

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 156, March 5, 1919 eBook

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 156, March 5, 1919

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Contents

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 156, March 5, 1919 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	4
Page 1.....	5
Page 2.....	7
Page 3.....	9
Page 4.....	11
Page 5.....	13
Page 6.....	15
Page 7.....	16
Page 8.....	18
Page 9.....	20
Page 10.....	22
Page 11.....	24
Page 12.....	25
Page 13.....	27
Page 14.....	29
Page 15.....	31
Page 16.....	32
Page 17.....	34
Page 18.....	36
Page 19.....	38
Page 20.....	40
Page 21.....	42
Page 22.....	44

Page 23.....	46
Page 24.....	48
Page 25.....	49
Page 26.....	51
Page 27.....	52
Page 28.....	54
Page 29.....	55

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	
Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
Title: Punch, or the London	1
Charivari, Vol. 156., March 5, 1919	
PUNCH,	1
CHARIVARIA.	1
L.	7
END.	29

Page 1

Title: **Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 156., March 5, 1919**

Author: Various

Release Date: February 21, 2004 [EBook #11201]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

*** *Start of this project gutenber* EBOOK *Punch* ***

Produced by Malcolm Farmer, Sandra Brown and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team.

PUNCH,

Or the London charivari.

Vol. 156.

March 5, 1919.

CHARIVARIA.

"What is whisky?" asks an evening paper headline. Our memory is not what is was, but we have certainly seen the name somewhere.

"Bitter," says the *Koelnische Zeitung*, "is the taste of defeat." A reference, presumably, to the thirty thousand tons of American bacon sold to Germany by the Allies.

"The Octopus," said the Lord Mayor of *Dublin* in his inaugural address, "is showing its fangs." Meanwhile Cardinal *Gibbons* is busy twisting the Lion's tentacles.

The owner of a mule found wandering at Walton-on-Thames is being advertised for. "Trooper," writing from Mesopotamia, says that if it had a portion of khaki breeching and

a stirrup in its mouth it is probably the brute which slipped out of his hands about six months ago.

With regard to the man who was seen struggling in the river last week, the report that his house was immediately taken by a passer-by is untrue. The man who pushed him in had got there first.

So much controversy has been caused by *de VALERA'S* escape from prison that there is some idea of getting him to go back and do it again.

It is reported that just before his escape *de Valera* had been greatly affected by the account of some labour strike. He is supposed to have come out in sympathy.

There are now, it is announced, thirty-six prices at which bottled beer may be sold. It is only fair to our readers to state that the price it used to be is not included in the thirty-six.

A Servant Girls' Trade Union has been formed. So far there is no suggestion of interfering with the mistresses' evening out.

Mr. Punch has already called attention to the statement that it costs the nation a guinea every time a question is asked in Parliament. The only difference between Westminster and the haunts of the General Practitioner is that in the latter case (1) you pay out of your own pocket, and (2) your tongue is protruded instead of being kept in the cheek.

Burglars are very superstitious, says a press-gossip. For example the appearance of a policeman while a burglar is drilling a safe is considered distinctly unlucky.

Page 2

* * * * *

[Illustration: “No, madam. *NINE GUINEAS*—not *Nine-and-NINEPENCE*.”]

* * * * *

“The pores of the ordinary individual,” says a, weekly paper, “would reach nearly forty miles if placed end to end.” We hope that nothing of the kind will be attempted, as the traffic difficulties are bad enough already.

A Thames bargee is reported to have sworn at a policeman for eleven minutes without stopping. We understand that there is talk of having the oration set to music.

Considerable damage has been caused in the Isle of Wight by rats. A description of the offenders has been furnished to the police.

In order to cope with the traffic problem the L.G.O. Company have placed one hundred additional omnibuses on the London streets. This is such an admirable solution of a serious difficulty that people are wondering what member of the Government first suggested it.

Despite the fact that his wife has attempted to shoot him eleven times a Detroit architect declares that he will never leave her. He appears to be one of those men who can never take a hint.

Mr. F.M.B. *Fisher* reports that in New Zealand some convicts recently went on hunger-strike because a band played outside the prison. It seems that their ground of complaint was that this was not included in the sentence.

A correspondent writing to *The Daily News* points out that the reign of Satan has been cut short by eighty thousand years, and that the end of the world is at hand. Several people in search of flats are now wondering whether it is worth while after all.

Mr. *Sean T.O. Kelly*, the Sinn Fein M.P., has handed M. *Clemenceau* a copy of the “Declaration of Independence of Ireland.” Other means have also been employed to entertain and amuse the distinguished invalid during his enforced rest.

We understand that a West-End lady has just been appointed mistress to a young parlourmaid.

We hear that the soldier who, after being demobilised, at once returned to barracks in order to say a few suitable words to his late sergeant-major, was put off on being told that he would have to take his turn in the queue.

* * * * *

The pre-war Habit.

“Clerk (male) quick and accurate at figures; one used to wages preferred.”—*Daily Paper*.

* * * * *

“The engine, which is based on the principle of the turbine, is designed to produce 30,000 revolutions a minute.”—*Daily Paper*.

Bolshevists please note.

* * * * *

Page 3

“Commander Ramsay and the Princess themselves had a private survey of their new possessions yesterday before the guests appeared, and report has it warmly congratulated one another on the interest and beauty of most of the things, and the unusual percentage of unimaginative and ugly offerings.”

Daily Sketch.

Although the statement is somewhat ambiguous, we feel sure that the writer meant well.

* * * * *

The Tonic of March.

(With acknowledgments to the author).

Month of the Winds (especially the East)
That staunch the young year's floods by dyke and dam,
Who enter like a lion, that great beast,
And make your egress like a woolly lamb;
Who come, as Mars full-armed for battle's shocks,
From lethargy of Winter's sloth to wean us,
Then melt (about the vernal equinox),
As he did in the softer arms of Venus;—

O Month, before your final moon is set,
Much may have happened—anything, in fact;
More than in any March that I have met
(Last year excepted) fearful nerves are racked;
Anarchy does with Russia what it likes;
Paris is put conundrums very knotty;
And here in England, with its talk of strikes,
Men, like your own March hares, seem going dotty.

Blow, then, with all your gales and clear our skies!
We did not win that War the other day
To please the Huns or gladden TROTSKY'S eyes
By fighting, kin with kin, this futile way;
Blow—not too hard, of course—I should not care
To inconvenience Mr. *Wilson* on his voyage—
But just enough to clean the germy air
And usher in the universal Joy-Age.

O.S.

* * * * *

Good-bye to the auxiliary patrol.

II.—*The ship's company.*

Demobilisation in the Navy, whatever it may be in the Army, is a simple affair. You are first sent for by the Master-at-Arms, who glares, thrusts papers into your trembling hand and ejects you violently in the direction of the Demobilising Office. Here they regard you curiously, stifle a yawn, languidly inspect your papers and send you to the Paymaster, who, after wandering disconsolately round the Pay Office, exclaiming pathetically, "I say, hasn't *anyone* seen that Mixed Muster book? It must be *somewhere*, you know," returns you without thanks to the D.O., where they tell you to call again in three days' time. On returning you are provided with a P.I.O. and numerous necessary papers, requested to sign a few dozen forms, overwhelmed with an unexpected *largesse* of pay and sent forth on that twenty-eight days' leave from which no traveller returns. There's nothing in it at all; the whole thing only lasts four days. They do it by a system, I believe.

Page 4

As we assembled on board for the last time, awaiting our railway warrants, there were some moving spectacles. The Mate and the Second-Engineer were bidding each other affectionate and tearful farewells behind the winch. "You won't quite forget me, Bill, will yer?" I heard the Second exclaim brokenly, but the only reply was a strangled sob. The Steward, seated on his kit-bag, was murmuring a snatch of song that asserted the rather personal fact that "our gel's a big plump lass." He is an oyster-dredger in civil life and is eagerly looking forward to experiencing once more the delicate thrills and excitement of this hazardous sport. Jones, our Signaller, who recently wrote a poem which opened with the lines,

"I for one will be surprised
When we are demobilised,"

was struggling painfully to insert a pair of boots into a recalcitrant kit-bag, and exhibited an expression of dogged determination rather than the astonishment he had predicted. The Trimmer was heard complaining mournfully that when he left the Patrol Office for the last time they never said good-bye. He seemed to feel this keenly.

All of us were more or less excited, all as it were on tip-toe with expectancy, like school-boys on breaking-up morning. All, did I say? No, there was one member of the crew who sat supremely indifferent to the prevailing atmosphere of emotion, gazing calmly before him with his solitary lacklustre eye. The Silent Menace, the ship's dog, betrayed none of our childlike sentiment. Demobilisation was nothing to him—he was too old a campaigner to let a little matter like that agitate his habitual reserve. To us the recent period of hostilities had been "The War," the only war in which we had ever been privileged to fight; but to him it was just one of the numberless affrays of an adventurous life, and, judging by the worn condition of his ears and the veteran scars that tattooed his tail, some of the previous ones had had their share of frightfulness. And to-morrow, no doubt, he will try the game again.

It was the Third Hand who suddenly propounded the unsolvable question: "Who's goin' to keep that there Menace?"

There was an almost universal chorus of "Me!" I say "almost universal" because Jones, who is R.N.V.R. and educated, probably said, "I," and the Chief Engineer was lighting his pipe and merely succeeded in blowing the match out.

"You can't all have him," said the Third Hand, "so I think I'll take him along with me. I knows a bit about dawgs."

There was instant and clamant disapproval, each one of us urging an unquestionable claim to the guardianship of the orphan Menace. The Steward said he was the only one with the ghost of a right to the dog; had it not always been the Menace's custom to help him wash up the plates and dishes? A Deck Hand, however, protested that as he had

eaten one of his mittens the Silent Menace was already in part his property. The Mate and the Second-Engineer nearly came to blows about it.

Page 5

The question was still unsettled when the warrants arrived. As time was short it was finally decided that whomsoever he should follow was to be adjudged his future owner. We climbed ashore and spread out fanwise, looking back and uttering those noises best calculated to incline the unyielding heart of the Menace towards us. He himself rose from the deck and strolled on to the wharf, where he stood coolly regarding us. Without emotion his Cyclopean orb directed its gaze from one to another till, midway between the Third Hand and the Second-Engineer, it was observed to irradiate a sudden and unaccustomed luminosity.

"Come along then, Menace," wheedled the Second.

"Yoicks, old dawg!" exclaimed the Third Hand, patting his knee encouragingly.

But they had misinterpreted their Menace, for in the middle distance, on a pile of timber directly behind the expectant twain, had appeared the sleek person of a sandy cat which proved to be the attraction. For an instant the Menace stood motionless, his spine bristling and his tail growing stiff; then with a short sharp bark he sprang forward like an arrow from a bow in the direction of the feline objective. We saw a streak of yellow as she fled for safety and life; a cloud of dust, and the Menace and his quarry disappeared from view. Faintly from afar floated an eager yelp, telling that the chase was still in full cry.

"Well, sink me," said the Second-Engineer, "that settles it."

There were trains to be caught, and so, slowly and sadly, we turned away.

Thus did the Silent Menace, with the rest of his shipmates, bid good-bye to the Auxiliary Patrol.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *A home from home.*

President Wilson (quitting America in his Fourteen-League-of-Nations Boots). "IT'S TIME I WAS GETTING BACK TO A HEMISPHERE WHERE I REALLY AM APPRECIATED."]

* * * * *

THE ROAD TO THE RHINE.

A LITTLE LOOT.

It was at the time when men still imagined that to be a pivotal man in some way enhanced their chances of being demobilised that an abnormal wave of acquisitiveness

passed over us. Before it passed, I regret to say, it *hovered*, chiefly on account of the prospect of a speedy return home and the desire to take back some kind of trophy to satisfy the still small voice of inquiry concerning papa and the Great War.

The very first day after we had arrived in the most unimportant village imaginable (our usual luck), Roley, the fattest subaltern on record, lurched into the room and told us of the discovery of a wonderful trainload of abandoned Bosch material, Being a Regular soldier, acquisitiveness runs through his whole being, of course, and he gave us a most glowing account of the wonders to be found. “Full of things,” he cried, “coal, Bosch beds, field-guns and souvenirs—hundreds of ’em.”

Page 6

I know no rabbit that could have pricked up his ears quicker than did the pivotal men at the sound of that magic word. “Hail, Roley!” we cried; “we who are about to be demobilised salute you!”

That evening a select conclave of super-scroungers met with great solemnity. Beds for the men and coal for all—certainly, and *then* we would start collecting. By the morrow each man slept in luxury, while subalterns from other companies came in to warm themselves by our roaring fires. Not till then did we feel justified in turning our thoughts to the furnishing of the baronial hall at home.

Some day, we pivotal men are still ready to believe, when demobilisation is nearly complete we shall return to our bowler hats and civic respectability, but meantime, let me tell you, respectable elderly subalterns *enjoy* things like clambering over a forbidden Bosch train in search of loot. When we had climbed to the end of the trucks and were thoroughly dirty, we found we had done very badly. The souvenirs were there all right, but no matter how interesting and desirable it may be, you simply cannot pack up a field-gun and send it home—the tail part does stick out so.

Chardenal and I had picked up the best thing we could find, brass cartridge cases (about three feet high) of a 5.9 gun, and some shorter eight-inch affairs. It was hard work. I carried four of the former and Chardenal carried two of each, and we looked as if we had come to mend a main drain. Not having been in the Army long enough to have lost all sense of shame, Chardenal began by trying to hide his cases under his British warm. His biggest effort at concealment was made when passing the sentry of the Brigade Headquarters’ guard, and the noise he made doing it brought the whole guard out. However, being sentries, they took very little notice of what we did, except that the N.C.O. in charge certainly did pick up one of the dropped cases and hand it to Chardenal. This was after I had tried to help him and we had dropped the whole lot.

After this Chardenal gave up all idea of concealment and tried to express by his carriage that he accepted no responsibility whatever for the souvenirs. He didn’t want the things, not he! They were *there*, certainly, and—well, yes, he was carrying them, but *why* he was carrying them (here he would have shrugged his shoulders if he could) he really couldn’t tell you; it was a matter of absolute indifference to him, anyway. Histrionically I have no doubt it was a great piece of work, but the only possible inference anybody could have drawn was that he might have been carrying them to oblige me—which I resented.

Heavens, how our arms ached, for it was over two miles to the billet! A collision of milk-trains could hardly have made more noise than we did as we clashed and clanged down the main street. Of course we met everybody we knew. People we hadn’t seen for years, people we didn’t like, people who didn’t like us—all seemed to have been paraded especially for the occasion.

Page 7

We got home in the end, and it was a great triumph. The only unenthusiastic person was Mr. Brown, my batman, who surveyed the things in silence, betokening that he knew quite well he would be called upon to sew them up in sacking and label them "Officer's Spare Kit, c/o Cox and Co." Then he looked sadly at my soiled tunic and my British warm and asked if I had carried them far.

"Over two miles," I replied proudly. "Pity," he said; "there's a whole dump of them at the bottom of the garden here."

There the matter might have ended if the fat Roley had not lurched up again the next day with a steel box containing a dial-sight off a field-gun. The dial-sight was a complicated affair of prisms and lenses which probably cost the Bosch about sixty pounds, and we felt a little sick at having overlooked such a find.

"Awful job I had too," he went on. "Some fellows were seen yesterday taking stuff away and they've put a sentry on the train."

"Serve them right," we said.

Next day we returned to the trucks to try again. The sentry was engaged in a little conversation, and whilst Chardenal took his photograph (ostensibly for *The Daily Snap* as "Sentry Guarding a Train") I slipped behind the trucks, opened a couple of lids in the tails of some field-guns, picked out two cases of sights and hurried off. Chardenal joined me later and, concealing our swag under our British warmes, we walked as quickly as we could until the Brigadier stopped and had a little chat with us about things in general. And there we had to stand for a quarter of an hour on a freezing afternoon with two fingers holding the box and the other fingers holding the coat down to effect better concealment. Chardenal was in so much pain and wore such an expression of agonized innocence that the Brigadier wanted him to come into headquarters until he felt better.

"Well, what have you got?" asked Carfax, another candidate for demobilisation, when we finally got back and showed him the cases.

"Only two?" he cried, "and you promised *me* one!" We said things.

"What lenses are they?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Chardenal, "but, whatever's the heaviest kind, that's the kind we've brought."

And we opened the boxes and they were empty.

The baronial hall will remain unfurnished. I'm fed up with the whole business.

L.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Farmer (to land-girl, who has been sent to feed the pigs).* "WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT THE SWILL BACK?"

Land Girl. "WELL, THEY WERE ASLEEP AND LOOKED SO COMFY—I SIMPLY HADN'T THE HEART TO DISTURB THEM."]

* * * * *

THE LANGUAGE TEST FOR V.A.D.'S.

From an Official Form of Application for stripes:—

"I certify that these Members have diligently attended their duties at the Hospital, are always neat in appearance, punctual in their habits and proficient in their cursing. I recommend they be allowed to enter for the Blue Stripe Examination."

* * * * *

Page 8

From the announcement of a musical service:—

“Soprano Solo, ‘With Verger clad’. (*Creation*), Miss Dorothy
——,”—*Canadian Paper*.

Quite a new “creation.”

* * * * *

[Illustration: CASTING PEARLS.

Philistine (who has been dragged by wife to Jazz tea-shop). “WHAT IS IT THEY’BE TRYING TO PLAY, DEAR?”

Modern Wife. “OH, YOU WOULDN’T BE ANY THE WISER.—NOTHING OUT OF ‘THE BOHEMIAN GIRL.’”]

* * * * *

THE HOUSE HISTRIONIC.

The enterprise of Mr. C.B. COCHRAN, who announces that the oak-parlour used in his play at the St. Martin’s Theatre will be sold by auction at the conclusion of the run, has not unnaturally provoked a certain liveliness in architectural circles. Should advertisements of houses for sale ever reappear in the newspapers, it is thought likely that they may include something like this:—

Desirable Family Mansion of unique interest, suit dramatist seeking congenial associations. Exceptionally fine dining-hall, as used in the supper scene in *Macbeth*, and equipped with convenient *Banquo* sliding-panel to kitchen. The latter apartment deserves the epithet Baronial, being transported direct from the successful pantomime, *Puss-in-Boots*, and capable of accommodating a ballet of two hundred cooks. The elegantly proportioned drawing-room (to which a fourth wall has been since added) was the subject of special mention in several leading newspapers after the production of *Epigrams* at the Niobe Theatre; while each of the twelve bedrooms represents some recent triumph in the Problematical Drama. An attractive feature is the fitting of an artificial sunlight attachment to the outside of each window; while every room is provided with one or more telephones.

Snug Bachelor Flat, direct from the phenomenally successful farce, *Peers and Pyjamas*, at the Plenipotentiaries Theatre. The fine central living-room contains sixteen doors, opening into bedrooms, kitchen, coal-cellar, *etc.* May be as conveniently entered by the window as by the doors. All the latter work upon the well-known dramatic hinge, by which as soon as one shuts another opens. Unlimited facilities for hide-and-seek. Exceptional opportunity for active tenant.

* * * * *

From *The Mistress of Court Regina*, by Mr. CHARLES GARVICE:—

“He kissed her, taking his cigarette out of his mouth to do so.”

This courteous consideration is invariably shown in the best circles.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Geordie*. “WELL, AH’M BLOWED! THEY’M NAMED YON PLAACE
AFTER T’OWD DOOG-OUT ON T’ SOMME!”]

* * * * *

THE SUBALTERNS’ PARADISE.

I met Bilsden and congratulated him on being in “civvies.”

Page 9

"What are you going to do now?" I asked. "Back to the old firm?"

"No," said Bilsden gravely; "when a man has acquired the power of leading men he's thrown away in an accountant's office, especially as the junior member of the staff. I see no prospect in England. I have offered to take charge of large departments of English firms, and be responsible for entire supervision, but they fail to recognise what the capacity for leadership gained in the army will do. I'm off to Ceylon—tea-planting. Just to control big gangs of coolies and see that they work. It will be child's play for me. Lovely climate; elephants. An absolutely ideal job."

It seemed to me on that foggy frosty day, that to lie in a hammock in the shade, with the temperature about ninety, watching coolies work, would be the perfect form of labour.

I congratulated Bilsden on having found his *metier*.

Half-an-hour later I met Parkinson, another second-loot who had just shed his pip.

"Well, what are you going to do now?" I asked.

"I'm a bit dubious," he said.

"Try tea-planting in Ceylon," I suggested. "Elephants, spicy breezes, swing in a hammock all day watching coolies. My dear boy, were I twenty years younger I should be inquiring about a berth on the next steamer."

"Ah," said Parkinson, "of course Ceylon's all right, and I've a lot of pals going out there; but what about rubber-planting in the Malay Peninsula? They've got tigers there. That's rather a pull."

I admitted the attraction of tigers to certain tastes, but not to mine. In my case the pull, I thought, might be on the tiger's side.

Since these interviews I have been going the rounds of my military acquaintances and I find a general feeling in favour of Ceylon or the Malay Peninsula.

Of course it's an excellent thing that they should take up the white man's burden and make the coolies work, only I'm in dread lest the overcrowding we suffer from in England may be extended to the Orient. Will there be enough plantations, coolies and big game to go round amongst our subalterns?

I can see the Government introducing several Bills—

- (1) For the extension of the Isle of Ceylon;
- (2) For the lengthening of the Malay Peninsula;

(3) For the importation of five million coolies, estimated at the rate of five hundred coolies each, to give employment to ten thousand second-loots;

(4) For the importation of elephants, tigers, lions, buffalo, hippopotami, giraffes and capercailzie.

* * * * *

AT PRINTING-HOUSE SQUARE.

[Mr. GEOFFREY DAWSON has resigned the Editorship of *The Times*, owing to a disagreement with Lord NORTHCLIFFE over matters of policy, and has been succeeded by Mr. H. WICKHAM STEED, formerly foreign editor.]

“Once more upon the waters! Yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a Steed
That knows his master.”

Page 10

Byron, "*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*."

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Inspecting Officer*. "WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT NUT ON THIS LORRY?"

Driver (ex-infantry). "I AM, SIR."]

* * * * *

A CAREER.

(*The Right Man in the Right Place*.)

You should see our son James!
You should just see our James!
As bright as a button, as sharp as a knife!
My wife says to me and I say to my wife,
"You'll never have seen such a son in your life
As our jammy son, James."

He is now three years old;
He's a good three years old;
When the fellow was two you could see by his brow
(At the age of a year, you could guess by the row)
That this was a coming celebrity. Now
He's a stout three-year-old.

Question: What shall he be?
Tell us, what shall he be?
Shall he follow his father and go to the Bar,
Where, passing his father, he's bound to go far?
"But one knows," says his mother, "what barristers are.
Something else he must be!"

Do you fancy a Haig?
Shall our James be a Haig?
The War Office tell me he's late for this war,
Have the honour to add there won't be any more
Since that's what the League of the Nations is for;
So it's off about Haig.

But his mother sees light
(Mothers always see light).



"This League of the Nations we mentioned above,
With the motto, 'Be Quiet,' the trade-mark, a Dove,
Will be wanting a President, won't it, my love?"
Jimmy's mother sees light.

Yes, that could be arranged;
Nay, it must be arranged.
In the matter of years Master Jimmy would meet
Presidential requirements. What age can compete,
In avoiding the gawdy, achieving the neat,
With forty to fifty? Thus, forty-five be't.
Given forty-two years, he'll be finding his feet
And the Treaty of Peace should be getting complete....
And so that's all arranged.

HENRY.

* * * * *

"I am sorry to have to say that this statement is a -----, and if
any of my readers have any doubt as to whether I used that strong
term without just reason, I invite them to communicate with the
Ministry of Shipping on the subject."—*Letter in "The Observer."*

We respect our contemporary's discretion, but we *should* like to know what was the
"strong term".

* * * * *

"The Literary Class has grown beyond all expectations, the numbers attending the last
few meetings averaging nearly 100. Papers have been read and discussed on Dickens'
Works, *Tess*, *Tale of Two Cities*."

The Highway.

Flushed with success, the Literary Class is expected next to tackle HARDY; *Jude the
Obscure* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* being the first objectives.

Page 11

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NOUVELLES DE PARIS.

Paris, March 3rd, 1919.

DEAREST POPPY,—You know, don't you, that I write for the Press? You *must* write, *ma chere*, if you want to be *dans le mouvement* nowadays. It's getting to be almost as big a craze as jazzing and is quite as exciting. It has its difficulties, of course, but so has the jazz roll. And if you've got a title or have been mixed up in a *cause celebre* you can write on anything *sans aucune connaissance speciale*. Camilla Blythely says she just sends in her photo and signature and those obliging newspaper people do the rest—which is most helpful to a busy person. But then we can't all be as notorious as dear Camilla. I hope it isn't getting just a little overdone. But I hear that lots of papers are offering only three guineas a column now for quite important signatures, while others actually insist on contributors writing their own articles. *Quant a moi*, I'm writing up the light side of the Peace Conference. I do those snappy pars about LLOYD GEORGE'S ties and CLEMENCEAU'S gloves and all those little domestic touches that people would much rather read about than such remote things as Czecho-Slovaks and Jugo-Slavs. I did a most *thrilling* three columns about the hats of the delegates, from the bowler of Mr. BONAR LAW to the “coffieh” and “igal” headdress of EMIR FAISUL, the Arab Prince. (It's always so effective if you can stick in a word or two like that that nobody understands. You never need get them right). Talking of odd words, the latest *boutade* over here is to find new names and epithets for our dress materials—some of them quite weird. If you want a silk *tricot* you ask for “*djersador*,” while a coarser texture is “*djersacier*”; “*mousseux*” now describes velvet as well as champagne; *ninon* is known as “*vapoureuse*”; while to make one of the newest Spring dresses you require only three-and-a-half yards of “*Salome*.” Some of the *couturiers* in the Rue de la Paix are issuing fashion-pronouncing handbooks, while others have their own interpreters to assist customers. The theatres over here are getting extremely—well, what our grandparents termed “*risques*,” but it really goes further than that. And the worst of it is my countrypeople seem to think it's the smart thing to go to them, which they do most indiscriminately. *Heureusement* they don't understand the stuff. Whenever I see a most circumspect and highly proper British matron entering one of the Boulevard theatres nowadays I think what a mercy it is that we as a nation rely so much on pronouncing phrase-books for acquiring foreign languages. It keeps one so single-minded in the midst of a wicked world. But, after all, propriety is a *question*

Page 12

de localite. Else why do people do things here which would badly shock us at home? *Par exemple*, dancing between the courses of a meal is our latest *caprice* here; but I was *un peu etonnee*, the other evening, to see the Duchess of Mintford, at a restaurant of the most *chic*, jazzing off the effects of the turbot with light-hearted *abandon*.

Unfortunately a waiter carrying a tray darted across the track at the very moment when she was involved in that step so *embrouillant*, the side-roll.

It took quite a long time to collect, and put in their proper order, the waiter, the contents of the tray, her Grace and all the other jazzers who were coming up behind.

But, *apres tout*, little comment was roused because most of the onlookers thought the incident was just part of the dance.

So long, old thing.

Bien a vous,

ANNE.

* * * * *

THE TRUMP SUIT.

Those who wield Britannia's power
Have decreed a blissful hour,
When the mellow bugle-note
Sounds in every ship afloat,
And you see the forrard decks
Littered up with leathernecks,
Seamen sprawling on the hatches,
Darning socks and fitting patches,
Cleaning jumpers, sewing, smoking,
Writing, fighting, sleeping, joking,
Baiting foe and twitting friend—
Sailors call it "Make and Mend."

In this jolly throng each day
Gunner 'Erbert, R.M.A.,
Sat and smoked serenely bored,
So that I must needs record
When that precious hour was ended
He had neither made nor mended.



'Erbert was a crumpled rose
In the beds of N.C.O.'s,
And a blot on the escutcheon
Which they pride themselves so much on;
For, in spite of threat and curse,
Cells and badges lost, or worse,
Captain's frown or sergeants' oaths,
'Erbert *wouldn't* mend his clothes.

In a distant Eastern land
Certain tribes got out of hand,
And, to comfort little Mary,
Sought to stew the missionary.
Our Marines were duly sent
To apportion chastisement,
And they snatched him from the larder,
But alas! pursuing harder
Than was wise in such a scrap,
They were landed in a trap.
For the wily natives got
All around and copped the lot,
Stripping off them every stitch
Of the clothes they stood in, which,
I am sure you'll all agree,
Was a great indignity.

Copped the lot? No, there was one
Absent when the deed was done.
'Erb, with his accustomed push,
Was advancing when the bush
Dragged the last remaining stitches
From the bag he called his breeches,
Leaving nothing but the dregs
Of the red stripe down his legs.
'Erbert paused; though not a prude,
He had never liked the nude.

Page 13

Seated in a distant clearing.
He remarked the natives cheering,
And, directed by the din,
Saw the plight his mates were in.
When he thought the time was ripe,
Clad in little but his stripe
'Erbert charged.... The tribes in wonder
Promptly bolted with the plunder.

'Erbert with averted head
Quickly gathered every shred
Of his late-lamented kit,
Saying, as he handed it
To the Major, "I infer
You have lost your breeches, Sir."

With his glasses in his hands
On his deck the Captain stands,
Watching with surprise and fear
His detachment reappear—
First the Major, garbed in dirt
And the tail of 'Erbert's shirt;
Then the Sergeant, better dressed
In the sleeves of 'Erbert's vest;
Then the rest in fragments torn
From the jumper he had worn.
Last comes 'Erbert, proud as NELSON,
With a smile and nothing else on.

Is it Fortune's final stroke,
Or the Skipper's little joke?
As the ladder they ascend
Comes the bugle "Make and Mend."

* * * * *

"A flotilla of Portuguese warships is actively maintaining the
blockade between the mouth of the Volga and that of the Minho."

Daily Paper.

The report that the Bolsheviks have borrowed a "Big Bertha" and are meditating a
bombardment of Lisbon by way of reprisal is as yet unconfirmed.



* * * * *

"Mr. W.A. Appleton, secretary of the Federation of Trade Unions, declares that since the Armistice the federation 'has lost no opportunity of endeavouring to smash the controls that meant continued high prices (of food).'"—*Evening Paper*.

More power to the "Federation" in its self-sacrificing campaign.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE GUEST WHO BROUGHT A BANJO.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: "THERE'S A BIT OF A FINANCIAL CRISIS ON AT THE PRESENT MOMENT. I BLEW INTO COX'S ON THE WAY HERE, ON THE OFF CHANCE, BUT —NOTHING DOING!"

"I S'POSE YOUR OVERDRAFT BLEW YOU OUT AGAIN—WHAT?"]

* * * * *

THE RIGHTS OF LABOUR.

(Extract from "*The Times and Mail*" of January 1st, 1925.)

A significant case was heard yesterday in the courts, when William Blogg, bricklayer's labourer, recovered twenty-five pounds damages from James Buskin Carruthers, artist, for injury done to the plaintiff's eight-cylinder car through defendant's culpable negligence in allowing himself to be run over by it.

Plaintiff urged that he was a labouring-man, who worked eight hours a day. The court was at once adjourned, while restoratives were applied to the Bench.

On the resumption of the proceedings it was explained that since the passing of the Two Hours Maximum Day Bill the supply of labour had been inadequate to meet the demands made upon it, and plaintiff had patriotically filled four posts, at the minimum rate of fifteen shillings an hour. It was while he was hurrying from one sphere of activity to another that the collision occurred, resulting in injury to the plaintiff's mud-guard and loss of valuable time.

Page 14

Defendant, who admitted negligence, pleaded poverty and threw himself upon the mercy of the Court.

The Bench, in summing up, called the jury's attention to the fact that defendant was not a labourer, but only a professional man; at the same time he reminded them of the impartiality of British justice, which did not admit that there was one law for the rich and another for the poor. Even the wealthiest labouring-man must be protected in the exercise of his inalienable right to work.

The accompanying photograph shows the plaintiff in the act of assisting to build a wall.; He is a self-made man, having started life as a solicitor and by sheer perseverance raised himself to the lucrative and responsible' position of an unskilled bricklayer's labourer.

* * * * *

TO M. GEORGES CLEMENCEAU.

Strong son of France, whose words were ever lit
By lightning flashes of ironic wit;
More fond of power than of pelf or place,
Eternal foeman of the mean and base,
And always ready in a righteous cause
To suffer odium and contemn applause—
Men call you still the "tiger," but the name
Has long outworn the faintest hint of blame,
Since in your country's direst hour of need
You have revealed your true heroic breed;
A tiger—yes, to enemies and Huns,
But trusted, idolised, by France's sons.
So when of late a traitor's felon blow
Was like to lay you, old and ailing, low,
And France was sorely stricken in her Chief,
The wide world shared her anguish—and relief;
For the assassin, resolute to kill,
Was foiled by your indomitable will.
Immortal France! she cannot spare you yet,
Till you have paid in full your filial debt,
And by the great Redemption and Release
Stamped Victory with the final seal of Peace.

* * * * *

[Illustration: CINDERELLA.

(No representative of the General Public seems to have been invited to sit on the Coal Industry Commission.)]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, February 24th.—The mantle of the lamented Mr. JOSEPH KING, whose taste in *proteges* was so remarkable, seems to have descended upon Colonel WEDGWOOD. His request for the return to this country of LAJPAT RAI, “the Indian patriot,” aroused a storm of objection from other hon. Members, who considered the description inapplicable to a person deported for sedition. But it was quickly quelled by the SPEAKER with the unanswerable assertion that “everybody calls himself a patriot in these days.”

Mr. RAPER sought an assurance that no “wrack”—which appears to be a term of art in the timber trade—should be used in the houses to be erected under the Government’s new housing scheme. If these were not to be “the unsubstantial fabric of a vision,” he implied, the official builders had better leave the wrack behind.

Page 15

Something is at last to be done to reduce the growing plague of Questions. Hitherto each Member has been entitled to put down eight Questions for oral reply on any one day. But in future no one is to be permitted to “star” more than four Questions *per diem*. Even that is regarded by some Members as an extravagant allowance. Major HENNESSY, I understand, thinks “three stars” enough for any man.

“The Government is not a trustee for one class, but for all,” was the leading theme of the PRIME MINISTER’S firm and tactful speech in introducing the Coal Industry Commission Bill. He was studiously conciliatory to the miners, but made it plain that they could not be allowed to put a pistol at the head of the general community.

The miners appear, however, to be in the mood of the little girl who said, “I don’t want to go to bed; I want to be *in* bed.” The gist of eloquent speeches delivered on their behalf by Mr. HARTSHORN and Mr. RICHARDS was that the Government already possessed all the relevant facts, and should give the desired relief at once. But they mustered only 43 in the Division Lobby against 257 for the Second Reading.

Tuesday, February 25th.—Their Lordships resumed their debate on Industrial Unrest. Lord RUSSELL attributed it mainly to ignorance—on the part of the capitalists and the newspapers, who, with few exceptions, never gave fair play to Labour. He was supported to some extent by His Grace of YORK, who declared that, after a perusal of the Labour Press and the non-Labour Press, he could hardly believe they were dealing with the same subject.

[Illustration: PERSUASIVE PURRING. MR. BRACE.]

Up to almost the eleventh hour the Committee stage of the Coal Commission Bill in the Commons was not encouraging. The Labour representatives moved amendment after amendment, designed either to wreck the measure or to make the Commission a mere registration-office to approve their own cut-and-dried plans.

Mr. RICHARDS moved to omit wages and hours from its purview, but the House, brought up in the belief that *Hamlet* without the *Prince of Denmark* is but a poor play, voted him down by 270 to 40.

[Illustration: MR. JOYNSON HICKS’S FAIR WARNING TO SIR ERIC GEDDES.]

Then came another question-begging amendment from Mr. ADAMSON, suggesting that the Commission’s inquiries into the possibilities of reorganising the mines should be limited to the single question of “nationalization”—the “blessed word” of Labour just now. This was supported in a capital maiden speech by Mr. SPOOR, an ex-pitman, whose father and son are both in the mines, and by Mr. CLYNES, who rather unreasonably complained that the HOME SECRETARY made SHORTT speeches; but it shared the same fate.

Page 16

Not till the Bill was nearly through Committee was there any sign of *rapprochement*. Then, in response to the persuasive purring of Mr. BRACE, who had urged that the Commission should issue an interim report on wages and hours by March 12th, the PRIME MINISTER declared that, after consultation with Mr. Justice SANKEY, he was prepared to promise that the report should be ready on March 20th. A smile, extending almost to the extreme limits of his moustache, spread over Mr. BRACE'S benevolent countenance. Thenceforward all was peace, and the Third Reading was carried without a division.

Wednesday, February 26th.—The Lords passed the Coal Industry Commission Bill through all its stages without a pause. Then Lord DEVONPORT expatiated on the mistakes of the Food Controllers with such a wealth of illustration that the LORD CHANCELLOR, who is fond of Classical “tags,” was heard to murmur, “*Omnium consensu capax imperil nisi imperasset.*”

A Second Reading was given to the Re-election of Ministers Bill, on the plea of the LORD CHANCELLOR that until it is passed several of his Ministerial colleagues will be *nantes in gurgite vasto*—or, in other words, all at sea.

Rumours that a new Department of Public Information was to be set up excited much curiosity in the Commons, but only negative replies were received. The Department, if, and when, it comes into existence, is not to advertise the virtues of the Coalition, nor is it to publish a newspaper of its own; though, to judge by the leaflets, circulars and *communiqués* issued by the existing Ministries in the course of the week, such an organ would certainly not perish for lack of copy.

The so-called Ten Minutes' Rule was originally intended for the introduction of comparatively unimportant Bills. This after-noon Mr. SHORTT employed it for the purpose of explaining the provisions of one of the most revolutionary and comprehensive measures ever brought forward in any country. Briefly it is to put under the control of a single Minister of Ways and Communications our railways, our canals, our roads, and also our supply of electricity, hitherto in the hands of hundreds of public companies and local authorities. Only on one point did the Bill meet with opposition. I do not know whether Mr. JOYNSON HICKS claims any connection with Hicks's Hall, which stands in the old road-books as the starting-point of the great highway to the North, but he became almost lyrical in his denunciation of the proposal to put all the roads in the country in charge of a railwayman like Sir ERIC GEDDES. They ought, in his opinion, to be under the care of someone “born on roads” and “trained on roads”—a sort of super-tramp, I suppose.

Thursday, February 27th.—To an appeal for an increase in the pensions of Crimea and Mutiny veterans, to meet the rise in the cost of living, response was made that such an increase would be granted in the case of those not over seventy years of age. It is not

thought that the concession will cause a heavy drain on the national resources, few of the veterans having joined up before entering their 'teens.

Page 17

As a retort, “Yah! German!” is, I am told, already considered *vieux jeu* by the wits of the pavement. But Ulstermen and Nationalists still think it effective to twit one another with having been supplied with rifles from the arsenals of the Bosch. They bandied charges and contradictions so vigorously this afternoon that the SPEAKER had to intervene to put an end to these “nonsensical bickerings.”

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY scouted the suggestion that County cricket-matches should be exempted from the entertainment tax. It is believed that his answer was based solely upon financial considerations, and that he must not be held to have expressed the opinion that first-class cricket, as played by certain counties, *is*, in point of fact, entertaining.

* * * * *

“German residents in South-west Africa have forwarded the Administrator a petition for transmission to President Wilson, claiming permission to erect a republic union with the Republic of Germany. The petitioners claim that they not only represent a majority of the white inhabitants, but interpret the views of the wishes of the majority of the majority of the ahmbahmbahmbah natives.”

New Zealand Paper.

We should like to know more of this remarkable tribe, which, *inter alia*, seems to have evolved a new method of proportional representation.

* * * * *

THE RED WINE OF THE COUNTRY.

“Did I iver tell ye,” asked ex-Sergeant O'Reilly, filling his pipe from my tobacco-jar, “about the red wine?”

“I remember a story about sparkling Burgundy,” I said.

“Och, that wouldn't be it at all. 'Twas another time altogether.”

“Well,” I said, “tell me about the red wine.”

“'Twas this way.” O'Reilly leant back in his chair, covered his maimed hand with a pocket-handkerchief—a curious way he had—and looked at me with that expression of openness and simplicity which demands confidence. “We was ‘way back o’ the line at the time, at a place where ye’d expect to get a taste o’ rest; but what wid fancy attacks an’ ‘special coorses’ (thim ‘s the divil an’ all!) there wasn’t enough rest for an honest man to get into mischief. Well, there was to be a grand inshpection by a tremenjuss brass-hat, one o’ thim soort all over ribbons that rides wid a shtiff back. ‘Twas the

mornin' before the great day whin the O.C. comes to me all of a flutter, an' says he, 'Sergint, ye've a chanct now to do me a good turn.'

"'I'll do it, Sorr,' says I, 'if it costs me my shtripes.'

"'The fact is,' says he, 'we've run out o' claret, an' there's no dacent shtuff to be had for twinty miles round; annyway, that's what I'm tould. Now the Gin'ral has a great fancy for red wine.'

"'Tis a sad business,' says I.

"'I've heard it whispered,' says the poor man, an' he wid the D.S.O. an' all, 'that where there's a good dhrop o' dhrink you're the man to find it. An', ' says he, 'there's no discredit to ye in that, O'Reilly.'

Page 18

“Indeed no, Sorr,’ says I; “tis a gift.’

“Well,’ says he, ‘would ye use that same gift of yours for the honour o’ the Rig’mint?’”

O'Reilly felt in his pocket for a tobacco-stopper, attended carefully to his pipe and again fixed me with his candid gaze.

“There’s a bit of a place ‘way back,’ says I, ‘where I’ve a fancy I might find somethin’.’

“Wid that he shtuck a bunch o’ notes in me hand. ‘Don’t shpare the cost,’ says he, ‘but get it. ‘Tis up to you, Sergint, to save a disp’rit situation.’”

“It was a terrible responsibility,” I said.

“Ye may say that. Whin I was alone wid thim notes bulgin’ in me tunic, I’d a notion I might let down the Rig’mint afther all, an’ that would have bruk me heart. But off I wint to see Achille. ‘Twas four miles to the village, an’ I wint on my blessed feet, an’ by the time I got to the place I was as nervous as a mouse in a thrap. Achille’s shop wasn’t a cafe or an estaminet or a buvette or anny o’ thim places. He had a bit of a brass plate on his door wid ‘Marchand de Vins’ on it. I knew him by raison of a fancy that took me wan day for a dhrop o’ brandy. So I wint in through Achille’s door wid thim notes as hot in me pocket as Patsy Donnelly’s pipe.

“Achille hopped out o’ the little room at the hack same’s a bird out of a cage. ‘Ah,’ says he, ‘that was good cognac, eh? You shall have more, me son.’

“‘Achille,’ says I, ‘tis a shtrange thing, but there’s niver a thought o’ cognac in me mind at all. ‘Tis red wine, the best, that I’m afther.’

“‘Red wine!’ says he. ‘I haven’t a litre o’ red wine in the cellars.’

“‘Holy Powers!’ says I, ‘an’ you wid “Marchand de Vins” on yer door.’ The shock of it took the breath out o’ me entirely. So I sat up on the counter to think.

“‘Tis a matther,’ says I, ‘that concerns the Rig’mint, a rig’mint that was niver bate yet.’ An’ I explained about the Gin’ral an’ what the O.C. tould me. An’ thin I tuk the notes from me pocket an’ put thim on the counther undher his eyes.

“‘Ach,’ says he, ‘tisn’t money I want from ye, but to hilp a frind.’ Then he folded his arms an’ his forehead wint up into a puzzle o’ wrinkles.

“‘An’ why wouldn’t white wine do?’ says he.

“‘Is it offer white wine to a Gin’ral an’ him wid a taste for red?’ says I. ‘It might rouse him terrible. Now, Achille,’ says I, ‘would there be no way of makin’ the white red?’”



O'Reilly put a persuasiveness into the last words that revealed Achille to me as an honest merchant confronted with the most subtle of temptations.

"O'Reilly," I said, "was that fair?"

"Maybe not, but I'd the Gin'ral an' the honour o' the Rig'mint fixed in me mind. 'That's a good joke, very good,' says Achille; but thore was niver a smile on his face.

"I 'd no intintion to make anny joke,' says I. 'Come, Achille, you're a knowin' man. Would there be no way at all?'"

Page 19

“Now it happened that he’d lift the door o’ the little room open, an’ I could see a bit o’ a garden through the window. ‘What’s the shtuff growin’ out there,’ says I, ‘wid the dark red leaves to it, or maybe ye’d call thim purple?’

“‘That’s beet,’ says he with a kind of a groan.

“‘Beet,’ says I. ‘An’ isn’t beet a red kind of a thing an’ mighty full o’ juice?’

“‘It is that,’ says he, wid the eyes of him almost out o’ his head.

“‘Then how would it be,’ says I, ‘to touch up the white wine wid some o’ that same juice?’

“‘The thought was in me mind, God help me,’ says he, an’ wid that he sat up on the counther forninst me, an’ we shtared into the garden like two men in a play.

“‘Would it make the wine cloudy?’ says I.

“‘I could filter it so’s it’d come as clear as sunshine,’ says he.

“‘An’ how would it be for taste?’ says I.

“‘Achille put a hand on me arm an’ I could feel him shakin’ like a man wid the ague.

“‘Heaven forgive me,’ says he, ‘but ye might say it was the wine o’ the counthry, an’ that taste was the mark of it.’ ‘Tis my belief he was near cryin’, for he was an honest man, an’ ‘twas for me he was lowerin’ himself to deceit.”

“‘You were a nice pair,” I said.

“‘Twas a beautiful schame,” O’Reilly went on. “I was niver concerned in a bettther.”

“‘Did it come off?” I asked.

“‘To a turn,” said O’Reilly. “We was docthorin’ that blissed wine for the best part o’ the day, an’ I tuk back a dozen bottles to camp. The O.C. was hangin’ round, as anxious as a dog for his master.

“‘Have ye the wine, O’Reilly?’ says he.

“‘I have, sorr,’ says I; ‘but I’d be glad if ye’d ask me no questions about it.’

“‘Not for the world,’ says he, givin’ me a queer look, an’ was off like a mountain hare.”

“‘Did the General recover?” I asked.

“That wine made a new man of him. He praised the Rig’mint up to the heighths. We was the pink o’ the Army, bedad! The throuble was he wanted to know where he’d get more o’ that same wine.

“‘There’s no more to be had,’ says I to the O.C., for I was done wid the job.

“‘He says it has a powerful bouquet,’ says the O.C.

“‘That may be,’ says I, ‘but he’ll niver taste the like of it agin. ‘Twas an ould wine o’ the counthry, an’ there’s niver been the match of it before or since.’

“‘Couldn’t it be managed annyhow?’ says the O.C.

“‘Not for all the Gin’rals in the British army,’ says I. ‘Twas for the love o’ the Rig’mint I got that wine, an’ I ‘m done wid the job.’”

“Is that the end?” I asked.

“Barrin’ this,” said O’Reilly. And he produced from his pocket a silver cigarette case, inside which was engraved, “To Sergeant Dennis O’Reilly, who saved the situation, October 15th, 1917.”

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Page 20

[Illustration: BACK TO THE LAND.

Ex-Air-Mechanic (in difficulties). "SEEMS TO BE A RARE OLD BUS FOR NOSE-DIVING."]

* * * * *

"No, thank you; I hate publicity.—Lord Jellicoe, in reply to a request for a farewell massage."—*Provincial Paper*.

We agree with the gallant Admiral that such operations are better conducted in private.

* * * * *

"It was stated that the cow took ill, and died on 23rd June last, and the purser now claimed the value of the animal, namely, L50, and also a further sum of L5, being the loss which he sustained through the want of milk, butter, and cheese, supplied by said cow from the date of her death to the date of the raising of the action."—*Scots Paper*.

"Faithful unto death"—and a bit over.

* * * * *

[Illustration: SARTORIAL CONTRASTS.

THE DUKE OF WESSEX WELCOMES THE LEADING FINANCIAL MAGNATE OF A FRIENDLY NATION ON HIS ARRIVAL AT VICTORIA STATION.

UPPER-CUT BILL OF STEPNEY, THE WEST OF EUROPE HEAVYWEIGHT, WELCOMES
BASHER SCROGGINS OF VALPARAISO ON HIS ARRIVAL AT LIVERPOOL.]

* * * * *

THE ART OF LEAVING.

If I had a son one of the first things I should teach him would be the art of leaving. I would have him swift in all ways, but swiftest when the time came to go. And when he went he should go absolutely. For although the people who leave slowly are bad enough, they are as nothing compared with the people who make false exits and return with afterthoughts.

The other day the necessity came for me to visit a house agent. Life has these chequered moments. There is something of despatch and order wanting about most house-agents, possibly the result of their very odd and difficult business, which is for the

greater part carried on with people who don't know their own minds and apparently are least likely to take an eligible residence when they most profess satisfaction with it. Be that as it may, house agents' offices in general have a want of definiteness unknown to, say, banks or pawnbrokers'. There is no exact spot for you to stand or sit; you are unaware as to which of the clerks is going to attend to you, and the odds are heavy that the one you approach will transfer you to another. There is also a certain air of familiarity or friendliness: not, of course, approaching the camaraderie of the dealer in motor cars, who leans against the wall with his hands in his pockets and talks to customers through a cigarette; but something much more human than the attitude of a female clerk in a post-office.

Being pressed for time and having only the very briefest transaction to perform, it follows that I was kept waiting for my turn with "our Mr. Plausible," in whose optimistic hands my affairs at the moment repose.

Page 21

Occupying his far too tolerant ear was another client, whose need was a country house surrounded by enough grass-land for a small stud farm.

This is what happened (he had, by the way, the only chair at that desk):—

Our Mr. Plausible (for the fortieth time). I understand perfectly. A nice house, out-buildings and about twenty acres of meadow.

Client. Twenty to thirty.

Our Mr. P. Yes, or thirty.

C. You see, what I want is to breed stock—cattle and horses too.

Our Mr. P. Exactly. Well, the three places I have given you are all well-adapted.

C. When a man gets to my age and has put a little money by he may just as well take it quietly as not. I don't want a real farm; I want just a smallish place where I can play at raising pedigree animals.

Our Mr. P. That's just the kind of place I've given you. The one near Newbury is probably the most suitable. I should see that first, and then the one near Alton.

C. You understand, I don't want a big farm. Anybody else can have the arable. Just a comfortable house and some meadows; about twenty acres or even thirty.

Our Mr. P. The biggest one I've given you is thirty. The place near Newbury is twenty-three.

C. Well, I'll go and see them as soon as I can. *[Gets up.*

Our Mr. P. The sooner the better, I should advise. There's a great demand for country-houses just now.

C.(sitting solidly down again). Ah, yes, but this is different. What I want is not so much a country-house in the ordinary meaning of the term as a farm-house, but without possessing a farm. Just enough buildings and meadow-land to breed a few shorthorns and a yearling or two. The house must be comfortable, you know, roomy, but not anything pretentious. *[Gets up again.*

Our Mr.P. I quite understand. That's just what I've given you.

C. (again seating himself). The whole scheme may be foolishness. My wife says it is. But *(here I believe I groaned audibly; at any rate all the other clerks looked up)* there it



is. When a man has enough to retire on and pay the piper he's entitled to call the tune; isn't he?

[At this point I resist the temptation to take him by the shoulders and push him out.]

Our Mr. P. Quite, quite. Well, Sir, if you take my advice you'll go to Newbury as quickly as you can. It's a first-rate place—most highly recommended.

[Here the client very deliberately puts the three "orders to view" in his inside pocket and slowly buttons his coat. I flutter on tiptoe, eager for his chair.]

C. If these won't do you'll find me some more?

Our Mr. P. With pleasure.

C. Very well; good morning.

[Moves away. I have just begun to speak when he returns.]

Page 22

C. Don't forget what I want it for. And not too far from London or my wife will dislike it.

Our Mr. P. Yes, you told me that. I've got a note of it here.

C. And you won't forget about the acreage?

Our Mr. P. No."

C.(addressing me). I'm afraid I've kept you waiting.

I (like the craven liar I am). It's all right.

[Client ultimately withdraws, but still with reluctance, and after two or three hesitations and half-turns back.

And the tragic part of it is that his name is Legion.

That is why if I had a boy I should teach him the art of leaving.
Almost nothing else matters.

* * * * *

OFFICIAL EUPHEMISM.

DR. ADDISON has stated that for some time past it has been the practice riot to use the word "pauper" in official documents when it was possible to use another expression; and no well-conditioned person will cavil at the spirit which has prompted the use of a less invidious substitute. But surely the process might be carried a good deal further. The practice of giving a dog a bad name is not only condemned by the proverbial philosophy of the ancients but by the most emancipated of the orthopsychical educationists of to-day.

If you keep on calling a man a "criminal," you will end by making him one. How much wiser it would be to refer to the impulses which occasionally bring him into conflict with the custodians of law and order as emanating from a dynamic individualism! In that way you may very possibly convert him into a static individualist and sterilize his potential malignance by a subliminal *serum*..

The amount of harm done by disparaging nomenclature is incalculable. Take the word "thief," for example. Its meaning can be expressed with infinitely greater precision and delicacy in the phrase, "one who is unable to discriminate between *meum* and *tuum*." Here you have in place of one mean little word a well-cadenced phrase of ten. Euphony as well as humanity prompts the variation.

Classical writers may have objected to the use of sesquipedalian words, but we know better, and Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL'S famous synonym for "lie" is permanently enshrined in the annals of circumlocution. One of the most offensive words in the language is "idiot"; yet it can be shorn of nearly all its sting when replaced by the definition, "a person of infra-normal mentality."

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Demolilisation Officer*. "WHAT IS THE NUMBER OF YOUR GROUP?"

Private. "I DON'T KNOW, SIR. I WAS A TURF ACCOUNTANT."

Demobilisation Officer. "AH! AGRICULTURE—GROUP 1."]

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Page 23

"London, Dec. 16.—At a meeting of the County Cricket Advisory Committee it was decided to run the County Championship during 1919, the matches to be limited to two days. There will be no change in the number of balls in the over.—Reuter's.

The Soviets are preparing the sharpest
counter-measure.—Reuter's."—*Canton Times*.

But we are confident that whatever the Soviets' little game is it will not be cricket.

* * * * *

STATE LOTTERIES.

[An Equality Theatre is being-run in Munich, where the public pays
a fixed price and is allotted by chance a seat in the stalls or
the gallery.]

The Equality plan we will run if we can
So that never a man or a woman need grumble—
If theatres, should the idea not include
Books, clothing and food for the great and the humble?
You will pay a fixed sum and accept what may come,
Be it loser or plum; and, to shun all that vexes,
We'll even eliminate what modern women hate,
And will not discriminate as to the sexes.

The question of dress may at first, I confess,
Make a sort of a mess of our smart Small-and-Earlies,
Where the First Footman John wears the garb of a don,
And Lord CURZON comes on from the House in his pearlies;
But when our char kneels on the steps and reveals
The last word in "Lucilles," will she not put her heart more
And more in her duties while great social beauties
Slink by in "pampooties" and arrows from Dartmoor?

Our tastes and our breeding no more will be leading
The paths of our reading; we'll read what we've got to
(And it *will* be a sell for Mamma if her Nell
Gets the last ETHEL DELL, when Mamma told her *not* to);
It may be a worry to poor GILBERT MURRAY
To read Hints on Curry and Blouses and Batter
In *Home Chat*, it's true; but still more of a stew
The Occult Review may appear to his hatter.



In the matter of meals, since the rations one feels
Hedonistic ideals have so soundly been shaken
That even the swankiest Duke might say, "Thankee!"
For Hodge's red hanky of bread and cold bacon;
But if in the sequel all chances are equal
You'll have to see me quell a volume of curses
When our "jobs" they allot, and I *still* have to swot,
If I like it or not, writing topical verses.

* * * * *

A HARDY ANNUAL.

Page 24

The butler, John Binns, who is an old and faithful retainer to this household, is now suffering from his annual cough. It is a terrific cough, capable of disputing supremacy with all other coughs of which the world has heard. The special points about this cough are (1) its loudness; (2) its combination of the noises made by all other coughs; (3) its depth; (4) its shriek of despair as it trembles and reverberates through the house; (5) its capacity to repel and annihilate sympathy. It is true that I have interviewed Binns with regard to his cough—it is an annual interview and is expected of me. I have urged him as he values our friendship not to neglect his cough, and he has assured me in return that the doctor has prepared for him a draught which possesses the supreme quality of being absolutely unable to effect the purpose for which it was devised.

“I shall drink ’is stuff,” says Binns, “but I ’aven’t any ’opes of its doing me any good. It doesn’t seem to get me *be’ind* the eough. If once I could really get be’ind it I should soon finish it. But yon can’t expect to do anything with a cough unless you’re be’ind it.”

“Have you tried chloraline?” I venture to suggest, mentioning not by that name, but by another, a much-advertised specific.

“I’ve been living on chloraline—that is when I wasn’t taking camphor lozenges. But my symptoms are too strong for that kind o’ stuff. Besides, I find that it’s no use to fill yerself up with remedies, because they only weigh down the cough unnaturally, and then when it does bust out it’s fit to tear yer throat in pieces. But none of them get be’ind it—no, not once.”

It will be observed that Binns has almost a superstition in regard to “getting be’ind.” If he got rid of his cough with everything still in front, he would take no satisfaction whatever in his malady; but as it is he feels a legitimate pride in it. He has been a member of this household for forty years, and punctually on the Kalends of March in every year his cough turns up. It never reduces his efficiency, but, while it alienates affection, it makes him more valuable to himself as being one who has symptoms capable of being related at full length to Mrs. Hankinson, the cook, or to any of the maids who have not yet experienced it and must be made aware that they belong to an establishment which has the high merit of accommodating John Binns’s annual cough.

It is something to have a butler who has coughed his irresistible way through two-and-a-half generations. It is a perfectly harmless affliction, but it gets on nerves in the same way as it did when first it huicked and honked and strangled and choked in the seventies of last century. I can see no decrease in its vigour or its variety. It deserves the chance of immortality that I hereby offer it, thus giving it a place beside the cough that *Johnson* coughed at *Dr. Blimber’s* famous establishment. It will be remembered that, when the *Doctor*

Page 25

began an excursus on the Romans, *Johnson*, “who happened to be drinking and who caught the Doctor’s eye glaring at him through the side of his tumbler, left off so hastily that he was convulsed for some moments and in the sequel ruined Dr. Blimber’s point.” He struggled gallantly, but had in the end to give way to an overwhelming paroxysm of coughing. It was a good cough, but an isolated one, and was perhaps, after all, not equal to Binns’s.

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THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

Captain Reginald Jones *and* Captain James Smith, *demobilised, meet accidentally in the waiting-room of a Government office. Their acquaintanceship had originated in a shell-hole near Plum-Tree Farm in 1916.*

Reggie. Cheerio, old egg.

Jimmy. Same to you. Doing anything?

Reggie. Lord, yes! I’ve been pushed on to the directorate of the pater’s firm.

Jimmy. Congrats!

Reggie. Stow it, old man; I’m simply worried to death. The whole cabush is on strike.

Jimmy. The blighters! What bunch are they?

Reggie. Stone-breakers.

Jimmy. Not the stone-breakers, surely?

Reggie. Yes, the stone-breakers, perish them!

Jimmy. And are you here about it?

Reggie. Sure. The junior director gets all the dirty work to do.

Jimmy. What a coincidence! I’m on the same stunt, old thing.

Reggie. Board of Trade?

Jimmy. Rats! Organising secretary of the Stone-breakers’ Union.

Reggie (after, gasp of surprise). Lucky devil.

Jimmy. Rot! I'd chuck it if I could afford to. Don't you wish sometimes you were back at Plum-Tree Farm?

Reggie. Crumbs, Jimmy; but weren't those the glorious days?

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"EX-CROWN PRINCE'S HORSE TO RUN."—*Heading in "The Times."*

Like master like horse.

* * * * *

[Illustration: FOR ENTERPRISING DISPERSAL STATIONS. SPEED UP YOUR OUTPUT BY INSTALLING THE MOVING-STAIRCASE SYSTEM. NO TIME LOST. GOVERNMENT SUITS "ASSEMBLED" BY SKILLED WORKMEN IN RECORD TIME.]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

I SHALL begin by saying straight out that Miss CICELY HAMILTON'S new book, *William—an Englishman* (SKEFFINGTON), is one of the finest war-stories that anyone has yet given us. You know already what qualities the author brings to her writing; you may believe me that she has done nothing more real, more nobly conceived, and by consequence more moving than this short tale. It opens, in a style of half-humorous irony, with an account of the youth, early life and courtship of *William*,

Page 26

who, with the girl whom he married, belonged to the vehement circles of the Labour-Suffragist group, spending a cheerfully ignorant life in a round of meetings, in hunger-striking and whole-hearted support of the pacifism that “seeks peace and ensues it by insisting firmly, and even to blood, that it is the other side’s duty to give way.” One small concession you must make to Miss HAMILTON’S plot. It is improbable that, when such a couple as *William* and *Griselda* left England in July 1914 to take their honeymoon in a remote valley of the Belgian Ardennes, their friends, knowing them to be without news and ignorant of all speech save English, should have made no effort to warn them. But, this granted, the tragedy that follows becomes inevitable. It is so finely told and so horrible (the more so for the deliberate restraint of the telling) that I will say nothing to weaken its effect. From one scene, however, I cannot withhold my tribute of admiration—that in which *William*, alone, brokenhearted, and almost crazed with the ruin of everything that made up his life, creeps home to find his old associates still glibly echoing the platitudes in which he once believed. A hint here of insincerity or conscious arrangement would have ruined all; as it is, the scene holds and haunts one with an impression of absolute truth. For the end, marked like all by an almost grim avoidance of sentimentality, I shall only refer you to the book itself. After reading it you will, I hope, not think me guilty of exaggeration when I call it, slight though it is, one for which its author has deserved well of the State.

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The dominant impression left upon me by Miss MERIEL BUCHANAN’S *Petrograd the City of Trouble* (COLLINS) is that its author is a sportswoman of the first order. You see her pressing to the windows to observe the shooting in the streets, going out to shop, to dine, to dance, during the stormy months of the various phases of the various Russian Revolutions. And I hasten to add, for fear of misunderstanding, that there is no suggestion of pose as the heroic Englishwoman. It was not till the end of 1918 that Sir GEORGE BUCHANAN withdrew from a country in which ambassadorial functions had obviously no reasonable scope. But he and his family, including our chronicler, his spirited daughter, remained long after there was any plausible reason to hope for the restoration of order and very long after considerations of personal safety might well have dictated and justified retreat. Mr. HUGH WALPOLE in his preface points out that Miss BUCHANAN is the first English writer to give a sense of the atmosphere of Russia during the New Terror. It is curious, but the impression she conveys is of something far less formidable than we have imagined. That may well be due to her high courage which minimised the ever-present dangers. Another odd impression is that her accounts of current events, e.g.

Page 27

of the death of RASPUTIN, seem to be as unpalatable as those which have been patched from various reports and guesses by writers far from the actual scene. It is perhaps the very nearness of the author to the source of the host of wild rumours and speculations concerning this strange tragedy that conveys this sense of the impossible. Have I thereby suggested that the book lacks interest? On the contrary, it hasn't a dull or insincere page.

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Little Houses (METHUEN) is not, as you might excusably suppose, a treatise upon the problem of the hour, but a novel. I confess that, when I read in the puff preliminary that it was "minutely observed" and "drab" in setting, my heart sank. But Mr. WODEN'S book is not made after that sufficiently-exploited fashion. He has a definite scheme, and (but for the fault of creating more characters than he can conveniently manage) tells his simple tale with a mature ease remarkable in a first novel. The plan of it is the life-story of a group of persons in a provincial factory town in those Victorian days when trade-unions were first starting, when the caricaturists lived upon Mr. GLADSTONE'S collars and the Irish Question was very much in the same state as it is to-day. We watch the hero, *John Allday*, developing from a Sunday-school urchin to flourishing owner of his own business and prospective alderman. Of course I admit that this synopsis does not sound peculiarly thrilling; also that as a tale it is by now considerably more than twice told. But I can only repeat that, for those with a taste for such stories, here is one excellent of its kind. Whether Mr. WODEN has been drawing upon personal memories for it, writing in fact that one novel of which every man is said to be capable, time and the publishing lists will show. I shall certainly be interested to see. Meanwhile the fact that despite his name GEORGE—always an object of the gravest suspicion—I accept his masculinity without question is my tribute both to the balance of his style and to the admirable drawing of his hero.

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That gallant and heroic gentleman, the late Mr. CECIL CHESTERTON, proved his quality by his service and death in the ranks of our army. In such scanty leisure as he could command he wrote, quite casually as it were, *A History of the United States* (CHATTO AND WINDUS). He seemed to say as *Wemmick* might have said, "Hullo! Here's a nation! Let's write its history," which he at once proceeded to do with immense gusto and considerable accuracy. Americans will not universally agree with all the views he puts forward. I myself am of opinion (probably quite wrongly) that I could make a better argumentative case for the North in the Civil War on the question of slavery. And in his account of the War of 1812-1814 Mr. CHESTERTON spends a great deal of indignation over the burning by the British of some public buildings in Washington, omitting to mention that this was done in reprisal for the burning by the

Americans in the previous year of the public buildings of Toronto. But in the main this history brilliantly justifies Mr. CHESTERTON'S courage in undertaking it, and it is written in a style that carries the reader with it from first to last. The book is introduced by a moving tribute from Mr. G.K. CHESTERTON to his dead brother.

Page 28

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We doubt whether Mr. BOOTH TARKINGTON'S many admirers on this side of the Atlantic will read *The Magnificent Ambersons* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) with any great sense of satisfaction. *George Minafer* is a spoilt and egotistical cad, and as we pursue his unpleasant personality from infancy onward our impatience with the adoring relatives who allow the impossible little bounder to turn their lives to tragedy becomes more and more pronounced. In England his "come uppance" would have commenced at an early age and in the time-honoured place thereunto provided. But in the case of young American nabobs these corrective agencies are too often wanting, and though it is hard to believe that a sophisticated uncle, a soldier grandfather and various other relatives would have allowed a conceited and overbearing young boor to wreck his mother's life by separating her from a former sweetheart, it cannot be said that such cases have not existed or that the picture is altogether overdrawn. But we do not like *George Minafer*, and his final reconciliation with his own sweetheart and her father—the man whom he has prevented his mother from marrying—leaves us cold. But if the characters are unpleasing the craftsmanship of *The Magnificent Ambersons* is of Mr. BOOTH TARKINGTON'S best, and his description "of the decline and fall of a locally supreme dynasty of plutocrats before the hosts of the Goths and Huns of spawning industrialism is almost a contribution to American social history.

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[Illustration: *Disturbed Burglar*. "SORL RIGHT, CONSTABLE. I'M ONLY 'AVIN' A GLOAT OVER ME WHIST-DRIVE PRIZES."]

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Of the two tales in *Wild Youth and Another* (HUTCHINSON) I prefer the other. In "Wild Youth" Sir GILBERT PARKER gives us the unedifying picture of a horrible old man married to a young and pretty girl. Jealous, tyrannical and vicious, this creature—referred to as a behemoth—is in all conscience unsavoury enough; but no one can read his story without feeling that he never had a dog's chance; and although the tale is in many respects well-told, I feel that it would have been vastly improved if some redeeming qualities had been vouchsafed to the villain of the piece. "Jordan is a Hard Road" is a more engaging piece of work. Here we have a man who has walked through most of the commandments—with especial attention to the eighth—trying to mend his ways. And he makes rather a sound job of it until something quite unforeseen happens; and then the old Adam (if this is quite fair to Adam) asserts himself. From a publisher's "literary note" enclosed in this book you will learn that Sir GILBERT'S imagination is "as boundless as the tracts of the Prairie which he loves and knows how to make his readers love." This is perhaps rather a large order, but I will content myself by saying that for the scenes of these stories Sir GILBERT has chosen ground that is familiar to him, and that knowledge is sometimes even more useful than imagination.

Page 29

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“HAMLET” AND THE FLU (an appeal to the Government): “Angels and Ministers of Health defend us!”

END.