

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 156, May 14, 1919

Various

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

VOL. 156.

May 14, 1919.

CHARIVARIA.

"Where Stands Germany To-day?" asks a headline. She doesn't. At least Count BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU kept his seat while addressing the Peace Conference. This discourtesy however need not be taken too seriously. It is pointed out that by the time Germany has complied with the Peace terms she may not be able to sit down.

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The Soviet Government has adopted a new calendar, in which the year will commence on October 25th. We ourselves have always, associated the first day of January with some of the most repugnant features of capitalism.

A resident of Balham who was last week bitten by a member of a Jazz band is now wondering whether he ought to submit to the PASTEUR treatment or just allow the thing to run its own course.

Several of our migratory birds have not yet returned to these shores. It is supposed that the spirit of competition has been aroused in them by the repeated rumours of a Trans-Atlantic flight and that they have started to race on foot across Europe.

"Where is all the Cheese?" asks an _Evening News'_ headline. A correspondent has suggested that it might be nesting-time.

Wallasey's Corporation has decided to exclude boys under sixteen from the municipal golf course. No child, the Mayor explains, should be allowed to witness its father's shame.

"Steps should be taken to make the clergy presentable and attractive," says the Vicar of St. Jude's, Hampstead. A little baby ribbon insertion, it is suggested, would give a certain dash to the carpet slippers without impairing their essential dignity.

The Ebbw Vale cat that is suspected of having rabies is still under observation. The belief is gaining ground, however, that she was merely trying to purr in Welsh.

North of England gas managers have passed a resolution urging the appointment of a Director-General of Light, Heat and Power. But surely the functions of such an office are already performed by Mr. SPEAKER.

Swallows, says a contemporary, have been seen flying over the Serpentine. Most of the snap was taken out of the performance by the fact that none of them delivered _The Daily Mail_.

A fine specimen of the rare white female dolphin, a very infrequent

visitor to our shores, has been killed off Yarmouth. We'll learn white female dolphins to visit us!

The National Historical Society have cabled to Mr. WILSON that they are supporting Italy's claim to Fiume. It is only fair to point out that Mr. Smith of Norwood has not yet reached a decision on the point.

A Sinn Fein M.P. has been recaptured at Finglas, co. Dublin. It would be interesting to know why.

The Board of Agriculture are of the opinion that rabies might be spread by rats. In view of this there is some talk of calling upon householders to muzzle their rats.

According to a Sunday paper a husband recently stated that a former lodger ran away with his wife. She was a German, and nobody can understand why they ran.

An anarchist arrested in Holland with a bomb in his possession explained that it was for the ex-Kaiser. We have since been informed that the retired monarch denies that he ever placed such an order with the gentleman.

A well-known golf club has recently engaged a totally deaf caddy. The idea is to induce more clergymen to join the club.

As no joke about the Isle of Wight Railway has appeared in any comic paper for at least a month, it is supposed that either a new engine has been bought or that the old one has been thoroughly overhauled.

A picture post-card sent off in 1910 has just arrived at its destination. It is presumed that one of the sorters who originally handled it is breaking up his collection.

It will take ten years, says a Post Office official, to replace the present telephone system with automatic exchanges. Persons who have already registered calls are urged not to make too much of this slight additional delay.

Every one, says the Secretary of the National Federation of Fish Friers, wants the trade to be a respectable one. On the other hand it is just that smack which it has of Oriental debauchery that makes it appeal so strongly to the idle rich.

Salmon taken from some parts of the Tyne are alleged to smell of petrol and taste like tar. Otherwise they are quite all right.

An American doctor states that British people sleep too much. No blame, however, attaches to America. After all, she invented the gramophone.

"The end of the dog," says a contemporary, "is in sight." Then it can't be a dachshund.

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[Illustration: PROTECT OUR PROTECTORS.

BARBED WIRE-MESH OVERALLS DESIGNED TO PREVENT THE POLICE FROM STRIKING AS A PROTEST AGAINST HAVING TO INTERN UNMUZZLED DOGS.]

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"Unionist Agent wanted ... Liberal salary offered."--_Times_.

Just the job for a Coalitionist.

* * * * *

"One must, however, remember that the Turk--and hurl upon him what execrations you may--is still the [text upside down: gentleman of the Near] East."--_Weekly Paper_.

He may be the "gentleman of the Near East," but that has not saved him from being turned down.

* * * * *

THE COUNTER-ORDER OF THE BATH.

[A Standing Committee of the House of Commons has refused to vote L3,800 for a lift and a second bathroom in the proposed official residence of the LORD CHANCELLOR within the precincts of the House of Lords. In a letter to Sir ALFRED MOND Lord BIRKENHEAD wrote: "I am sure both yourself and the Committee will understand that my object in writing is to make it plain that I never asked anyone to provide me with a residence, and that I am both able and willing, in a house of my own, to provide my family and myself with such bathroom and other accommodation as may be reasonably necessary."]

I did not ask for it; I never yearned
Within the Royal Court to board and bed;

Like all the other honours I have earned,
I had this greatness thrust upon my head;
But if the Precincts are to be my lair
Then for my comfort Ministers must cater;
I want a second bath inserted there,
Also an elevator.

Daily fatigued by those official cares
Which my exalted dignity assumes,
I could not ask my feet to climb the stairs
Which link that mansion's three-and-thirty rooms;
And, if the Law must have so clean a fame
That none can point to where a speck of dust is,
A single bathroom cannot meet the claim
Of equitable Justice.

My wants are modest, you will please remark;
I crave no vintage of the Champagne zone,
No stalled chargers neighing for the Park,
No 9.5 cigars (I have my own);
I do not ask, who am the flower of thrift,
For Orient-rugs or "Persian apparatus";
Nothing is lacking save a bath and lift
To fill my soul's hiatus.

And, should my plea for reasonable perks
(Barely four thousand pounds) be flatly quashed;
Should kind Sir ALF, Commissioner of Works,
Be forced to leave me listless and half-washed;
Then for these homely needs of which I speak,
Content with my old pittance from the nation,
In Grosvenor Square (or Berkeley) I will seek
Private accommodation.

O.S.

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BACK TO THE CAM.

College head-porters as a class assuredly rank amongst the dignified things of the earth. One may admire the martial splendour of a Brigadier-General, and it is not to be denied that Rear-Admirals have a certain something about them which excites both awe and delight, but they are never quite the same thing as a college head-porter. There may be weak spots in the profession, and indeed in one or two of the less self-respecting colleges the head-porters scarcely rise above the level of the Dons; but these are distinctly exceptional. As a class they stand, as I said, amongst the dignified things of life.

Parsons is our head-porter, and perhaps he is the sublimest of them all. Freshmen raise their squares to him, and Oriental students can rarely bring themselves to enter the porter's lodge during their first term without previously removing their shoes. Few except fourth-year men have the temerity to address him as "Parsons" to his face; it seems such an awful thing to do, like keeping a chapel in bedroom slippers or walking arm-in-arm with a Blue. You feel awkward about it.

In order to give you a shadowy idea of Parsons' majesty I must hark

back for a moment to a certain day in November, 1914, when Biffin and I, after a brief dalliance with the C.U.O.T.C., left Cambridge to join our regiments. It was pouring with rain, but we were elated in spirit; we had our commissions; things were going to happen; we felt almost in case to jostle a constable. As we passed out through the porter's lodge Parsons sat at his table, imperturbable and austere, his eagle eyes flashing from beneath his bushy brows and his venerable beard sweeping his breast. At that moment Biffin, overwrought with excitement, forgot himself.

"Cheerio, Parsons, old cracker," he shouted wildly; "how's the weather suit your whiskers?"

Then, realising the enormity of his act, he turned suddenly pale, dashed out into the road and dived panic-stricken into the waiting taxi. We made good our escape.

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Those seven stars represent the War. I take a childlike pleasure in dismissing Armageddon in this brusque fashion. If you have had anything at all to do with it you will understand.

Having been demobilised at a relatively early date, out of respect for our pivotal intellects, Biffin and I were bound for Cambridge, to take up the threads of learning where WILHELM had snapped them some years previously. Both of us have changed a little. Biffin has been burnt brown by the suns of Egypt, while I wear a small souvenir of Flanders on my upper lip.

"I wonder if Parsons will remember us," said Biffin as the train thundered into the station.

"Of course he will," I replied. "Parsons never forgets anything."

"I doubt it," said Biffin.

As our taxi drew up before the portals of Alma Mater the first person we saw, standing on the steps of the porter's lodge, was Parsons. He was as Olympian as ever. As soon as you saw him you felt that, though they might abolish compulsory Greek or introduce a Finance Tripos, they would never be able to subdue the ancient spirit of the University. A single glimpse of Parsons, standing erect in all his traditional glory, showed up people like Mr. H.G. WELLS in their true perspective in a moment. It did one good.

We approached him. "Good afternoon, Parsons," we said, with a brave attempt at `_sang-froid_`.

Parsons regarded us. "Good afternoon, Mr. Jones," he said to me. Then his eyes rested on Biffin. "Good afternoon, Sir," he said.

Biffin nudged me, "He's forgotten me," he whispered. Parsons continued to subject him to an implacable scrutiny. At length he spoke again. "As to your question, Mr. Biffin, which I have had no earlier opportunity of answering, I may say that what you were pleased to allude to as my whiskers--a colloquialism I do not myself employ--are entirely impervious to and unaffected by any climatic variations whatsoever. Your rooms, Sir, are on Staircase B."

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TRUE HOSPITALITY.

"Lecture by Rev. W. ----. 'The Dragon, The Beast and The False Prophet.' All welcome."--_Scotsman_.

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"Scotch reels, corner dances, and waltzes were favourites at the Masons' ball on Tuesday evening. Dancers fought shy of the fog-trot which has proved so popular at other dances."--_Scots Paper_.

Perhaps they were afraid of missing their steps in the dark.

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"Detroit to-day completed its first year as the world's largest 'dry' city. The city has prospered during the past year both financially and industrially. Murders, suicides, embezzlements, assaults, robberies and drunkenness were reduced by half."--_Daily Mail_.

The record of drunkenness seems still rather high for a teetotal city.

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[Illustration: A CAUTIOUS DICTATOR.

PRESIDENT WILSON (_dictating a message to the American Nation_). "AT LAST WE MAY FAIRLY SAY THAT THE DOVE OF PEACE HAS SIGHTED DRY LAND." (_Pauses_). "ONE MOMENT--I'M NOT QUITE SURE THEY'LL LIKE THAT WORD 'DRY.'"

[The New York _World_ asserts that President WILSON has promised to set aside the Prohibition Law if he finds that popular opinion is opposed to it.]]

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[Illustration: MR. WILL JONES, M.C., D.C.M., AND MR. RONALD MONTMORENCY (TOTAL EXEMPTION 1917--WORK OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE) AS THEY APPEAR IN THE LEADING PARTS OF THE MELODRAMA "IN HIS COUNTRY'S NEED."

Reading from left to right: MR. MONTMORENCY, MR. JONES.]

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SAFETY FIRST.

The fact being now established to the satisfaction of the authorities that the public is composed almost exclusively of drivelling idiots, a campaign has been instituted for adding to the decorations of London by placarding the walls with hints on how to avoid various violent deaths.

We are surrounded now by blood-curdling photographs of people being run over by omnibuses or dribbled along the street by horses attached to brewers' drays, these illustrations being accompanied by explanatory notes as to the inevitable result of crossing roads with your eyes shut or your fingers in your ears and endeavouring to alight from moving omnibuses by means of the back somersault or the swallow dive. We are also implored to make quite sure, before alighting from a train, that it is really at a station.

As this admirable propaganda is only in its infancy, I submit the following additions to its collection of horrors, which may perhaps inspire others even cleverer than myself to evolve new methods of protecting the public from themselves.

TUBES.

A picture of a widow wringing her hands with grief, and under it this pungent hint: "This is the widow of a man who tried to light his cigarette on the 'live rail.'"

A picture of a man who has been cut in half, with, say, a crisp little couplet:--

"Here are two portions of Benjamin Yates
Who scorned the request to 'stand clear of the gates.'"

A photograph of the interior of a hospital ward full of patients, with the following: "Interior of a ward in the Bakerdilly Hospital, exclusively for patients who stepped off the moving staircase with the wrong foot."

TRAINS.

A picture of a stately building standing in its own grounds with the description: "The N.S.E. & W. Railway Orphanage for children whose parents crossed the line by the track instead of the footbridge."

A picture of a decapitated body with the poignant comment:--

"Be warned by the ending
Of Ferdinand Goschen
Who leaned out of window
While the train was in motion."

And perhaps a few general hints such as:--

- (1) In stepping off an omnibus always alight feet first.
- (2) In crossing crowded thoroughfares, proceed through the traffic, not under it.
- (3) Before stepping from the pavement make quite sure that there is a road there, etc., etc.

Imagination, colour--that's all that's wanted, and if this propaganda is carried far enough the safety of the public will be assured, for either they really will try not to be killed while travelling or walking in the streets, or they will stay indoors altogether.

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A DISCIPLINARIAN.

"SCHOOLMISTRESS'S RESIGNATION."

Miss ---- will have the satisfaction of knowing that she has left her mark on those who have passed through her hands."--_Provincial Paper_.

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"Closing scores in the professional golf match were Newman 14,835; Inman 13,343."--_Provincial Paper_.

This high scoring was due, we understand, to the large number of losing hazards which had to be negotiated.

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"Aerial fights to and from towns on the coast are to be a feature of Hythe's holiday season."--_Belfast Weekly News_.

We are all in favour of popularising aviation, but we think this is over-doing it.

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[Illustration: _Director of old-established firm_. "I HOPE YOU DON'T SMOKE?"

The new "Boy." "NO--GIVEN IT UP. FIND IT 'PUFFS' ME FOR JAZZIN'."]

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SPRING CLEANING

The hailstorm stopped; a watery sun came out,
And late that night I clearly saw the moon;
The lilac did not actually sprout,
But looked as if it ought to do in June.
I did not say, "My love, it is the Spring;"
I rubbed my chilblains in a cheerful way
And asked if there was some warm woollen thing
My wife had bought me for the first of May;
And, just to keep the ancient customs green,
We said we 'd give the poor old house a clean.

Good Mr. Ware came down with all his men,
And filled the house with lovely oily pails,
And went away to lunch at half-past ten,
And came again at tea-time with some nails,
And laid a ladder on the daffodil,
And opened all the windows they could see,
And glowered fiercely from the window-sill
On me and Mrs. Tompkinson at tea,
And set large quantities of booby-traps
And then went home--a little tired, perhaps.

They left their paint-pots strewn about the stair,
And switched the lights off--but I knew the game;
They took the geyser--none could tell me where;
It was impossible to wash my frame.
The painted windows would not shut again,
But gaped for ever at the Eastern skies;
The house was full of icicles and rain;
The bedrooms smelled of turpentine and size;
And if there be a more unpleasant smell
I have no doubt that that was there as well.

My wife went out and left me all alone,
While more men came and clamoured at the door
To strip the house of everything I own,
The curtains and the carpets from the floor,
The kitchen range, the cushions and the stove,
And ask me things that husbands never know,
"Is this 'ere paint the proper shade of mauve?"
Or "Where is it this lino has to go?"
I slunk into the cellar with the cat,
This being where the men had put my hat.

I cowered in the smoking-room, unmanned;
The days dragged by and still the men were here.
And then I said, "I too will take a hand,"
And borrowed lots of decorating gear.
I painted the conservatory blue;
I painted all the rabbit-hutches red;
I painted chairs in every kind of hue,
A summer-house, a table and a shed;
And all of it was very much more fair
Than any of the work of Mr. Ware.

But all his men were stung with sudden pique
And worked as never a worker worked before;
They decorated madly for a week
And then the last one tottered from the door,
And I was left, still working day and night,
For I have found a way of keeping warm,
And putting paint on everything in sight
Is surely Art's most satisfying form;
I know no joy so simple and so true
As painting the conservatory blue.

A.P.H.

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[Illustration: THE PROFESSOR, IN HIS CAGE, INTENDED TO STUDY THE LANGUAGE OF MONKEYS. BUT, WHEN THE KETTLE UPSET, THE MONKEYS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY OF STUDYING THE LANGUAGE OF PROFESSORS.]

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THE LAST OF HIS RACE.

IT is interesting, though ill-mannered, to watch other people at a railway bookstall and guess their choice of literature from their outward appearance.

Had you pursued this diversion, however, in the case of Mr. Harringay Jones as he stood before the bookstall at Paddington, you would, I fear, have been far out in your conjecture. For Mr. Jones, who had the indeterminate baldheadedness of the bank cashier and might have been anything from thirty-five to sixty, did not purchase a volume of essays or a political autobiography, but selected a flaming one-and-sixpenny narrative of spy hunts and secret service intrigue.

Still, how could you have guessed that Mr. Jones's placid countenance and rotund frame concealed an imagination that was almost boyish in its unsatisfied craving for adventure? Humdrum year had succeeded humdrum year, yet he had never despaired. Some day would come that great moment when the limelight of the world's wonder would centre on him, and he would hold the stage alone.

But till its arrival he consoled himself with literature and found vicarious enjoyment in the deeds of others. As long as his imagination could grow lean in its search for treasure amid Alaskan snows, he recked not if reality added an inch or two to his circumference. While he could solve, in fancy, problems that had baffled the acutest investigators, what matter if his tie-pin got mislaid?

And then came war to deposit romance and adventure upon our doorsteps. Mr. Jones was agog with excitement.

Espionage, treachery in high places, the hidden hand--Mr. Jones read about them all and shuddered with unholy joy. Perhaps he, an obscure cashier--who could tell? Stranger things had happened.

Meanwhile he devoured all the spy literature he could find, for, as he once remarked to himself, in dealing with such gentry you have to mind your P's and QUEUX. It was his only joke.

His literary choice dictated by such considerations, Mr. Jones picked his way delicately across the platforms till he reached his compartment, into the corner of which he stretched himself luxuriously and prepared to enjoy his book.

Just before the train started a lady entered carrying a baby and--greatly to Mr. Jones's annoyance--took the corner seat opposite him. Being a confirmed bachelor, he had a horror of all babies, but this child in particular struck him with disfavour; seldom, he thought, had he seen such a peevish discontented expression on any human face.

Close on the lady's heels followed a withered old man of the traditional professorial type, who seated himself at the other end of the compartment.

Mr. Jones buried himself in his book. For once, however, the narrative failed to entertain him. Beautiful spies lavished their witchery in vain; the sagacity of the hero left him cold.

Suddenly an atmosphere of unrest and agitation conveyed itself to him. The train was slowing down in the darkness; the lady opposite was leaning forward, her face pale, her whole attitude tense with excitement. The train stopped; outside someone was walking along the metals; there came the sound of a guttural remark.

The lady put her hand to her heart and, turning to the elderly gentleman, gasped, "Doctor, that was his voice. They have tracked us."

The old man rose quietly and, opening the far door, stood waiting.

"But the child?" she cried with a sob.

"He must be left behind, Madame. There is less danger thus."

"But what am I to do?" She turned to Mr. Jones, looked at him steadily and fixedly, and then, as if satisfied with what she read in him, exclaimed, "You have a good heart. You must keep him. Do not let them have him; too much depends upon it."

And before the astonished cashier had time to protest his fellow-travellers had gone and he was alone with the child.

But not for long. Just as the train commenced to move again three men entered the compartment; two appeared to be servants, but the third was a young man of distinguished appearance, the most conspicuous items of whose attire were a dark Homburg hat and a long cape of Continental cut.

Mr. Jones's heart missed a beat.

Throwing a searching glance around the compartment the stranger rapped out, "There has been a lady in here?"

"No," replied Mr. Jones, on general principles.

For answer the stranger picked a cambric handkerchief off the floor.

"That's mine," said Mr. Jones hastily.

"Perhaps," was the sneering reply, "you will tell me also that the child is yours."

"Certainly," said Mr. Jones, ruffled by his cross-examination; "it always has been."

The stranger snorted contemptuously. "You are good at explanations. Perhaps you can explain this."

Mr. Jones looked down at the baby's coat. To his amazement he beheld a crown and monogram embroidered on it.

"That," he replied, taking refuge in fatuity, "is the laundry mark."

"Come, come, enough of this fooling. Give me the child."

Mr. Jones took no notice.

"Give me the child, I say."

Mr. Jones paled but did not move.

"Very good, then." The stranger turned to his attendants. "Rupert, Rudolph," he said.

Two revolver barrels flashed out.

Mr. Jones stood up hastily, the child clutched tightly in his arms. "What do you mean by threatening me like this? What right have you to the child? I never heard of such a thing; I shall inform the police."

"Porkhound," yelled the stranger, "do you defy me? me, Count Achtung von Eisenbahn? Give me the babe. I must have him. I will have him. He is ours--our Prince Fritz, the last of the Hohenzollerns."

The great moment had come. Jones's face lit up. Death--a hero's death--might claim him, but he would make democracy safe for the world.

"Last of the Hohenzollerns!" he shouted; "then, by Jove, this is going to be the last of _him_." And with a yell of triumph he hurled the infant out into the night.

From the child in its trajectory came a long ear-splitting shriek, followed by a gentle wailing.

Mr. Jones sat up and blinked his eyes. The professorial gentleman was still in the far corner; the lady was still opposite him; the child was wailing softly.

The lady smiled. "I'm afraid baby has broken your nap. A passing express frightened him."

"Not at all," murmured Mr. Jones incoherently, searching for his novel, the one solace left amid the ruin of his dreams.

"Pardon me," said the lady, "but if you are looking for your book you threw it out of the window just before you woke up."

Mr. Jones sank back resignedly. His glory had gone, his book had gone.

Once again he settled himself in his corner to sleep--perchance to dream.

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[Illustration: "JACKY, DEAR, YOUR HANDS ARE FRIGHTFULLY DIRTY."

"NOT 'FRIGHTFULLY,' MUMMY. A LOT OF THAT'S SHADING."]

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STRANGE BEHAVIOUR OF THE GERMAN ENVOYS.

"Five minutes later the German plenipotentiaries reappeared, dived into Allied representatives, emerged, jumped into their car and drove off."--_Dublin Evening Mail_.

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CHANT ROYAL OF CRICKET.

When earth awakes as from some dreadful night

And doffs her melancholy mourning state,
When May buds burst in blossom and requite
Our weary eyes for Winter's tedious wait,
Then the pale bard takes down his dusty lyre
And strikes the thing with more than usual fire.
Myself, compacted of an earthier clay,
I oil my bats and greasy homage pay
To Cricket, who, with emblems of his court,
Stumps, pads, bails, gloves, begins his Summer sway.
Cricket in sooth is Sovran King of Sport.

As yet no shadows blur the magic light,
The glamour that surrounds the opening date.
Illusions yet undashed my soul excite
And of success in luring whispers prate.
I see myself in form; my thoughts aspire
To reach the giddy summit of desire.
Lovers and such may sing a roundelay,
Whate'er that be, to greet returning May;
For me, not much--the season's all too short;
I hear the mower hum and scent the fray.
Cricket in sooth is Sovran King of Sport.

A picture stands before my dazzled sight,
Wherein the hero, ruthlessly elate,
Defies all bowlers' concentrated spite.
That hero is myself, I need not state.
'Tis sweet to see their captain's growing ire
And his relief when I at last retire;
'Tis sweet to run pavilionwards and say,
"Yes, somehow I was seeing them to-day"--
Thus modesty demands that I retort
To murmured compliments upon my play.
Cricket in sooth is Sovran King of Sport.

The truth's resemblance is, I own, but slight
To these proud visions which my soul inflate.
This is the sort of thing: In abject fright
I totter down the steps and through the gate;
Somehow I reach the pitch and bleat, "Umpire,
Is that one leg?" What boots it to inquire?
The impatient bowler takes one grim survey,
Speeds to the crease and whirls--a lightning ray?
No, a fast yorker. Bang! the stumps cavort.
Chastened, but not surprised, I go my way.
Cricket in sooth is Sovran King of Sport.

Lord of the Game, for whom these lines I write,
Fulfil my present hope, watch o'er my fate;
Defend me from the swerver's puzzling flight;
Let me not be run out, at any rate.
As one who's been for years a constant trier,
Reward me with an average slightly higher;
Let it be double figures. This I pray,
Humblest of boons, before my hair grows grey
And Time's flight bids me in the last resort
Try golf, or otherwise your cause betray.
Cricket in sooth is Sovran King of Sport.

King, what though Age's summons I obey,
Resigned to dull rheumatics and decay,
Still on one text my hearers I'll exhort,
As long as hearers within range will stay:
"Cricket in sooth is Sovran King of Sport."

* * * * *

"Royal Horse Guards.--Captain (acting Marquis) W.B. Marquis of Northampton resigns his commission."--_Provincial Paper_.

But retains, we trust, his acting rank.

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SPRING MODES AT MURMANSK.

We, the enthusiasts of the Relief Force who sailed from England with the fine phrases of the Evening Press ringing in our ears have arrived at Murmansk, only to be disappointed and disillusioned. It is not that the expedition looks less attractive than it did, or that our leaders fail to inspire us with confidence. It is because the gilt has disappeared from the sartorial gingerbread of our adventure.

Why did we leap forward to volunteer before we were wanted and continue to leap till, for very boredom, they sent us embarkation orders and a free warrant? Was it simply to escape an English Spring? Was it not rather that we might win our furs--might wear the romantic outfit which we were led to believe was *de rigueur* in the most exclusive circle, namely, the Arctic? What was the first remark of our female relatives when we showed them the War Office telegram? Was it not, "Of course you must be photographed in your furs and things?"

No wonder, after the monotony of khaki, if we looked forward to the glory and distinction of fur-lined caps and coats, Shackleton boots, huge snow-goggles and enormous gloves turning hands to savage paws.

And now what spectacle greets us at Murmansk, with everybody's camera cleared for action? What is the example set by those to whom we naturally look for light and leading? Behold the General and his Staff coming on board in the snow-reflected sunshine flashing with the gold and scarlet trimmings of Whitehall. And what of the old residents, our comrades? They are playing football in shorts and sweaters.

The genial R.T.O. cheered us up a little and kept the more resolute of our Arctic heroes in countenance by sporting a magnificent and irresistible fur head-dress; but an R.T.O. can do what would be regarded as nerve in you and me; and, moreover, here is the A.P.M. in the familiar flat cap, encircled with the traditional colour of authority.

Even the nice little Laplander and his lady, driving in to do shopping, drawn on a sleigh by a nicely-matched trio of reindeer, was sitting on more furs than he or Mrs. L. were wearing; while even the naked team seemed to feel the heat oppressive.

I suppose we have come too late in the year for the romance of skins and ski, and must condescend to the familiar gum-boot until the mosquito season opens and a man may design some becoming effect in

muslin.

Of course there is still plenty of snow to be photographed against in the full splendour of a Hyperborean disguise; but is it worth while to unpack one's valise for that? And anyhow would not the atmosphere of the picture be marred, the pose of the explorer be rendered unnatural by his consciousness of insincerity and his fear of imminent suffocation?

So the Photographic Press of England must bear their loss as best they may.

* * * * *

"Dear Sir,--Mr. Gould has authorised this committee to hereby and of this date relinquish the title of world's open champion at tennis. He feels it is inexpedient for him to defend his title."--_Field_.

It is understood that he is afraid that the strain might make him split another infinitive.

* * * * *

"Mr. Siddons Kemble, a young Bensonian actor, who plays the part of 'A Poet' in 'Cyrano,' is the great-great-grandson of the actress Sarah Siddons and her equally famous brothers, John Phillip Kemble, Charles Kemble and Henry Stephen Kemble."--_Evening News_.

There must have been a remarkable amount of close intermarriage in the KEMBLE family.

* * * * *

ROYAL ACADEMY--FIRST DEPRESSIONS.

[Illustration: _Ulysses (disillusioned). _ "FULL SPEED AHEAD!"]

[Illustration: _Sir William Bull (to Mr. Hacker). _ "I WARN YOU THAT IF THIS ASH FALLS IT MAY THROW ME OFF MY BALANCE."]

[Illustration: "PULVIS ET UMBRA."

Excited Spectator. "TWO TO ONE ON UMBRA."]

[Illustration: _Disgusted Artist_. "WHAT'S THE GOOD OF MY TRYING TO PAINT HER WHEN SHE KEEPS ON FALLING ASLEEP?"]

[Illustration: "OH, DO HURRY UP AND FINISH! I'M GROWING OUT OF MY CLOTHES."]

[Illustration: _The Donkey_. "LET THEM FACE THE CAMERA IF THEY LIKE. FOR MY PART, I'M AT MY BEST IN PROFILE."]

[Illustration: _The Right Hon. Mr. Justice Darling_. "NO, THIS IS
NOT A JOKE!"]

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[Illustration: _Cynical Taxi-driver_. "HERE!--HI!--ME LORD! YOU'VE
MADE A MISTAKE--YOU'VE GIVE ME TUPPENCE TOO MUCH!"]

* * * * *

THE COOK.

(_With acknowledgments to TENNYSON and CALVERLEY_.)

Urged by the Government, with loyal step
I to the Labour Bureau made my way
To find a cook; and there beheld a queen,
Tall, fair, arrayed in feathers and in fur
And all things beautiful. Whom when I saw,
"Madam," said I, "they tell me, who should know,
That you have skill of Mrs. Beeton's art.
If that be so--" She nodded "Yes," and I
Assumed a courage, though I had it not,
And spoke again: "Then tell me, if you will,
Of your experience and past career.
Whence come you?" And the cook--why not?--replied:

"I come from haunts of bomb and shell,
I've toyed with lathes and gauges,
I've sparkled out a sudden swell
With quite unheard-of wages.

"By thirty shops I've paused to buy
Silk stockings, skirts and undies,
In fifty stores I've sat to try
Smart tango boots for Sundays.

"Down Bond Street gaily would I float,
Buy chairs, pianos, tables,
With here and there a sealskin coat,
And here and there some sables.

"I'd slip, I'd slide, I'd jazz, I'd glide,
I'd fox-trot, one- and two-step,
And show with pardonable pride
My skill at every new step.

"I'd dance until my soles wore raw,
When, tired of dissipation,
I'd lie in bed whole weeks and draw
My out-of-work donation.

"And when that palled I'd rise to see
What fortunes cooks are earning,
And how the ladies long for me
With dumb pathetic yearning.

"I flit about, I skip, I roam

Through houses past the telling,
Through many a stately ducal home,
And many a Mayfair dwelling.

"I chatter in the servants' hall,
I make a sudden sally,
And with the parlourmaid I brawl
Or bicker with the valet.

"I murmur under moon and stars
With blue and khaki lovers,
I linger in resplendent bars
With golden taxi shuvvers.

"But out again I come and know
That Fate will fail me never,
For wars may come and wars may go,
But cooks go on for ever."

* * * * *

"SUN ECLIPSE IN MAY.

WIRELESS OPERATORS' HELP ASKED."

Daily Paper.

We ought all to put our shoulders to the wheel and make this Victory
Eclipse a big thing.

* * * * *

"All the Lumpkins are clever and some of them are
brilliant.... The head of the family, Lord Durham, is an
exceptionally ready and witty man."--_The Globe._

Readers of GOLDSMITH may suggest that _Anthony Lumpkin, Esq_., was
not a brilliant Lumpkin; but it may well be that he was only distantly
connected with that branch of the family from which Lord DURHAM traces
his descent. In this connection a correspondent suggests the following
train of thought: Lambton--Lambkin--Lump(ofcoal)kin.

* * * * *

"We stand at the noon of the greatest day the world has seen,
with all the hideous darkness of the night behind and all the
glory of the dawn before."

Mr. Arthur MEE in "Lloyd's News."

It looks as if the dawn would be a day late.

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[Illustration: GERMANY DRAWS THE PEN.

"IT'S NOT EXACTLY A SABRE, BUT I DARESAY I CAN CONTRIVE TO KEEP IT
RATTLING FOR A BIT."]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, May 5th--Sir AUCKLAND GEDDES is the maid-of-all-work of the Ministry. Deputising for the PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE he had an opportunity of displaying an encyclopaedic knowledge which fully justified his position as President-elect of a Canadian University. Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS probably thought he had floored him with a poser on "gas-scrubbing," but Sir AUCKLAND knew all about it.

He is discreet as he is erudite. An inquiry about meat-imports elicited plenty of information about "ewe-mutton" and "wether-mutton," but not a word about the Manchurian and other exotic beef recently foisted upon London consumers.

Mr. REMER is one of the most attractive and enterprising of the new Members. But I am afraid, despite his cheery appearance, that he is a bit of a pessimist. With Peace believed to be so near, it was distinctly depressing to find him calling attention to the danger of a deficiency of pit-props "in any future war," and refusing to be put off with the usual official answer, "in view of the urgency of the question."

There are few topics which excite more general interest in the House than the shortage of whisky. When, in reply to a complaint by Colonel THORNE that a firm of Scotch distillers had refused to furnish their customers with adequate supplies, Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS remarked that he would like to be supplied with "specific cases," he was, no doubt unconsciously, expressing an almost universal desire.

Before the War, as we learned from Mr. ILLINGWORTH, Government offices used to send on the average about forty thousand telegrams a month. At the end of it the number had risen to close on a million. Much of the increase is due, no doubt, to zeal for the rapid despatch of public business, but some, one fears, to the natural tendency of dug-outs (even in Whitehall) to protect themselves with wire-entanglements.

If one were to believe all that the Scottish Members said about their own country in the debate upon the Housing (Scotland) Bill Dr. JOHNSON'S gibes would be abundantly justified. Half the population, according to Sir DONALD MACLEAN, are living in such over-crowded conditions that the wonder is that any of the children survive to man's estate, and still more that they retain sufficient energy to run most of the British Empire. But in the circumstances a certain amount of exaggeration may be forgiven. When it is a case of touching the Imperial Exchequer for local advantage the Scot is no whit behind the Irishman in "making the poor face."

Tuesday, May 6th--The Scottish peers are no less impressed with the miserable condition of their country, Lord FORTEVIOT declared that in the Western Hebrides the housing accommodation was no better than the caves of primitive man. Yet these cave-dwellers furnished some of the stoutest recruits to the British army. Perhaps it was their early

experience that made them so much at home in the trenches.

Their lordships gave a Second Reading to the Solicitors' Bill, designed to enable the Incorporated Law Society to punish as well

as try offending attorneys, instead of leaving their sentences to be determined by a Divisional Court. The LORD CHANCELLOR and Lord BUCKMASTER were of one mind in thinking that the measure would be enthusiastically welcomed by the lower branch of their profession--presumably on the principle of "Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know."

[Illustration: _Mr. G.H. Roberts_. "I COME TO BURY FOOD CONTROL--ALSO TO PRAISE IT."]

The issue of an official pamphlet on "The Classics in British Education" aroused the wrath of Colonel YATE, who contemptuously asked what "suchlike subjects" had to do with reconstruction. Before the Minister could answer, Sir JOHN REES, fearing lest all Anglo-Indians should be thought to hold the same cultural standard, jumped to his feet to declare that he had read the pamphlet and found it admirable.

Of all the new Departments instituted during the War the Food Ministry has best justified its existence. Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS'S account of its activities was very well received, and many regrets were expressed that he should have come to bury CAESAR as well as to praise him. Mr. CLYNES, to whom and the late Lord RHONDDA much of the Ministry's success was due, was particularly insistent on the need of some permanent Government control, to counter the machinations of the food-trusts.

The chief criticisms of the Ministry related to its milk-policy, and these were appropriately dealt with by Mr. MCCURDY.

Wednesday, May 7th.--In Downing Street apparently Mesopotamia is not regarded as a "blessed word," for when Colonel WEDGWOOD asked whether that country, after its future status had been decided, would be taken out of the hands of the Foreign Office Mr. CECIL HARMSWORTH fervently replied, "I hope so!"

I wonder whether Sir DAVID BEATTY, now enjoying a well-earned holiday on the Riviera, is as grateful as he ought to be to Commander BELLAIRS for trying to get him back into harness. He has been promised both by Mr. BALFOUR and Mr. LONG the reversion of Sir ROSSLYN WEMYSS' post as First Sea Lord as soon as it is vacant. But no immediate change is contemplated. Meantime it is pleasant to learn from Mr. LONG that the late C.-in-C. of the Grand Fleet "has been consulted on Naval policy since the Armistice." So he is not yet quite forgotten.

A new form of wireless telegraphy has been invented by the Post Office officials. When really urgent messages are handed in for transmission to Paris they despatch them by passenger train; they find this method much quicker than cabling.

An attempt by Sir DONALD MACLEAN to draw attention to the recent exploits of the LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND in the field of Journalism was severely suppressed by the SPEAKER, who perhaps thinks that the less said about them the better. It seems a pity that the Press Censor should have been demobilised just when his famous blue pencil might have been really useful.

Recognising that in the present temper of the House a frontal attack upon Imperial Preference was a forlorn hope the Free Traders sought to destroy it by an enfilading fire. But their ingenious attempt, in

the alleged interest of the consumer, to extend to China tea the same reduction as to the product of India and Ceylon was easily defeated. Mr. CHAMBERLAIN means to have no Chinks in his armour.

Thursday, May 8th--When the Ministry of Health Bill was in the Commons some objection was raised to the multiplicity of powers conferred upon it. But if certain noble lords could have their way the measure would become a veritable octopus, stretching its absorptive tentacles over all the Departments of State. It would take over the inspectorship of factories from the Home Office, the control of quack medicines from the Privy Council and the relief of the poor from the Local Government Board. Fortunately for Dr. ADDISON the Government refused to throw these further burdens upon him. After all, DISRAELI'S famous phrase, "_Sanitas sanitatum omnia sanitas_" must not be translated too literally.

Members were all agog to hear what the Government might have to say about the Peace-terms announced this morning. Mr. BOTTOMLEY challenged the adequacy of the financial provisions, but the HOME SECRETARY evidently felt unequal to a controversy with so great an expert in money-matters, and requested him to wait for his "big brother," Mr. BONAR LAW.

A proposal by Mr. SYDNEY ARNOLD to raise the limit of exemption from income-tax from L130 to L250 was strongly backed by the Labour Party. In resisting it the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER pointed out that the Labour Party had opposed indirect taxation and now they were opposing direct taxation. In what form did they consider that working-men should contribute to the expenses of their country? No answer to this blunt question was forthcoming.

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THE CHILDREN'S BELLS.

[The Bells of St, Clement's, which have been too much out of order to ring for many years, are now being restored. It is hoped they will be ready to ring the Peace in.]

Where are your oranges?
Where are your lemons?
What, are you silent now,
Bells of St. Clement's?
You, of all bells that rang
Once in old London,
You, of all bells that sang,
Utterly undone?
You whom the children know
Ere they know letters,
Making Big Ben himself
Call you his betters?
Where are your lovely tones,
Fruitful and mellow,
Full-flavoured orange-gold,
Clear lemon-yellow?
Ring again, sing again,
Bells of St. Clement's!
Call as you swing again,
"Oranges! Lemons!"

Fatherless children
Are listening near you;
Sing for the children--
The fathers will hear you.

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[Illustration: FROM FIELD-MARSHAL TO JOURNALIST.

LORD FRENCH'S PROMOTION.]

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MUSICAL RECONSTRUCTION.

(By our Special Reporter, who is also busy with the Coal Commission).

At the meeting of the Musical Reconstruction Commission last Saturday the President, Mr. Justice Bland, announced the resignation of Mr. Patrick Horan, an Irish choirmaster, owing to the results of his adjudicating between the competing Sinn Fein brass bands at a "Feis," or festival, held at Athlone on Easter Monday. Mr. Justice Bland said that he felt sure he was interpreting the feelings of all the members of the Commission in uniting to express regret at Mr. Horan's resignation and hope for his speedy recovery from his injuries. Continuing, the President said he had received a letter from the Minister of Music, informing him that Sir Hercules Plunkett, K.B.E., Chairman of the Amalgamated Society of Mandolin, Balalaika and Banjo-makers, had been invited to fill the vacant place.

Mr. Tony Hole, Scriabin Fellow of Syndicalist Economics at Caius College, Cambridge, then presented a memorandum on the Guild Control of Composers on the basis of a forty-hour week, with equal opportunity for performance, the economic use of orchestral resources and the preferential treatment of Russian folk-tunes as thematic material. All members of the Guild should receive the same salary free of income tax; all performances should be free, and applause or encores prohibited as likely to lead to the rupture of artistic solidarity. The profits from the sale of programmes should go into the National Exchequer, but should be earmarked for a Pension Fund for the relief of composers on their compulsory retirement at the age of sixty.

Examined by Sir Leonardo Spaghetti Coyne, Mr. Hole said that he was not aware that the mortality among monkeys employed in the piano-organ industry during the late War was excessive. But he agreed that the fearlessness shown by the monkeys at the Zoo in the course of air-raids deserved a special decoration.

Mr. William Susie, who next occupied the chair, was examined by Mr. Moody MacTear on the question of the nationalisation of Royalty Ballads.

Mr. MacTear, quoting an estimate by a Fellow of the Thermaero-statistical Society, that the ballad composers of the country could produce one hundred and ninety thousand million ballads in five hundred and eighty years, asked the witness whether it would be legitimate that a royalty charge should be made on every ballad produced during that period for the benefit of certain individuals of

future generations. Mr. Susie replied that the State had recognised the right of royalties and therefore he saw no good reason for discontinuing the charge.

Mr. Gladney Jebb. Are you aware that there have been more cases of influenza amongst people who have attended Royalty Ballad concerts in 1918 than amongst all the troops who served on the Palestine Front since 1916? Mr. Susie challenged Mr. Jebb to produce his statistics, and it was arranged, at the suggestion of the President, that Mr. Jebb should be given facilities to proceed to Jericho and collect them.

After the luncheon interval Mr. Cyril Blunt read a report, which he had prepared at the request of the Commission, on the Nationalisation of the Folk-song Industry. He said that it was a scandalous paradox that this natural and obvious reform had hitherto been successfully resisted by unscrupulous individualistic action. Folk-tunes were the product of and belonged to the People, but they had been seized, exploited and perverted by composers, who should be forced to refund the profits they had derived from their robbery. The conservation of our national musical resources should be jealously guarded, and the collection, notation and harmonisation of these tunes carried on under rigorous State supervision. At the same time the State might issue licences for the symphonic use of folk-tunes, the profits from the sale of these licences to be devoted to the maintenance of village festivals, at which only genuine folk-music should be performed by the oldest inhabitants.

Asked by Sir Mark Holloway what he meant by genuine folk-music, Mr. Blunt said, "Tunes of which it is impossible to assign the authorship to a known composer."

Mr. Kilcrankie Fox, who was the next witness, was subjected to a very searching examination by Mr. Moody MacTear, Mr. Gladney Jebb and Sir Leonardo Spaghetti Coyne.

Mr. Moody MacTear. Are you aware that brass instrument players are habitually sweated in orchestras and bands?--It depends on what you mean. I certainly admit that their activities often conduce to profuse perspiration.

Mr. Moody MacTear. Have you ever played the trombone yourself?--No, nor the lyre either.

Mr. Gladney Jebb. Are you prepared to deny that the strain on the nerves of players in Jazz-bands, especially drums, is greater than that endured by soldiers in the front-line trenches during an intense bombardment?--As a rule I am prepared to deny at sight any statement for which you are responsible, but I concede you the big drum.

Sir Leonardo Spaghetti Coyne. Are you aware that, owing to profiteering in the cloth trade, organ-grinders have been unable to provide their Simian assistants with proper habiliments during the recent inclement weather?--"Apes are apes though clothed in scarlet"--or broadcloth. I have not noticed any shabbiness of late in the garb of those with whom I am acquainted.

The Commission broke up at a late hour. At the next meeting evidence will be taken on the subject of the housing of musical seals and the alleged profiteering of dealers in burnt cork at the expense of

players in Jazz-bands.

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[Illustration: _Waiter (a demobilised Sergeant--as Staff officer enters)._ "ROOM--"SHUN!"]

"FOR SALE,
STANDARD BABY.
Lately overhauled."
Cape Times.

Inhuman, we call it.

* * * * *

THE CONQUERING CELT.

[Mr. ROBERT O'LOUGHRAN, writing in _The Times_ of May 2nd, observes, "The Celt is tattooed in his cradle with this historic belief in his race--a free Ireland."]

The Sassenach, stodgy and prosy,
Lacks any distinguishing mark;
The Semite has merely been nosey
Right back to the days of the Ark;
The Teuton proclaims himself _edel_
And points to his family tree;
But the Celt is tattooed in his cradle
With "Erin the Free."

Some races inherit a stigma,
And some find a spur in their past,
But Ireland's ancestral enigma
Has now been unravelled at last;
For the Celt, the original Gaidel,
Apart from his proud pedigree,
Is always tattooed in his cradle
With "Erin the Free."

The actual process of branding
I dare not attempt to describe;
Some themes are too high and outstanding
For bards of the doggerel tribe;
But patriot minstrels will ladle
Out lauds on the parents who see
That the Celt is tattooed in his cradle
With "Erin the Free."

* * * * *

AT THE PLAY.

"JUDITH."

That Mr. ARNOLD BENNETT was actuated by the very highest motives

when he set out to edit the Apocryphal Scriptures for stage purposes, nobody would dream of doubting. It is the more unfortunate that by making the rest of the play very dull he should have thrown into relief certain features in the story of Judith which the original author had preferred to treat with a commendable reticence.

It will be recalled that in the ancient version Holofernes made a feast for Judith "and drank much more wine than he had drunk at any time in one day since he was born;" that he then lay down on his bed in a state of stupor, and that Judith, taking advantage of his torpid condition, "approached" and cut off his head at her leisure with his own "fauchion." The decency of this arrangement is easily apparent; it obviated the necessity for wanton allurements on the part of Judith and amorous advances on the side of the Commander-in-Chief. Incidentally it is more reasonable to assume that so virile a warrior would yield to nothing short of intoxication than that he would be persuaded, while still remaining sober, to take a brief rest (on the ground of temporary indisposition) and so go like a lamb to the slaughter, as he does in the play.

To do Miss LILLAH MCCARTHY justice, she went through a scene embarrassing alike to actors and audience with as much dignity and aloofness as the situation admitted. In a previous scene there had been one rather gratuitous posture which we might perhaps have been spared; but, for the rest, from the moment when she first entered, a noble figure in her robes of widowhood, veiling all but the oval of her face, pale and passionless, she played with a fine restraint, giving us confidence in her reserve of strength and never once allowing her high purpose to be forgotten.

It was not her fault if, in the night scene, amid a generous exposure of physical facts, we missed the less palpable atmosphere of impending doom. Certainly the Holofernes of Mr. CLAUDE KING never for a moment suggested it. I admit that I had not hitherto seen an Assyrian officer making love on the edge of his grave and so had no exact precedent to go by, but this officer, with his face far too well groomed for the conclusion of a heavy banquet, and those rather anaemic and perfunctory gestures of endearment, which had nothing to do with the sombre forces of elemental passion, gave no hint of the sinister workings of Fate.

This lack of atmosphere pervaded G.H.Q. Apart from Miss MCCARTHY, Mr. THESIGER, whose performance as Bagoas must have astonished those who only knew him on the stage as a frivolous flaneur, was the sole character who conveyed any sense of the general uncanniness of things.

Mr. ARNOLD BENNETT'S own novelties--the very rapid fraternization of Judith's little Cockney maid with the enemy; her own inexplicable love-at-first-sight for an Ammonite pervert; the laborious pretentiousness of Ozias, the Governor of Bethulia; the tedious garrulity of the oldest inhabitant, and the topical reference, in the manner of pantomime, to the War of 1914-1918 A.D.--these offered no great improvement on the original narrative. On the other hand his neglect to show us the head of Holofernes, which constitutes so dramatic a property in the Book of Judith, was a noticeable omission. But perhaps he was well-advised to leave it out, for I thought I detected the significant presence of Mr. BILLING in the stalls.

[Illustration: MANUAL EXERCISE.

Bagoas (MR. THESIGER). "CANST DO THIS WITH THY HANDS, WOMAN?"

Judith (MISS LILLAH MCCARTHY). "NAY, MIGHTINESS, THY SLAVE CAN DO NO BETTER THAN THIS POOR TRICK."]

I ought perhaps to add that there was a _Messenger_ whose refinement of speech greatly struck me. He said that he came from Jerusalem, but he sounded as if he came from Balliol.

O.S.

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"A party of police have been stationed in and around the premises, and to-day their number were augmented by a party of Scottish Horse Marines."--_Cork Paper_.

We are glad to see this historic unit bobbing up again.

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C.K.S. AND U.S.A.

The news that our own and only C.K.S.--the "Great Clem of Literature," and the "Wee Cham of Literature," as he is alternatively and affectionately known to the members of the Johnson Club--was on his way to America aroused the liveliest excitement among our fellow-war-winners, and preparations on a grand scale were made for his reception. The statue of Liberty was transformed to resemble Mnemosyne (pronounced more or less to rhyme with limousine), the mother of the Muses, and a bodyguard of poets, novelists, writers, journalists and brainy boys generally was drawn up on the quay.

As soon as the new Columbus was through the Customs these formed a procession and escorted him to his hotel, where a private suite had been engaged, with hot and cold ink laid on.

At a banquet given by the Highbrow Club in the evening the illustrious visitor was the principal guest. As a pretty compliment the floral decorations were all of shamrock, and everything in the menu was Spherical, or nearly so, beginning with radishes and passing on to rissoles, dumplings, potatoes and globe artichokes, plum pudding and tapioca. Humorous allusions to the Eastern and Western Clemi-spheres were of constant occurrence.

In response to the toast of "Literature, Ancient and Modern," coupled with the name of its most vigilant champion, Mr. SHORTER said that he was indeed happy to be on soil hallowed by association with so many writers of merit. To name them would be invidious, but he might say that he had enjoyed the pleasure of intimate correspondence with a large number of them, all of whom had testified to the value which they set upon his friendship. Although he looked upon himself as the least of men (cries of "No, no"), yet he should always be proud to remember that some of his criticisms had not fallen on stony ground. (Loud cheers.) He had in his pocket friendly letters from men whose eminence would electrify his hearers. (Sensation.) He would not read them (moans of despair) because that would be to break the seal of secrecy. (Loud cheers and singing "For he's a jolly Shortfellow.")

Mr. SHORTER'S main purpose is to meet the best American minds in friendly intercourse and thus to promote Britannico-Columbian amity and an even freer interchange of ideas than the theatre now ensures. To this end he has visited or will visit every place of importance, including the Bowery, China Town, Uncle Tom's Cabin, the Yosemite Valley, Niagara, Tuxedo, Chicago, the Waldorf-Astoria, Bunker's Hill, Milwaukee, Chautauqua, the Clover Club, Greenwich Village and Troy.

Mr. SHORTER'S visit to America is otherwise a purely private one. More Irish than the Irish though he is known to be, he has for the moment sheathed his shillelagh. None the less, the condition of Ireland being so critical, he hopes to address a few meetings on the aspirations of his adopted country.

Although the tour is of this private character, Mr. SHORTER is not unprepared to record his opinions as they occur to him or to continue to nourish his mind on the latest productions of the human intellect. His travelling entourage comprises a brace of highly-trained typists, a librarian, the Keeper of the Paper-knife and a faithful stenographer known as "Boswell," who is pledged to miss none of the Master's _dicta_. During the voyage Mr. SHORTER had the services of a special Marconi operator, so that he might receive half-hourly bulletins as to the state of the publishing world, contents of the literary papers, deaths of editors and fellow-critics, new knighthoods and so forth. The Atlantic, on the whole, did not displease him.

Details of the tour which have already reached home indicate that its success is profound.

At Boston Mr. SHORTER, although his visit was brief, found time to deliver his famous _causerie_, "Men of Letters Whom I have Influenced," with special reference to GEORGE MEREDITH.

At Waterbury (which there is some possibility of renaming Shorterbury) the great critic was made the recipient of an address of welcome and a watch.

At Pittsburg the freedom of the Carnegie Libraries all over the world was conferred upon him by the famous iron-master.

At Haworth (Minn.) Mr. SHORTER presented the postmaster with an autographed copy of his _magnum opus_ on the BRONTES.

At Salt Lake City he enchanted the Mormon Elders by anecdotes of THACKERAY'S relations with their namesake, the London publisher.

At Peoria (Ill.) he kept his audience in roars by recounting the good sayings of his critical _confrere_, Sir WILLIAM ROBERTSON NICOLL.

At Philadelphia a very old man, who claimed to be a younger brother of _Mr. Rochester_ (in _Jane Eyre_), publicly embraced the illustrious visitor and borrowed two dollars.

The rumour that Mr. SHORTER is to be appointed as our Ambassador in Washington must not be too lightly dismissed. America often sends us a man of letters--LOWELL, for example, and HAY. Why should we not return the compliment? It would be a better appointment than many that could be named.

The fact cannot be concealed that at home the absence of Mr. SHORTER in America is seriously felt. Fleet Street wears a bereaved air and Dublin is conscious of a poignant loss. As for our authors, they are in a state of dismay; some, it is true, like mice when the cat is away, are taking liberties, but most are paralysed by the knowledge that the watchful eye is not there, the hand, so instant to blame or praise, is resting. Even publishers, normally an insensitive race are shaken, and books that were to have been issued have been held back. For what is the use of bringing out new books if C.K.S. is not here to pass definitive comments upon them before their ink is dry?

England's loss is, however, America's gain. A new cocktail has been named after him.

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[Illustration: WITHIN THE LAW?]

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THE PEACE TREATY.

What really impressed the Germans most of all with the power of the Big Four was the third clause of Section 3, as given in the Press:--

"LEFT BANK OF THE RHINE.

... Germany must not maintain or construct any fortifications less than fifty kilometres to the East of the Rhine."

Even WILHELM himself never succeeded in reversing the course of this famous river.

* * * * *

"The fifth issue of The Indian Year Book is issued a little later than the earlier editions. For this the Editor would ask immunity."--_Preface to "The Indian Year Book_."

Granted. Mr. Punch invariably adopts the same order of procedure in regard to his own publications.

* * * * *

MORE ALLEVIATIONS.

The late JAMES PAYN, who, as is well known, waged a merciless war against sham admiration in literature, happened one day to hear me quote that tremendous fellow, SIBRANDUS SCHAFNABURGENSIS. The particular lines I mean are those in which he says:--

"Then I went indoors, brought out a loaf,
Half a cheese and a bottle of Chablis;
Lay on the grass and forgot the oaf
Over a jolly chapter of Rabelais."

Mr. PAYN remarked sharply:--

"It would cost him some trouble to find one. I've never found a jolly chapter of RABELAIS in my life, and what's more I mean to say so some day and watch the faces."

Well, Mr. PAYN believed in stating his own views truthfully. No doubt the necessity of finding a rhyme for "Chablis" had something to do with the appearance of RABELAIS' name at the end of that line. But that cannot have been the reason why POPE, being under no compulsion of rhyme, brought RABELAIS into his lines:--

"O thou! whatever title please thine ear,
Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff or Gulliver!
Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air
Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy-chair."

I don't much care whether I have quoted correctly or not. I suggested last week in these columns that one might be allowed, as a compensation for advancing years, to use one's quotations without fastidious regard for their accuracy. On consideration I don't see why this liberty should not be even further extended. I can see ("in my mind's eye, Horatio") whole masterpieces coming within its scope and yielding with a sufficiently bad grace to a courageous candour like JAMES PAYN'S. Why should Don Quixote, for instance, tyrannise over us? He has had a good innings, in the course of which, it is only fair to acknowledge, he has been enormously helped by his henchman, Sancho Panza, a fellow of infinite wit, no doubt. There are however readers who set up these two as idols and would compel us to kneel to them, especially when Sancho receives the appointment of Governor of Barataria. I acknowledge I am a constant devotee of Don Quixote and his Sancho, but it is conceivable that there are people who have no liking for them. Let such, if they are old enough, proclaim it, as JAMES PAYN did his opinion about RABELAIS' fun.

I should like to bring certain long poems of universal renown within the scope of my principle. What about Paradise Lost? Did any woman, except perhaps GEORGE ELIOT, ever read it throughout unless under scholastic compulsion? I doubt it; her sense of humour would not allow her to. Take, for instance, the following lines, describing the simple amusements of our first parents:--

"About them frisking played
All beasts of the earth since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den.
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis."

Now, if anybody does not like MILTON'S fun, why, in the name of a "lithe proboscis," should he not say so--in his mature middle-age?

* * * * *

"There is a shamelessness among many in both high and low life that calls for vehement protest. The question with many seems to be how near they can come to the verge of decency without falling over."--Ashore and Afloat.

We have noticed a few who have had quite a narrow escape.

* * * * *

WAY OUT.

(Thoughts on leaving the Crystal Palace.)

A brigadier or two beside the portal
To cry to me with anguish half disguised,
"Hail and farewell, O brother! pomp is mortal"--
Something, I fancied, something of this sort'll
Happen to me when I'm demobilised.

That was an error. Not a drum was sounded;
No personage, no panoply, no pep;
Only a single private who expounded
My pathway out, and I went forth dumbfounded;
Merely remembering to mind the step.

Nothing spectacular and nothing solemn;
No company of men that I might drill,
And either tick 'em off or else extol 'em
And give 'em "Facing left, advance in column,"
And leave 'em marching, marching onwards till

They butted into something. Never a blooming
Ultimate kit-inspection as I passed,
Nor sound of Sergeant-majors' voices booming,
Nor weary stance while aides-de-camp were fuming,
Not even a practice fire-drill at the last.

And that's the end. To-morrow I'll awaken
To meet a world of doubtfulness and gloom,
By orders and by Adjutants forsaken,
And none to tell what action should be taken,
If any, through what channels, and by whom.

But dreams remain amidst the new disaster:
There shall be visions when the firelight burns--
Squads of recruits for ever doubling faster,
Fresh clothing-issues from the Quartermaster
And audit boards and absentee returns.

I shall forget awhile civilian fashions
And watch the P.T. merchants on the square,
And polish tins and soothe the Colonel's passions,
And mount the guard and go and see the rations
And bid departed days be "as you were."

And souvenirs! I know there are a number
Who stuff their homes with memories of dread;
The ancient hat-stand in the hall encumber
With Pickelhaubes and delight to slumber
With heaps of nasty nose-caps round their bed.

Not I, the bard. When delicately suited
I move again amid the mufti swarms,
Since trophies from the Front may be disputed,

I'll flaunt the only spoils that I have looted,
My little library of Army forms.

EVOE.

* * * * *

"RANTZAU'S INSOLENT ACT."

Under this heading The Daily Mail states that before entering the Trianon Palace Hotel to meet the Allies, Count BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU took "a last deliberate puff at his cigarette," and "dropped it on the steps, in the middle of a group of Allied officials." We understand that our contemporary feels that it would have been more in keeping with Germany's political and economic position had the Count humbly extinguished the cigarette and placed it in his waistcoat-pocket for future use.

* * * * *

"Spitable offices will be placed at the disposal of the German Peace delegates."-- Evening Paper.

It is the truest hospitality to make provision for your guests' peculiarities.

* * * * *

[Illustration: First Reveller. "I SAY, WHAT STUNT IS THIS? A BIRTHDAY OR SOMETHING?"

Second ditto. "DUNNO; FANCY IT'S SOMEBODY'S RAG."

First ditto. "SHOULDN'T ONE SAY 'CHEERIO' TO THE BLIGHTER?"]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

The Chartered Adventurer (SKEFFINGTON) is what AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE rather pleasantly call their latest hero, Terence O'Flaherty, impecunious gentleman of fortune, lover and general exponent of the picturesque arts of romance. In a special sense indeed, since you have him not only adventuring for fame and fortune, but, as a by-product, turning his exploits into material for a worked-out early-Victorian novelist, whose "ghost" he had, in a more than usually impecunious moment, consented to become. I found this same unfortunate author, gravelled for lack of sensational matter, at once the most entertaining and original figure in the book, whose course is, to tell the truth, marked otherwise by no very conspicuous freshness. The particular adventure to which O'Flaherty and his companion, Lord Marlowe, are here devoted, is concerned with the intrigues of Madame la duchesse DE BERRI on behalf of her son, as de jure King of France, under the title of Charles X. They provide an environment singularly apt for such affairs; the "wild venture" and the abortive, forgotten rising in which it culminated give colour to a multitude of dashing exploits. In themselves, however, these follow what might be

called common form, showing the two young men exposed to a sufficiency of danger and exhibiting that blend of folly and gallantry expected of their situation. As to the former quality, when, I wonder, will the heroes of romantic fiction learn that the "pretty youth," with flashing eyes contradicted by a manner of singular modesty, is really--well, what common folk could have known her for in the first glance? To sum up, I should call The Chartered Adventurer admirable for almost anyone else's writing, but just a little below the best Castilian standard.

* * * * *

The Pagan (METHUEN) certainly deserves to be called one of the uncommon stories. Whether it will be a popular success is of course a different matter. At least it confirms my previous suspicion, that Mr. CHARLES INGE is a novelist who takes his art seriously and is not afraid of originality. The moral of his tale, which perhaps hardly needs much enforcing to-day, is--don't be too much impressed with the idea of the superman, and especially don't try to go one better. That was the attempt that broke up the happy home where John Witherson had lived with his wife, his infant son and his mother and sister-in-law (too many; but that is beside the point). John had been a schoolmaster, old style, teaching in the ancient faiths, muscular Christianity, play-the-game, sportsmanship and the rest. But about half-way through the War the apparent invincibility of brutal force began to rattle John's nerves. It rattled them so much that he eventually sold his school, moved his household, including the in-laws, to Suburbia, and set up, in partnership with two others of like mind, as instructor of youth, after the jungle law of ruthless efficiency. Not content with this, he proposed also to turn the infant Witherson into a prospective superman by giving him toy-tigers and brief lectures on the rewards of frightfulness. Whereat the mother, finding her protests disregarded, dried her eyes and set herself to fill the poor child's infrequent leisure with anti-toxin injections of the higher morality as conveyed in the poetry of TENNYSON. You now take my meaning when I speak of Mr. INGE as sufficiently single-minded to brave some danger of unintentional humour. Really my sketch has done less than justice to a story that will hold your interest, if only for the sincerity with which it is handled; for myself I was first impatient, then derisive, finally curious to know how it was going to end. I rather think this sounds like a victory for Mr. INGE.

* * * * *

It will add a new terror to the Peace if everybody who has done A Year of Public Life (CONSTABLE) in or about Whitehall is to make a book about it. Not that Mrs. C.S. PEEL does not deserve well of her country. She is evidently a capable person and hustled about the country for the Ministry of Food to some purpose before the days of compulsory rationing. Her general idea seems to be that simple folk are tremendously interested in the most trivial and indirect details of important folk. So she will tell you how Sir HENRY REW and Mr. ULICK WINTOUR were fond of tea (Sir HENRY liked a bun as well); how Mr. KENNEDY JONES once lent her his car; how Lord DEVONPORT, asked if biscuits were included in the voluntary cereal ration, said firmly, "Yes, they are"; how the chauffeur suddenly put on the brake and she bumped into "poor M. FAIDIDES"; how she "visited Bath twice and bought a guide-book," information from which she retails; how secretaries of Ministers came out to say that Ministers would see her in a few

moments; and how, beyond and above all, the QUEEN, when she inspected Westminster Bridge kitchen, asked of a certain substance, "What's that?" and Princess MARY at once replied, "Maize" (just like that). This kind of anecdote, by the way, which our long-suffering Royal Family has to endure in the Press might very well be made actionable under a new _lese-majeste_ law. There are better things than this in the book, but on balance I don't really think it establishes a fair case for existence. The most interesting thing in it is a detailed account of the canteen systems at the Renault and Citroen works near Paris.

* * * * *

There is a great falling off in quality as between _The Pointing Man_ and the anonymous authoress's latest effort, _The Man Who Tried Everything_ (HUTCHINSON), a fact which may be partly accounted for by the brief time elapsing between its appearance and that of its immediate forerunner, _The Man from Trinidad_. Her new book is a war spy story--an exacting form of fiction in any event--and deals with German revolutionary machinations in the Orient. It fails because it moves too rapidly and covers far too much ground. The writer has neither the gift nor the general information necessary for this class of adventurous fiction. Her genius lies in her power of reproducing the atmosphere of crime and intrigue; but her Orient and her Orientals seem to have lost their hold on the reader's imagination. And I venture to remind her that it is fatal in this kind of story to replace known facts by unnecessary fiction; for example, to speak, as she does, of a German warship in the Indian Ocean as the _Bluecher_, when all the world knows that that particular vessel was elsewhere. It will be easily understood that she gives us a hero who wins his heart's desire, and numerous plotters of various nationalities who are all safely foiled, the entire romance being conducted with a ladylike absence of the bloodshed that usually accompanies this class of fiction. That is its best recommendation.

* * * * *

The fact that _The Pearl_ (BLACKWELL) is described in its sub-title as "A Story of School and Oxford Life," may perhaps somewhat mislead you. Let me therefore hasten to explain that the school is for girls, and the Oxford life is that enjoyed by wearers of whatever may be the modern substitute for skirts. Not too immediately modern indeed, as the events fall within the period of the South African war, a fact that will, of course, much increase their appeal for those whose Oxford memories belong to the same epoch. But it is naturally a book difficult for the male reviewer to appraise with exactitude. All I can say, being unacquainted with the domestic politics of a ladies' college, is that I should imagine Miss WINIFRED TAYLOR to have given a remarkably true picture of existence therein; its mixture of academic ambition, sentiment, religious fervour and party spirit seems (as was to be expected) pretty much as we knew it in the masculine camp. The chief point of difference appears to be that Miss TAYLOR'S heroine, _Janet_, and her friends (all pleasantly individual) are naturally thrown a good deal more upon themselves than is the case with their more fortunate brothers. I have no doubt of the book's success. Girl-graduates, past, present and to come, will of course buy it; while in that other Oxford, now so happily re-awakening, I can fancy it being read with all the curiosity that naturally attaches to revelations of the unknown land.

* * * * *

[Illustration: _Urchin (contemptuously)_ "HUH! YER MOTHER TAKES IN WASHIN'!"

Neighbour. "WELL, YER DIDN'T S'POSE SHE'D LEAVE IT HANGIN' AHT OVERNIGHT UNLESS YOUR FARVER WAS IN PRISON, DID YER?"]

* * * * *

From a report of the Cippenham inquiry:--

"Witness: 'Oh, I have a hide like a rhinorocerus.'"--_Evening Paper_.

This pachyderm is new to us.

* * * * *

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