

# **Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 153, November 14, 1917 eBook**

## **Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 153, November 14, 1917**

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# Contents

<a href="#">Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 153, November 14, 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="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Page 8.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Page 9.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Page 10.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Page 11.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Page 12.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Page 13.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Page 14.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Page 15.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Page 16.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">Page 17.....</a>	<a href="#">37</a>
<a href="#">Page 18.....</a>	<a href="#">38</a>
<a href="#">Page 19.....</a>	<a href="#">40</a>
<a href="#">Page 20.....</a>	<a href="#">42</a>
<a href="#">Page 21.....</a>	<a href="#">44</a>
<a href="#">Page 22.....</a>	<a href="#">46</a>



Page 23.....	47
Page 24.....	48

# Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
CHARIVARIA.		1
I.		11

# Page 1

## CHARIVARIA.

People are asking, "Can there be a hidden brain in the Foreign Office?"

\*\*\*

A German posing as a Swiss, and stated by the police to be "a spy and a dangerous character," has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment. The matter will be further investigated pending his escape.

\*\*\*

Three men were charged at Old Street last week with attempting the "pot of tea" trick. The trick apparently consists in finding a man with a pot of tea and giving him a sovereign to go round the corner and buy a ham sandwich, the thief meanwhile offering to hold the pot of tea. When the owner returns the tea has, of course, vanished.

\*\*\*

The increased consumption of bread, says Sir *Arthur Yapp*, is due to the 9d. loaf. It would just serve us right if bread cost 2s. 6d. a pound and there wasn't any, like everything else.

\*\*\*

"It is all a matter of taste," says a correspondent of *The Daily Mail*, "but I think parsnips are now at their best." They may be looking their best, but the taste remains the same.

\*\*\*

Seventy tons of blackberries for the soldiers have been gathered by school-children in Buckinghamshire. Arrangements have been made for converting this fruit into plum-and-apple jam.

\*\*\*

"Home Ruler" was the occupation given by a Chertsey woman on her sugar-card application. The *food controller* states that although this form of intimidation may work with the Government it has no terrors for him.

\*\*\*

The Russian Minister of Finance anticipates getting a revenue of forty million pounds from a monopoly of tea. It is thought that he must have once been a grocer.

\*\*\*

The Law Courts are to be made available as an air-raid shelter by day and night, and some of our revue proprietors are already complaining of unfair competition.

\*\*\*

Two survivors of the battle of Inkerman have been discovered at Brighton. Their inactivity in the present crisis is most unfavourably commented on by many of the week-end visitors.

\*\*\*

A dolphin nearly eight feet in length has been landed by a boy who was fishing at Southwold. Its last words were that it hoped the public would understand that it had only heard of the food shortage that morning.

\*\*\*

Captain *Otto* SVERDRUP, the Arctic explorer, has returned his German decorations. Upon hearing this the *Kaiser* at once gave orders for the North Pole to be folded up and put away.

\*\*\*

A certain number of cold storage eggs at sixpence each are being released in Berlin and buyers are urged to "fetch them promptly." In this connection several Iron Crosses have already been awarded for acts of distinguished bravery by civilians.

\*\*\*

## Page 2

One of the new toys for Christmas is a cat which will swim about in a bath. If only the household cat could learn to swim it might be the means of saving several of its lives.

\*\*\*

A correspondent would like to know whether the naval surgeon who recently described in *The Lancet* how he raised “hypnotic blisters” by suggestion received his tuition from one of our University riverside coaches.

\*\*\*

We are asked to deny the rumour that Mr. *Justice Darling*, who last week cracked a joke which was not understood by some American soldiers, has decided to do it all over again.

\*\*\*

The power of music! An enterprising firm of manufacturers offers pensions to women who become widows after the purchase of a piano on the instalment plan.

\*\*\*

We understand that a Member of Parliament will shortly ask for a day to be set aside to inquire into the conduct of Mr. *Philip Snowden*, who is reported to have recently shown marked pro-British tendencies.

\*\*\*

In view of the attitude taken up by *The Daily Express* against Sir *Arthur Conan Doyle*, on the question of “spooks,” we understand that the celebrated author, who has long contemplated the final death of *Sherlock Holmes*, has arranged that the famous detective shall one day be found dead with a copy of *The Daily Express* in his hand.

\*\*\*

A customer, we are told, may take his own buns into a public eating-house, but the proprietor must register them. In view of the growing habit of pinching food, the pre-war custom of chaining them to the umbrella-stand is no longer regarded as safe.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *The question of the hour*. [Sign before church with bomb-damaged steeple:] *The Rev SULVANUS Jones will preach next Sunday morning on what's wrong with the church?*]

\* \* \* \* \*

*India moves.*

*Dear Mr. Punch,*—The following is taken from a letter from the Quartermaster-General in India to the General Officers Commanding Divisions and Independent Brigades:—

“I am directed to point out that at present there appears to be considerable diversity of opinion regarding the number of buttons, and the method of placing the same on mattresses in use in hospitals.

“I am therefore to request that in future all hospital mattresses should be made up with fifty-three buttons placed in fifteen rows of four and three alternately.”

This should convince your readers that even India has at last grasped the idea of the War and is getting a move on.

\* \* \* \* \*



## Page 3

“Mr. H. A. Barker, the bonesetter, performed a bloodless and successful operation yesterday upon Mr. Will Thorne’s knee, which he fractured six years ago.”—*Sunday Paper*.

If the case is correctly reported—which we doubt—it was very confiding of Mr. *Thorne* to go to him again.

\* \* \* \* \*

*More sorrows of the Sultan.*

Beersheba gone, and Gaza too!  
And lo! the British lion,  
After a pause to comb his mane,  
Is grimly padding off again,  
Tail up, *en route* for Zion.

Yes, things are looking rather blue,  
Just as in Mesopotamy;  
My life-blood trickles in the sand;  
My veins run dry; I cannot stand  
Much more of this phlebotomy.

In vain for WILLIAM’S help I cry,  
Sick as a mule with glanders;  
Too busy—selfish swine—is he  
With winning ground in Italy  
And losing it in Flanders.

His missives urge me not to fly  
But use the utmost fury  
To hold these Christian dogs at bay  
And for his sake to block the way  
To his beloved Jewry.

“My feet,” he wired, “have trod those scenes;  
Within the walls of Salem  
My sacred presence deigned to dwell,  
And I should hate these hounds of hell  
To be allowed to scale ’em.

“So do your best to give them beans  
(You have some ammunition?),  
And at a less congested date



I will arrive and consecrate  
Another German mission."

That's how he wires, alternate days,  
But sends no troops to trammel  
The foe that follows as I bump  
Across Judaea on the hump  
Of my indifferent camel.

Well, I have tried all means and ways,  
But seldom fail to foozle 'em;  
And now if *William* makes no sign  
(This is his funeral more than mine)  
The giaours can have Jerusalem.

O.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

*The sugar fiend.*

"I will have a cup of tea," I said to the waitress, "China if possible; and please don't forget the sugar."

"Yes, and what will you eat with I it?" she asked.

"What you please," I replied; "it is all horrible."

I do not take kindly to war-time teas. My idea of a tea is several cups of the best China, with three large lumps of sugar in each, and half-a-dozen fancy-cakes with icing sugar all over them and cream in the middle, and just a few cucumber sandwiches for the finish. (This does sound humorous, no doubt, but I seek no credit for it. Humour used to depend upon a sense of proportion. It now depends upon memory. The funniest man in England at the present moment is the man who has the most accurate memory for the things he was doing in the early summer of 1914).

## Page 4

The loss of the cakes I could bear stoically enough if they would leave my tea alone, or rather if they would allow me a reasonable amount of sugar for it. However, we are an adaptable people and there are ways in which even the sugar paper-dish menace can be met. My own plan, here offered freely to all my fellow-sufferers, provides an admirable epitome of War and Peace. The sugar allowance being about half what it ought to be, I take half of the cup unsweetened, thus tasting the bitterness of war, and then I put in the sugar and bask in the sunshine of peace.

On this particular occasion peace was on the point of being declared when I found my attention irresistibly compelled by the man sitting opposite to me, the only other occupant of my table. At first I thought of asking him not to stare at me so rudely, and then I found that he was not looking at me but over my shoulder at some object at the end of the room. I can resist the appeal of three hundred people gazing into the sky at the same moment, but the intense concentration of this man was too much for me. I turned round. Seeing nothing unusual I turned back again, but it was too late. My sugar had gone! No trace of it anywhere, except in the bubbles that winked suspiciously on the surface of the miscreant's tea.

His face did not belong to any of the known criminal types. It was a pale, dreamy, garden-suburb sort of face—a face you couldn't possibly give in charge, except, perhaps, under the Military Service Acts.

"Do you know," I said to him, "that you have just committed one of the most terrible offences open to civilised mankind—a crime even worse (Heaven help me if I exaggerate) than trampling on an allotment?"

"Oh, I'm sorry!" he replied, waking from his dream. "Did you want that sugar? You know, you seemed to be getting on very well without it."

As I could not believe him to be beyond the reach of pity, I explained my method to him, describing as harrowingly as I could the joy of those first few moments after the declaration of peace. I suggested to him that he might sometimes find it useful himself, if ever he should be compelled to sit at an unoccupied table. ("*Touche*," he murmured, raising his hat). "And now," I concluded, "as I have told you my system, perhaps you will tell me yours—not for imitation, but for avoidance."

"There is very little to tell," he replied sorrowfully, "but it is tragic enough. All my life I have been fond of sugar. Before the war I took always nine lumps to a cup of tea. (It was my turn to raise my hat.) By a severe course of self-repression I have reduced it to seven, but I cannot get below that. I have given up the attempt. There are a hundred cures for the drink habit; there is not one for the sugar habit. As I cannot repress the desire, I have had to put all my energy into getting hold of sugar. I noticed some time ago that at these restaurants they give the sugar allowance to all customers who ask for tea or coffee, although perhaps twenty per cent. of them do not take sugar at all. It is

these people who supply me with the extra sugar I need. In your case it was an honest mistake. I always wait to see if people are proposing to use their sugar before I appropriate it.”

## Page 5

"But if you only take from the willing," I inquired, "why do you not ask their permission?"

"I suppose I have given you the right to ask me that question," he replied with much dignity, "but it is painful to me to have to answer it. I have not yet sunk so low that I have to beg people for their cast-off sugar. I may come to it in the end, perhaps. At present the 'earnest gaze' trick is generally sufficient, or, where it fails, a kick on the shin. But I hate cruelty."

"Physical cruelty," I suggested.

"No, any kind of cruelty. I have said that in your case I made a mistake. If I could repair it I would."

"Well," I said, "here's something you can do towards it, although it's little enough." And I handed him the ticket the waitress had written out for me. "And now I'll go and get a cup of tea somewhere."

"One moment," he said, as I rose to go. "We may meet again."

"Never!" I said firmly.

"Ah, but we may, I have a number of disguises. Let me suggest something that will make another mistake of this kind impossible."

"I am not going to give up my plan," I said.

"No, don't," he answered; "but *why not drink the sugared half first?*"

\* \* \* \* \*

Extract from an official letter received "Somewhere in France":—

"It must be clearly understood that the numbers shown under the heading, 'Awaiting Leave' will be the number of all ranks who have not had leave to the United Kingdom since last arrival in this country, whether such arrival was their last return from Leave, or their last arrival in France."

And the Authorities are still wondering why the "Awaiting Leave" list tallied so exactly with the daily strength.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *A great incentive. MEHMED (reading despatch from the All-Highest). "Defend Jerusalem at all costs for my sake. I was once there myself."*]

\* \* \* \* \*

*The mud larks.*

The ammunition columns on either flank provide us with plenty of amusement. They seem to live by stealing each other's mules. My line-guards tell me that stealthy figures leading shadowy donkeys are crossing to and fro all night long through my lines. The respective C.O.'s, an Australian and an Irishman, drop in on us from time to time and warn us against each other. I remain strictly neutral, and so far they have respected my neutrality. I have taken steps toward this end by surrounding my horses with barbed wire and spring guns, tying bells on them and doubling the guard.

Monk, the Australian, dropped in on us two or three days ago. "That darn Sinn Feiner is the limit," said he; "lifted my best moke off me last night while I was up at the batteries. He'd pinch BALAAM'S ass." We murmured condolences, but Monk waived them aside. "Oh, it's quite all right. I wasn't born yesterday, or the day before for that matter. I'll make that merry Fenian weep tears of blood before I've finished. Just you watch."

## Page 6

O'Dwyer, the merry Fenian, called next day.

"Give us a dhrink, brother-officers," said he, "I'm wake wid laughter."

We asked what had happened.

"Ye know that herrin'-gutted bush-ranger over yonder? He'd stale the milk out of your tea, he would, be the same token. Well, last night he got vicious and took a crack at my lines. I had rayson to suspect he'd be afther tryin' somethin' on, so I laid for him. I planted a certain mule where he *could* stale it an' guarded the rest four deep. Begob, will ye believe me, but he fell into the thrap head-first—the poor simple divil."

"But he got your mule," said Albert Edward, perplexed.

"Shure an' he did, you bet he did—he got old Lyddite."

Albert Edward and I were still puzzled.

"Very high explosive—hence name," O'Dwyer explained.

"Dear hearrts," he went on, "he's got my stunt mule, my family assassin! That long-ear has twenty-three casualties to his credit, including a Brigadier. I have to twitch him to harness him, side-line him to groom him, throw him to clip him, and dhrug him to get him shod. Perceive the jest now? Esteemed comrade Monk is afther pinchin' an infallable packet o' sudden death, an' he don't know it—yet."

"What's the next move?" I inquired.

"I'm going to lave him there. Mind you I don't want to lose the old moke altogether, because, to tell the truth, I'm a biteen fond of him now that I know his thricks, but I figure Mr. Monk will be a severely cured character inside a week, an' return the beastie himself with tears an' apologies on vellum so long."

I met O'Dwyer again two days later on the mud track. He reined up his cob and begged a cigarette.

"Been havin' the fun o' the worrld down at the dressin'-station watchin' Monk's casualties rollin' in," said he. "Terrible spectacle, 'nough to make a sthrong man weep. Mutual friend Monk lookin' 'bout as genial as a wet hen. This is goin' to be a wondherful lesson to him. See you later." He nudged his plump cob and ambled off, whistling merrily.

But it was Monk we saw later. He wormed his long corpse into "*Mon Repos*" and sat on Albert Edward's bed laughing like a tickled hyena. "Funniest thing on earth," he spluttered. "A mule strayed into my lines t'other night and refused to leave. It was a

rotten beast, a holy terror; it could kick a fly off its ears and bite a man in half. I don't mind admitting it played battledore and what's-'is-name with my organisation for a day or two, but out of respect for O'Dwyer, blackguard though he is, I ..."

"Oh, so it was O'Dwyer's mule?" Albert Edward cut in innocently.



## Page 7

Monk nodded hastily. "Yes, so it turned out. Well, out of respect for O'Dwyer I looked after it as far as it would allow me, naturally expecting he'd come over and claim it—but he didn't. On the fourth day, after it had made a light breakfast off a bombardier's ear and kicked a gap in a farrier, I got absolutely fed up, turned the damn cannibal loose and gave it a cut with a whip for godspeed. It made off due east, cavorting and snorting until it reached the tank-track; there it stopped and picked a bit of grass. Presently along comes a tank, proceeding to the fray, and gives the mule a poke in the rear. The mule lashes out, catching the tank in the chest, and then goes on with his grazing without looking round, leaving the tank for dead, as by all human standards it should have been, of course. But instead of being dead the box of tricks ups and gives the donk another butt and moves on. That roused the mule properly. He closed his eyes and laid into the tank for dear life; you could hear it clanging a mile away.

"After delivering two dozen of the best, the mule turned round to sniff the cold corpse, but the corpse was still warm and smiling. Then the mule went mad and set about the tank in earnest. He jabbed it in the eye, upper-cut it on the point, hooked it behind the ear, banged its slats, planted his left on the mark and his right on the solar plexus, but still the tank sat up and took nourishment.

"Then the donkey let a roar out of him and closed with it; tried the half-Nelson, the back heel, the scissors, the roll, and the flying-mare; tried Westmoreland and Cumberland style, collar and elbow, Cornish, Graeco-Roman, scratch-as-scratch-can and Ju-jitsu. Nothing doing. Then as a last despairing effort he tried to charge it over on its back and rip the hide off it with his teeth.

"But the old tank gave a 'good-by ee' cough of its exhaust and rumbled off as if nothing had happened, nothing at all. I have never seen such a look of surprise on any living creature's face as was on that donk's. He sank down on his tail, gave a hissing gasp and rolled over stone dead. Broken heart."

"Is that the end?" Albert Edward inquired.

"It is," said Monk; "and if you go outside and look half-right you'll see the bereaved Mr. O'Dwyer, all got up in sack-cloth, cinders and crepe rosettes, mooning over the deceased like a dingo on an ash-heap." PATLANDER.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Aunt Maria*. "DO YOU KNOW I ONCE ACTUALLY SAW THE KAISER RIDING THROUGH THE STREETS OF LONDON AS BOLD AS BRASS. IF I'D KNOWN THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW I'D HAVE TOLD A POLICEMAN."]

\* \* \* \* \*

“FOR THE DURATION ...”

“The forenoon service in the Parish Church will be at 11 o'clock instead of 11.15 on Sunday first, and will continue till further orders.”—*Scottish Paper*.

## Page 8

\* \* \* \* \*

AID FOR THE MILITARY POLICE.

“The recruiting hut which is being erected in Trafalgar Square in connection with the campaign undertaken by the Ministry of Labour to recruit women for the Women’s Army Auxiliary Cops will shortly be completed.”—*Sunday Pictorial*.

\* \* \* \* \*

“She was visited occasionally by a man of foreign appearance, who was believed to be her bother-in-law.”—*Ipswich Evening Star*.

Probably one of those “strained relations” we so often read about.

\* \* \* \* \*

“My Correspondent’s bona fides are above suspicion.”—“*The Clubman*” in “*The Pall Matt Gazette*.”

One good fide deserves another, but of course the more the merrier.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: Keen Motorist (*who has temporarily taken to push-biking, to leisurely fowl which has brought him low*). “JUST YOU WAIT TILL THEY REMOVE THESE PETROL RESTRICTIONS.”]

\* \* \* \* \*

INVITATION.

If you will come and stay with us you shall not want for ease;  
We’ll swing you on a cobweb between the forest trees;  
And twenty little singing-birds upon a flowering thorn  
Shall hush you every evening and wake you every morn.

If you will come and stay with us you need not miss your school;  
A learned toad shall teach you, high-perched upon his stool;  
And he will tell you many things that none but fairies know—  
The way the wind goes wandering and how the daisies grow.

If you will come and stay with us you shall not lack, my dear,  
The finest fairy raiment, the best of fairy cheer;

We'll send a million glow-worms out, and slender chains of light  
Shall make a shining pathway—then why not come to-night?

R.F.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### CHRISTMAS FARE IN WAR-TIME.

"Whatever the dinner be like, we can still have our fill of  
holly and mistletoe."—*Star*.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### IMITATION AIR-RAIDS.

Mr. Punch is glad to note that some real efforts are being made to meet the public needs in this matter on nights when there is no attack by the enemy.

In particular the owners of certain large warehouses have come forward in a spirited manner by giving directions for the banging of large folding-doors at suitable (irregular) hours. Private individuals also, especially when returning home late at night, can do something in the way of supplying entertainment for nervous residents in the neighbourhood. Much is expected, too, of the large dairy companies, who, by their control of vast numbers of heavy milk-cans, are in a peculiarly favoured position. By the manipulation of these vessels on a stone floor a very

## Page 9

complete imitation of a raid can be produced. A good deal, of course, can be done by any ordinary householder. "I have had great fun," one correspondent writes, "with a very deliberate and heavily-striking Dutch clock, which I have lately put against my party-wall. My neighbour's family frequently jump up and run for the basement. When they get used to the thing I shall give the other side a turn."

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE FIRE-DRILL.

Once a month, as laid down in "Orders for Auxiliary Hospitals for Officers," or some such document, we practise fire-drill. This consists of escaping from upper windows by means of precarious canvas chutes. The only people exempted from this ceremony are Mrs. Ropes—who watches with great delight from a safe distance—and Sister, who stands sternly at the top to make sure (a) that those patients who don't want to go down do go down, and (b) that those patients who do want to go down don't go down more than once. No excuses are taken. The fixed ration is one slither per chute per person.

We had this month's rehearsal last Tuesday. The patients were put through it first, Major Stanley—to his great disgust—being chosen to lead the way and set his juniors an example. He was told that it was possible, by sticking out his elbows, to go down as slowly as he liked; but he must have done it wrong somehow, for he disappeared with startling suddenness the instant he let go the window-sill, and almost simultaneously his boots shot out at the other end and doubled Dutton the butler up so badly that he had to be taken away and reinflated.

Haynes, who came next, insisted on first making his dying speech from the window, for, as he pointed out to Sister, when people allowed themselves to be inserted alive into machines of this type there was every likelihood of their reappearing at the other end in the form of sausages. Seymour handed Sister a bulky package labelled "WILL" before starting, and most of us managed to be mildly humorous in some way or other.

Mrs. Ropes, on the lawn, enjoyed it all immensely; and so did Ansell, who was standing beside her with an air of detachment. Sister's eagle eye singled him out.

"Come along, Mr. Ansell," she called. "I see you—your turn next. No shirking."

"I'm not in this, Sister," he answered loftily.

"Oh, indeed! And why not?"

"Because I sleep on the verandah. If there's a fire I simply get out of bed and step into the garden."

“Oh, no, you don’t,” put in Seymour. “That would be entirely contrary to regulations. The official method of escaping from burning buildings is down the official chute. In case of fire your correct procedure will be to double smartly upstairs, commend your soul to Providence in a soldier-like manner, and toboggan smartly down.”

(Have I mentioned that Seymour is an Adjutant?)

“That’s right, Captain Seymour,” said Sister from above. “Bring him up under escort if necessary.”

## Page 10

After the patients came Miss Ropes, and after her the domestic staff, beginning with the less valuable members and working up gradually to Dutton and Cook. It was possible to trace the progress of the younger and slighter maids by a swiftly-descending squeal, while that of the more portly was visible as a leisurely protuberance. At last Cook was the only one left—Dutton was not feeling quite up to performing the journey. She was a new cook, and very precious. She had all the generous proportions of her profession, and with them went a placid temper and a great sense of personal dignity.

“Oh, Cook,” said Miss Ropes, “*you* needn’t go down, you know, unless you want to.”

There are times when official regulations must be sacrificed to diplomacy. But Cook was in high good humour, and quite determined on doughty deeds. Miss Ropes said no more.

The task of getting a wide cook into a narrow canvas tube proved quite unexpectedly difficult; and, when it was accomplished, so far from sticking out her elbows as brakes, she had to press them close to her sides in order to move at all. With the aid of a friendly pressure applied to the top of her head by Sister she got slowly under way. The chute bulged portentously. The bulge travelled a few feet; then it stuck and became violently agitated. Sister clutched at the top of the chute, while Dutton hung manfully on to the other end.

“Don’t struggle,” said Sister in a stern professional voice. “Keep your arms still, and you’ll come down all right.” A muffled screaming and a dangerously increased agitation of the chute was the only reply. Cook had quite lost her head and was having violent hysterics. Three or four of us raced upstairs to aid Sister in keeping the top end of the apparatus from jerking free, while several more went to the assistance of the flustered Dutton.

Cook ceased to struggle for a moment, but only through exhaustion; for when Sister seized the opportunity to repeat her advice a fresh paroxysm came on, and everybody “stood to” at their posts again. Miss Ropes conceived the idea of attaching a cord to Cook’s armpits and hauling her up again by main force. She dashed into the house, and found a demoralised kitchen-maid calling incoherently for help down the telephone.

Meanwhile Cook had had her worst spasm. We hung grimly on to the chute, dismally confident that something would have to give way soon. Suddenly there was a rending sound; the seam of the canvas ripped open and a gaping slit appeared, through which Cook’s freed arm flapped wildly. Then the arm disappeared as the body to which it was attached gathered momentum; and when Miss Ropes appeared with a length of cord she was just in time to see her retainer return to the world—alive, but practically inside out.

As soon as Cook recovered her breath it was apparent that her temper was no longer placid. Forgetting entirely that it was by her own choice that she had made the trip, she gave us all to understand that she believed the whole incident to have been specially arranged for her humiliation. She gave notice on the spot, and staggered indignantly to the house to pack her box, leaving her employer once again face to face with the Servant Problem.



## Page 11

\* \* \* \* \*

THE ARTISETTE.

*(An Engineering School for Women  
has been started in Scotland.)*

What if my lady should appear  
In a mechanic's grimy gear?  
I shall not squeamishly decline  
To figure at her shrine.

If Vulcan's smoky sway precludes  
An assignation in the woods,  
I shall not linger less elate  
Outside the foundry gate.

When she knocks off at eventide  
I'll flutter fondly to her side,  
And demonstrate that grease and oil  
Can't loosen love's sweet coil.

Most tenderly my tongue shall wag  
To Amaryllis on the slag,  
Whilst I endeavour to confine  
Her horny hand in mine.

\* \* \* \* \*

PERSONAL.

"Pat. Don't be disappointed. Nothing amis. Iris."—*Calcutta  
Statesman*.

Only a letter gone astray.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Apartments (furnished and unfurnished) to be let, outside  
air radius."—*Daily Telegraph*.

A little suffocating, perhaps.

\* \* \* \* \*

“If a million quarter acres in the country were left uncultivated, the result would be that a quarter of a million acres would be left uncultivated.”—*Scotch Paper*.

Examined and found correct.

\* \* \* \* \*

Extract from a speech by Lord SELBORNE:—

“In that ouse Capital was very fully represented—he thought over-represented.”—*Daily Telegraph*.

The printer seems to have thought so too, when he cut the capital out.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: THE HIGHWAYMAN.

“TAXI! TAXI!”

“WHAT ABAHT IT?”

“I WANT TO GO TO HAMPSTEAD.”

“DO YER?”

“I’LL DOUBLE YOUR LEGAL FARE.”

“DOUBLE THAT AGIN AN’ I’LL TAKE YER—’ALF-WAY.”

“AN’, MIND YER, I WOULDN’T ’AVE BROUGHT YER AS FAR AS THIS ONLY I ’APPENED TO ’AVE BIN COMIN’ ANY’OW. I LIVE UP ’ERE.”]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Officer (returning to France in heavy sea)*. “I—HOPE—TO—HEAVENS—THE NEXT—WAR THEY HAVE—WILL—BE—IN ENGLAND.”]

\* \* \* \* \*

NIGHTMARES.

I.

OF A FORM MASTER WHO DREAMS THAT HE HAS CALLED ON THE WAR CORRESPONDENT OF “THE DAILY MAIL” FOR A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE CAESAR’S *DE BELLO GALLICO*.

## Page 12

*"Omnis Gallia in tres partes divisa est."* Is it fanciful to say of the three parts into which all Gaul is divided that by their colours may they be known, the blue, the brown and the ghastly, ghoulish, intolerable, bestial, but, thank God, passing, grey? Yes, thank God, the blight of greyness cannot last long; even now the scabrous plague is being burnt up and swept back and overwhelmed by the resistless flood, eager yet cautious, persistent yet fiery, of the blue and the brown. Hideous, pitiable, soul-searing are the scars that it leaves in its mephitic wake, but the cleansing tide of the brown and the blue sweeps on, and the healing wand of time waves over them, and soon the shell-holes and the waste places and the abominations of desolation are covered with little flowers—or would be if it were Spring.

The Spring! No one knows what depth of meaning lies in that little word for our brave fellows, what intensity of hopes and fears and well-nigh intolerable yearnings it awakens beneath the cheery insouciance of their exteriors; no one, that is, except me. They tell me about it as they pass back, privates and generals, war-hardened veterans and boys of nineteen with the youth in their eyes not yet drowned by the ever-increasing encroachments of the war-devil; all are alike in their cheerful determination to see this grim and bloody business of fighting to an honourable end, and alike, too, in that their souls turn frankly, as might children's, for refreshment and relief to the kindly breast and simple beauties of Mother Nature.

The key-note of their attitude is given in the sentence, spoken dreamily and as if in forgetfulness of my presence, by a Corporal of the R.G.A. as I cleaned his boots—it was an honour. "The blue—the blue—the blue—and the white!"

He was gazing skywards. I could see nothing but grey clouds, but I knew that his young eyes were keener than mine, that he had learnt to look into the inmost heart of things in that baptism of fire, that travail of freedom, where desolation blossoms and hell sprouts like a weed. Through the grey he could discern the triumph of the blue and the white of peace, when the work of the brown shall be done. It was an allegory. More he told me, too, in his simple country speech, so good to hear in a foreign land: of the daisies in the yard at home, of the dandelions on the lawn, of his pet pig: things too sacred to repeat here. And he told me that the great event on the Front now is the Autumn glory of the trees. Then he departed, and as he went he broke into deep-throated, Homeric laughter, and I—I understood: he was mocking Death. Even thus does laughter yap at the heels of that dishonoured king out here.

\* \* \* \* \*

TO THE BOOD.

A SODDET.



[Our poet has caught a severe cold through  
having spent the night in the cellar.]

BOOD, whose autubdal spleddour, as of dood,  
Shides od frob set of sud to dawdigg bord,  
Gradt be this bood, o bood, to calb by bood  
With agodisigg apprehedsiod tord,

## Page 13

Illube dot with thy beabs the biddight burk,  
Whed through the gloob the Huddish biscreadt  
Cobe sdeakigg, bedt od their idhubad work  
Of bobbigg slubberigg dod-cobbatadts.

Or if thy labbedt gleabs thou bayst dot blidd,  
Thed bay they aid our airbed add our guds;  
Its bark bay every barkigg bissile fidd,  
Bay dought be dode abiss, dor dode be duds.

So bayst thou baffle burderous WILLIAB'S plad,  
Add all attebts of that bad badbad bad.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: PRIVILEGED DISLOYALTY.

FIRST TRAITOR. "HOW ARE WE TO PUSH OUR PROPAGANDA PAST THE CENSOR?"

SECOND TRAITOR. "NOTHING EASIER. GET THE RIGHT KIND OF QUESTIONS ASKED IN PARLIAMENT; THERE'S NOBODY TO STOP *THEM* FROM BEING PUBLISHED."]

\* \* \* \* \*

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

*Monday, November 5th.*—By way of celebrating Guy Fawkes Day the Government announced their intention of compensating, up to a limit of five hundred pounds, any householder whose property has been damaged in air-raids. How soon he will cage his "monkey" will depend upon the Treasury, which is morbidly anxious lest in its transactions *bis dat qui cito dat* should be literally illustrated.

[Illustration: "Forgetting the claims of Glasgow." MR. WATT.]

The official price of potatoes is still unsettled. According to his own statement the FOOD CONTROLLER is only waiting for the decision of the War Cabinet. "On the contrary," said Mr. LAW, "the Cabinet is only waiting for Lord RHONDDA." It seems to be another case of the Earl of CHATHAM and Sir RICHAUD STRACHAN; and in the meantime the potatoes are rotting.

Provided that no scarcity of gas for other purposes is caused the Government see no objection to its use for the propulsion of motor-cars. On receiving this information Mr. PEMBERTON BILLING at once ordered a Zeppelin attachment to his famous torpedo-

shaped car. No other gas-consumer will suffer, as he is prepared to keep the apparatus inflated from his own retorts.

By the scheme of the Boundary Commissioners, the roll of the Commons, already a hundred per cent. too big for its accommodation, is to be increased by some thirty Members. Various suggestions for enabling the new-comers to assist at debates have been proposed. "Dug-outs" under the existing benches, whence they could poke out their heads between the legs of other Members, and "painters' cradles" depending from the ceiling, or the galleries, are among the most popular.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that the HOME SECRETARY strenuously resisted the proposal of the London representatives to give another couple of Members to "the hub of the universe," as Mr. WATT, momentarily forgetting the claims of Glasgow, handsomely called it. Among a number of minor concessions, Mr. THEODORE TAYLOR'S plea that Batley should be associated with Morley "because they have had many a tussle at cricket" could not be resisted.

## Page 14

*Tuesday, November 6th.*—A statement that the great War Savings meeting at the Albert Hall cost £3,500, chiefly for the expenses of delegates, shocked the thrifty conscience of Mr. HOGGE, who hoped Mr. BALDWIN would discourage the PRIME MINISTER'S meetings if they were so expensive. Mr. BALDWIN did not condescend to answer him or he might have observed that the delegates in question were voluntary workers who by their exertions had helped to raise over a hundred millions for the prosecution of the War.

Mr. TILLET, the newly-elected Member for North Salford, took his seat, and there was general cheering as, under the safe-conduct of two amply-proportioned friends, Little Ben was introduced to Big Ben.

[Illustration: THE NEW RECRUIT. SIR JOHN SIMON.]

When Mr. BALFOUR informed Mr. JOWETT at Question-time that the only commitments of Great Britain to France are contained in the Treaty of Alliance of September 5th, 1914, which has been duly published, he knocked the foundation from under the subsequent peace-debate. But that did not prevent Mr. LEES SMITH from making a long speech, on the assumption that by promising to help France to recover her ravished provinces we had improperly extended the objects of the war. Mr. MCCURDY, who shares with Mr. LEES SMITH the representation of Northampton, plainly hinted that if his colleague cared to visit his constituents they would be delighted to present him with a specimen of the local manufacture.

The speeches of Mr. BALFOUR and Mr. ASQUITH, though well worth hearing, were hardly needed to complete the rout of the Pacifists; and, in the division on the Closure, the men who are prepared (in Mr. FABER'S pungent phrase) "to take the bloody hand of Germany" made a very poor muster.

*Wednesday, November 7th.*—I am inclined to echo Lord SALISBURY'S regret that Labour has no direct representative in the Upper House. The proletarian peer, if there were one, would have been both surprised and delighted to hear how the non-proletarians, without exception, spoke of his class.

My imaginary peer would have been especially edified by the speech of Lord MILNER, whom a small but noisy section of the Press persists in describing as more Prussian than the Prussians. Not under-estimating the difficulties in the way of a frank and full understanding between Capital and Labour, he nevertheless believed that they would be overcome, because he had an abiding faith in the mass of his fellow-countrymen. Not quite what one expects of a British Junker, is it?

*Thursday, November 8th.*—When tonnage is so scarce it seems odd that room can still be found for consignments of wild animals. Mr. PETO drew attention to a coming cargo, including two hundred avadavats, the little birds about which *Joseph Surface* was so

contemptuous, and six hundred monkeys—“sufficient,” as he pleasantly observed, “to fill this House.”



## Page 15

For once Mr. BILLING expressed a widely-held opinion when he questioned the propriety, in present circumstances, of holding the LORD MAYOR'S Banquet. Mr. BONAR LAW'S solemn assurance that he only accepted the invitation on the distinct understanding that the feast would fall completely within the FOOD CONTROLLER'S regulations, was not altogether convincing. Members were anxious to know the exact dimensions that Lord RHONDDA has laid down for the turtle-ration.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Onlooker (at a Company exhibition, to the better man).* "HERE, LAAD, NOT SO MOOCH OF IT. WE'M SHORT O' SOJERS IN OUR COOMPANY, DOAN'T THEE FORGET!"]

\* \* \* \* \*

GILBERT.

We are all very fond of Gilbert. There are, however, one or two things about him which even his best friends will admit make it hard for us at times to remember how much we really love him. Sometimes he seems almost too good to be true. Yet I have known wet horrible days in the trenches when the sight of him coming smiling down the line, exuding efficiency and enthusiasm at every pore, has made his fellow-officers positively dislike him.

For, alas, he is one of those dear overzealous fellows whom in moments of depression we stigmatise as "hearty." He has even been known to be hearty at breakfast; to come trampling into the dug-out with that blinking old smile on his face, expressing immense satisfaction with life in general at the top of a peculiarly robust voice; to tread on his captain's toes and slap his next-door neighbour heartily on the back, and then to explain to a swearing and choking audience how splendidly he has slept, and what a topping day it is going to be.

Never has Gilbert been known to spend a bad night; he is one of those fortunate animals who can go to sleep standing and at five minutes' notice, and start snoring at once. If you try to sleep anywhere near him, you dream of finding yourself in Covent Garden station, trying to board endless trains which roar through without stopping—that's the kind of snore it is.

And now it is time I told my story.

It happened many years ago, when the War was young and the Bosch comparatively aggressive; when our big guns fired once every other Sunday and we lived precarious lives in holes in the ground. Our Brigadier, a conscientious soldier of the old school, was dodging round our line of trenches, and had just reached the sector allotted to my

company, which was also Gilbert's, when the distant buzz that generally means an aeroplane overhead made itself distinctly heard.

"Can you spot him?" said the General to his Brigade-major; "one of theirs, I suppose?"

Now it is as much as a Brigade-Major's job is worth to confess ignorance at such a crisis. So, after sweeping the skies fruitlessly with his glasses and listening intelligently to the steady drone, he said, "Yes!" with as much conviction as possible.

## Page 16

"Heads down," said the General sharply, "and don't move. Pass it down." And by way of example he sat heavily on my periscope and stayed gazing at the ground like a fakir lost in meditation.

Meanwhile the message was passed along, and the trench became silent as the grave. I was informed a few days later that it reached the outer battalion of the next brigade later on in the morning, and was popularly supposed to have reached Switzerland the same evening.

For about five minutes the droning continued ("Having a good look at us," said the Brigade-major in a sepulchral whisper) and then suddenly ceased with what I can only describe as an appalling snort. Almost simultaneously a tousled head was thrust out of a dug-out almost into the great man's face, and Gilbert's cheerful roar was heard by a scandalised company.

"Had a topping sleep. What's the time, someone?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Best milch cows have been sold recently for L60 in the Isle of Wight. At a meeting of the Cowes Council it was stated that at Chichester cows had sold for L73 each."—*Times*.

And now that the Isle of Wight milkers have held their indignation meeting it is expected that the anomaly will be removed.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: ONE UP!]

\* \* \* \* \*

PETER, THE TEMPTER.

Necessity does not make stranger bedfellows than some of the changes brought about by War. Who, for example—and certainly not such a born sun-worshipper as I—would ever have dreamt that a time would come when we in London and the Eastern counties would desire rain and wind with a passionate keenness once reserved solely for fine weather? Yet so it is. By reason of that foolish invention of flying we now, when we go to the window in the morning and lift the blind, are dashed and darkly thoughtful if no sky of grey scudding misery meets our gaze. "Please Heaven it pours!" we say. Just think of it—"Please Heaven it pours!" What a treachery! It may even come that we include prayers for storms in the Liturgy.

In default of bad weather we may have to Take Cover; and it is when we Take Cover that discoveries begin and long-postponed adventures fructify. For years and years, for example, I had looked down that steep hill by the Tivoli site in the Strand into the yawning cavern that opens there, and wondered about it. I had thought one day to explore it, but had never done so, any more than I have yet proceeded further towards a visit to the Roman Bath, also off the Strand, than to threaten it.

But I shall get to the Bath yet, because already, thanks to the intervention of the Hun, I have become intimately acquainted with Lower Robert Street, and the next step is simple.

## Page 17

In the ordinary way, short of desperate impulse and decision—unless by some happy chance I had relinquished the burden of this pen and taken happy service with one of the wine merchants who store their treasure there—I should never have entered Lower Robert Street at all, for it goes nowhere and runs under the earth, and it is damp and mouldy, and the only doors, leading to this vault and that, are locked. But for all these disabilities Lower Robert Street is, in Gotha and Zeppelin times, a very present help and refuge. There assemble, with more or less fortitude and philosophy, the denizens of the Adelphi, thankful indeed that the brothers Adam established their streets and terrace on so useful a foundation; and there twice recently have I joined them. And an odd assembly we have made, ranging as we do from successful dramatists to needy journalists, with an actress or so to keep us manly.

There for long hours have we waited until the “All clear” has sounded—or, at any rate, some have done so. As for myself, on the last occasion, taking advantage of a lull in the uproar, I crept away to bed, and, after falling into the sleep of exhaustion, had the ironical experience of being rudely awakened by the reassuring bugles and my night again ruined.

Having taken cover only in Lower Robert Street, which is open to all, I cannot with any personal knowledge speak of the camaraderie of private basements; but I suppose that that exists and is another of the War’s byproducts. I take it that, in the event of a sudden alarm, no householder with a cellar would be so inhuman as to refuse admittance to a stranger, and already probably a myriad new friendships and not a few engagements have resulted. Our own camaraderie is admirable. The federation of the barrage breaks down every obstacle; while a piece of shrapnel that one can display is more valuable than any letter of introduction, no matter who wrote it. Hence we all talk; and sometimes we sing too—choruses of the moment, for the most part, in one of which the depth of our affection for our maternal relative is measured and regulated by the floridity of the roses growing on her porch.

And yet, when at last friendliness is upon the town, there are people—and not only alien Hebrews either—who have been hurrying away from London! When London has become more interesting than ever before in its history there are people who leave it!

Personally I mean to cling to the old city as long as it will cling to me; but even now across one’s aching sight comes a “dream of pastime premature” which shakes such resolves a little. Peter, for example, has been having a disturbing effect on me. Only now and then, of course—when I am not quite myself; when the two and thirty (what remains of them) are not so firmly gritted as they should be; when even London seems unworthy of devotion.

## Page 18

But these moods pass. You will admit, though, that Peter has his lure. I read about him in the *Tavistock Gazette*, one of the few papers, I fancy, which does not belong to Lord NORTHCLIFFE; and this is how the lyric (it is really a lyric, although it masquerades as an advertisement) runs, not only in the paper but in my head: “To be let, by Tender” (this is not an oath but some odd legal or commercial term) “as and from Lady Day all that nice little PASTURE FARM known as HIGHER CHURCH FARM, situate in the village of Peter Tavy.” Now what could be more unlike London under the German invasion and all that nasty little tunnel known as Lower Robert Street, than Peter Tavy?

But I must not be tempted. I must stick it out here.

\* \* \* \* \*

### LITERARY GOSSIP A LA MODE.

The mystification practised by authors who have passed off as their own work the compositions of others is familiar to all literary students. SHAKSPEARE’S assumption of borrowed plumes is of course the classic example. But another and more subtle problem is the interchange of functions between two men of letters; and the theory recently advanced by the distinguished critic and occultist, Mr. Pullar Leggatt, deserves at least a respectful hearing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Briefly stated, it is that during his hermit existence at Putney the late Mr. SWINBURNE effected an interchange of this sort with Sir W. ROBERTSON NICOLL; the Editor of *The British Weekly* devoting himself to the composition of poems, while the poet assumed editorial control of the famous newspaper. If the theory thus crudely stated sounds somewhat fantastic the arguments on which it is based are extraordinarily plausible if not convincing.

\* \* \* \* \*

To begin with, experts in anagrams will not fail to notice that the names ALGERNON SWINBURNE and W. ROBERTSON NICOLL contain practically the same number of letters—absolutely the same if SWINBURNE is spelt without an “e”—and that the forenames of both end in “-on,” as does also the concluding syllable of WATTS-DUNTON. The fact that the Editor of *The British Weekly* has never published any poems over his own name only tends to confirm the theory, as the argument conclusively establishes.

\* \* \* \* \*

For it is impossible to believe that so versatile a polymath should not at some time or other have courted the Muse, and if so, under what name could he have had a stronger



motive for publishing his poems than that of SWINBURNE? So austere a theologian would naturally shrink from revealing his excursions into the realms of poesy, and under this disguise he was safe from detection. Lastly, while Sir W. ROBERTSON NICOLL has always championed the Kailyard School, SWINBURNE lived at The Pines. The connection is obvious; as thus: Kail, sea-kale, sea-coal, coke, coker-nut, walnut, dessert, pine-apple, pine.

## Page 19

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As regards SWINBURNE'S conduct of *The British Weekly*, it is enough to point to such alliterative and melodious combinations as "Rambling Remarks" and "Claudius Clear." The theological attitude of the paper presents difficulties which are not so easy to overcome, but Mr. Pullar Leggatt has promised to deal with this question later on. Meanwhile the diplomatic silence maintained by Sir W. ROBERTSON NICOLL and Mr. EDMUND GOSSE must not be interpreted as conveying either a complete acceptance or a total rejection of this remarkable theory.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Wounded Tommy*. "WILL YOU PLAY MENDELSSOHN'S 'SPRING SONG,' PLEASE?"

*Distinguished Pianist (with a soul above Mendelssohn)*. "I'M AFRAID I CAN'T."

*Tommy*. "IT IS A BIT OF A TEASER, AIN'T IT? TIES MY SISTER UP IN A KNOT WHENEVER SHE TACKLES IT.]"

\* \* \* \* \*

THE NEW CRUMMLES.

HERTLING "is not Prussian."

\* \* \* \* \*

MY PYJAMAS.

A STUDY IN THE FASTIDIOUS.

I hope this is not going to be embarrassing. If so, it is not my fault. This is history, please remember, not fiction. I wanted—I am obliged to say it—pyjamas for winter wear. I know all about pyjamas for summer wear; what I wanted was pyjamas for winter wear, and I decided that Agnes should make them. For years I have been trying to get proper pyjamas—by which I mean pyjamas properly made—but the haberdasher always smiles depreciation and tells me that the goods he offers me are what are always worn. Quite so; but what I say is that out of bed and for the purpose of having your photograph taken Trade pyjamas are all right; but that in bed they commit untold offences. I enter my bed clothed; I settle down in it half-naked. The jacket has run up to my arm-pits; my legs are bare to the knee; my arms to the elbows; the loosely buttoned front is ruckled up into a funnel, down which, whenever I move, the bedclothes like a bellows draw a chill blast of air on to that particular part of my chest which is designed for catching colds. When I turn over in my dreams I wake to find myself tied as with



ropes. Slumber's chains have indeed bound me. I am a man in the clothing of a nightmare. The cold, cold sheets catch me in the most ticklesome delicacies of my back and make me jump again. Enough.

"Well," said Agnes, "if I am going to make your pyjamas you must tell me exactly what you want."

"My pyjamas," I said, "shall be buttoned round the ankle and capacious below the waist—there I ask a Turkish touch. The jacket shall be buttoned at the wrists and baggy at the shoulder; at the chest it shall strap me across like an R.F.C. tunic, and it shall be securely clipped to the trousers."

"Why not have it all in one?"

## Page 20

"What!" I cried, "and parade hotel passages in search of the bath looking like a clown out of a circus? No, thank you."

"You must make me a pattern then," said Agnes, "or I shan't know what to do."

I can't make patterns, but I can, and I did, make plans of ground and first-floor levels, a section and back and front elevations, all to a scale of one inch to the foot exactly. I also made a full-size detail of a toggle-and-cinch gear linking the upper storey to the lower.

"I think," Agnes said, "you had better come to the shop and choose the material."

I thought so too. I wanted something gaudy that would make me feel cheerful when I woke in the morning; but I also had another idea in my mind. *Mangle-proof buttons!* Have the things been invented yet?

The archbishop who attended to us deprecated the idea of india-rubber buttons.

"What kind are you now using?" he asked solicitously.

"At present, on No. 2," I said, "I am using splinters of mother-of-pearl. Last week, with No. 1, I used a steel ring hanging by its rim to a shred of linen, two safeties, and a hairpin found on the floor."

I chose a flannel with broad green and violet stripes, and very large buttons of vitrified brick which I hoped might break the mangle. These buttons were emerald in colour and gave me a new idea. *Trimmings.*

"I want to look right if the house catches fire," I told Agnes. "Green sateen collar to match the buttons—"

"And for the wristbands," said Agnes, catching my enthusiasm.

"And for the wristbands," I agreed; "but," I added, "not at the ankles. That would make the other people in the street expect me to dance to them, and I don't know how to."

And now the good work is complete. Toggle and cinch perform their proud functions, and I sleep undisturbed by Arctic nightmares, for I have substituted green ties for the stoneware buttons which reduced my vitality by absorbing heat. My only trouble is my increasing reluctance to rise in the morning. I don't like changing out of my beautiful things so early in the day. I am beginning to want breakfast in bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

AT THE DUMP.

*(LINES TO THE N.C.O. IN CHARGE.)*

Now is the hour of dusk and mist and midges,  
Now the tired planes drone homeward through the haze,  
And distant wood-fires wink behind the ridges,  
And the first flare some timorous Hun betrays;  
Now no shell circulates, but all men brood  
Over their evening food;  
The bats flit warily and owl and rat  
With muffled cries their shadowy loves pursue,  
And pleasant, Corporal, it is to chat  
In this hushed moment with a man like you.

## Page 21

How strange a spectacle of human passions  
Is yours all day beside the Arras road,  
What mournful men concerned about their rations  
When here at eve the limbers leave their load,  
What twilight blasphemy, what horses' feet  
Entangled with the meat,  
What sudden hush when that machine-gun sweeps,  
And—flat as possible for men so round—  
The Quartermasters may be seen in heaps,  
While you sit still and chuckle, I'll be bound!

Here all men halt awhile and tell their rumours;  
Here the young runners come to cull your tales,  
How Generals talked with you, in splendid humours,  
And how the Worcestershires have gone to Wales;  
Up yonder trench each lineward regiment swings,  
Saying some shocking things;  
And here at dark sad diggers stand in hordes  
Waiting the late elusive Engineer,  
While glowing pipes illumine yon notice-boards,  
That say, "No LIGHTS. YOU MUST NOT LOITER HERE."

And you sit ruminant and take no action,  
But daylong watch the aeroplanes at play,  
Or contemplate with secret satisfaction  
Your fellow-men proceeding towards the fray;  
Your sole solicitude when men report  
There is a shovel short,  
Or, numbering jealously your rusty store,  
Some mouldering rocket, some wet bomb you miss  
That was reserved for some ensuing war,  
But on no grounds to be employed in this.

For Colonels flatter you, most firm of warders,  
For sandbags suppliant, and do no good,  
And high Staff officers and priests in orders  
In vain beleaguer you for bits of wood,  
While I, who have nor signature nor chit,  
But badly want a bit,  
I only talk to you of these high themes,  
Nor stoop to join the sycophantic choir,  
Seeing (I trust) my wicked batman, Jeames,  
Has meanwhile pinched enough to light my fire.

A.P.H.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Lady (looking out of train on to darkened platform).* "PORTER, IS THIS EDGWARE ROAD? I CAN'T SEE A THING."

*Porter (with Irish blood in her).* "NOT YET, M'M. EDGWARE ROAD'S THE STATION BEFORE YOU GETS TO BAKER STHEET."]

\* \* \* \* \*

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

"In a few days," says the puff preliminary of *The Coming* (CHATTO AND WINDUS), "you and all your friends will be reading and discussing this most strange and prophetic novel." Perhaps. But what we shall be saying about it depends largely, I suppose, upon our definition of the term prophetic; also a little upon our feeling with regard to good taste and the permissible in fiction. My own contribution will be a sincere regret that a writer as gifted as Mr. J.C. SNAITH should have attempted the obviously impossible. His theme,

## Page 22

symbolised by a wrapper-design of three figures silhouetted against a golden sunrise, is a second advent of the Messiah, embodied in the person of a village carpenter named (with palpable significance) *John Smith*, whom local prejudice sends, not inexcusably, to a madhouse, where he dies, after converting the inmates and instituting a campaign of universal peace. Frankly, the chief interest of such a wildly fantastic idea lies in watching just how far Mr. SNAITH can carry it without too flagrant offence. That his treatment is both sincere and careful hardly lessens my feeling that the whole attempt is one to be deplored. Humour of the intentional kind has, of course, no place in the author's scheme. How remote is its banishment you may judge when I tell you that the Divine message is represented as given to mankind in the form of a wonderful play, which instantly achieves world-wide fame, being performed by no fewer than fifty companies in America alone. The problem (to name but one) of the resulting struggle between plenary inspiration and the conditions of a fit-up tour is only another proof of my contention that there are more things in heaven and earth than can be treated in realistic fiction, and that Mr. SNAITH'S good intentions have unfortunately betrayed him into selecting the least possible.

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If *Humphrey Thorncot* and his sister *Edith* had not bored one another and grown touchy—I judge by their reported conversations—in a house with green shutters in Chelsea, they would never have gone to St. Elizabeth, which is a Swiss resort, and would never have met the East-Prussian family of the *von Ludwigs* in the year before the War. And *Humphrey* would never have fallen (temporarily) in love with *Hulda von Ludwig*, nor would *Karl von Ludwig* have fallen (permanently) in love with *Edith Thorncot*. The troubles and miseries of this latter couple are related by Mr. HUGH SPENDER in *The Gulf* (COLLINS). Papa *von Ludwig* objects so violently to all this love-making that he eventually succumbs to a regular East-Prussian stroke of apoplexy which all but leads to a charge of parricide against *Karl* by his base brother, *Wilhelm*. *Karl* is really too good for this world. He objects to atrocities and refuses at the risk of his own life to shoot innocent Belgian villagers. Being imprisoned, he escapes by means of a secret sliding panel and an underground passage which leads him, not immediately, but after many vicissitudes, to America. There he is joined by his faithful *Edith*, who defies the Gulf caused by the War, and marries him. Mr. SPENDER appears to have been in some doubt as to whether he should write the story of two souls or the history of the first few weeks of the War. Eventually he elects to do both, and his novel consequently suffers somewhat in grip. He certainly paints a very vivid picture of events in the first period of active operations. May I hint a doubt, by the way, whether in 1913 a French Professor would have mentioned HINDENBURG as one of Germany's most important men? Whatever he may have been in Germany, HINDENBURG was for the outside world a later discovery.

## Page 23

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*Further Memories* (HUTCHINSON) is justly called by its publishers a “fascinating volume.” The designation will not surprise those who enjoyed the late Lord REDESDALE’S former book of recollections. The present collection is a little haphazard (but none the worse for that), its chapters ranging over such diverse subjects as Gardens and Trees, QUEEN VICTORIA, BUDDHA, and the Commune. Certainly not the least interesting is that devoted to the story of the Wallace Collection, of which Lord REDESDALE was one of the trustees. His account of the origin and devolution of the famous treasures will invest them with a new interest in the happy days when they shall again be visible. Mr. EDMUND GOSSE contributes a foreword to the present volume, in which he draws a pathetic picture of the author, still unconquerably young, despite his years, facing the future with only one fear, that of the unemployment to which his increasing deafness, and the break-up of the world as it was before the War, seemed to be condemning him. *Further Memories* was, we are told, undertaken as some sort of a safeguard against this menace of stagnation. It was a measure for which we may all be glad, as we can share Mr. GOSSE’S thanksgiving that the writer’s death, coming when it did, saved him, as he had wished, “from all consciousness of decrepitude.”

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When an unstable young wife, getting tired of a pedantic husband in the way so familiar to students of novels, goes off with a companion more to her taste, anyone can foresee trouble, or what would there be to write about? When, further, her detestable lover, seeking change and fearing the financial lash of his properly indignant parent, terminates the arrangement, even an observer of real life can guess that her return to her rightful lord and master must entail disagreeables; but only a reader well brazened in modern fiction could expect Don Juan promptly to make love to and marry the husband’s sister without a word of apology to anyone. This kind of rather unsavoury dabbling in problems best left to themselves generally concludes with the decease of most of the characters and a sort of clearing up, and to this rule, after many years and pages of discomfort, MARY E. MANN’S new story, *The Victim* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), is no exception. Not a very attractive programme, but all the same the volume has one or two redeeming features. For one thing, the sister is clearly and attractively drawn, and so is the picture on the wrapper, though it represents no particular incident to be traced in the pages of the volume which it adorns. Writing more strongly than is perhaps her wont, Mrs. MANN has taken some trouble to emphasise the fact that in these cases of uncontrolled passion the major penalty of guilt is borne not by the offenders themselves but by the first generation succeeding. This does need saying occasionally, I suppose, and to that extent *The Victim* redeems itself from the charge of trivial unpleasantness.

## Page 24

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Mr. J. RATH has really discovered a new type of heroine, new at least this side the Atlantic. His farm-bred *Sadie*, a Buffalo shirt-packer, classifies men by the sizes of their shirts, has no use for any swain with a chest measurement under forty, and eventually in a most original way finds her hero in *Mister 44* (METHUEN), an enormous Canadian engineer and sportsman. She is no chicken herself and has a passion to be free of the city and out in the great open. *Sadie* is more than big; she is beautiful, burnished-copper-haired, sincere and kind, and, though I think the author “gets this over” quite well I liked her best before she found her man and her *Robinson Crusoe* adventures among the islands of Ontario, and was giving back chat to the little foreman in the factory. Here she is a pure delight; and in these days, when a knowledge of the American language may come in handy at any moment, this amiable romance may well be recommended as an attractive manual of first-aid in the matter.

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Without professing to be a student of Mrs. DIVER’S books I know enough about them to be worried by the commonplaceness of *Unconquered* (MURRAY). Like so many other authors she has succumbed to the lure of the War-novel. There may be a public for tales of this kind, but I have not yet read one that approaches artistic success. Here we are spared nothing. *Sir Mark Forsyth* goes to France in the early days, is first of all reported “missing, believed killed,” and then officially reported “killed.” Of course he turns up again, but such a physical wreck that the minx whom he was to have married breaks off the engagement. Naturally the sweet girl, friend of *Mark’s* childhood, undertakes to fill the gap. The minx, *Bel Alison*, is so scathingly drawn that from sheer perversity I found myself hunting for one good point in her character; but without a find. On the other hand, *Lady Forsyth*, *Mark’s* mother, and a quiet, capable man called *Macnair*, are admirably put before us. Yet at best there remains the conviction that the War is terribly real that these attempts to romance about it are almost bound to be as superficial as they are superfluous.

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[Illustration: DURING THE RAID. *Disappointed Player*. “HARD LINES! I HAD AN EASY FIVE SHOT THAT WOULD HAVE RUN ME OUT.”]

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“Lost, between Ryde Pier and Southsea, Black Satin Bag, containing keys and eyeglasses. Reward given.”—*Portsmouth Paper*.

A chance for the local mine-sweepers.