thought.

Mr. CONRAD is busy with a new romance treating of JONAH and the whale, in which, for the sake of verisimilitude, JONAH will himself recount his strange adventure to a few personal friends. As the narrative runs to over a hundred thousand words the reader may be sure that no detail of realism is omitted from the description of the luckless voyage.

Mrs. ELINOR GLYN'S new novel will be called The Heart of Solomon.

The movie-producers are not idle. After the greatest difficulty in procuring an actor of prophetic mien willing to undertake the rather trying part of DANIEL, an intrepid dompteur has been found in France and the story of the Lions' Den is to be filmed at once. Possibly some assistance from the drug whose power was illustrated by Mr. GEORGE MORROW in last week's Punch may be called for.

Meanwhile a company is being formed for the exploitation of a new system of muscular development under the name of "Samsonism," and a powerful company of public men is being enlisted to write daily articles in its praise.

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ANOTHER IMPENDING APOLOGY.

"London's Premier Turn Coat Specialist."--Advt. in Daily Paper.

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"Writers, mostly town-bred, infatuated with the country-side, have raved of the statuesque repose of the rural maiden. A statute is no doubt a beautiful object, but you do not want to take it to a dance."--Daily Paper.

We shouldn't, but the LORD CHANCELLOR might.

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AT THE PLAY.

"THE HOUSE OF PERIL."

The maker of a plot that turns upon murder and drugging in the neighbourhood of a Continental gambling haunt must be aware that his work is not going to be brought to the test of common experience, and he is therefore less likely to be hampered by the laws of probability. But there are limits even to the British public's gift of credulity. How far Mrs. BELLOC LOWNDES may have enjoyed special privileges in the search for her material I cannot say; but for myself I confess that a modest acquaintance with the atmosphere of European casinos has left me in absolute ignorance of any such society as that of the hosts of The House of Peril. Perhaps Mrs. LOWNDES'S book (which I have not read) may throw light on this dark mystery; but in the play--and the play's the only thing that concerns us here--I could trace nothing to indicate to my poor intelligence how it was that two decently-bred ladies and their escort, a perfectly honest French officer, ever came to find themselves on terms of easy intercourse with the frowsy old German couple who lived at the Chalet des Muguets, Lacville, on the proceeds of robbery.

Any obstacle which these repellent Teutons may have had to overcome in the ultimate execution of their nefarious designs must have been the merest child's-play compared with the initial difficulty of inducing the right kind of victim to penetrate so fifth-rate an interior. One never even began to get over the inherent improbability of such an

attraction.

And I was the less disposed to take things for granted because of the rather irritating obscurity that veiled the opening of the Second Act, in which we are introduced to The House of Peril and are left for a long time in doubt as to the nature of the place and its relation to anything that has gone before. I think this must have been the fault of the adapter, Mr. VACHELL. He seems to have assumed in his audience a general knowledge of the original story--dangerous confidence, even in the case of so clever and popular a writer as Mrs. BELLOC LOWNDES.

It certainly was his fault that the end of the play was like nothing ever seen off the stage. Let me briefly put the scene before you. A young Englishwoman, paying a farewell call upon the criminals of The House of Peril, has been drugged by them. She wakes up prematurely to find them collecting her pearl necklace--four thousand pounds' worth of it. Murder is in the air, when suddenly, to the surprise of the villains (but not to ours, for we had had fair warning of the denouement), enter to the rescue two admirers of the lady. In the excitement attendant upon her recovery from a swoon the druggists are suffered to pass out through the door into the arms of a posse of constabulary.

At this juncture, the lady having been restored to her senses, you might suppose that the rescue-party would take at least some fleeting interest in the disposal of their prisoners. There you would be in error. The final curtain is due and there are peremptory affairs of the heart to be wound up before we can get away. So, to clear the ground, one of the admirers makes a gallant statement which redeems the other's character from a false suspicion, and, rightly regarding himself as de trop, goes off by another exit and shows no further concern in either of the two developments--on or off the stage.

The remaining admirer, left alone in the company of the lady, ignores with a fine detachment the impotent rage that his captives are presumably venting in the passage just outside, and declares the ardour of his passion as a man might do in the breathless calm of a moonlit solitude a deux. And on this idyllic scene the curtain descends.

[Illustration: "PAP-PA" AND "POOSY-CAT."]

Wachner MR. NORMAN MCKINNEL.
Madame Wachner . . MISS ANNIE SCHLETTER.]

The most satisfying thing in the play was the acting of Miss ANNIE SCHLETTER as "Madame" Wachner_ of the Chalet des Muguets, an extraordinarily clever study of the doting Hausfrau,_ much busied about the service of her lord. Mr. NORMAN MCKINNEL as Wachner_ easily contrived to convey the typically Teuton blend of brutishness, and domestic sentimentality, combined with the heavy playfulness which by a curious delusion, ineradicably racial, is mistaken over there for humour. "Ja, ja," he says complacently, "I have the humour-sense."

It was regrettable that the cosmopolitan Anna Wolsky,_ acted with great animation by Miss MARGARET HALSTAN, had to withdraw from the scene at an early stage in consequence of being murdered--I don't know how, as we neither saw nor heard the details. Her friend, Sylvia Bailey,_ however, stayed on to the finish, and Miss EMILY BROOKE saw

her nicely through her troubles. A very level performance.

[Illustration: "CHARGE, CHESTER--CHARGE!"

Count Paul de Virieu . . . MR. OWEN NARES.
William Chester MR. JOHN HOWELL.]

To the rather wooden part of _William Chester_ (foil to hero) Mr. JOHN HOWELL brought a certain unliveliness of his own. A better chance was taken by Miss STELLA RHO, who gave proof of a vivid personality in her brief sketch of a professional fortune-teller who admitted to her clients (this must be very unusual) that she nearly always made a mess of her crystal-gazing.

Finally, Mr. OWEN NARES, looking pretty and not too warlike in the gay uniform of a French Officer of Cavalry, played the hero's part with a very natural and fluent charm. I join in the general hope that this, the first play under his actor-management, will go well. It ought to, for though, in point of power to thrill, it did not quite confirm the promise of its sinister name and theme it was never for a moment dull, and its faults were the kind of stage-faults about which, while they give the critic a chance of being unkind, a British audience never worries too much.

O.S.

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A matinee of _Romeo and Juliet_ will be given at the Royal Court Theatre on Sunday, March 30th, at 2.30 P.M., in aid of the Notting Hill Day Nursery, which has done such admirable service among the poor of "The Potteries." Help is greatly needed to enable the promoters of this good work (for which Mr. Punch has before now appealed) to pay off a mortgage and to start a fund for a convalescent cottage-home. Among the cast of the matinee will be Miss MONA MAUGHAN, Mr. DENNIS NEILSON-TERRY and Mr. OTHO STUART, who produces it. Tickets may be obtained from the Hon. Sec., 22, Paulton's Square, Chelsea, S.W.

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[Illustration: LEAVES FROM A SPECIAL'S REMINISCENCES OF THE GREAT WAR.

Small Girl (on morning after air-raid). "HI, MISTER, '_E_ BROKE THAT WINDER!"]

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"STAGE-STRUCK NOVELISTS.

"LILLAH MCCARTHY AS EXECUTIONER."--_Sunday Paper_.

Well, they can't say they haven't had a fair warning.

* * * * *

"Scotsmen the world over possess to a remarkable degree the spirit of clamishness."--_Times of India_.

A good many of them have certainly made the world their oyster.

* * * * *

"OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE.

"BOOT RACE TO BE ROWED THIS YEAR AT HENLEY REGATTA."--_Daily Paper_.

A very suitable _venue_ for the contest, which, we presume, will be conducted in pairs.

* * * * *

"---- CATTLE MARKET.

"Messrs. ---- beg to announce that they will hold their usual Sale of Fat and Store Stock at above.

"Present Entries include:

"80 Pairs Men's, Women's and Children's New Boots, assorted sizes."--_Provincial Paper_.

These, of course, will be entered with the calves.

* * * * *

TO A MARCH BROWN, SWALLOWED ALIVE.

Rash insect with your jaunty air
The troubled stream serenely riding,
How guessed you not that Death was there
Nor feared the hungry trout in hiding?
Did instinct, friend of helpless things,
Not bid you rise and use your wings?

Alas, the widening ripple showed
Around the spot which lately bore you,
And down you went the deadly road
Where many a fly has gone before you,
One victim more to swell the pride
Of golden tum and spotted side.

Yet know (if any ghost of you
Or delicate spirit's left to know it)
That I've a fly which never flew
(Your likeness) and the skill to throw it;
And I that saw the fatal rise
Marked where a fat half-pounder lies.

Thither will I with reel and rod
And cure his taste for dainty dishes
By favour of whatever god
Decides the destiny of fishes;
And that were vengeance passing sweet--
Your captor on your counterfeit!

* * * * *

DAISY.

He was always called Daisy. We hated the name, but the christening "just happened" with the suddenness of influenza or an earthquake. Percy was the culprit, for he knocked all our pre-arranged plans for a name on the head by his passion for what he calls "apt quotation." When he (Daisy) emerged from his basket we saw that, like NELSON, he was blind of an eye. Percy, immediately inspired, quoted from WORDSWORTH'S *Ode to the Daisy*, "A little Cyclops with one eye"--and the result was inevitable. Daisy resented the name from the first, for at the very font, so to speak, he drew blood from us both, and then, utterly indifferent to our feelings, settled himself on the top of an empty beer barrel and there performed his evening ablutions.

It was a curious coincidence that made him select a beer barrel, for thereby hung a tragic tale. He and his twin-brother had been adopted from infancy by the Sergeants' Mess and had lived in peace and plenty--in fact in too much plenty, for I regret to say that Daisy's brother died of drink from having formed the discreditable habit of emptying all the dregs of the Sergeants' beer mugs into his own inside. However, he was granted military obsequies, which were so successfully performed that an account of them found its way into one of the daily papers. This so delighted the amateur undertakers that Daisy's brother was at once exhumed and re-buried with further pomp and circumstance. Daisy meanwhile, feeling himself of less consequence than the departed hero, began to mope; so to save life and reason he was sent to us "to cheer and cherish," as the Sergeants put it.

An egotistical irascible bachelor seagull; yet his vices, and he was made up of them, became virtues in our eyes.

The morning after his arrival he went for a solemn tour of investigation, finally taking up his abode in the middle of the tennis-court, as being to his mind the most salubrious spot--and from there he ruled despotically. "That blooming bird fears neither man nor devil," Cook was heard to mutter, after he had embedded his beak in her ankle; and it was quite true. He so terrified Horatio, our portly bull-dog, by pecking at his sensitive kinky tail from behind when he was absent-mindedly lapping water from Daisy's bath, that he never again ventured alone on to the lawn. I say "alone," for he dared once more, emboldened by the presence of his unwilling young wife, who accompanied him, tied by a rope to his collar.

Percy and I watched them advance from afar and waited in suspense for the sequel. Daisy was taking a post-prandial nap inside his beer barrel. There was a breathless hush, followed by a pandemonium of sound, masculine and feminine cries of distress mingled with raucous shrieks of anger, and then we saw our valiant couple in slow but ignominious retreat. Horatio was dragging his spouse along on her back, with legs in air and bulging eyes! What had happened in the interim we never knew, but both Mr. and Mrs. Horatio bore marks of battle, and they were sadder and wiser dogs for many days to come.

Percy, always deprecatingly anxious to find favour in Daisy's eyes, tore down to the shore one morning before breakfast and returned with a large pailful of salt water, which he laid--so to speak--at Daisy's feet. Daisy glanced at it and at Percy with his cold grey eye, and then stepped lightly into his fresh-water tub, which was always at

hand. Percy however, being of an unshubbable disposition, tried again to find a way into Daisy's heart, and this time he brought Hengist and Horsa, two young seagulls that he had found derelict on the rocks, hoping that he would take a paternal interest in their loneliness; but, like his great prototype, Daisy clapped his glass to his sightless eye, and "I'm damned if I see them," he said. But he saw them all right at meal times, when he would whisk round suddenly as their portion of fish was flung to them, and swiftly gobble it up!

So Daisy prospered and grew sleek and fat, and his days were long in the land. He consented indeed to partake of our hospitality for over a year, won many hearts, but kept his own intact, until the following spring, when a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love; then he preened his white waistcoat and sallied forth.

Did I say he was a bachelor? The last we heard of him was from a fisherman friend who, when in search of sea-birds' eggs, saw and recognised our Daisy by the fierceness of his one eye. He was reluctantly taking his turn on the family egg while Mrs. Daisy stretched and titivated herself after her domestic labours.

Does he sometimes, we wonder, think regretfully of his celibate days and the beer barrel, where he lived _en garcon?_

* * * * *

"Widower, 35, abstainer, would like to correspond with respectable widow, or otherwise, view matrimony."--_Provincial Paper_.

He seems an easy-going fellow who would make any woman happy.

* * * * *

DEMOBILISED DAYDREAMS.

At 10 A.M. or so (in bed,
With lowered blinds and curtains drawn),
There wander lightly through my head
Memories of ruddy dawn--
A thing I never could have said
Before we warred against the Hun,
For then, although I may have heard
That this phenomenon occurred,
I had no notion how the thing was done.

A stranger to the birth of day,
How many have I watched since then!
At least a thousand, I should say
(It seems to me like ten);
On Salisbury Plain, austere and grey,
Breaking night's gloom and deepening mine,
When, crawling forth, I used to see
Stonehenge all shaken visibly
By the rude Sergeant's bellow, "_Rise and shine!_"

Gilding the foam of distant seas--

And humbly then I bowed my neck
And sank forlornly to my knees
To swab the blooming deck;
A wealth of flaming pageantries,
When, in a dusty Indian fort,
I went to early morning jerks,[A]
Cursing the sun and all his works
And dripping perspiration by the quart;

In Egypt, too, a pallid glow
Through swirls of desolating dust--
There often have I watched it grow,
Fed up enough to bust;
In Palestine, uncertain, slow
(While standing-to, with drowsy eyes),
Herald of shells and, what was worse,
Waking the ancient Eastern curse,
A hundred thousand million ravenous flies.

Sombre, inspiring, radiant, chill,
Mysterious, wild, inert, ablaze,
A thousand times on plain and hill
The dawn has held my gaze;
Idly I dream of it, until
A sterner mood invades my brain
And I grow resolute. Here and now
I register a mighty vow
Never to see the beastly thing again.

ONE OF THE _PUNCH_ BRIGADE.

[Footnote A: Physical training.]

* * * * *

"The Home Secretary gives notice that summer time will be brought into force this year on the morning of Sunday, March 30, and will continue until the night of Sunday-Monday; September 28129."--_Scots Paper_.

By which time, it is confidently expected, the Peace Conference will be over.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Road Sweeper_. "WOT'S BECOME O' BILL? I 'AVEN'T SEEN 'IM FOR MONTHS."

Female ditto. "BILL! WHY, 'AVEN'T YOU HEARD? 'E'S PROMOTED. 'E'S ON THE BINS."]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

MR. H.M. HYNDMAN brings to _Clemenceau: the Man and his Time_ (GRANT RICHARDS) a specialised knowledge of the intricacies of French

politics, personal friendship with his subject and a sympathy not discounted by profound differences of opinion. Here is one veteran fighting man writing a brilliant (I don't use the word as a _cliche_) chronicle and commentary of the battles of another, battles which cover the same period and were fought broadly for the same causes. But the French Radical extremist could never see his way to subscribe to the Socialist creed. His stalwart individualism, in part temperamental, was also as a political working faith the result of a distrust of logic divorced from the experience and responsibility of actual administration. Somewhat similarly the English Socialist refused to let logic press him into the premature Internationalism of so many of his associates, nor did he share their trust, so ruthlessly betrayed, in German Social Democracy as having either the power or the serious intention of thwarting German Imperialism. If a man's achievement be rightly gauged by the difficulties he has overcome, then M. CLEMENCEAU, called unwillingly and unwilling at the most desperate crisis of the destiny of a distracted and dispirited France hammered by the enemy's legions and with the pass ready for sale by false friends, may well justify Mr. HYNDMAN'S verdict on him as _the_ statesman of the Great War. The man who came into the War a mere Tiger will go out of it an authentic Lion.

* * * * *

"Miss BERTA RUCK" is among the few writers from whom I can really enjoy stories about the War. She has an engaging way with her that can turn even that (at least the more endurable aspects of it) to favour and prettiness. And in _The Land Girl's Love Story_ (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), a theme after her own heart, she has given us what is, I think, her best achievement so far. It is an excellent slight tale of two heroines who took their patriotic turn at the work of the land army on a Welsh farm, and the adventures, agricultural and (of course) amorous, that befell them there. It is all the best-humoured affair imaginable, refreshingly full of country airs and brisked up with a fine flavour of romance. "Miss RUCK" has the neatest hand for this kind of thing; she permits no loose ends to the series of love-knots that she ties so amusingly. So the finish of the comedy deserves the epithet "engaging" in more senses than one: with a Jack to every Jill, and the harvest moon (as promised in the cover picture) beaming upon all, the couples paired off to everyone's entire satisfaction. A tale that will be safe for a _succes fou_ with all who have worn the smock and the green armet; while I can well imagine that ladies less fortunate may find their enjoyment of it tempered with a certain wistfulness.

* * * * *

German Days (MURRAY) is a plain tale of everyday life in Germany before the War, with just those gaps in it which would naturally occur in the narrative of any one observer who also hadn't been aware at the time that she was observing. "A POLISH GIRL (C.B.)" has written this account with an engaging frankness and an apparent lack of exaggeration which distinguish it among books of its kind. It is largely a record of school days, and "C.B.," as the child of a Polish Jew of good standing living in Posen, suffered slights and insults and met with injustices which a "true German" would not have had to endure; but she does not seem embittered. Her picture of the German at home has not made me yearn to renew my acquaintance with him, but it seems to explain the origin of some of his most unpleasant qualities.

Since, as "C.B." and other writers would have us know, the German soldier was cowed by physical suffering in peace-time it is small matter for wonder that he became a brute in war, or that the citizen, to whom everything used to be _verboten_, has, since the bureaucracy which regulated his smallest actions went to pieces, shown very little ability to regulate them for himself. The terrible pact, by which in the ten years preceding the War thousands of German women bound themselves to combat the predominance of the landed classes, which was making life for ordinary people a slow starvation, is one of the things which I am induced to believe, because "C.B." has dealt so faithfully with others of which I knew already. Of books on Germany from within there have been very many, but there is still room for such books as this.

* * * * *

You must not be shocked to find that Captain HARRY GRAHAM has (apparently) abandoned the lighter fields of literature for the heavy plough-land of Biography. What is, I believe, his initial venture of this kind lies before me in _Biffin and His Circle_ (MILLS AND BOON), a record of the career of _Reginald Drake Biffin_, that eminent author with whose works (_The Bolster Book_, and others) the public is already familiar; though, by a pardonable confusion, they are more usually associated with the name of the present biographer. It may be said at once that, if a life of _Biffin_ had to be written, Captain GRAHAM was emphatically the man for the task; indeed, from the preface, with its absorbing account of the inception of the work in certain alleged convivialities between author and publishers, to the final chapter, there is not a page that is not calculated to inspire the reader with profound (and in my own case frequently uncontrollable) emotion. Nor is the work valuable for the central figure alone. Of each member of the _Biffin_ circle Captain GRAHAM tells (nay, repeats) some anecdote that forms a tribute at once to the fertility of his research and the industry of his invention. I should not omit to add that the volume is enriched with some admirably reproduced portraits of members of the _Biffin_ circle, as also by an index that is itself a monument of inaccuracy so subtle that it must be traced to be appreciated.

* * * * *

Mr. REGINALD BLUNT has scored another brilliant success with _The Wonderful Village_ (MILLS AND BOON). It is one of his Chelsea books of anecdote, gossip and good talk of which he possesses the secret. He knows how to create the right Chelsea atmosphere and he is most artful in leading his readers on, just as a little dog shows himself every now and then at a decoy and thus draws the inquisitive ducks after him till they drift in with all exit cut off. At one moment Mr. BLUNT gives you a glimpse of that bloodthirsty butcher, KING HENRY VIII. Then you pass to ANNE BOLEYN, CATHERINE PARR and the PRINCESS ELIZABETH. Further on there is a delightfully humorous account by WILLIAM DE MORGAN of his attempt to induce CARLYLE to become a member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: "He promised to think it over, chiefly, I think, because Sir JAMES STEPHEN had rather implied that the Society's object was not worth thinking over. He added one or two severe comments on the contents of space." The various Chelsea potteries are not omitted, and there is an account of the wonderful set designed and executed by the WEDGWOODS for the EMPRESS CATHERINE OF RUSSIA. Of this, in 1909, about one thousand

pieces were surviving. Who shall say where those are now? I may add that the author's profits on this book are to be given for the assistance of our blinded soldiers and sailors at St. Dunstan's.

* * * * *

The title of Miss F.E. MILLS YOUNG'S *_The Shadow of the Past_* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) does not refer to the youthful transgressions of any of her characters, but to the cloud which the Boer War left behind it, to burst ultimately in rebellion. I do not know any novelist who brings to her work a greater sympathy with or a finer feeling for South Africa than Miss YOUNG, and if her moderate methods do not find favour the reason can only be that for the moment moderation is a rather unpopular quality. As regards the actual story given to us here I find myself unable to accept the hero, *_Guy Matheson_*, with any great enthusiasm. Fresh from the kissing of one girl, he at once falls heavily in love with another. Number One, however, secured him in the end, for he discovered that his feeling for her was real affection, while passion had been responsible for his affair with Number Two. But I fancy that he would still need a little watching. Intermingled with his love affairs is a tale of racial prejudice and intrigue which is told with restraint and skill. *_Holman_*, a German agent who had dropped an "n" for his better security, is an obnoxious person, in whose underhand work I can quite readily believe.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE ABSENT-MINDED STRAPHANGER.]

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