

# **Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 153, September 19, 1917 eBook**

## **Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 153, September 19, 1917**

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# Contents

<a href="#">Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 153, September 19, 1917 eBook.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Table of Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Page 1.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Page 2.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Page 3.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Page 4.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Page 5.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Page 6.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Page 7.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Page 8.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Page 9.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Page 10.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Page 11.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Page 12.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Page 13.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Page 14.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Page 15.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Page 16.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Page 17.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">Page 18.....</a>	<a href="#">37</a>
<a href="#">Page 19.....</a>	<a href="#">39</a>
<a href="#">Page 20.....</a>	<a href="#">41</a>
<a href="#">Page 21.....</a>	<a href="#">43</a>
<a href="#">Page 22.....</a>	<a href="#">45</a>

[Page 23.....47](#)

[Page 24.....48](#)

[Page 25.....50](#)

# Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
CHARIVARIA.		1
LXV.		5
ERIN'S INCUBUS.		12

# Page 1

## CHARIVARIA.

There is no truth in the report that one of the most telling lines in the *National Anthem* is to be revised so as to read "Confound their Scandiknavish tricks."

\*\*\*

Grave fears are expressed in certain quarters that the Stockholm Conference has been "*spurlos versenkt*."

\*\*\*

Someone has stolen the clock from St. Winefride's Church, Wimbledon. We hope that the culprit has responded to the universal appeals in the newspapers which urged him to put the clock back on Sunday last.

\*\*\*

An Englishwoman living in the East has a servant-girl who, when told about the War, remarked, "What war?" Another snub for the *Kaiser*.

\*\*\*

"A Vegetarian" writes to accuse Lord RHONDDA of reducing the price of meat on purpose.

\*\*\*

Tube fares are to be raised. An alternative project of issuing special tickets, entitling the holder to standing room, was reluctantly abandoned.

\*\*\*

The Thames, says a contemporary, has come into its own again as a holiday resort. Many riparian owners, on the other hand, are complaining that it has come into theirs.

\*\*\*

A trades union of undertakers' mutes has been formed. Their first act, it is believed, will be to strike for a fifty-year life.

\*\*\*

We have been asked to explain that the Second Division in which Mr. E.D. *Morel* is now serving is not the one that fought at the battle of *Mons*.

\*\*\*

Two escaped German prisoners have been arrested at Wokingham by a local grocer. The report that he charged twopence each for delivery is without foundation.

\*\*\*

At Leith Hill, in Surrey, trees are being felled by a number of unescaped German prisoners.

\*\*\*

"Beans running to seed," says an informative daily paper, "should be picked and the small beans extracted." But the old custom of lying in wait for them on the return journey and stunning them with a flail still retains many adherents in the slow-moving countryside.

\*\*\*

"I am the father of sweeps," declared an elderly employer to the West Kent Tribunal. He afterwards admitted, however, that the secret correspondence of Count LUXBURG had not been brought to his notice.

\*\*\*

Acting, explained an applicant to the House of Commons' Tribunal, is regarded by many as a work of national importance. The Tribunal have generously arranged for him to storm a few barns in Flanders.

\*\*\*

Sixty-eight thousand persons, it is stated, have visited the maze at Hampton Court this season. Others have been content to stay at home and study the sugar regulations.

\*\*\*

The admission fee to a concert recently held for the benefit of the Southwark Military Hospital was one egg. None of the gate money, it seems, reached the performers.

## Page 2

\*\*\*

According to the Town Crier of Dover, who has just retired after fifty years' service, town crying isn't what it was before the War. People *will* listen to the bombs instead of attending to the properly constituted official.

\*\*\*

A "History of the Russian Revolution" has been published. The pen may not be mightier than the sword to-day, but it manages to keep ahead of it.

\*\*\*

A private in one of the London regiments has translated two hundred and fifty lines of *Paradise Lost* into Latin verse during a sixteen-day spell in the trenches. The introduction of some counter-irritant into our public school curriculum is now thought to be inevitable.

\*\*\*

The crew of the U-boat interned at Cadiz, says a Madrid correspondent, have been allowed to land on giving their word of honour not to leave Spain during the continuance of the War. The mystery of how the word of honour came into their possession is not explained.

\*\*\*

Further evidence of the success of the U-boat starvation campaign has been thoughtlessly afforded the German Press by a London newspaper which has announced that burglars are now using practically nothing but skeleton keys.

\*\*\*

No one has yet found anything that will conquer the wire-worm, says Professor J.R. *Dunstan*. We feel that the Professor is unduly pessimistic. Has he tried the effect of writing a letter to *The Daily Mail* about it?

\*\*\*

Things appear to be settling down in Mexico. Last week only one hundred of General CARRANZA'S men were annihilated by bandits.

\*\*\*

The Berlin authorities have ordered a "Shaveless day." As a measure of frightfulness this is doomed to failure against an Army like ours with tanks which will eat their way through all sorts of entanglements.

\*\*\*

Because an officer omitted to salute him, Field-Marshal *Von Hindenburg* stopped his car and said, "I am *Hindenburg*." We understand that the officer accepted the explanation.

\*\*\*

"There is a scarcity of violins," says *The Evening News*. Some papers never know how to keep a secret.

\*\*\*

Lundy Island has just been purchased by Mr. *Augustus Christie*, of North Devon. We are relieved to know it is still on the side of the Allies.

\*\*\*

A grocer at Coalville, Leicestershire, riding a motor-bicycle without lights, is said to have offered two and a half pounds of sugar to a policeman to say nothing about it. Fortunately the constable, when he came out of his faint, remembered the number of the bicycle, and the man was summoned.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: "You on Guard to-night, nobby?" "Naw." "Wot Yer bin an' washed Yer face for, then?"]

## Page 3

\* \* \* \* \*

*Official rectitude.*

*Sweden on the LUXBURG incident.*

We cannot think that we're to blame.  
We took the very natural view  
That one who bore a German name  
Would be as open as the blue;  
Would bathe in sunlight, like a lark,  
So different from the worm or weevil,  
Those crawling things that love the dark  
Because their deeds are evil.

We thought his cables just referred  
To harmless matters such as crops,  
The timber-market's latest word,  
The local fashions in the shops,  
To German trade and German bands,  
And how in Argentine and Sweden  
And all that's left of neutral lands  
To build a German Eden.

True he employed a secret code,  
But who would guess at guile in that?  
Unless he used the cryptic mode  
He couldn't be a diplomat;  
He wished (we thought) to be discreet,  
Telling his friends how frail and fair is  
The exotic feminine you meet  
In bounteous Buenos Aires.

Why, then, should mud be thrown so hard  
At Stockholm's faith? She merely meant  
To show a neighbourly regard  
Towards a nice belligerent;  
For peaceful massage she was made;  
Aloof from martial animosities,  
She yearns with fingers gloved in suede  
To temper war's callosities.

Such courtesy (one would have said)  
Amid the waste of savage strife



Tends to maintain—what else were dead—  
The sweet amenities of life;  
And seeking ends so pure, so good,  
So innocent, it *does* surprise her  
To be so much misunderstood  
By all—except the *Kaiser*.

O.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

*The Prudent orator.*

“The Premier was accompanied by Mrs. Lloyd George and his laughter.”

*Irish Daily Telegraph.*

\* \* \* \* \*

“Our new nippers are beginning to squeeze to some tune in France and Belgium.”

*Liverpool Daily Post.*

Try a little oil.

\* \* \* \* \*

We print (with shame and the consciousness of turpitude) the following letter:—

“*Bed 56, E Block, 11/9/1917.*

“*Dear sir,*—This morning I was reading your edition dated September 5, 1917. In the ‘Charivaria’ I saw an article in which you proclaimed the North Pole to be the only territory that has not had its neutrality violated by the Huns. I beg to draw your attention to the South Pole.

“I remain, yours sincerely,

“*A wounded Tommy.*”

\* \* \* \* \*

*Washout.*

## Page 4

We had hardly settled down to Mess when an orderly, armed with a buff slip, shot through the door, narrowly missed colliding with the soup, and pulled up by Grigson's chair. Grigson is our Flight Commander—one of those rugged and impenetrable individuals who seem impervious to any kind of shock. There is a legend that on one occasion four machine-gun bullets actually hit him and bounced off, which gave the imitative Hun the idea of armour-plating his machines.

Grigson took the slip and read, slowly and paraphrastically: "Night operations. A machine will be detailed to leave the ground at 10:30 pip emma and lay three fresh eggs on the railway-station at ——. At the special request of the G.O.C.R.F.C., Lieutenant Maude, the well-known strafer, will oblige. Co-operation by B and C Flights."

Lieutenant Maude, commonly known by a loose association of ideas as Toddles, buried a heightened complexion in a plate of now tepid soup. Someone having pulled him out and wiped him down, he was understood to remark that he would have preferred longer notice, as it had been his intention that night to achieve a decisive victory in the Flight ping-pong tournament.

"Oh, but, Toddles," came a voice, "think how pleased old Fritz will be to see you. You'll miss the garden party, but you'll be in nice time for the fire-works—Verrey lights and flaming onions and pretty searchlights. Don't you love searchlights, Toddles?"

Toddles stretched out an ominous hand towards the siphon, and was only deterred from his fell intention by the entry of the C.O.

"Oh, Grigson," said the C.O. pleasantly, "the Wing have just rung through to say they want that raid done at once, so you might get your man up *toute suite*."

Toddles was exactly halfway through his fish.

Now, though Toddles has never to my knowledge appeared before the C.O. at dead of night attired in pink silk pyjamas, begging with tears in his eyes to be allowed to perform those duties which the dawn would in any case impose upon him (this practice is not really very common in the R.F.C.), he is a thoroughly sound and conscientious little beggar. And, making allowances for the fallibility of human inventions, and the fact that two other young gentlemen were also engaged in the congenial task of making structural alterations to the railway station at ——, Toddles comes out of the affair with an untarnished reputation.

Whether it was that his more fastidious taste in architecture detained him I do not know, but it was fully ten minutes after the others had landed before we who were watching on the aerodrome became aware that Toddles was coming home to roost. The usual signals were exchanged, and Toddles finished up a graceful descent by making violent contact with the ground, bouncing seven times and knocking over two flares before

finally coming to rest. His machine appeared to be leaning on its left elbow in a slightly intoxicated condition.

## Page 5

“Bust the V strut,” said Toddles cheerfully. We assured him that one would hardly notice it. Grigson meanwhile had been examining the under carriage with scientific care, and turned to ask him how he had got on.

“Bong,” said Toddles, beaming; “absolutely bong. They spotted us, but Archie was off colour.”

“Did you see your pills burst?”

Toddles beamed more emphatically than ever. “One in what I took to be the station yard, one right on the line, and one O.K. ammunition truck; terrific explosion—nearly upset me. Three perfectly good shots.”

So far Toddles’ account agreed very fairly with the two we already had.

“Didn’t have any trouble with the release gear, I suppose?” said Grigson. “Nasty thing that. I’ve known it jam before now.”

“Well,” answered Toddles, “it did stick a bit, but I just yanked it over and it worked.”

“Splendid!” said Grigson brightly. “A nice bit of work, and very thoughtful of you to bring home such jolly souvenirs.”

“Look here,” replied Toddles with warmth, “who the devil are you getting at?”

“Nothing; oh, nothing at all.”

Grigson moved away towards the Mess. “By the way,” he said, “you’re quite certain they were your own shots? I should have a good look at that under carriage if I were you.”

We all went down on hands and knees. Lying placidly in the rack with an air of well-merited ease born of the consciousness that they had, without any effort of their own, avoided a fatiguing duty, were three large bombs.

“Er—ah—hum,” said Toddles. “Now then, Sergeant, hurry up and get this machine back into the shed!”

And the Sergeant’s face was the best joke of all.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Man, handy at vice, been in motor repair shop.”—*Daily Chronicle*.

Still, it must not be assumed that life in a garage is necessarily fatal to virtue.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: PERFECT INNOCENCE.

CONSTABLE WOODROW WILSON. "THAT'S A VERY MISCHIEVOUS THING TO DO."

SWEDEN. "PLEASE, SIR, I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS LOADED."]

\* \* \* \* \*

THE WATCH DOGS.

## LXV.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I feel some hesitation in passing the following story on to you, less from the fear of what it will divulge to the enemy than from the fear of what it may divulge to our own people. As far as the enemy is concerned be it stated boldly that the train was going to Paris and "I" got into it at Amiens. Yes, HINDENBURG, there *is* a place called Paris and there *is* a place called Amiong. Now what are you going to do about it? As far as our own people are concerned it is asked of them that, if ever they come to read it, they may not inquire too closely as to who "I" may be.

## Page 6

It is a long train and there is only one dining-car. Those who don't get into the car at Amiens don't dine; there is accordingly some competition, especially on the part of the military element, of which the majority is proceeding to Paris on leave and doesn't propose to start its outing by going without its dinner. Only the very fit or the very cunning survive. Having got in myself among the latter category I was not surprised to see, among the former category, a large and powerful Canadian Corporal.

If he can afford to pay for his dinner there is no reason, I suppose, why even a corporal should not dine. If he can manage to snaffle a seat in the car there is certainly no reason why a French Commandant should not dine. There is every reason, I imagine, for railway companies to furnish their dining-cars with those little tables for two which bring it about that a pair of passengers, who have never seen each other before and have not elected to meet on this occasion, find themselves together, for a period, on the terms of the most complete and homely intimacy. Lastly, the attendant had every reason to put the Corporal and the Commandant to dine together, for there was nowhere else to put either of them.

What would have happened if this had taken place ten years ago, and the French Commandant had been an English Major? The situation, of course, simply could not have arisen; it would have been unthinkable. But if it had arisen the train would certainly have stopped for good; probably the world would have come to an end. As it was, what did happen? Let me say at once that both the Corporal and the Commandant behaved with a generosity which was entirely delightful; the Corporal's was pecuniary generosity, the Commandant's generosity of spirit. This was as it should be, and both were true to type.

Quick though the French are at the uptake, it took the good Commandant just a little while to settle down to the odd position. This was not the size and shape and manner of man with whom he was used to take his meals. As an officer one feels one's responsibilities on these public occasions, and I felt I ought to intervene and to do something to rearrange the general position. But at the start I caught the Corporal's eye, and there was in it such a convincing look of "Whatever I may do I mean awfully well," that I just sat still and did nothing.

The awkward pause was over before the soup was finished. Rough good-nature and subtle good sense soon combined to eliminate arbitrary distinctions. The Commandant won the first credit by starting a conversation; it was really the only thing to do. Had the Commandant and I been opposite each other we should probably have dined in polite silence. But the Corporal was one of those red-faced burly people with whom you have, if you are close to them, either to laugh or fight.

## Page 7

The Commandant was not inwardly afraid; he was innately polite. He talked pleasantly to his *vis-a-vis*. The Corporal, a trifle abashed at first, listened deferentially, but as the good food enlivened him he ceased to be abashed and became cordial. From cordial he became affable, from affable affectionate, and from affectionate he passed to that degree of friendship in which you lean across the dinner-table, tap a man on the shoulder and call him "old pal." Finally, he insisted upon the Commandant cracking with him a bottle of champagne. I give the Commandant full marks for not persisting in his refusal.

A draught or two of champagne has, as you may be aware, the effect of developing to an extreme any friendly feelings you may at the moment happen to possess ...

The train chanced to stop just after dinner was finished, and the Commandant, seizing his opportunity, hurriedly paid his bill and got into another carriage. My *vis-a-vis* also left the car, though I must confess that I had not stood *him* so much as a glass of beer. I and the Canadian Corporal were left facing each other, and the position was such that I couldn't avoid his eye. I had no feelings with regard to him, but I simply could not smile at him, since I do not like champagne. So I suppose I must have frowned at him; anyhow, he came along and sat down at my table in order to explain at length that he was not drunk.

He wasn't drunk, and I had never said he was, and I was not in the least interested in his theme, until he got to the point of what his main reason was for not being drunk. This, I admit, interested me deeply. "When we get to Parry," said he, "we shall be met by Military Police, and they will ask to see our papers. And if my papers weren't in order and if I wasn't in order myself I should be put under arrest and sent back again. And I don't mean to be sent back, and I have all my papers in order and I'm in order myself." And, dash it all, the fellow was right, and when we got to the Gare du Nord there were the Military Police as large as life, and clearly there was no avoiding them.

At first I didn't quite know what to do about it, but a little thought decided me. "There are your M.P.," I said to the Corporal, as we trooped slowly out of the dining-car. "I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to come along with me and interview one of them." Giving him no time to argue, I led him straight to the Police Sergeant and insisted upon this case being dealt with before all others. "I must ask you, Sergeant, to make this man produce his papers. I have reason to doubt whether he is in order."

## Page 8

The Corporal began to expostulate, but the Sergeant adopted the none-of-that-I-know-all-about-your-sort attitude which is so admirable in these officials. The Corporal produced some papers and tendered them indignantly. The Police Sergeant remained impassively unconvinced, but gave me one fleeting look, as if he wondered whether I had put him on to a good thing. "There are papers and papers," said I, as if I too knew all about the business. "Let us see if they are in order." The Sergeant's instinct had already told him that the papers were quite in order, and he was all for cutting the business short and getting out of it as quickly as he could. But I insisted upon the most minute examination and would not give in and admit my mistake until the Sergeant practically ordered us both off the station.

Having given the Sergeant to understand that he was to blame for the Corporal's papers being in order, I allowed myself to be passed on. The Corporal followed me; he wanted an explanation. When we got outside the station I let him catch me up, because I thought he was entitled to one.

"Will you allow me to ask why you did that, Sir?" he said very indignantly but not rudely. "You knew that I had my papers, Sir, and that they were in order."

"Yes," I said. "But I knew that my own weren't."

His cheeks suffused with the most jovial red I have ever seen.

"In the very strictest confidence, Corporal," I said, "I haven't any papers."

I didn't know that a human laugh could be so loud. On the whole I think it was a good thing that we had arrived in Paris after closing time, since otherwise, in spite of my dislike of the stuff, I'm sure that three more bottles of the most expensive brand would have been cracked. I should have had to stand one; he would have positively insisted on standing two.

Yours ever,

HENRY.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Skipper of Drifter (who has been fined thirty-five shillings for losing a pair of binoculars).* "PROPER JUSTICE I CALLS IT; MY BROTHER-IN-LAW LOSES HIS WHOLE BLINKING DRIFTER AND YOU DON'T FINE 'IM A BLOOMING CENT."]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Tommy.* "E'S A WONDER AN' NO MISTAKE. I CAN'T TEACH MY OLD DAWG AT HOME TO DO ANYTHINK."

*Pal.* "AH, BUT YER SEE, MATEY, YOU 'AVE TO KNOW MORE 'N A DAWG, OR YER CAN'T LEARN 'IM NUTHIN."]

\* \* \* \* \*

A SIGN OF THE TIMES.

"YOUNG LADY Wants post as Housekeeper to working man."—*Halifax Evening Courier*.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Planers (large letters) Wanted, for machine tool work; good bonus; war work; permanent job."—*Daily Dispatch*.

Pessimist!

\* \* \* \* \*

"WHAT DISABLED SOLDIERS SHOULD KNOW.

## Page 9

"That there is no such word as 'imossible' in his dictionary."—*Canadian Paper*.

Correct.

\* \* \* \* \*

"M. Polychromads, Green Charge d'Affaires, has left London for the Hague."—*Sunday Times*.

It is an unfortunate colour, but with a name like that he can always try one of the others.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The canker of indiscipline and the wine of liberty have shaken the Russian Army to its foundations."—"Times" *Russian Correspondent*.

While the tide of new life that was kindled by the torch of revolution seems destined to crumble into dust.

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE TRIUMPHAL PROGRESS.

There are few phases of the War—subsidiary phases, side-issues, marginalia—more interesting, I think, than the return of the natives: the triumphant progress, through their old haunts and among their old friends, of the youths, recently civilians, but now tried and tested warriors; lately so urban and hesitating and immature, but now so seasoned and confident and of the world. And particularly I have in mind the return of the soldier to his house of business, and his triumphant progress through the various departments, gathering admiration and homage and even wonder. I am not sure that wonder does not come first, so striking can the metamorphosis be.

When he left he was often only a boy. Very likely rather a young terror in his way: shy before elders, but a desperate wag with his contemporaries. He had a habit of whistling during office hours; he took too long for dinner, and was much given to descending the stairs four at a time and shaking the premises, blurring the copying-book and under-stamping the letters. When sent to the bank, a few yards distant, he was absent for an hour. Cigarettes and late hours may have given him a touch of pastiness.

To-day, what a change! Tall, well-set-up and bronzed, he is a model of health and strength. His eyes meet all our eyes frankly; he has done nothing to be ashamed of: there is no unposted letter in his pocket, no consciousness of a muddled telephone

message in his head. To be on the dreaded carpet of the manager's room was once an ordeal; to-day he can drop cigarette-ash on it and turn never a hair.

"Oh yes," he says, "he has been under fire. Knows it backwards. Knows the difference in sound between all the shells. So far he's been very lucky, but, Heavens! the pals he's lost! Terrible things happen, but one gets numbed—apathetic, you know.

"What does it feel like to go over the top? The first time it's a rotten feeling, but you get used to that too. War teaches you what you can get used to, by George it does! He wouldn't have believed it, but there—"

And so on. All coming quite naturally and simply; no swank, no false modesty.

## Page 10

"This is his first leave since he went to France, and he thought he must come to see the firm first of all. Sad about poor old Parkins, wasn't it? Killed directly. And Smithers' leg—that was bad too. Rum to see such a lot of girls all over the place, doing the boys' jobs. Well, well, it's a strange world, and who would have thought all this was going to happen?..."

Such is his conversation on the carpet. In the great clerks' room, where there are now so many girls, he is a shade more of a dog. The brave, you know, can't be wholly unconscious of the fair, and as I pass through I catch the same words, but spoken with a slightly more heroic ring.

"Lord, yes, you get used even to going over the top. A rotten feeling the first time, but you get used to it. That's one of the rum things about war, it teaches you what you can get used to. You get apathetic, you know. That's the word—apathetic: used to anything. Standing for hours in water up to your knees. Sleeping among rats." (Here some pretty feminine squeals.) "It is a fact," he swears to them. "Rats running over you half the night, and now and then a shell bursting close by."

Standing at his own old desk as he talks, he looks even taller and stronger than before—by way of contrast, I suppose, and as I pass out I wonder if he will ever be able to bring himself to resume it.

Having occasion, a little while later, to go downstairs among the warehousemen, where female labour has not yet penetrated. I hear him again, and notice that his language has become more free. Safely underground he extends himself a little.

"Over the top?" he is saying. "Yes, three blinking times. What does it feel like the first time? Well—" and he tells them how it feels, in a way that I can't reproduce here, but vivid as lightning compared with his upstairs manner. And still he remains the clean forthright youth who sees his duty a dead sure thing, and does it, even though he may be perplexed now and then.

"So long!" they say, old men-friends and new girl-acquaintances crowding round him as at last he tears himself away (and watching him from the distance I am inclined to think that, if he gets through, he will come back to us after all). "So long!" they say. "Take care of yourself."

"You bet!" he replies. "But the question is, Shall I be allowed to? What price the Hun?" And with a "So long, all!" he is gone.

All over London, in the big towns all over Great Britain, are these triumphant progresses going on.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Wanted, a good Private Wash; good drying place.”—*High Peak News*.

We respect the advertiser’s dislike of publicity.

\* \* \* \* \*

“JONG.”

*(Lines suggested by an Australian aboriginal place-name commonly known by its last syllable.)*

Fine names are found upon the map—  
Kanturk and Chirk and Cong,  
Grogtown and Giggleswick and Shap,  
Chowbent and Chittagong;  
But other places, less renowned,  
In richer euphony abound  
Than the familiar throng;  
For instance, there is Beeyah-byyah-bunniga-nelliga-jong.

## Page 11

In childhood's days I took delight  
In LEAR'S immortal Dong,  
Whose nose was luminously bright,  
Who sang a silvery song.  
He did not terrify the birds  
With strange and unpropitious words  
Of double-edged *ontong*;  
I'm sure he hailed from Beeyah-byyah-bunniga-nelliga-jong.

*Prince Giglio's* bag, the fairy's gift,  
Helped him to right the wrong,  
Encouraged diligence and thrift,  
And "opened with a pong;"  
But though its magic powers were great  
It could not quite ejaculate  
A word so proud and strong  
And beautiful as Beeyah-byyah-bunniga-nelliga-jong.

I crave no marble pleasure-dome,  
No forks with golden prong;  
Like HORACE, in a frugal home  
I'd gladly rub along,  
Contented with the humblest cot  
Or shack or hut, if it had got  
A name like Billabong,  
Or, better still, like Beeyah-byyah-bunniga-nelliga-jong.

Sweet is the music of the spheres,  
Majestic is Mong Blong,  
And bland the beverage that cheers,  
Called Sirupy Souchong;  
But sweeter, more inspiring far  
Than tea or peak or tuneful star  
I deem it to belong  
To such a place as Beeyah-byyah-bunniga-nelliga-jong.

\* \* \* \* \*

### OUR STYLISTS.

"It is the desire of the Management that nothing of an objectionable character shall appear on the stage or in the auditorium, and they ask the co-operation of the audience in suppressing same by apprising them of anything that may escape their notice."

*From a provincial Hippodrome programme.*

\* \* \* \* \*

From the evidence in a juvenile larceny case:—

“The Father: Devils seem to be getting into everyone nowadays,  
not only in boys, but in human beings.”

*Devon and Exeter Gazette.*

A delicate distinction.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Win-the-War Vice-President of our Supply Depot (doing grand rounds).*  
“HERE AGAIN IS A FIFTH GLARING EXAMPLE. THE HEM OF THIS BAG IS AN  
EIGHTEENTH OF AN INCH TOO WIDE. GET THEM ALL REMADE. WE CANNOT  
HAVE THE LIVES OF OUR TROOPS ENDANGERED.”]

\* \* \* \* \*

A MIXED LETTER-BAG.

*(Prompted by “Thrifty Colleen’s” letter in “The Times”  
of September 12.)*

CRUELTY TO VEGETABLES.

SIR,—May I be allowed to protest with all the vigour at my command against the  
revolting suggestion that, with the view of making cakes from potatoes they should be  
first boiled in their skins. I admit that this is better than that they should be boiled  
without them, but that is all. The potato is notoriously a sensitive plant. Personally I  
regard it more in the light of an emblem than a vegetable. That it is not necessary as an  
article of food can be conclusively proved from the teaching of history, for, as a famous  
poet happily puts it—

## Page 12

"In ancient and heroic days,  
The days of Scipios and Catos,  
The Western world pursued its ways  
Triumphantly without potatoes."

If, however, the shortage of cereals demands that potatoes should be used as a substitute for wheat, I suggest that, instead of being subjected to the barbarous treatment described above, they should be granted a painless death by chloroform or some other anaesthetic.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

POTATOPHIL.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ERIN'S INCUBUS.

SIR,—A great deal of fuss is being made over Irish potato-cakes. Why Irish? The tradition that the potato is the Irish national vegetable is a hoary fallacy that needs to be exploded once and for all. It is nothing of the sort. The potato was introduced into the British Isles by Sir WALTER RALEIGH, a truculent Elizabethan imperialist of the worst type, transplanted into Ireland by the English garrison, and fostered by them for the impoverishment of the Irish physique. The deliberations of the National Convention now sitting in Dublin will be doomed to disaster unless they insist, as the first plank of their programme, on the elimination of this ill-omened root. If ST. PATRICK had only lived a few centuries later he would have treated the potato as he did the frogs and snakes.

I am, Sir, Yours rebelliously,

SHANE FINN.

\*\*\*

## A DANGEROUS DISH.

SIR,—May I put in a mild *caveat* against excessive indulgence in potato-cakes, based on an experience in my undergraduate days at Trinity College, Cambridge, when WHEWELL was Master? One Sunday I was invited to supper at the MASTER'S, and a dish of potato-cakes formed part of the collation. WHEWELL was a man of robust physique and hearty appetite, and I noted that he ate no fewer than thirteen, considerably more than half the total. Whether it was owing to the unlucky number or the richness of the cakes I cannot say, but the fact remains that the MASTER was seriously indisposed on the following day and unable to deliver a lecture on the Stoic



Philosophy, to which I had greatly looked forward. I cannot help thinking that PYTHAGORAS, who enjoined his disciples to “abstain from beans,” would, if he were now alive, be inclined to revise that cryptic precept and bid us “abstain from potatoes,” or, at any rate, from over-indulgence in hot potato-cakes.

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully,

CANTAB.

\*\*\*

WANTED—A NEW NAME.

SIR,—If a thing is to make a success a good name is indispensable. The potato has been handicapped for centuries by its ridiculous name, which is almost as cumbrous as “cauliflower” and even more unsightly to the eye. It is futile to talk of a “tuber” since that means a hump or bump or truffle. No, if you are to get people to eat potato-cakes you must devise a more dignified and attractive name; and it would be good policy for the FOOD CONTROLLER to offer a large prize for the best suggestion, Mr. EUSTACE MILES, Mr. EDMUND GOSSE and Mr. HALL CAINE to act as adjudicators.

## Page 13

I am, Sir, Yours obediently,

EARTH-APPLE.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: "HULLO! WHERE'S BABY? I THOUGHT HE WAS WITH YOU." "SO HE IS, AUNTIE; BUT HE THOUGHT YOU WERE COMING TO FETCH HIM IN, SO HE'S OVER THERE, CAMMYFLAGING HIMSELF WITH A TOWEL."]

\* \* \* \* \*

THOROUGHNESS.

It is generally agreed that the War has given women great chances, and that women for the most part have taken them. Where they have not, but have preferred frivolity, it is not always their own fault, but the result of outside pressure. Such a paragraph, for example, as the following, by "Lady Di," in *The Sunday Evening Telegram*, is hardly a clarion call to efficiency:—

"This recurrence of night raids has made business brisk in the lingerie salons, especially among flatland dwellers, for it's quite the thing now to have coffee and cake parties after a raid, with brandy neat in liqueur glasses for those whose nerves have been shaken. And such parties do give chances for the exhibition of those dainty garments that usually you have to admire all by yourself. Which reminds me. Don't forget an anklet and a wristlet of black velvet—the wristlet on the right and the anklet on the left!"

Since "Lady Di" is out for making the most of every opportunity, and since even she might forget something, I am minded to help her, two heads being often better than one. Air raids are not the only unforeseen perils. Surely some such paragraph as this would be useful and indicate zeal:—

The escape of German prisoners being of almost daily occurrence, it would be well for all women who wish never to be taken unawares to be prepared to look their best should one of these creatures meet them. For nothing is lost by looking nice; indeed it is one's duty to be smart, lest dowdiness should give him the impression that England really is suffering from the War. A costume which I have designed to be seen in by escaping German prisoners is a "simple" one-piece (not peace) frock—which, when built by a real artist, can be so intriguing. Of ninon, for choice, with a Duvetyn hat. Carry a gold purse and lift the skirt high enough to show the finest silk stockings.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE CROSSBILLS.



A Northern pinewood once we knew,  
My dear, when younger by some lustres,  
Where little painted crossbills flew  
And pecked among the fir-cone clusters;  
They hobnobbed and sidled  
In coats all aflame,  
While young Autumn idled,  
And we did the same.

They're cutting down the wood, I hear,  
To make it into war material,  
And, where the crossbills came, this year  
Their firs are lying most funereal;  
There's steam saw-mills humming  
And engines at haul,  
A new Winter coming  
And more trees to fall.

## Page 14

Ah, well, let's hope when Peace at length  
Is here, and when our young plantations  
In days unborn have got the strength  
And pride of ancient generations,  
The red birds shall show there  
From tree to dark tree,  
If two folk should go there  
As friendly as we!

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: RUSSIA FIRST. RUSSIA (*to the Spirit of Revolution*). "THROW DOWN THAT TORCH AND COME AND FIGHT FOR ME AGAINST THE ENEMY OF LIBERTY."]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: "WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? WE ARE READY FOR YOU TO BEGIN."

"YES, MADAM. WE ARE JUST TUNING UP."

"*TUNING UP!* WHY, I ENGAGED YOU TWO MONTHS AGO!"]

\* \* \* \* \*

BELLAIRS ON MAN-POWER.

MR. BELLAIRS, it will be remembered, was the first to discover the possibilities of proving (by figures) the dwindling reserves of hostile man-power. His estimates, based upon pure reason, personal experience and some two tons of figures, have been carefully revised and brought to date, more especially for the benefit of those busy people who cannot take a holiday by the sea, but like to solace themselves at home with a weekly immersion in *Mud and Water*.

*Germany.*

Here Mr. BELLAIRS is the first to admit a slight inaccuracy in his previous calculations. Germany has now eight men, instead of four, on the Western Front. It would appear from these numbers that the enemy attaches greater importance to defending his line on this Front than on any other.

*Russia.*

There are five (and one in reserve) on the Russian Front. The Russian retreat is explained to be due to artfully inculcated Christian Science (made in Germany), which has persuaded the Russians to entertain the belief that they are being heavily attacked.

*Austria.*

Austria is reputed on her last legs (three altogether). Her one man and a boy are fighting with the nonchalance of despair to resist the Allied pressure. Good news may be expected from this Front shortly.

*Bulgaria.*

The warfare of attrition has never shown such excellent results as in the case of Bulgaria. Her army of trained goats is now the only barrier to the vengeance of the Serbs.

*Turkey.*

According to the latest report the Turkish Army has lost its rifle. It is hoped that every advantage will be taken of our momentary superior armament.

*China.*

As a last resort Germany is sending her remaining Hun to attack the Chinese. What they can hope to achieve by so prodigal a waste of "cannon-fodder" is difficult to see.

*Rumania.*

There is no news on the Rumanian Front. It is thought that there is nobody there.

*Palestine.*

## Page 15

In Palestine both sides have withdrawn their troops and the battle is proceeding without them.

When one realises that against these weakening and ever decreasing forces our Allies will still have a reserve of 80,000,000 by the Spring of 1925, it is impossible to take an otherwise than optimistic view of the situation.

\* \* \* \* \*

INTENSIVE RAINFALL.

“CUMBERLAND and WESTMORELAND.—After a ten weeks’ drought we have had three weeks’ rain every day.”—*Daily Paper*.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Officer’s camp kit wanted, in good condition, Sam Browne belt (5 ft. 7), haversack, &c.”—*Scotsman*.

In readiness for this hero’s arrival at the Front the communication-trenches are being specially widened.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I WISH—

“That it were possible to get frying-pans that would stand LEVEL when one is cooking in them.”—*Home Chat*.

It is so awkward to be tilted out of the frying-pan into the fire.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: C.O. (*to sentry*). “DO YOU KNOW THE DEFENCE SCHEME FOR THIS SECTOR OF THE LINE, MY MAN?”

Tommy. “YES, SIR.”

C.O. “WELL, WHAT IS IT, THEN?”

Tommy. “TO STAY ’ERE AND FIGHT LIKE ’ELL.”]

\* \* \* \* \*

THE GREAT OFFENCE.

As everybody knows, a Gurkha is first of all a rifleman, but apart from his rifle (which to a hill-man is both meat and raiment) there are two other treasures very dear to the little man's heart. These are his kukri and his umbrella—symbols of war and peace; and, although he knows the weapon proper to each state and can dispense (none better) with superfluities, there must have been many times in France when the absence of his umbrella has caused him a bitter nostalgia. "Battle is blessed by Allah and no man tires thereof," but trenches are of the Shaitan, and from the same malevolent one comes the ever-raging bursat, the pitiless drenching rain, that falls where a man may not strip.

With his kukri he did wonders out there on stilly nights, when he wriggled "over the top," gripping its good blade in his teeth. Then No Man's Land became a jungle and the Bosch a beast whose dispatch was swift and sure under his cunning wrist. Dawn would find him squatting in the corner of his dug-out sleeping as one who has sweet dreams—dreams maybe of counting the decapitated before an admiring crowd in his native city, himself again the dapper young dog of Darrapore.

No kilted Jock goes with more swagger down Princes Street than Johnny Gurkha down the bazaar of Darrapore, particularly in the evening, when he doffs khaki for the mufti suit of his clan—the spotless white shorts, coat of black sateen, little cocked cap and brightly bordered stockings—a *mode de rigueur* that would be robbed of its final *cachet* without the black umbrella, tucked well up under the arm.

## Page 16

A splendid warrior; in private life a bit of a *Don Juan*, perhaps; but his womenfolk bear him no grudge on this score, liking themselves to sail easy through matrimonial seas.

When I returned to the depot a month ago there were tales, but, as our old Subadar-Major observed, "War brought little disturbances. The mischief was unfortunate, perhaps, but not irremediable," and, as the Subadar had himself been on service in China for a matter of three years, he knew what he was talking about.

As for the tales, well, I was reminded of them a few days ago on making a tour of the lines to see that quarters were clean and habitable for the next batch of invalids. There would be hospital for some, for others the sunny little married quarters, and round there wives were bustling with glee, making no secret of their late coquetries, but manifestly glad of the return of their former lords.

Brass pots were being scoured in the doorways; babies sprawled in the sun; a smell of cooking sweetmeats filled the air; a band of small urchins in the roadway, wearing the sham accoutrements of war, was prancing blithely to the song of "Lang-taraf-Tippalaerlee," and as their leader pulled up to give me a grave and perfect salute I recognised the son of old Bahadur Rai.

Now Bahadur Rai would be returning, and, as I recalled the man, I wondered how he would take the news of Bibi, his capricious wife, for I had heard (unofficially) that she had no intention of leaving the lines of the 2nd Battalion, or the dashing young Naik Indrase. This might be a bit awkward, I mused, remembering the tough little chap who had been so popular with us all by reason of being the best *shikari* in the regiment. His incorrigible love of sport may have made the defaulter's sheet ugly (and there's no denying that "Absent with leave" does not lead to quick promotion); but that was in the good old days. Now he was returning covered with glory, and I was sorry about Bibi.

The train arrived at noon with what our travelled Babu calls the "blissies." They were nearly all marked "P.D.", and I hope it may be given to me to look as cheerful when my turn comes to be Permanently Disabled.

It was worth a week's pay to see the grins on their brown puckered faces and hear their husky contented salaams as they were lifted from the train. Blankets, top-coats, pillows, and other items belonging to the State were gaily abandoned, but every man clung with tenacity to his tunic and his water-bottle, for was there not a collection of trophies in those bulging pockets and sea-water in those battered bottles? Real salt sea-water, for the taste and enlightenment of incredulous elders.

Outside the station the usual crowd had gathered, where it disported itself like a herd of wild elephants. Veteran bandsmen played the regimental march; casual minstrels blew conches or banged tom-toms; and when at last the ambulance waggons moved off, drawn by oxen that wore blue bead necklaces, and marigolds over their ears, one had

the proud satisfaction of feeling that the most perfect organisation in the world could not have given our fine fellows a reception more after their own hearts.

## Page 17

When we reached the parade-ground the scene was still merry and bright, for there Gurkha ladies were massed in their many-coloured *saris*, chattering for all the world like the parrakeets they resembled. Dogs barked; pet names were squealed; old men waved their staffs; children clung to the waggons and whooped, and when the cortege finally turned into the hospital compound and I cantered back to the lines I wondered what a London bobby would have made of the heterogeneous traffic that littered the Darrapore Road. I had to sit tight in office to get level with work that evening, and the mess bugle was dwelling maliciously on its top note when at last I put down my pen.

Then the door opened and with a confederate mysterious air the orderly announced Bahadur Rai. (Heavens!)

"And the Sahib?" the Bahadur was asking in swift Nepalese after a wealth of salutations was over. "Can but one arm do all this?" waving towards my bulging files.

"One does not want two hands to write with, you know, Bahadur."

"True. But the shooting?" he added sadly.

"We'll have that again too some day. Great things are done in Vilayat, where I go when peace comes. And you? You have done well, Bahadur."

"Well enough," he admitted with a trace of pride, Then, after a pause, "The 2nd Battalion starts on service to-morrow, Sahib?"

"Yes. A few men will be left at the depot—not those of any use."

"And Naik Indrase, does he go?"

"No. The Colonel-Sahib put his name down long ago for station duty."

"Then I desire leave, your Honour. I want to visit 2nd Battalion lines."

"Ah! Put it off a bit," I urged weakly. "It's rough getting across the nullah, and with that crutch—"

There was silence. "Your son?" I began irrelevantly.

"My son does well and grows fast, Allah be praised. Later he will come to the hills to learn the ways of a gun. Even now he has the heart of a lion," added the proud father with a return of the old twinkle in his eyes. "But of this other matter. Perhaps the Sahib has heard what the Naik has done?"

"Yes," I admitted reluctantly. "I visited your house this morning. All was in order, and I gave instructions about the roof, which—"

“It is already repaired,” interrupted the old fellow quickly, “and my mother has arranged all things well within. But the Naik, Sahib. It is necessary that I should beat him. The Sahib has heard—”

“About Bibi? Yes. But he will give her up,” I said confidently.

“Bibi? He can keep Bibi. She was ever swift with her tongue and liked not the ways of *shikaris*. Yes, he can keep Bibi,” added Bahadur Rai without bitterness. “But, Sahib”—and here the little man’s voice rose almost to a scream of indignation—“that was not the *worst*. The Naik must be beaten, and *well* beaten, for he took, not Bibi alone—he took *my umbrella!*”

## Page 18

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: "YOU'VE GOT SOME ROCKERY HERE, DAD, SINCE I LEFT."

"HUSH! NOT A WORD. IT'S COAL, MY BOY, WHITEWASHED! CELLAR'S FULL UP."]

\* \* \* \* \*

PROPAGANDA FRIGHTFULNESS.

*(It is reported that the German Minister to Patagonia, with the assistance of the Swedish Charge d'Affaires, has caused the following Proclamation to be distributed, along with a translation into the vernacular, among the natives; alleging that it reproduces a leaflet composed by the ALL-HIGHEST and dropped from a German aeroplane over the London district.)*

This is a know-making to my Britisch Underthanes addressed. Be it known that from to-day on the Britisch Empire my Empire is, and all Britisch Men, Fraus and Childer are Germans. The folgende are now rules:—

- (1) I make all Laws alone and nobody with me interfere must.
- (2) When a Man or Frau or Child a mile from me laughs it is as when into my All-Highest Face gelaughed is and the Strafe shall the Death be.
- (3) Who me sees shall flat on the Earth fall and shall him there until I my gracious Hand wave keep.
- (4) The German Sprache shall the Britisch Folk's Sprache be and every Englisch Man who German not sprech kann shall with a by-Proclamation-to-be-declared-Strafe gestrafed be.
- (5) German at the Table Manners shall by all Britisch Childer gelernt be.
- (6) Everyone shall German Soldiers salute. If any one misses this to do shall the Soldier the Right have him through the body with a sword to run.
- (7) Only German Cigars and Tabak shall gesmocht be.
- (8) The Newspapers shall every day print an Artikel me for my good Heart, my Genius and my Condescension praising.
- (9) It shall a Picture of me in every House be.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: AN OPEN-AIR VARIETY ENTERTAINMENT AT THE FRONT  
WITH “OCCASIONAL MUSIC BY THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT SECTION.”]

\* \* \* \* \*

AT THE PLAY.

“THE YELLOW TICKET.”

If Mr. MICHAEL MORTON doesn’t mind my not taking his original play too seriously I don’t mind telling him how much I enjoyed it. It is quite a neat example of the shocker—an agreeable form of entertainment for the simple and the jaded. The chief properties are a yellow ticket and a hat-pin. Both belong to the innocent and beautiful Jewish heroine, *Anna Mirol*.

It appears that she wanted to leave the pale to go to see her dying father in Petersburg, and the police, who will have their grim joke against a Jewess, offer her “the most powerful passport in Russia”—the yellow ticket of Rahab. She accepts it desperately, and, to escape its horrible obligations, enters an English family as governess, under an assumed name. Here the head of the sinister Okhrana (Secret Police

## Page 19

Bureau), a sleek red-haired sensualist, *Baron Stepan Andreyeff*, and a chivalrous but tactless English journalist, *Julian Rolfe*, become acquainted with her. The latter wishes to marry her; the former's intentions are strictly dishonourable, and with the aid of his ubiquitous secret policemen he persecutes her, using his power to set her free from the attentions of his detestable minions for bargaining purposes in a perfectly Hunnish manner. Discreet servants, locked doors, champagne, a perfectly priceless dressing jacket, a sliding panel disclosing a luxuriously appointed bedroom—all these resources are at his disposal.

But he reckons without her hatpin, which in the course of his deplorably abrupt attempts at seduction she pushes adroitly into his heart, and next day well-informed St. Petersburg winks discreetly when it learns that the *Baron* has died after an operation for appendicitis.

How that nice young man, *Julian*, is more than a match for the forthright methods of the Okhrana is for you to go and find out.

Mr. ALLAN AYNESWORTH'S finished skill was reinforced by a quite admirable make-up, though only a policeman of very melodrama could have missed that brilliant pate as it shone balefully over the inadequate chair in which he sat concealed while his subordinate was bullying the hapless *Anna*. Also I doubt whether so stout a ruffian would have succumbed so promptly to such a simple pin-prick. But perhaps the surprise, annoyance and keen disappointment broke his soldierly heart. Anyway, living or dying, the *Baron* was a clever and plausible performance.

You know Mr. WONTNER'S loose-limbed ease of manner and agreeable voice. He was rather a stock and stockish hero as he left the author's hands, but Mr. WONTNER put life and feeling into him. Miss GLADYS COOPER reached no heights or depths of passion, but took a pleasant middle way, and certainly gets more out of herself than once seemed likely. I should like to commend to her the excellent doctrine of the "dominant mood." She was, for instance, just a little too detached in the recital of that story when playing for time by the bad *Baron's* fireside.

Mr. SYDNEY VALENTINE, having happily come by an early death in another theatre, is able to present us a lifelike portrait of a really remorseless policeman in our third Act, condemning folk to Siberia with all the arbitrary despatch of the *Red Queen*.

On the whole, then, distinctly good of its kind—transpontine matter with the St. James's form.

T.

\* \* \* \* \*

OUR SOUVENIR UNIT.

“No,” said the Canadian slowly, “organization isn’t everything. Up to a certain point it’s necessary, but there must be a latitude. Give me scope for initiative every time.

## Page 20

“Take an instance. You know our regiments have runners, men who go to and fro carrying orders and making liaison along the line. In the regiment I’m telling you about the runners were two smart chaps—drummers they were before the War—and not having too much work with their errands they ran a few side lines of their own, such as shaving and hair-cutting, cobbling and the like. But of all their side lines souvenir-selling was the most profitable. In their capacity of runners they could go where they liked and accompany any of the attacking parties, so they had good chances for souvenirs.

“One evening they went over into D Company’s trench and said, ‘Say, you fellows, anybody want souvenirs? Bert’s ordered an attack for daybreak. A, B, and C Companies carry it out. You’re not going. I expect we shall be doing a nice line in tin hats. Any orders? Helmet for you? Right, that’ll be twenty francs, cash on delivery. Bosch rifle? Yes, if we get any, fifty francs. Bandoliers, same price. What’s that? Iron Cross? Oh, not likely! But we’ll do our best. A hundred francs if we deliver the goods.’

“Well, the next day the attack was made, and at one end of a Bosch trench there was some pretty hand-to-hand work. An old Rittmeister held it, his breast covered with decorations, and he just wouldn’t give in. Of course, so long as he stuck it the other Bosches did too, and there was nothing doing in the Kamerad line. They fought like fury. So did our men, but we were slightly outnumbered, and it soon began to be evident that we should have to retire if we didn’t get reinforcements. But, just when things were looking hopeless, over the top of the parapet leaped the two runners, unarmed but irresistible. With blazing eyes they flung themselves on that old Rittmeister, and while one of them downed him with a blow under the chin we heard the voice of the other uplifted in a new slogan: ‘Give over, will you, old turnip-head! You’ve got the goods, and, by Sam Hill, we mean to have ‘em!’ And with one hand he held the prisoner down while with the other he tore the Iron Cross from his tunic.

“After the Bosch officer’s fall our men made short work of the rest, but the runners didn’t wait for victory. There was a muttered counting of the spoils: ‘Six helmets for D Company. Two Bosch rifles. One bandolier. And the Iron Cross. That’s the lot. We’d better git.’ And they got.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“The two British Colossuses, *The Tribune* says, opened fire with their 300 five-millimetres guns.”—*The Post (Dundee.)*

This is the first we have heard of the new naval pea-shooter.

\* \* \* \* \*

“The war aims to which Germany and Austria must give assent must be expressed in unequivocal language and based on the principles of jujsjtjicjejjjji.”—*Evening Echo (Cork)*.

## Page 21

We are not quite sure whether our spirited contemporary refers to justice or ju-jitsu; but, either way, it means to give the Huns a knock-out.

\* \* \* \* \*

“For British and Oversea soldiers and sailors who visit Paris a club is to be opened at the Hotel Moderne, Place de la Republique.

“The British Ambassador, Sir Douglas Haig, Sir John Jellicoe, and Sir William Robertson have become patrons of the club, which will provide them with comfortable quarters and meals at reasonable prices, supply guides, and generally fulfil a useful purpose.”

*Evening Standard.*

But surely the British Ambassador has already fairly comfortable quarters in the Rue Faubourg St. Honore.

\* \* \* \* \*

### SMALL CRAFT.

When Drake sailed out from Devon to break King PHILIP’S pride, He had great ships at his bidding and little ones beside; *Revenge* was there, and *Lion*, and others known to fame, And likewise he had small craft, which hadn’t any name.

Small craft—small craft, to harry and to flout ’em!  
Small craft—small craft, you cannot do without ’em!  
Their deeds are unrecorded, their names are never seen,  
But we know that there were small craft, because there must have been.

When NELSON was blockading for three long years and more,  
With many a bluff first-rater and oaken seventy-four,  
To share the fun and fighting, the good chance and the bad,  
Oh, he had also small craft, because he must have had.

Upon the skirts of battle, from Sluys to Trafalgar,  
We know that there were small craft, because there always are;  
Yacht, sweeper, sloop and drifter, to-day as yesterday,  
The big ships fight the battles, but the small craft clear the way.

They scout before the squadrons when mighty fleets engage;  
They glean War’s dreadful harvest when the fight has ceased to rage;  
Too great they count no hazard, no task beyond their power,  
And merchantmen bless small craft a hundred times an hour.



In Admirals' despatches their names are seldom heard;  
They justify their being by more than written word;  
In battle, toil and tempest and dangers manifold  
The doughty deeds of small craft will never all be told.

Scant ease and scantier leisure—they take no heed of these,  
For men lie hard in small craft when storm is on the seas;  
A long watch and a weary, from dawn to set of sun—  
The men who serve in small craft, their work is never done.

And if, as chance may have it, some bitter day they lie  
Out-classed, out-gunned, out-numbered, with nought to do but die,  
When the last gun's out of action, good-bye to ship and crew,  
But men die hard in small craft, as they will always do.

Oh, death comes once to each man, and the game it pays for all,  
And duty is but duty in great ship and in small,  
And it will not vex their slumbers or make less sweet their rest,  
Though there's never a big black headline for small craft going west.

## Page 22

Great ships and mighty captains—to these their meed of praise  
For patience, skill and daring and loud victorious days;  
To every man his portion, as is both right and fair,  
But oh! forget not small craft, for they have done their share.

Small craft—small craft, from Scapa Flow to Dover,  
Small craft—small craft, all the wide world over,  
At risk of war and shipwreck, torpedo, mine and shell,  
All honour be to small craft, for oh, they've earned it well!

C.F.S.

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[Illustration: TRIALS OF A CAMOUFLAGE OFFICER.

WHEN AN INSPECTING GENERAL MISTAKES A DISGUISED TRENCH FOR SOLID  
GROUND.]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

The opening paragraph of Mr. JEFFERY FARNOL'S latest novel, *The Definite Object* (LOW, MARSTON), informs us that in the writing of books two things are essential: to know "when and where to leave off ... and where to begin." Perhaps without churlishness I might add a third, and suggest that it is equally important to know where to make your market. Mr. FARNOL, very wisely, plumps for America; and the new story is a thing of millionaires, crooks, graft and the like. But don't go supposing for one moment that these regrettable surroundings have in the smallest degree impaired the exquisite and waxen bloom of our author's sympathetic characters. Far from it. Of the young and oh-so-good-looking millionaire (weary of pleasures and palaces, too weary even to dismiss his preposterous and farcical butler—lacking, in effect, the definite object); of the heroine's young brother, crook in embryo, but reclaimable by influence of hero; and of the peach-like leading lady herself, I can only say that each is worthy of the rest, and all of a creator who must surely (I like to think) have laughed more than once behind his hand during the progress of their creation. I expect by now that I have as good as told you the plot—young brother caught burgling hero's flat; hero, intrigued by mention of sister, doffing his society trappings, following his captive to crook-land, bashing the wicked inhabitants with his heroic fists, and finally, of course, wedding the sister. So there you are! No, I am wrong. The wedding is not absolute finality, since the heroine (for family pride, she said, because her brother had tried to shoot her

husband; but, as this reason is manifestly idiotic, I must suppose her to be acting on a hint from Mr. FARNOL'S publishers) decreed their union to be in name alone. Which provides for the extra chapters.

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## Page 23

Have you ever imagined yourself plunged (bodily, not mentally) into the midst of a story by some particular author? If, for example, you could get inside the covers of a Mrs. ALFRED SIDGWICK novel, what would you expect to find? Probably a large and pleasantly impecunious family, with one special daughter who combines great practical sense with rare personal charm. You would certainly not be startled to find her brought into contact with persons of greater social importance than her own; and you would be excusably disappointed if she did not end by securing the most eligible young male in the cast. I feel bound to add that a perusal of *Anne Lulworth* (METHUEN) has left me with these convictions more firmly established than ever. The *Lulworth* household, from the twins to the practical mother, is Sidgwickian to its core, though perhaps one can't but regret that the Great Unmasking has for ever robbed them of the society of those fat and seemingly kindly Teutons who used to provide such good contrast. The *Lulworths* lived at Putney, and never had quite enough money for the varied calls of clothes and education and sausages for breakfast. Then *Anne* went on a visit to ever such a delightful big house in Cornwall, and there met the only son ... But then came the War and he was reported missing, so *Anne* stayed on indefinitely with his widowed mother; and the unpleasant next-of-kin (Mrs. SIDGWICK never can wholly resist the temptation of burlesquing her villains) refused to believe that she had ever been engaged to Victor, and indeed went on indulging their low-comedy spleen till the great moment, so long and confidently expected, when—But really I suppose I needn't say what happens then. Sidgwickiana, in short, seasonable at all times, and sufficient for any number of persons.

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Mrs. A.M. DIXON began her work in October, 1915, as manager of one of the *Cantines des Dames Anglaises* established in France under the aegis of the London Committee of the French Red Cross. She remained until the beginning of July in the following year, and in *The Canteeniers* (MURRAY) she gives an account of her experiences at Troyes, Hericourt and Le Bourget, where she and her helpers ministered to an almost unceasing stream of tired-out French soldiers. There is something remarkably fresh and attractive about this story. It does not aim at fine writing, but its very simplicity, which is that of letters written to an intimate friend, carries a reader along through a succession of incidents keenly observed and sympathetically noted in the scanty leisure of a very busy life. That she succeeded as she did is a high tribute to her kindness and tact as well as to her organising capacity, I cannot forbear quoting from the letter of a grateful *poilu*: "DEAR MISS,—I am arrived yesterday very much fatiguated. After 36 o'clocks of train we have made 15 kms. You can think then that has been very dur for us, because in the train we don't

## Page 24

sleep many ... We go to trachees six o'clocks a day and all the four days we go the night. I don't see other things to say you for the moment. Don't make attention of my mistakes, please." The book is well illustrated with photographs. I recommend it both on account of its intrinsic merits and because the author's profits are to be given to the London Committee of the French Red Cross.

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When a penniless but oh, so ladylike "companion" goes to the Savoy in answer to a "with a view to matrimony" advertisement, what more natural than that the party of the first part should prove to be—not a genteel widower in the haberdashery business, but a handsome super-burglar of immense wealth and all the more refined virtues. True, he burgles, but his manly willingness to reform in order to please the lady shows that his heart was always in the right place, wherever his fingers might be. Then again the actual pillage occurs "off," as they say, and the gentlemanly burglar, while not "occupied in burgling," walks the stage a perfect Sir George Alexander of respectability. Do I hear you, gentle reader, exclaiming, like the Scotsman when he first saw a hippopotamus, "Hoots! There's nae sic a animal!" It is simply your ignorance. The joint authors of *This Woman to this Man* (METHUEN) have selected him as the hero of their latest novel, so there he is. His combined annexation of the penniless beauty's hand and her titled relatives' *objets d'art*, her discovery that the splendid fellow she has idolised—it must be admitted, without any indiscreet investigation of his past—is a thief, and their final reconciliation in the rude but honest atmosphere of a New Mexico cattle ranch, are all included in the modest half-crown's worth that C.N. and A.M. WILLIAMSON put forward as their latest effort. And nowadays you can't buy much of anything for half-a-crown.

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With commendable idealism Mr. SIDNEY PATERNOSTER considers *The Great Gift* (LANE) to be Love, and brings a certain seriousness to bear upon his theme. *Hugh Standish*, ex-newsboy, is at the age of twenty-five partner of an important shipping firm, as well as large holder in a book-selling business, which, in his leisure, he has so successfully run that it is "floated with a capital of L100,000 and over-subscribed" (incidentally rejoice, ye novelists!). At forty-six he is the whole shipping firm and a Cabinet Minister to boot. I would ask Mr. PATERNOSTER if such a man, who has, *ex hypothesi*, been so busy that he needs the sight of an out-of-work being tended and caressed by his faithful wife in a London Park to suggest to him that there exists such a thing as Love, with a capital L; needs also a later conversation with the same out-of-work to convince him that there is really something the matter with the industrial system (and wouldn't it be a good idea to do something about it now one is a Cabinet Minister?)—I ask Mr. PATERNOSTER, I say, if this is the sort of man to take it all so sweetly when the girl of his choice prefers his cousin and secretary to him? I think not. Our author

has woven his story without any reference to the play of circumstance upon his characters. I am afraid he has shirked the difficult labour of artistic plausibility, and I leave it to moralists to decide whether his excellent intentions and sentiments redeem this aesthetic offence.

## Page 25

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*Weird o' the Pool* (MURRAY) may be described as a subterranean book. I mean that its characters are frequently to be found in secret passages and caves and places unknown to law-abiding citizens. The scenes of this story of incident are laid in Scotland at the beginning of last century, and Mr. ALEXANDER STUART makes things move at such a pace that for a hundred pages or so I could not keep up with him. Then two kind ladies had a conversation, and the confusion which had invaded my mind was suddenly and completely cleared away. The pace after this dispersal is as brisk as ever, but it is quite easy to keep up with it. All the same, I cannot help thinking that Mr. STUART has overcrowded his canvas, and that his tale would be the better for the removal of a few of his plotters and counter-plotters from it. I have never yet said a good word for a synopsis, but I do not mind admitting that I could put up with one here.

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[Illustration: "*Auntie Madge*" (who writes the weekly letter to the darling kiddies in "*Mummy's Own Magazine*"). "NOISY LITTLE BEASTS! I SHALL NEVER DO ANY DECENT WORK IN *THIS* ATMOSPHERE."]

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SUGGESTED BY THE KAISER-TSAR REVELATIONS.

*Willy-Nilly*. Willingly or unwillingly.  
*Willy-Nikky*. Of malice aforethought.