

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 153, Aug 8, 1917

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI

VOL. 153

AUGUST 8, 1917

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CHARIVARIA.

"No amount of War Office approval will make hens lay," says The Weekly Dispatch. These continuous efforts to shake our confidence in the men entrusted with the conduct of the War can only be regarded as deplorable.

A workman in a Northern shell factory has been fined five pounds for having his trousers fastened on with iron nails. Why he abandoned the usual North Country method of having them riveted on him was not explained.

Charlie Chaplin, says a message from Chicago, has not joined the U.S. Army. He excuses himself on the ground that Mr. Pemberton-Billing, who is much funnier, is not in khaki.

A woman told the Lambeth magistrate that her husband had not spoken to her for six weeks. It is a great tribute to the humanity of our magistrates that the poorer people should go to them with their joys as well as their sorrows.

Cruises on the Thames and Medway estuaries will only be permitted on condition that the owners of pleasure craft agree to increase the nation's food supply by catching fish. Merely feeding them will not do.

A man who was seen carrying a grandfather clock through the streets of Willesden has been arrested. It seems to be safer, as well as more convenient, to carry a wrist-watch.

Newhaven, it is stated, is suffering from a plague of butterflies. All attempts to persuade them to move on to the Metropole at Brighton have so far been successfully resisted.

Table-napkins have been forbidden in Berlin and special ear-protectors for use at meal-times are said to be enjoying a brisk sale.

When the fourteen-year-old son of German parents was charged in a London Court with striking his mother with a boot, the mother admitted that she had cut the boy's face because he had called her by an opprobrious German name. On the advice of the magistrate the family have decided to discontinue their subscription to the half-penny press.

"I should like to give you a good licking, but the law won't allow me," said Mr. Bankes, K.C., the new magistrate for West London, in fining a lad for cruelty to a horse. The discovery that even

magistrates have to forgo their simple pleasures in these times made a profound impression upon the boy.

Herr Erzberger has expressed a desire for "half an hour with Mr. Lloyd George" to settle the War. In view of the heavy demands upon the Premier's time it is suggested in Parliamentary circles that Major Archer-Shee should consent to act as his substitute.

The idea of giving raid warnings by the discharge of a couple of Generals has been unfavourably received by the Defence authorities.

A German shell which passed through a Church Army Hut was found to have been stamped with the initials "C.A." in its passage through the building. The clerk, whose duty it is to attend to matters of this kind, has been reprimanded for not adding the date.

A small boy at Egham, arrested for breaking a bottle on the highway, said that he did it to puncture motor tyres. If the daily bag included only one Army motor-car, with nothing better than a Staff-Colonel as passenger, the entertainment was considered to be well worth the risk.

"If I saw the last pheasant I would kill it and eat it," says Lord Kimberley. Food hog!

We hear that, as a result of Herr Michaelis' disclaimer, the Germans are about to appoint a Commission to find out who (if anybody) is carrying on the War.

Women have reinforced the bell-ringers at Speldhurst, Kent. As no other explanation is forthcoming, we can only suppose they are doing it out of malice.

A man charged at a London Police Court with being drunk stated that he had been drinking "Government ale." It appears now that the fellow was an impostor.

Another man who wrote a letter protesting against the weakness of the official stimulant inadvertently addressed his letter to the Metropolitan Water Board.

A correspondent who has just spent a day in the country hopes the Commission now dealing with Unrest will not overlook one of its principal causes—namely wasps.

There has been a great falling-off in the number of visitors to Stratford-on-Avon, and it is expected that a new and fuller Life of the Bard will shortly be published.

A Surrey soldier, writing from The Garden of Eden, says, "I think it is a rotten hole, and I don't blame Adam for getting thrown out." Still it is rather late to plead extenuating circumstances.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _The Bantam_ "AN' I DON'T WANT NONE OF YER NARSTY LOOKS NEITHER, OR IT'S ME AN' YOU FOR IT."]

* * * * *

"James ---- was remanded at the Thames Police Court on a charge of stealing nine boxes of Beecham's pills, valued at L5."-- _The Times_

So little? What about those advertisements?

* * * * *

"I was surprised to hear of Baron Heyking's dismissal from his post of Russian Consul-General in London. I had only been talking to him the day before--and then came his dismissal by telegram!"-- _"Candide," in "The Sunday Pictorial."_

Some of our journalists have a lot to answer for.

* * * * *

THE KAISER'S ORIENTAL STUDIES.

A Distinguished Neutral, who has just returned from Germany after residing for some time in the neighbourhood of Potsdam, informs us that the KAISER has been taking a course of Oriental literature in view of his proposed annexation of India, and has lately given close attention to the works of Sir RABINDRANATH TAGORE. The Distinguished Neutral has been fortunate enough to secure the KAISER'S personally annotated copies of the Indian poet's _Stray Birds_ and _Fruit-Gathering_. From these volumes we have the pleasure of reproducing a selection of Sir RABINDRANATH'S aphorisms and fantasies, accompanied in each case by the KAISER'S marginal reflections:--

"I cannot choose the best. The best chooses me."--R.T.

Very true. I never chose the Deity. He chose Me.--W.

* * * * *

"Through the sadness of all things I hear the crooning of the Eternal Mother."--R.T.

Sometimes, too, I hear the groaning of the Unforgettable Grandfather.--W.

* * * * *

"Life has become richer by the love that has been lost."--R.T.

I wish I could feel this about America.--W.

* * * * *

"Who draws me forward like fate?' 'The Myself striding on my back.'"--R.T.

That cannot be right. I always said I didn't want this War.--W.

* * * * *

"Wrong cannot afford defeat, but Right can."--R.T.

"This ought to console poor old HINDENBURG."--W.

* * * * *

"Listen, my heart, to the whispers of the world with which it makes love to you."--R.T.

I must pass this on to TIRPITZ.--W.

* * * * *

"We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility."--R.T.

Quite right. I always make a point of acknowledging the assistance of my Partner.--W.

* * * * *

"I shall stake all I have and when I lose my last penny I shall stake myself, and then I think I shall have won through my utter defeat."--R.T.

I don't think.--W.

* * * * *

"The noise of the moment scoffs at the music of the Eternal."--R.T.

All the same I could do with some more big guns.--W.

* * * * *

"The Spring with its leaves and flowers has come into my body."--R.T.

I dislike all Spring offensives.--W.

* * * * *

"Let me not look for allies on life's battlefield, but to my own strength."--R.T.

I wonder where Austria would have been by now if she had taken this attitude.--W.

* * * * *

"Wayside grass, love the star, then your dreams will come out in flowers."--R.T.

That reminds me that I must write and thank TINO for his letter enclosing a bunch of edelweiss.--W.

* * * * *

"My heart has spread its sails for the shadowy island of
Anywhere."--R.T.

Personally I should be content with the solid island of Great
Britain.--W.

* * * * *

"Woman, when you move about in your household service your limbs sing
like a hill stream among its pebbles."--R.T.

I have often noticed this in some of our Berlin butter queues.--W.

* * * * *

"Let my thoughts come to you, when I am gone, like the after-glow of
sunset."--R.T.

I doubt if this beautiful thought would appeal to LITTLE WILLIE.--W.

* * * * *

"'Who is there to take up my duties?' asked the setting sun.
'I shall do what I can, my Master,' said the earthen lamp."--R.T.

I shall make LITTLE WILLIE learn this bit by heart.--W.

* * * * *

"The real with its meaning read wrong and emphasis misplaced is the
unreal."--R.T.

Yes; it's very hard on WOLFF'S Bureau.--W.

* * * * *

"My heart longs to caress this green world of the sunny day."--R.T.

I find it most unfortunate that all the best places in the sun should
be already occupied.--W.

* * * * *

"While I was passing in the road I saw thy smile from the balcony and
I sang."--R.T.

O dreams of the East! O Baghdad!--W.

* * * * *

"'The learned say that your light will one day be no more,' said the
firefly to the stars. The stars made no answer."--R.T.

That's what I should have done, but MICHAELIS would keep on
talking.--W.

* * * * *

"God is ashamed when the prosperous boast of His special
favour."--R.T.

This must be some other god, not our German one.--W.

* * * * *

"Power takes as ingratitude the writhings of its victims."--R.T.

And quite rightly. That's all the thanks I got when my heart bled for Louvain.--W.

* * * * *

"Kicks only raise dust and not crops from the earth."--R.T.

Very sound. Roumania has been most disappointing.--W.

* * * * *

"Timid thoughts, do not be afraid of me. I am a poet."--R.T.

I shall send a copy of my collected poems to FERDIE.--W.

O.S.

* * * * *

WAR AND MY WARDROBE.

As I am not a banker or a high official swell,
I never felt a pressing need for dressing extra well;
And yet there were occasions, in days not long remote,
When I assumed the stately garb of topper and frock-coat.

But war's demands, if you desire to tread the simple road,
Are somewhat hard to reconcile with the Decalogue of Mode;
So I gave away my topper to the man who winds our clocks,
With a strangely mixed assortment of collars, ties and socks.

And if I haven't parted from my dear old silk-faced friend
It isn't out of sentiment--all that is at an end--
It's simply that the highest bid, in cash paid promptly down,
I've had from any son of SHEM is only half-a-crown.

* * * * *

"The plots cultivated by the men who have learned in the best
school of all--experience--stand out clearly among the others.
There is no overcrowding on their land."--_Evening News_.

The truly great are always modest.

* * * * *

"Wanted, September and October, a comfortably Furnished
House; five bedrooms, in adjoining counties."--_East
Anglian Daily Times_.

It sounds a little detached.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE COUNTERBLAST.

KAISER. "HAD A GLORIOUS TIME ON THE EASTERN FRONT."

HINDENBURG. "A LITTLE LOUDER, ALL-LOUDEST. I CAN'T HEAR YOU FOR THESE
CURSED BRITISH GUNS IN THE WEST."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: "WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THROWING STONES AT THOSE BOYS?"

"IT'S ORL RIGHT, SIR. WE'RE LEARNIN' 'EM TO TAKE COVER FOR AIR RAIDS."]

* * * * *

THE MUD LARKS.

Out here the telephone exists largely as a vehicle for the _jeux d'esprit_ of the Brass Lids. It is a one-way affair, working only from the inside out, for if you have a trifle of repartee to impart to the Brazen Ones the apparatus is either indefinitely engaged, or _Na poo_ (as the French say). If you are one of these bulldog lads and are determined to make the thing talk from the outside in, you had better migrate _chez_ Signals, taking your bed, blankets, beer, tobacco and the unexpired portion of next week's ration, and camp at the telephone orderly's elbow. After a day or two it will percolate through to the varlet's intelligence that you are a desperate dog in urgent need of something, and he will bestir himself, and mayhap in a further two or three days' time he will wind a crank, pull some strings, and announce that you are "on," and you will find yourself in animated conversation with an inspector of cemeteries, a jam expert at the Base, or the Dalai Lama. If you want to give back-chat to the Staff you had best take it there by hand.

A friend of mine by name of Patrick once got the job of Temporary Assistant Deputy Lance Staff Captain (unpaid), and before he tumbled to the one-way idea his telephone worked both ways and gave him a lot of trouble. People were always calling _him_ up and asking _him_ questions, which of course wasn't playing the game at all. Sometimes he never got to bed before 10 P.M., answering questions; often he was up again at 9 A.M., answering more questions--and such questions!

A sample. On one occasion he rang up his old battalion. One Jimmy was then Acting Assistant Vice-Adjutant. "Hello, wazzermatter?" said Jimmy. "Staff Captain speaking," said Patrick sternly. "Please furnish a return of all cooks, smoke-helmets, bombs, mules, Yukon-packs, tin bowlers, grease-traps and Plymouth Brothers you have in the field!"

"Easy--beg pardon, yes, Sir," said Jimmy and hung up.

Presently the phone buzzed and there was Jimmy again.

"Excuse me, Sir, but you wanted a return of various commodities we have in the field. What field?"

"Oh, the field of Mars, fat-head!" Patrick snapped and rang off. A quarter of an hour later he was called to the phone once more and the familiar bleat of Jimmy tickled his ear. "Excuse me, Sir--whose mother?"

On the other hand the great Brass Hat is human and makes a slip, a clerical error, now and again sufficient to expose his flank. And then the humble fighting-man can draw his drop of blood if he is quick about it. To this same long-suffering Jimmy was vouchsafed the heaven-sent opportunity, and he leapt at it. He got a chit from H.Q., dated 6/7/17, which ran thus:--

"In reference to 17326 Pte. Hogan we note that his date of birth is 10/7/17. Please place him in his proper category."

To which Jimmy replied:--

"As according to your showing 17326 Pte. Hogan will not be born for another four days we are placed in a position of some difficulty.
Signed ----

"P.S.--What if, when the interesting event occurs, 17326 Pte. Hogan should be a girl?

"P.P.S.--Or twins?"

Our Albert Edward is just back from one of those Army finishing schools where the young subaltern's knowledge of SHAKESPEARE and the use of the globes is given a final shampoo before he is pushed over the top. Albert Edward's academy was situated in a small town where schools are maintained by all our brave Allies; it is an educational centre. The French school does the honours of the place and keeps a tame band, which gives tongue every Sunday evening in the Grand Place. Thither repair all the young ladies of the town to hear the music. Thither also repair all the young subalterns, also for the purpose of hearing the music.

At the end of every performance the national anthems of all our brave Allies are played, each brave Ally standing rigidly to attention the while, in compliment to the others. As we have a lot of brave Allies these days, all with long national war-whoops, this becomes somewhat of a strain.

One morning the French bandmaster called on the Commandant of the English school.

"Some Americans have arrived," said he. "They are naturally as welcome as the sunshine, but" (he sighed) "it means yet another national anthem."

The Commandant sighed and said he supposed so.

"By the way," said the _chef d'orchestre_, "what is the American national anthem?"

"Yankee Doodle," replied the Commandant.

The Chief Instructor said he'd always understood it was "Hail, Columbia."

The Adjutant was of the opinion that "The Star-Spangled Banner" filled the bill, while the Quartermaster cast his vote for "My country, 'tis of thee."

The _chef d'orchestre_ thrashed his bosom and rent his coiffure. "_Dieu!_" he wailed, "I can't play all of them--_figurez-vous_!"

Without stopping to do any figuring they heartily agreed that he couldn't. "Tell you what," said the Commandant at length, "write to your music-merchant in Paris and leave it to him."

The _chef d'orchestre_ said he would, and did so.

Next Sunday evening, as the concert drew to a close, the band flung into the _Marseillaise_, and the subalterns of all nations kept to attention. They stood to attention through "God Save the King," through the national anthems of Russia, Italy, Portugal, Rumania, Serbia, Belgium, Montenegro and Monte Carlo, all our brave Allies. Then the _chef d'orchestre_ suddenly sprang upon a stool and waved above his head the stripes and stars of our newest brave Ally, while the band crashed into the opening strains of "When de midnight

choo-choo starts for Alabam." It speaks volumes for the discipline of the allied armies that their young subalterns stood to attention even through that.

PATLANDER.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Sailor_ (_rebuking pessimist_). "O' COURSE SOME O' THEM U-BOATS GETS AWAY. WOT D'YER THINK WE 'UNT 'EM WITH? FILTERS?"]

* * * * *

THE GENTLEST ART.

Private Elijah Tiddy looked at his watch. There was still half-an-hour to the great moment for which the battalion had waited so long. Most of the men had decided to fill up the time by eating, drinking or sleeping, but Private Tiddy had two other passions in life--one was his wife, and the other the gentle art of letter-writing. At all possible and impossible moments Private Tiddy wrote letters home. To some men this would have been an impossible moment--not so to Tiddy, who, if he hadn't been first a plumber and then a soldier, would have made an inimitable journalist.

So he sat down as best he could with all that he carried, and extracted a letter-case from an inside pocket. It was a recent gift from the minister of his parish, who knew and shared Tiddy's weakness for the pen, and it filled his soul with joy. He fingered the thin sheets of writing-paper lovingly, as a musician touches the strings, and thoughtfully sucked the indelible pencil which Mrs. Tiddy had bought for him as a parting present when she said good-bye to him at the bookstall.

"Dearest Wife," he began. Then at a shout he hastily drew in his feet as a man dashed past him with a heavy burden. "I nearly got it in the neck a minute ago," he wrote, "but I'm all right, and this is a fine place if it wasn't for the noise. They never seem to stop screeching and the smoke is fair awful, and as soon as you think everything is quiet another comes. I am quite alone at this minute, but don't you go for to worry; they'll be back soon and then perhaps I'll get a bit of something. It's pretty hard where I am sitting and I can't write you much of a letter, what with the cramp in my legs and the noise and wondering how soon the Sergeant will come and tell us to move up nearer our part of the line. I can see some of the line, not our bit, from where I am sitting. It's shining just lovely in the sun.

"Dear wife, this isn't a bit like home, but it still makes me think of you at our station buying me that pencil and all, just as the train come in. I think of you all the time wherever I am, but the noise is something cruel, and here comes the Sergeant to tell us to prepare. I shan't have time to get a drink first; but it don't matter; I'd rather write to you than anything; and this pad what the minister gave me is fine. I keep it in my left breast pocket. Please tell him it hasn't stopped a bit of stuff yet, but I am sure it will soon. Remember me to everybody. Love and kisses from your Elijah."

Mrs. Tiddy duly received the letter and shed proud tears at the thought of her husband, obviously on the eve of a great advance, or even lying out hungry and wounded in No Man's Land (she hovered between the alternatives), but still cheery and finding time and energy to write to his wife.

It was only a too observant neighbour who discovered that the postmark was London, S.E. But even she has not yet decided whether Elijah Tiddy

is of intention the biggest liar in the East Mudshires, or whether he only saw Waterloo Station with the eye of the literary man.

* * * * *

HISTORY PLAGIARIZES FROM FICTION.

"Mr. Ginnell: Everybody in the House is excited but myself. Even you, Mr. Speaker, are excited."--_Parliamentary Debates_.

"'It's my opinion, sir,' said Mr. Stiggins ... that this meeting is drunk, sir. Brother Tadger, sir ... _you_ are drunk, sir."--_Pickwick Papers_.

* * * * *

AN OLD SONG RESUNG.

"O Ever since the world began
There never was and never can
Be such a very useful man
As the railway porter."

So ran the rhyme that in my youth
I thought perhaps outstripped the truth,
But now, when longer in the tooth,
Freely I endorse it.

In calling out a station's name
He is undoubtedly to blame
For failing, as a rule, to aim
At clear enunciation;

But, since the War, he hasn't struck
Or downed his tools--I mean his truck--
And plays the game with patient pluck
Like a sturdy Briton.

He's often old and far from strong,
But still he doesn't "make a song"
About his lot, but jogs along
Steadily and bravely.

He doesn't greet with surly frowns
Or naughty adjectives and nouns
A tip of just a brace of "browns"
Where he once got sixpence.

But better far than any meed
Of praise embodied in this screed
Is ERIC GEDDES' boast that he'd
Been a railway porter.

* * * * *

THE TOWER THAT PASSED IN THE NIGHT.

It was in the beginning of things, when the gunners of the new army were very new indeed, and the 0000th Battery had just taken up its first position on the Western Front. As soon as the guns were satisfactorily placed the O.C. began a careful survey of the enemy positions. Slowly he ran his field-glasses over the seemingly peaceful landscape, and the first thing he noticed was a small, deserted, half-ruined tower with ivy hanging in dark masses down its sides.

"We must have that removed at once," he said to the Captain. "It's the very place for an observation post. Probably one of their best. How long do you think it will take you to get it down?"

"Oh, we ought to do it in an hour," was the confident reply.

But the hour passed and the tower remained just as peaceful, just as suitable for an O.P. as ever. The only change was that many other features of the adjacent landscape had been resolved into their component parts.

The battery was disappointed, but not unduly so. They knew what was the matter; a couple of hours' work should give them the range, and then--

But, when evening came and the tower still stood untouched, 0000th Battery began to be worried indeed. A little more of this and they might as well blow themselves up. They would be disgraced, a laughing-stock to the whole Front. After hopeless arguments and bitter recriminations they turned in with the intention of beginning again bright and early in one last stupendous effort.

Great and shattering was their surprise when the dawn showed them no tower at all, nothing but a heap of rubble in the midst of desolation. The hated O.P. had disappeared in the night.

0000th Battery rubbed its eyes and wild surmise ran from man to man. "An unexploded shell must 'ave gorn orf in the night."

"A mine may 'ave bin laid under 'er, and somethink's touched it off, like."

But the real explanation, stranger still, was supplied later by a letter dropped from a Taube flying over the Battery's position. It ran thus:--

"Having noticed with regret that the enemy objected to the tower in front of X position, the Ober-Kommando gave orders to have it removed, in the interests of the surrounding country."

* * * * *

"Once or twice in the course of his speech Mr. Macdonald spoke of himself and his Labour friends as 'we.' 'Who are "we"?' sharply challenged Mr. Wardle, reviving a question familiar in the annals of split parties. 'You knof perfectly wel thlat you are not includeddin the "we,"' was the retort."--_Manchester Guardian_.

Pretty crushing, wasn't it?

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Betty_ (_after flash of lightning_). "COUNT QUICKLY, JENNY! MAKE IT AS FAR AWAY AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN."]

* * * * *

FRAGMENT OF A TRAGEDY.

Dramatis Personae.

A Staff Officer.

A Colonel.

A Captain.

A Herald.

Chorus of Officers' Servants and Orderlies.

SCENE.--_Exterior of Battalion Headquarters Dug-out_.

Leader of Chorus.

Ho! friends, a stranger cometh; by his dress
Some nobleman of leisure, I should guess;
Come, let us seem to labour, lest he strafe;
A soldier ever eye-washes the Staff.

Chorus start work, singing.

Brighter than the queenly rose,
Brighter than the setting sun,
Brighter than old Ginger's nose
The raiment of the gilded one.

The red tab points towards each breast,
The red band binds his forehead stern;
The rainbow ribbons on his chest
Proclaim what fires within him burn.

Upon his throne amid the din
He sits serene--yet sometimes stoops
To take a kindly interest in
The trousers issued to the troops.

Enter Staff Officer.

Staff Officer. Ho, slaves! your Colonel seeking have I come.

L. of C. This is his house, but he is far from home.

Staff O. And whither gone? Reply without delay.

L. of C. Ask of the Captain. See, he comes this way.

Enter Captain _from dug-out_.

Captain. Immaculate stranger, hail! What lucky chance
Has brought you to this dirty bit of France?

Staff O. Not chance. A conscientious Brigadier
Has sent me hither.

Captain. And what seek you here?

Staff. I seek your Colonel.

Captain. He is up the line.
'Tis said the foe will soon explode a mine,
And we must be prepared should he attack.

Staff O. I think I will await his coming back.

Captain. Then chance to me at least has been most kind;
Come, let me lead you where a drink you'll find.

[They enter dug-out and are seen relieving their thirst_.

Chorus.

Beyond the distant bower,
Where skirted men abide
And in an uncouth language
Their skirted children chide;
Beyond the land of sunshine,

Where never skies are blue,
There lives a silent people
Who know a thing or two.
All is not gold that glitters,
And _sirops_ are rather sad;
All is not Bass that's "bitters,"
And Gallic beer is bad;
But out of the misty regions
Where loom the mountains tall
There comes the drink of princes--
Whisky, the best of all.

Staff O. This is my seventh drink, and yet, alas!
The Colonel comes not.

Captain. Fill another glass.

Staff O. I will [_he does_]. The bottle's finished, I'm afraid.

Captain. It does not matter. I drink lemonade.

L. of C. A doom descends upon this house, I fear;
That was the only bottle left us here.

Enter Herald.

Herald. The Colonel comes. Let no ill-omened word
Escape the barrier of your teeth. I heard
Men say his temper's in an awful state;
Therefore beware lest some untoward fate
Befall you; and--I do not think I'll wait.

Enter Colonel.

He sees empty whisky-bottle, looks at Staff Officer, and--

[_Here the fragment leaves off._

* * * * *

"Turnouts. Odd colour miniature pony, 36in. high, used to
children, coming 5 years, and Swiss governess and brown
harness; can be seen any time, a miniature lot; L25."--_The
Bazaar, Exchange and Mart_.

It may be right to turn out aliens, but is not this rather hard on the
miniature Swiss Governess?

* * * * *

From an auctioneer's advertisement: "Grandfather Clocks, and
other Arms and Armour."--_Manchester Guardian_.

In these days even our oldest clocks are expected to strike for their
country.

* * * * *

"Herr Harden says:--

"The aim of our enemies is--
Democracy;
The right of nations to self-government;
An honest, and not merely a specious, diminution of arguments."
--_Provincial Paper_.

So far as this last aim is concerned the German Government appears to agree with the Allies, for it has just suppressed Herr HARDEN's journal.

* * * * *

DAVID.

The War brought about no more awful clash of personalities than when it threw David and myself into the same dug-out. Myself, I am the normal man--the man who wishes he were dead when he is called in the morning and who swears at his servant (1) for calling him; (2) for not calling him. My batman has learnt, after three years of war, to subdue feet which were intended by nature to be thunderous. His method of calling me is the result of careful training. If I am to wake at 7 A.M. he flings himself flat on his face outside my dug-out at 6 A.M. and wriggles snake-like towards my boots. He extracts these painlessly from under last night's salvage dump of tin-hats, gas-masks and deflated underclothes, noses out my jacket, detects my Sam Browne, and in awful silence bears these to the outer air, where he emits, like a whale, the breath which he has been holding for the last ten minutes. And meanwhile I sleep.

At 6.55 A.M. he brings back boots, belt and jacket. This time he breathes. He walks softly, but he walks. He places the boots down firmly. He begins to make little noises. He purrs and coughs and scratches his chin, and very gradually the air of the dug-out begins to vibrate with life. It is like *Peer Gynt*--the "Morning" thing on the gramophone, you know; he clinks a toothbrush against a mug, he pours out water. It is all gradual, *crescendo*; and meanwhile I am awakening. At 7 A.M., not being a perfect artist, he generally has to drop something; but by that time I am only pretending to be asleep, and I growl at him, ask him why he didn't call me an hour ago, and then fall asleep again. I get up at eight o'clock and dress in silence. If my batman speaks to me I cut myself, throw the razor at him, and completely break down. In short, as I say, I am the normal man.

With David it is otherwise. David is a big strong man. He blew into my dug-out late one night and occupied the other bed--an affair of rude beams and hard wire-netting. He spread himself there in sleep, and silence fell. At dawn next morning an awful sound hurled me out of dreams towards my revolver. I clutched it in sweating terror, and stared round the dug-out with my heart going like a machine-gun. It was not, however, a Hun counter-attack. It was David calling for his servant. As the first ray of the sun lights the Eastern sky David calls for his servant. His servant is a North-countryman. Sleeping far off in some noxious haunt, he hears David's voice and instantly begins to speak. His voice comes swelling towards us, talking of boots and tunics. As he reaches the dug-out door he becomes deafening. He and David have a shouting match. He kicks over a petrol-tin full of water, smashes my shaving mirror, and sits on my feet while picking up the bits.

Meanwhile David is standing on his bed and jodelling, while his batman shrieks to him that his wife said in her last letter to him that if he doesn't get a leaf soon the home'll be bruk up. Then David starts slapping soap on to his face like a bill-sticker with a paste-brush. His servant drops a field boot on to my stomach, trips over an empty biscuit-tin and is heard grooming a boot without.

David now strops his razor. It is one of those self-binding safety razors which is all covered with cog-wheels and steam-gauges and levers and valves. You feed the strop into it like paper into

a printing-press, and it eats up the leather as low people eat spaghetti, making all the time a noise like a mowing-machine. David loves that. He whistles gay tunes while it happens. He whistles while he shaves. He cannot whistle while brushing his teeth, but he brushes his teeth as a man might wash down a cab in a large yard with plenty of room.

The moment it is over he whistles again. Then he does deep breathing at the door of the dug-out. (Aeroplanes passing overhead have had narrow escapes from being dragged into the dug-out by sheer power of suction, when David deep-breathes.) Then he does muscle exercises. He crooks his finger and from behind you see a muscle like a mushroom get up suddenly in the small of his back, run up his spine and hit him under the left ear.

Meanwhile he is whistling, and his batman is making sparks fly out of the buttons, which he cleans with glass-paper and gun-cotton just outside the door.

At eight, when I get carefully out of bed, David is beginning to don his shirt. At nine we move together towards breakfast.

I am training David to say "Rah! Rah!" against the day when he and General ROOSEVELT meet in a communication trench. I am sure they will take to each other at once.

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[Illustration: _Basil_. "MOTHER, I THINK SATAN MUST BE ABOUT."

Mother. "WHY, DEAR?"

Basil. "ISN'T IT SATAN THAT MAKES VERY GOOD PEOPLE FEEL BAD?"

Mother. "YES, DEAR."

Basil. "WELL, I FEEL AS IF I DIDN'T WANT TO GO AND WASH MY FACE."]

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SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE.

["The plain truth is that there are very few jobs that could not be done by women as well as they are being done by men."--_Daily Paper_.]

Chloe, in the placid days
Ere the war-clouds gathered,
I was prodigal in praise
Of your charm and winning ways;
You became a cult, a craze
(Heavens, how I blathered!);
With an ardour undismayed and treacly
I proposed (without success) bi-weekly.

Now, my dear, it's up to you
To become the hero;
Show us how a man should woo
When he wills to win, and do
Teach us how to bill and coo
With our hopes at zero.
Chloe, for a change (it may amuse you),
You propose to me--_and I'll refuse you_.

* * * * *

From an auction catalogue:--

"PRINCESS, Brown Mare, 7 years, 15-3, has been ridden by a nervous person, good manners, trained to the High School, Hant-le-Cole."

Haute Ecole manners are usually of the best and we are glad that Hant-le-Cole, which we have been unable to find on the map, provides no exception.

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[Illustration: A MISFIT.

Recruit. "IT'S NO USE, GUV'NOR. I 'ATES AN' DETESTS 'ORSES, AN' THEY FAIR LOATHES ME. IT'S A HENGINE-DRIVER I AM--NOT AN 'ORSE-DRIVER."]

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THE INVESTITURE.

Be silent, guns! for Bernard is invested,
And wheresoe'er the slaves of strife are found
Let your grim offices be now arrested,
Nor the hot rifle shoot another round,
Nor the pale flarelights toss,
But for a space all devilry be barred,
While Mars hangs motionless in pleased regard
And the hushed lines look West to Palace Yard,
Where on his breast our KING has pinned the Cross.

Of in the Mess have we rehearsed that moment,
In old French farms have staged the Royal Square,
Or in cool caves by Germans made at Beaumont,
Though there indeed we had no space to spare,
So lifelike was it all,
And when KING GEORGE (the Padre's hard to beat
In that great role), surrounded by his suite,
Pinned on the cover of the potted meat,
The very Hippodrome had seemed too small.

Or we would act the homing of our Hector,
Flushed up with pride beneath the ancestral fir,
The cheering rustics and the sweet old Rector
Welcoming back "our brave parishioner;"
And since the lad was shy
We made him get some simple phrases pat
To thank them for the Presentation Bat,
While Maud stood near (the Adjutant did that),
So overcome that she could only sigh.

Ah! Bernard, say our pageants were not wasted,
Not vain the Adjutant's laborious blush!
Was it to Maud this glowing morn you hasted
With yonder bauble in its bed of plush--
Or was it that Miss Blake?
Say not you faced, with ill-concealed dismay,
Your thronging townsmen and had nought to say,
Or from your KING stepped tremblingly away
With someone else's Order by mistake!

Surely you shamed us not! for all that splendour
Can scarce have been more moving to the heart
Than our glad rites, the Princess not so tender
As was myself, who always took that part;

I cannot think the KING,
Nor gorgeous Lords, nor Officers of State,
Nor seedy people peering through the gate,
Felt half so proud or so affectionate
As those far friends when _we_ arranged the thing.

A.P.H.

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DISCONCERTING NEWS FOR THE KAISER.

Woman to Vicar: "Please Sir will you write to our George in France?
'is number is a 'undred and eleven million four thousand and six."

* * * * *

"The inmates of buses have changed, too. All classes travel
side by side, the perspiring flower girl, with her heavy
basket of roses, the charwoman clutching her morning purchase
of fish, the daintily dressed lady going out to dinner,
&c."--_The Daily Chronicle_.

A very early dinner, apparently; perhaps with the charwoman.

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[Illustration: FREEDOM RENEWS HER VOW. AUGUST 14, 1917.]

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ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, July 30th.--The _obiter dicta_ dropped by Mr. BONAR LAW in
the course of debate are gradually furnishing the House with an almost
complete autobiography. To-day it learned that while, unlike Mr.
BALFOUR, he reads a great many newspapers he does not include among
them a certain financial organ which makes a speciality of spy-hunting
in high places.

[Illustration: RAMSAY MACDONALD IN PARIS. "ARC DE TRIOMPHE! THE WORD
HAS A SINISTER SOUND."]

When the National Insurance Scheme was set on foot there were great
complaints because some Friendly Societies were not allowed to share
in its administration. Possibly the officials thought them a little
too friendly in their ways. One of them, we learned to-day, employed
an auditor who signed the return with a mark, like _Bill Stumps_;
while another auditor had a habit of signing it in blank and leaving
the secretary to fill in the figures.

Mr. ASQUITH used to allow his colleagues so much freedom of action
that his Administration was nick-named "the Go-as-you-please
Government"; and eventually it went as he did not please. But I cannot
recall under his gentle rule anything quite so free-and-easy as Mr.
HENDERSON'S visit to Paris. That a member of the War Cabinet should
attend a Conference of French and Russian Socialists at all is in
itself a sufficiently remarkable departure from Ministerial etiquette,
but that he should be accompanied by Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD, whose
peculiar views upon the questions of war and peace have so recently
been repudiated by the Government and the House of Commons, makes
it still more extraordinary. In the circumstances it was almost
surprising to learn that the complaisance of the Government did not
extend to furnishing Mr. MACDONALD with a war-ship for his journey.

What Mr. BALFOUR, who is responsible for the foreign policy of this country, thinks about it all one can only surmise, for he said nothing directly on the subject in his great speech to-night--a speech which earned him the unique tribute of a compliment from Mr. PRINGLE. But the FOREIGN SECRETARY'S warning to the House not to try to anticipate the work of the Peace Congress may well have been inspired by apprehensions as to what the amateur diplomatists were saying at that moment in Paris.

Tuesday, July 31st.--An attempt to obtain further light on the HENDERSON-MACDONALD excursion met with little success. Mr. BONAR LAW professed to see nothing unusual in Mr. HENDERSON'S taking part in a Labour Conference, and declared, on the somewhat slender ground that only the Allies were represented, that it was not of an international character. Mr. HOGGE essayed to move the adjournment, but had omitted to have his motion ready. The result of his hurried effort to draft one was not satisfactory, for the SPEAKER ruled that it constituted an attack on Mr. HENDERSON and ought not in fairness to be moved until the right hon. gentleman was back in his place. So the Government escaped--for the moment.

Wearing a jacket suit of Navy blue, and escorted by Lord EDMUND TALBOT and Mr. RAWLINSON, the new FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY walked up the floor to take the Oath. Members noted with satisfaction the buoyancy of his step and the firmness of his chin. If looks go for anything the Navy in his hands will not relax the bull-dog grip upon the enemy that it has maintained these three years.

[Illustration: THE "SHEE-BILLING" AUTUMN WEAR FOR MEMBERS--AND POLICEMEN--OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.]

Asked whether the Government proposed to institute a prosecution in regard to the disturbance of the peace (with alleged profane language) that recently occurred within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster, Sir GEORGE CAVE gravely recited the words of the statute providing that an offender in such circumstances was liable to have his right hand stricken off. All eyes instinctively turned to see how Mr. PEMBERTON-BILLING was taking it; but any anxiety that he may have felt was relieved when the HOME SECRETARY added that the statute in question was repealed in 1828.

A question put by Sir HENRY CRAIK about a C1 recruit included the statement that he was "suffering from Addison's disease"; and Mr. HOGGE voiced the general curiosity when he asked, obviously out of solicitude for the late Minister of Munitions, "What is ADDISON'S disease?" It is believed that the reply, if one had been given, would have been "Over-dilution."

Good progress was made with the Corn Production Bill, and on the vexed question as to how far allowances should be reckoned as part of the minimum wage an amendment was inserted enabling the Wages Boards to secure for the labourer a little more in cash and less in kind.

In the Lords a satisfactory account of the recent negotiations between British and German Commissioners at the Hague was given by Lord NEWTON. Incidentally he disposed of the suggestion that there had been anything in the way of fraternization. Both sides had held strictly to the business in hand, which was the exchange of prisoners, not of compliments.

Wednesday, August 1st.--The Peers were to have had another field-day, for Lord SELBORNE had put down a motion calling attention to the alleged sale of honours. But, to the relief of certain of the recently ennobled, who could not be sure what the Unnatural History of SELBORNE might contain, the discussion was postponed.

Three hours' talk over Mr. HENDERSON'S dual personality left the Commons still vague as to how a Cabinet Minister becomes a Labour delegate at will. Perhaps the Channel passage may have had something to do with it.

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[Illustration: ANY PORT IN A STORM.]

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THE PICTURE POSTCARDS.

A little family party, with an acquaintance or two added, sat in deck chairs (at twopence each) at the head of the pier. Their complexions proved that there had been sun at Brightbourne in some strength. Their noses were already peeling a little, and the ladies had bright scarlet patches in the V of their blouses. To supply any defects in the entertainment provided by the ocean itself they had brought paper-covered novels, the two most popular illustrated dailies and chocolate. The boy and girl shared Roaring Chips or some such comic weekly. The father and his gentleman-friend smoked their pipes. All were placid and contented, extending their limbs to receive every benediction that sun and sea air could confer.

A little desultory conversation having occurred—"There's a lady at our boarding-house," said one of the acquaintances, "who reads your hand wonderfully," a languid argument following on palmistry, in which one of the gentlemen disbelieved, but the other had had extraordinary experiences of the accuracy of the science—the mother of the boy and girl suddenly remembered that not yet had postcards been sent to Auntie and Uncle, Gus and Beatty, Mr. Brown and Mrs. Venning.

"We promised, you know," she said guiltily.

"Better late than never," said the father's friend jocularly.

"That's right," said the father.

"Come along," said the gentleman-friend to the boy and girl, "we'll go and choose the cards. There's a stall close by," and off they started.

"Don't let them see everything," the prudent mother called out, having some acquaintance with the physical trend of the moment in postcard humour, which has lost nothing in the general moral enfranchisement brought about by the War, one of the most notable achievements of which is the death and burial of Mrs. Grundy.

"Go on!" said the boy, with all the laughing scorn of youth. "We've seen them all already."

"You can't keep kids from seeing things nowadays," said the father sententiously. "Bring them up well and leave the rest to chance, is what I say."

"Very wise of you," remarked one of the lady-friends. "Besides, aren't all things pure to the pure?"

Having probably a very distinct idea as to the purity of many of the postcards which provide Brightbourne with its mirth, the father made no reply, but turned his attention to the deep-water bathers as they dived and swam and climbed on the raft and tumbled off it....

"Well, let's see what you've got," said the mother as the foraging

party returned.

"We've got some beauties," said the daughter--"real screams, haven't we, Mr. Gates?"

"Yes, I think we selected the pick of the bunch," said Mr. Gates complacently, speaking as a man of the world who knows a good thing when he sees it.

"My husband's a rare one for fun," said his wife. "A regular connoozer."

"There's a pretty girl at the postcard place," said the boy. "Mr. Gates didn't half get off with her, did you?"

Mr. Gates laughed the laugh of triumph.

"She's not bad-looking," he said, "but not quite my sort. Still--" He stroked his moustache.

"Now, Fred," said Mrs. Gates archly, "that'll do; let's see the cards."

"This one," said the girl, "is for Gus. He's been called up, you know, so we got him a military one. You see that girl the soldier's squeezing? She's rather like his young lady, you know, and it says, 'Come down to Brightbourne and learn how to carry on.' Gus'll show it to her."

The mother agreed that it was well chosen.

"Where's Beatty's?" she asked.

"Here's Beatty's," said the boy; "I chose it. The one with the shrimp on it. It says, 'At Breezy Brightbourne. From one giddy young shrimp to another.' Jolly clever, isn't it? And this is for Mr. Hatton, because he's so fond of beer. You see there's a glass of beer, and it says underneath, 'Come where the girls are bright and the tonic's all right.' There was another one with a bottle called 'The Spirit of Brightbourne,' but we thought beer was best."

"What about Uncle?" the mother asked.

"Oh!" said the girl, "there's a lovely one for him. Three men on their hands and knees licking up the whisky spilt from broken bottles."

"Good Heavens!" said the father, "you can't send him that."

"I think not," said the mother. "If you sent Uncle that, all the fat would be in the fire."

"It's very funny," said the boy.

"Funny, yes," said the father. "But funniness can be very dangerous. Good Heavens!" and he mopped his brow, "you gave me quite a turn."

"Very well, who shall we give it to?" the boy asked. "We mustn't waste it."

"I don't care who has it so long as it's not your Uncle," said the father. "And what have you got for your Aunt Tilly?"

"This one," said the girl. "An old maid looking under the bed for a man and hoping she'll find one."

"Goodness, Maria!" said the father, "are your children mad? The idea of sending such a thing to Tilly!"

"But she is an old maid," said the girl.

"Of course she is," said the father. "That's the mischief."

"Well, there's rather a good one where a wife is going through her husband's trousers and saying, 'Brightbourne's the place for change,'" said the girl. "Would that suit?"

"Of course not," snapped her father.

"Or the one where the bed is full of fleas?" the boy suggested.

"No jokes about fleas," said the father sternly. "No, you must change those for something else. Don't be funny at all with either your Uncle or Aunt. We can't run any risks. Send them local views--coloured ones, of course, but strictly local."

"Mr. Gates helped us," said the boy meanly.

"Mr. Gates doesn't know all the facts," said the father.

"He can guess one or two of them," said Mr. Gates, jingling his pocket.

"Fred is so quick," said his admiring wife.

"Well, and what are the others?" the mother asked. "There's Mr. Brown and Mrs. Venning. Why shouldn't Mr. Brown have the whisky one? I'm sure he'd laugh. But you couldn't send Mrs. Venning the old maid."

"We got this for Mr. Brown," said the boy. "The nurse bringing the father twins and calling them two 'pink forms.'"

"That's dashed good," said Mr. Gates, "don't you think?"

"Very smart," said the father. "That's all right. And what about Mrs. Venning?"

"Well," said the girl, "we thought she'd like this one--a man and a woman kissing in a tunnel, and he says the tunnel cost ten thousand pounds to make, and she says it's worth it, every penny."

"Very good," said the father; "I like that. Get me another of those and I'll send it to a friend of mine in the City. And I'll go to the shop myself and help you to choose the local views for your Uncle and Aunt Tilly. It's a case where care is necessary."

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THREE DAUGHTERS OF FRANCE.

Chateau ----, France.

To M. PUNCH.

CHER MONSIEUR,--Shall I write to you of the toil, the fatigues which my sisters and I must endure at the hands of our country's Allies, without kindness in your breast that flame of chivalry which is the common glory of our two races? _C'est incroyable_.

Let us then to my complaint.

We lived for many years, my two sisters and I, in the service of our dear master, who owned a beautiful chateau in the North of France.

Our duties were simple--to entertain the guests of M. le Vicomte after dinner on those evenings upon which he gathered his friends around him.

For the rest we lived in the ease which his kind generosity knew how to provide. We loved our own particular boudoir, with its books, its pictures, its comfortable fauteuils and its soft green cushions.

Oh, Monsieur, it makes me to weep when I think of my beautiful sisters--the one with her laughing rosy cheeks, the other pale as ivory, save for one little black spot, which no man surely could call a blemish.

Those were happy days. Often we kissed, my sisters and I, for very joy.

Then it came--this terrible War. M. le Vicomte was called away in the cause of la belle France; but we would not desert our home. One day, we said, it shall be as of old.

And as the months went by it was whispered that the English would make of our chateau a house of rest for their officers who were recovering themselves of their wounds. And we were glad, for we promised ourselves to entertain our brave Allies. Thus might we too serve la patrie.

They came. Mon Dieu! Is it now a hundred years that we hurry to and fro in their service? A House of Rest! Ma foi! Morning, noon and night they come, these countrymen of yours. Never can we rest. Hither and thither do they drive us. No longer are our cushions soft and caressing; the cloth upon our table is stained, and see--here is a hole.

Ah, it is cruel! Our beauty is decayed. The cheeks of my poor sister, that once were so rosy, have lost their colour and our figures their rounded grace.

We are loyal, Monsieur, and, though we are no longer pleasing to look upon, we do not grudge our service. But we beg of you, kind M. Punch, to procure for us a respite from our labours, that we may recover something of our former lustre. Thus shall you merit the undying gratitude and your countrymen regain the devoted services of what were at one time three of France's fairest billiard-balls.

Agreez, cher Monsieur, etc., etc.

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[Illustration: First Actor (in khaki, to second ditto). "HULLO, OLD BOY--WORKING?"

Second Actor. "YES, OLD CHAP, AND HAIG HAS BOOKED ME FOR THE AUTUMN TOO."]

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THE FATAL EMBRACE.

"There is a good story of how at an election meeting in Cork a few years ago, when he was a candidate, one of a crowd of working women pushed her way into a brake from which he was addressing a throng in the market square and suddenly put her

arm round his neck and killed him."--_Times of India_.

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"At the Port Elizabeth Town Council meeting, Mr. Mackay asked could nothing be done to the seats at Homewood? The resin was oozing out of them. He had had a valuable pair of pants completely ruined, and the same thing might happen to any lady."--_South African Paper_.

Our trousered Amazons must not be discouraged.

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[Illustration: "PRISONER, WHEN ARRESTED, CLUNG TO THE RAILINGS."]

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[Illustration: "PRISONER, WHEN ARRESTED, CLUNG TO THE RAILINGS."]

THE TWELFTH--NEW STYLE.

(_DREAMT IN A DUG-OUT_.)

In my dream it was my first Twelfth after the ending of the War.

The party moved off in file up the slope of the moor, Sir Percy on his pony in front, then the guests with rifles at the trail, next the bearers and orderlies, and in the rear the ammunition-limbers and regimental baggage. A ration-party would follow later. There was to be no singing on the march, but pipes were allowed.

Just as we neared the crest of the hill, at a notice bearing the legend, "Keep below," the whole party entered a deep "boyau" leading right up to the trenches in front, from which branched off various passages to the gun pits, or butts, as we used to call them.

Our position was semi-circular in form and about three-quarters of a mile long; its main strength lay in a chain of machine-gun emplacements at intervals of about two hundred yards. These were, needless to say, all armoured, but it was nevertheless considered bad form to fire along the line.

Further back there were a couple of Archies and a battery of eighteen-pounders.

Our instructions had been as follows: "At 10 A.M. the artillery will open on enemy's main positions with H.E., and at the same time the Archies will maintain a barrage along the far side, to keep them from breaking away to Smithson's moor (a poor sportsman, Smithson; uses lachrymatories. All the birds we got off his place last year actually had tears in their eyes still). At 10.15 you will open fire with machine guns and rifles on anything under three hundred yards. At 10.30 the firing will stop and you will make your way to the assembly trenches, where bombs will be served out. At 10.35 the entire force will advance in open order. No prisoners will be taken."

My personal instructions were to hold my position with two men. Hastily lighting a cigarette and adjusting my map-case, I was standing-to, when the telephone bell tinkled. "Hello," said Sir Percy's voice, "all ready? The planes are out." I glanced up at the two 500 h.p. Liddell and Scott monoplanes, which circled high up over the moor. "What do they report?" I asked. "Birds in force at a.2.B.c.d., x.y.z.6 and A.b.3.m., and small parties in and near the Heather Redoubt."

At 10.30 I left my smoking weapon and an empty flask, and at 10.35 went over the top. A little later I brought down no fewer than seven of the enemy with one beautifully timed bomb, and stole a furtive glance at the others. Nobody had seen me do it. However, I thought, I shall be able to tell them about it at least three times to-night.

Meanwhile our bearers were collecting the enemy's dead and finishing off his wounded. Away to the left Sir Percy and half-a-dozen more were gathered round what I took to be the Heather Redoubt, and every now and then a little white puff of smoke broke from the ground.

"What's the idea?" I asked over the telephone. "Rabbit warren," answered Sir Percy. "Bombing 'em out. I always bomb 'em out. Smithson uses gas—poor sportsman, Smithson."

* * * * *

I was dozing lazily in the smoking-room, vaguely wondering if I could tell them about it a fourth time, when suddenly the dressing gong went, and someone shook me roughly by the shoulder. Outside a voice was shouting, "Gas!"

"Poor sportsman, Smithson," I muttered, struggling into my mask.

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EXPERIENCES.

There are few of my friends whom I hold in higher respect than the Fladworths. Fladworth is a prosperous accountant, quite in the front rank of his profession, and for the last three years an indefatigable War-worker. His two sons joined up on the day War was declared; his three daughters are all nursing, and for the last two years their town house has been a convalescent home. Mrs. Fladworth is a saint of hospitality, and their country house is always full for the week-end with people who want a rest. And one can accept this hospitality with a good conscience, because they can afford it. It does not involve the painful self-sacrifice shown by some people, of whom it has been happily said that, when their supplies are short, they will insist on your staying for a meal, "even if they have to kill a rabbit with a Christian name."

The Fladworths are charming hosts, but they have a weakness—a passion for intellectual games, serious variants, for the most part, on "Consequences," and a most trying ordeal for persons who cannot spell or are ignorant of history or general information. Moreover, to add to the strain, Fladworth is always inventing new games, "so that all may start fair." This happened on the occasion of my last visit, when he introduced the company to "Experiences." Every one, having contributed sixpence to the pool, was expected to describe the most interesting or exciting event in his or her life. One of the party, who did not compete, then decided which was the best experience, and the winner pocketed the pool.

I cannot remember all the episodes recounted, though they were for the most part serious and impressive. Mrs. Fladworth had heard Mr. GLADSTONE read the lessons in church; Fladworth had heard TENNYSON recite "Come into the Garden, Maud" at a friend's house in the Isle of Wight; a young invalid airman, who was known to have had the most thrilling adventures, but, after the manner of his kind, never talked of his own achievements, told us how frightened he had been by the giant in his first pantomime. My turn came last, but I was not in the least helped by having had the longest time to prepare. I have a wonderful memory for futilities, and when called on could think of

nothing better than my recollection of the arrival of Hiawatha at the Channel Islands and the delirium of the populace.

You can imagine my feelings when old Mr. Fladworth, aet. eighty-four and rather deaf, who was acting as judge, awarded me the prize on the ground that nothing was more interesting than the effect of poetry on the masses. I hadn't the courage to explain that it was not LONGFELLOW'S poem, but that terrible tarantelling American tune which electrified the Channel Islanders some ten years back. As none of the company was able or disposed to correct him there was nothing left for me to do but to rake in the sixpences. After all, the total only amounted to five and sixpence, and I compounded with my conscience by putting it in the plate on the following morning.

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A TALE OF THE HORSE MARINES.

"The crew of the submarine made great efforts to refloat the vessel, but were unsuccessful. The cavalry advanced towards the spot and surrounded both the submarine and her crew, who surrendered."-- Daily Paper.

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"Lord Lambourne, in a farewell address to his late constituents at Waltham Abbey, said the honour which had been conferred on him was not degraded by a farthing of his money. Licensed victualler, of Queen's Road."-- Woodford Times.

Are we to infer that the late Chairman of the Commons' Kitchen Committee is now in business on his own account?

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"One of my informants says that he was awakened by shells passing beside his window which rushed screaming inland."-- Daily Paper.

This was evidently "a magic casement opening on the foam of perilous seas." A French window would have shown more courage.

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[Illustration: "GOOD GRACIOUS, BABY, HERE ARE SOME PEOPLE COMING! GET BACK TO YOUR DRESSING-ROOM AT ONCE."]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(BY MR. PUNCH'S STAFF OF LEARNED CLERKS.)

It was a special duty of the late JOHN F. MACDONALD, who was cut off in his prime after incautiously adding to his journalistic labours in Paris the voluntary and too exacting duties of entertaining the wounded, to emphasize the Entente Cordiale. Ever since KING EDWARD laid the foundation of that understanding between England and France, it was Mr. MACDONALD'S delight as well as his livelihood to study every facet of it, both in Paris and in London, and with unflinching humour and spirit, fortified by swift insight, to present each in turn to his readers. The two best papers in the first volume of the posthumous collection of his writings are those which describe in vivid kindly strokes the triumphant impact of the late KING on the Parisians some fourteen years ago, and the visit, not long after, of

five hundred London school-children to the French capital. Had Mr. MACDONALD been spared to prepare this book himself, there is no doubt that he would have subjected his essays to revision and brought them into a more harmonious whole; but as they stand, gathered together in this volume, *Two Towns--One City* (GRANT RICHARDS), by the proud hands of his mother, they have charm and vitality and the authenticity of first-hand knowledge and lively sympathy. The War, as we have just been reminded by an impressive memorial service, has made deep gaps in the ranks of English journalists, and the loss of JOHN F. MACDONALD'S quick eyes, happy choice of words, and intensely human apprehensions was far from being the least.

* * * * *

Whether you enjoy *The House in Marylebone* (DUCKWORTH) will depend entirely upon your taste for the society of a number of hardworking but sentimental "business girls." For this is the whole matter of Mrs. W.K. CLIFFORD'S book. I call her girls sentimental, because (for all that they are supposed to be chiefly concerned with living their own lives) you will be struck at once with the extent to which they contrive to mix themselves up with the lives of any male creatures who venture over the horizon. "Our little republic," says one of its inmates towards the end of the book, "is firmly feminine and hasn't done much falling in love." Well, well--I suppose this is a question that turns upon your definition of the word "much;" to me personally they seldom seemed to be doing, or thinking about, anything else. Nor could I help reflecting how much fuller and more vigorous all Mrs. CLIFFORD'S cast would have found their existence to-day. Perhaps this feeling explains a slight impatience which the society of so much struggling femininity eventually produced in me. Young women still live in houses in the Marylebone Road; they still proclaim republics of hardworking celibacy, and fall briskly in love with the first eligible bachelor; but their vocations and their citizenship have both (*Hoch der KAISER!*) grown out of all knowledge. So that charming writer, Mrs. CLIFFORD, must forgive me if I could find only an historical interest, and no very robust one at that, in her amiable retrospect.

* * * * *

AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE have certainly been well advised about their sub-title to *The Black Office and other Chapters of Romance* (MURRAY). For that is precisely what the tales are; and excellently romantic and thrilling chapters too, for the most part dated in the decade following the great Anglo-French peace of a century ago. Probably you couldn't say off-hand what the Black Office was. Let me whisper. It was, amongst other things, a postal censorship that opened and perused all letters intended to cross the Channel. With what natural indignation would you, in July three years ago, have read of such monstrous activities! Truly, as the authors say, there is some interest in the comparison of then and now. Of the other stories, my own favourites would be "The Resurrectionist" and "The Smile on the Portrait." The first of these is a haunting affair of body-snatching, or rather of an early escapade of the notorious BURKE, who was asked to supply a red-haired corpse, and not finding one produced instead a gentleman who had yet to fulfil the condition precedent to body-snatching, i.e. who had to be killed first and snatched afterwards. This is certainly as grim as anything I have met over the Castellated signature. Beside it, "The Smile on the Portrait," the tale of a jealous husband who becomes a maniac, is almost soothing. They had clearly their little worries even a century ago. The CASTLES, as everybody knows, have always had the trick of adventurous fiction; *The Black Office*, etc., proves that their hands have lost nothing of their cunning.

* * * * *

One has heard so often of works of "absorbing interest" that appeared at "the psychological moment" that one feels a bit squeamish about applying these phrases even to such a book as Mr. HARRY DE WINDT'S Russia as I Know It (CHAPMAN AND HALL); but honestly their appropriateness cannot be denied in view of the author's peculiar knowledge of the too mysterious country on which interest just now is so poignantly concentrated. He has not only traversed Siberia as few, even Russians, have done—that is an old though still thrilling story—but he has ranged at large over the whole country from Finland to the Crimea (the only two parts, by the way, which he has made me thirst to visit), and has gone with his eyes open. In the present volume, touching only incidentally on his journeyings and still less on politics, he has tried to satisfy the thousand-and-one questioners who, one imagines, have been plaguing him not a little lately as to those intimate details that really count in the life of a nation. He tells us for instance how the Russians do business and keep out the cold; how many of the women you could call pretty, and how much mutton a Kirghiz can eat. Though some of this is not new, yet the book has, as a whole, a most vivid freshness, and, if in the end the main effect is to make one content to live out of Russia, that is a tribute to the writer's frankness. At the least one is able to rejoice in his final verdict of unqualified enthusiasm for his hosts, since he found not merely acquaintances ready to welcome the popular English, but true and trustworthy friends in all classes of the community.

* * * * *

MRS. OLIVER ONIONS has a light puckish humour and a smooth if over-hasty pen, and I don't think she quite does her own intelligence (or ours) full justice in The Bridge of Kisses (HUTCHINSON). I liked her flapper heroine, Joey, and the naughty nephews, the O.U.'s, and her sapper lover, The Bridge Builder, who was a confoundedly long time over his work, by the way, but ultimately came into his own over his own bridge of kisses, built under a heavy barrage of needless misunderstandings. But Joey's pipsqueak shirker fiance, Hilary, was altogether too foolish a travesty of a man ever to have gained her hand or, having gained it, to have held it against any real male in or out of khaki. The fact is that "BERTHA RUCK" can achieve something better than these meandering methods and this spinelessness of characterisation; and it is distinctly disappointing to see her content with the curate's egg standard.

* * * * *

It is time that some of our novelists put up a statue to NAPOLEON for services rendered to the cause of fiction. In Miss MAY WYNNE'S A Spy for Napoleon (JARROLD) his misdeeds and those of his minions are made to serve the purpose of emphasizing the loyalty of the heroine to her lover. This lover was an Englishman of a type sufficiently familiar in novels—cold and masterful, but, for some reason not apparent to me, extremely attractive. As he seemed to be roaming about France with the object of getting NAPOLEON out of the way by any means available, I am not certain that he was playing the game, even when we remember that the rules of it were lax enough at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But we are not asked to weigh carefully the merits of character. It is just a romance of incident, in which a hot pace is set at the start and kept up to the finish. In short you get a good run for your money, and that is all about it.

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[Illustration: THE THEORIST.]

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From a review of a novel:--

"Joan is pretty, and Stewart Austen ... asks her to marry him. Joan refuses indignantly on the ground that his views and conduct are opposed to those which as a member of a Suffrage Society she is pledged to eradicate."--_The Saturday Westminster_.

Why the lady should resent her lover's endorsement of her own opinions is just one of those things that no fellah (unless he is a reviewer) can understand.

* * * * *

"Besides being Paul Von Hindenburg's second self, Ludendorff is the transportation expert of the Central Powers. He was ordered to go to the industrial cities along the Rhine and the Rhone rivers."--_Evening Paper_.

It is a pity that the second part of this enterprise had for geographical reasons to be abandoned, for we understand that Lyons would have given him a particularly warm reception.

* * * * *

"The Canadian Club gave a luncheon to-day in honour of the Canadian Highlanders, who have been a picturesque feature of the British recruiting week in New York....

"An exciting incident occurred during the luncheon, when two German waiters were ejected from the room. The Highlanders now go to Chicago to make a similar demonstration."--_Morning Paper_.

As nothing more has been heard of the matter, it is supposed that the Germans in Chicago prudently refused to wait for them.

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