

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 153, December 26, 1917 eBook

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 153, December 26, 1917

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Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

Victory is only a question of keeping cool, says *Von tirpitz*. A long-suffering Fatherland anticipates no difficulty whatever in following his advice during the winter.

A semi-official message from Berlin declares that Jerusalem was evacuated because Germany's friends did not desire to see battles fought over sacred ground. The Sultan of *Turkey* is reported to have wired to the *Kaiser* to think of another.

America is still breaking all records. A native artist has painted a picture which is said to be sixty feet by nineteen, the largest miniature ever painted in America.

It is rumoured that at a provincial Tribunal the other day an applicant asked for a further six months' exemption as he had a wife and a position in a butter queue to maintain.

It seems useless to attempt to cope with the multiplicity of events in these days. Cuba has declared war on Austria; the *Kaiser* threatens to make a Christmas peace offer, and Mr. *George Bernard Shaw* has described himself as "a mere individual." And this all in one week.

According to Dean *Inge*, Germany is in many ways the best governed country in Europe. She certainly seems to have a better governed clergy than ours.

Much relief is felt at the announcement that rather than endanger the Allies' "solidarity" Lord *Lansdowne* has promised not to agree with President *Wilson* again.

Bloaters have reached the unprecedented price of six-pence each. It was hoped that, at any rate, over the Christmas season they would remain within reach of the upper classes.

A man has been charged with stealing a railway sandwich at Harwich. It appears that the poor fellow, who was lonely, wanted to take it home as a pet.

A contemporary has a headline, "Swearing in the New French Cabinet." They are beginning early.

For adding water to his employer's milk a dairyman's assistant has been sent to prison. Innocent dairymen must of course be protected.

Smokers complain that they are discovering unfamiliar substances in their tobacco. A sensation has been caused by the expert statement that they are tobacco.

Orchids were sold for as little as two-pence each at a recent sale, and alarmed growers are clamouring for the immediate appointment of an Orchid Controller.

An evening paper correspondent has complained that he has searched the shops in vain for a tortoise. So far the various Government Departments have maintained a dignified silence.

It is all nonsense for a contemporary to say that the blizzard in the North on a recent Saturday did no damage. Several of the football results were delayed.

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While visiting Seaton College, New York, the other day, Mr. *Roosevelt* saluted a statue of *Alexander the great*. We have always maintained that there is nothing petty about the *ex-President*.

The most striking announcement of the year 1917 comes just when it is almost used up. "There is a steady demand for money," says a Stock Exchange report.

A mummified duck, estimated to be two thousand years old, has been discovered in a sandstone stratum in Iowa. It is not often that the poulterers of Iowa are caught napping.

An American policeman is said to have written two successful musical comedies. If we remember rightly it was an English policeman who first composed the Frog's March.

At a Guildford charity fete the winner of a hurdle race was awarded a new-laid egg. If he succeeds in winning it three years in succession it is to become his own property.

The L.B. & S.C. Railway desire to state that the train from which the deserter jumped without injuring himself was not really doing its best.

A burglar was discovered concealed beneath the counter of a Leicester butter-merchant's shop. It is understood that he came early to avoid the rush.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Manager*. "*Why don't you get in the middle of the stage?*"]

Tenor (*haughtily*). "*I prefer staying where I am.*"

Manager. "*All right—all right! I suppose you think you'll be able to pop down the euphonium if there's an air-Raid.*"]

* * * * *

Title and half-title pages.

With a view to economy of paper, the title and half-title pages of the Volume which is completed with the present issue are not being delivered with copies of *Punch* as usual; they will however be sent free, by post, upon receipt of a request.

Those readers who have their Volumes bound at the *Punch* Office, or by other binders in the official binding-cases, will not need to apply for copies of the title and half-title pages, as these will be bound in by the *Punch* Office or supplied direct to other binders along with the cases.

* * * * *

"Affairs in Russia.

[printed upside down: "*Military dictatorship*"] "*Expected.*"—*Egyptian Daily Mail.*

It looks as if the expectation has been upset.

* * * * *

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“The defendant expressed regret that having misunderstood a newspaper paragraph he charged one penny for a box of ‘Pilot matches.’ Directly his attention was drawn to the matter he at once charged the correct price, 3s. 43/4d.”—*South London Press*.

Our journalists should really be more careful not to mislead honest tradesmen.

* * * * *

With the auxiliary patrol.

I do not think there was a single man of the ship’s company who bore the loss of poor Mnemosyne dry-eyed. From the lieutenant down to the trimmer we had become sincerely attached to this affectionate little creature, and when unhappily, during the temporary absence of the steward, she ventured to circumvent the rim of an open condensed milk-tin, missed her footing and succumbed to a clammy death, there was not a more unhappy trawler patrolling the North Sea than ours.

She was a weevil and I found her in my ship’s biscuit. From the first I recognised that she was no ordinary weevil; her stately bearing, the fine upward curl of her moustachios, but, more than anything else, the intelligent, often humorous gleam in her big black eyes elevated her at once above the mass of her compatriots. She took to me wonderfully: I secured her confidence with a piece of boiled cat-fish, and thenceforth we were scarcely ever apart. Not that she resented the advances of the rest of the crew—she was no snob, and would eat from the hand of the trimmer as readily as from my own, and allow anyone to stroke her; but it was I who taught her to sit up and beg, to “die for her country,” to droop her antennae whenever the name of *Von tirpitz* was mentioned, and to wave them for Sir *David Beatty*. She would often sit with me in the wireless cabin whilst I was on watch, and never once did she disturb me during the receiving of a message by boisterous or noisy behaviour.

We had other weevils at different times, but none so intelligent or so faithful as Mnemosyne. The lieutenant tamed one, and, being a devotee of science and despising the arts, he named him Newton Darwin; but he was a foolish fellow at the best and continually getting into somebody’s way. The lieutenant offered to back him against Mnemosyne for a race across the cabin table, and we made a match of it. The betting was three to two in favour of Newton Darwin, because the third hand, who had once been employed in a racing-stable, had been heard to remark that he had very fine quarters. The stakes were half a plug of ship’s tobacco.

It was a walk-over. On the word “Go” Mnemosyne positively leapt forward, took a crease in the tablecloth in her stride and completed the course, which measured sixteen inches, in the remarkable time of seven and two-fifths minutes. Newton Darwin was left standing; indeed he never attempted to race, but, after staring about vacantly for some

minutes, ambled leisurely off in the opposite direction, where he had seen a breadcrumb.

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This victory was very popular, and the third hand was roundly abused for suggesting that Mnemosyne had been doped. Even if Newton had got away with the pistol he would never have stood a chance against her. She was the fleetest weevil I ever saw.

Another weevil was Bertie, who belonged to the second engineer, but he was caught pilfering the skipper's private supply of fresh butter, which he kept in a jar in his bunk and was very jealous of, so Bertie had to be made away with. He walked the plank at daybreak one grey stormy morning just off the Nethermost Ruff of the Dogger. The second was very upset for a day or two; he said he would have staked anything on Bertie's honesty.

We kept Mnemosyne for over two months, and never once did she misconduct herself or behave in an unseamanlike manner. Her one failing, if such it can be called, was a weakness for condensed milk, and this it was that led to her untimely end. We had come to regard her as one of the crew, and had a little lifebelt made for her in case of need. Jones, our signaller, who has poetical moments, was inspired by her to make verse, which began:—

There is something very evil
In the war-whoop of a weevil.

This was indignantly censored as a libel, but he excused himself on the plea that "evil" was the only possible rhyme to be found for "weevil," and declared that his very last intention had been to be personal or to cast the least reflection on the lovable disposition of Mnemosyne, so we forgave him with a caution.

Well, Mnemosyne is gone, and the ship seems a dull place without this exhilarating little pet. Never so long as ship's biscuits continue to buckle the jack-knives of British seafarers will there be another weevil like Mnemosyne.

We flew the White Ensign at halfmast from dawn to sundown on the day she died.

* * * * *

A Rash act.

Extract from the report of a ladies' Lacrosse Club:—

"The deplorable habit of scratching with no sufficient reason,
just before a practice, has mounted almost to a disease."

* * * * *

“Will any kind gentleman help an Indian with a loan of Rs. 7,000 at 6%? No risk. Gentleman having deep love for mother will understand advertiser’s noble cause. No brokers should apply.”—*Statesman (Calcutta)*.

What’s the matter with brokers? Aren’t they also born of woman?

* * * * *

LIPS AND THEIR LESSONS.

[“General PERSHING has collected round him a staff of thin-lipped determined men.”—*The Observer*.]

If physiognomists are right,
And faces count as half the battle,
We clearly ought not to invite
Comparison with sheep or cattle,
But rather should improve the features
That mark us off from humbler creatures.

Page 5

Eyebrows projecting like a bush
Are facial assets to be prized,
Denoting driving-power and push
In men however undersized
(Bear's grease or paraffin or both
Will largely stimulate their growth).

The fish-like and lethargic eye
We should endeavour to efface,
And foster visual orbs that vie
With those of eagles in its place;
While belladonna's artful use
An extra brilliance may produce.

Nor are there wanting ways and means
Enabling experts to impose
By sundry suitable machines
Fine character upon the nose;
And nasal dignity, we find,
Promptly reacts upon the mind.

But those who in this great reform
Of face and feature are engrossed
Agree that to enforce a norm
In labial fabric matters most;
The lips that help a race to win
Unquestionably must be thin.

Therefore with pleasure unalloyed
We learn that great Columbia's sons,
With PERSHING busily employed
In laying plans to down the Huns,
According to a trusty pen
Are "thin-lipped and determined men."

* * * * *

On the retirement of certain Tanks from their War Bond duties:—

"They can understand, we hope, how very jolly it has been to have them, and how sorry we are to see them go. We shall probably sing those typical English ballads 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'Will ye no come back again?'"—*Daily Paper*.

A Scottish correspondent suggests the addition of a few other “typical English ballads,” such as “The Wearing of the Green,” “Men of Harlech,” “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “The Marseillaise.”

* * * * *

“Applications will be received by Mr. J. Arnold, Chairman of the Bathurst Municipality, for a TOWN CLERK, whose duties will be the following, viz.: Competent Bookkeeper, Sanitary Inspector, Street Inspector, and to supervise labour party on roads, Native Location Inspector, Dog Tax Collector, Ranger, Caretaker of the Municipal Dipping Tank and be able to mix dip. Kafir language essential.”—*South African Paper*.

And he’ll want a lot of it.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE WAIT. HIS MASTER’S VOICE. “I’VE NOTHING FOR YOU. GO AWAY!”]

* * * * *

[Illustration: Mr. Podgers (persuasively hospitable). “NOW COME, GRANDMA, DO ALLOW ME TO GIVE YOU JUST A LITTLE—SAY FIVE SHILLINGSWORTH—MORE TURKEY.”]

* * * * *

SIDNI THE STOREMAN.

FRAGMENT OF AN EDDA.

At the downcome of darkness
Up to the trenches
Fared he forth,
Sidni the Storeman.
On bent back
Bore he the Rum Jar,
Bringing a boon
To the Folk in the Front Line.

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Scatheful the sky
With no stars shining;
Monstrous the mud
That lay deep on the Duck Boards.
A weary while
Wandered he on;
No wit he wotted
Of fate that followed
Stalking his steps.
So passed he the posts
All silent and sunken
In mire and murk,
Till fearful he felt for
The doubtful Duck Boards
No longer beneath him.
Then spake Sidni,
Steward of Stores:
"Now know I well
I have come to the Country
That men name No Man's;"
And with woe his heart
Waxed heavy within him
For horror of Hun Folk
Who crawl in the craters.

Then there arose
Dim in the darkness
The face and form
Of Heinrik the Hun
With hand upheld
Bearing a bomb.
But fear filled the heart
Of Sidni the Storeman,
And with force of fear
Raising the Rum Jar
Drave he adrad
At the face of the foeman.
Down sank the Slayer
Smitten asunder
And over his face



Unloosed ran the liquor.
Then Heinrik the Hun
Sang he this Swan Song:
"Hero, I hail thee,
Godlike who givest
Fire and Sweetness
Born of a blow.
Loki art thou,
Or Wotan the one-eyed
Coming to call me
Away to Walhall.
Happy I haste
To the Hall of the Heroes;
Point thou the Path!
I come! I come!"

But fast with the force
Of the fear that was in him
Fled Sidni the Storeman
Back to the Britons
And came by chance
Straightway to his section,
Bearing the Rum Jar
Now lacking the liquor.
Then, puffing with pride
And the pace of his running,
Told he a tale
Of the Slaying of Seven;
But little belief
In the count of the killing
Gat Sid from the section,
Wrathy withal
At the loss of the liquor.
And one thing Erb,
Erb that erstwhile
Hight his old Pal,
Had for an answer:
"Bale hast thou brought
And rede of bale
Have I for thee."
Then troth they took
And oath swear betwixt them
That for four years full
Or the War's duration
He should draw and drink
Sid's ration of Rum.
So doom was decreed



For the loss of the liquor.
But Sidni the Storeman
Transferred to the Transport.

* * * * *

“UNION OF DEMONCRATIC CONTROL.”

Leicester Daily Mercury.

Is this a misprint or a criticism?

* * * * *

THE WATCH DOGS.

LXVIII.

My Dear Charles,—I don't know that I think so much of these alliances after all, and I'll tell you why.

When I first heard that my old friend Italy was in trouble I paraded my officer at once. “Stand to attention, George,” I said, “and tell me what we are going to do about it.”

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"Oh, that'll be all right," said he. "I've booked my seat in the train."

I think that George, my subordinate, sometimes forgets who I am and what importance attaches to me. I feel that he ought at least to consult me formally before he decides what instructions I am going to issue to him. After all, I am only fifteen years younger than he is.

"You will proceed forthwith to Italy," I said, "and will there study the local conditions on the spot. You will then take such action as the occasion seems to you to demand." George was cleaning out his pipe, so for once he didn't interrupt. "You will report progress to me in triplicate."

George frowned. Having been the Supreme White Man in some African district for dozens of years before the War, all his hair seems to have got into his eyebrows, and his frown is a terrible thing to see.

"At any rate," I said, "you might just drop me a post-card to tell me how you're getting on."

George's eyebrows stood at ease and then stood easy.

"It's all very well for you," I added. "But what about me, when it comes to totting up your travelling allowances later on?"

George has private means, which work out at about one-and-fourpence, less income tax, a day. Consequently he is a little careless about money matters. "Oh, that'll be all right," he said.

* * * * *

George was away for three weeks. What he did all the time I'm sure I don't know, though I kept on reporting to my superiors that the necessary steps were being taken and the requisite measures were being initiated. When he got back he wanted to start in at once telling me all about it. But I said no, and insisted on getting down to the War.

"In making out travelling claims," I said, producing the appropriate Army Form, "care should be taken to comply with the instructions contained in the King's Regulations. We have a quarter of an hour before your breakfast will be ready. Let us deal with our more formidable enemies, the Pay People, first."

George is the sort of person who gets you into trouble on the very first line of any Army Form. Asked as to his rank, he told me he was a Second Lieutenant in the Army, temporary Lieutenant, acting Captain. All these ranks get a different rate of allowance. Which of the three was George in fact?

“A man of your age ought to know better,” I said.

We were half-an-hour late for breakfast, and even so George hadn't got to the station of departure, as far as A.F.O. 1771 was concerned.

I determined to devote the morning to the matter, clearing the court for the purpose. Our Mr. Booth, however, who is intolerably precise and accurate in these matters, had profited by my absence at breakfast to collect a folio of relevant Orders and Instructions, numbered one to seventy-three consecutively.

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It all sounds so simple, doesn't it? You get so many francs a day for subsistence, and so many francs a night for accommodation, in France; so many lire a day for subsistence, and so many lire a night for accommodation, in Italy. Ah yes, but you don't know George when he is in action. Not content with travelling in the dark, and so subsisting by night when he ought to be accommodated, and being accommodated by day when he ought to be subsisting, he could never make up his mind to stay in the same country for two days together. As to his constant movements from one country to the other, three times he had supposed he had finished with Italy and was due back in France; each time he had got comfortably across the frontier into France he had been recalled to Italy. Never once had he the sense to cross the frontier on the stroke of midnight, and so make a complete twenty-four hours of it on each side, and all the time the rate of exchange was varying by a fraction. But, as George said, it wasn't himself who was manipulating the rate of exchange as between the two countries, and courtesy to allied nations prevented him from manipulating the trains.

It was towards teatime when he satisfied me of his own innocence on these points; but don't run away with the idea that by this time we were well on with the business. We had barely as much as started. How are you to fix the "date of journey" in such a manner as to give the traveller a clear night for accommodation in one country, or a clear day for subsistence in another, when he leaves his home at 5.15 P.M., arrives at the end of the first stage at 6.10 P.M., sleeps in a hotel till 11 P.M., gets in the train at thirty-five minutes past, crosses the frontier at 2 P.M. on the following day, arrives at his Italian destination at 5 A.M. on the morning after that, and then, if you please, goes to bed in another hotel? Old soldier though I am, there didn't seem to me to be a single line in a single column which I could satisfactorily fill in. True, there was the space for "Remarks," but our Mr. Booth was quite sure that my remarks were not what the Pay People called for.

By this time I was for giving in, but George was now the persistent one. It was never his pocket he cared for; it was just one of his confounded principles not to be beaten by anything, not even an Army Form. I expressed some surprise that in the course of this tour of duty he had not managed to find his way to America for an hour or two, if only to complicate my business with the dollar question...

I read the whole Form again, from start to finish, including the bit about vouchers being required for any unusual expenditure, such as cab-fares of over ten shillings. I then told George to write down on a piece of paper how much money he had when he started on his silly journey, and how much he had in hand when he got back; to deduct the latter from the former and tell me the result; to go away, leave me to wrestle all night with the problem, come back next morning at nine, remain motionless and strictly in one country in the meanwhile, neither accommodated nor subsisting. He gave me the figure, 173 francs, and never mentioned the subject to me again for days owing to the sullen fury he noted in my expression every time he cleared his throat to do so.

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After ten days I handed George a chit from the Pay People for “one hundred and seventy francs for travelling expenses, 30/10/1917 to 20/11/1917, for tour of duty to Italy.” George said I had a dashed fine brain to have worked out the claim; I told him the Pay Man had a dashed kind heart to settle it. I hadn’t been able to avoid mentioning Italy; but for the rest the Pay Man simply must have thought that George had driven all the way to the frontier and back in cabs and done precious little duty on the other side of it. Wouldn’t you have thought so, Charles, if you had received a claim merely for eighty-five cabs, at two francs a time, and all in France, too?

Yours ever,

HENRY.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Profiteer*. “VELL, ‘ERE’TH ANOTHER PENNY FOR LOOKIN’ THO MITHERABLE!”]

* * * * *

From a church notice-board:—

Matins.—Hymn 43:

‘Great God, what do I see and hear?’

Preacher, Rev. Dr. —.

Hymn 45:

‘Hark! an awful voice is sounding.’

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE DEDUCTIVE MIND.

Permanent Base Man (in charge of incinerator, to Sanitary Inspector.) “YOU CAN TAKE IT FROM ME, CORPORAL, SOME BLIGHTER’S BEEN PUTTING BOMBS IN THIS INSINUATOR.”]

* * * * *

TRENCH COATS.

I went into a shop to buy a trench-coat. The shopman came forward with an air which said quite plainly, “You are a second lieutenant. You have just obtained a commission from the ranks. You think you do not want a complete outfit. It is my business to show

you that you are mistaken. You want a complete outfit. Your Sam Browne is second-hand. You picked your boots up from a Salvage Dump. Your cap was used once in your bathroom at home as a sponge-bag. Your trench-coat is disgusting. The whole outfit would fail to deceive a man's maiden aunt, so obvious an attempt is it to mislead the unsophisticated into supposing that you have arrived here straight from the trenches. I know better. You have just obtained a commission in the motor-transport section of the Wessex Home Defence Corps. Gentlemen from the trenches always dress as if they'd come straight out of a shop like this ... And we don't take cheques."

That was what his manner said. What he actually said was noncommittal. He said, "Yes, Sir?"

I took off my trench-coat and let the glory of three whole stars dazzle him. He little knew that one of them was "acting," and his face fell.

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"I do not at present," said I, "require a knife with indispensable cheese-scoop and marmalade-shredding attachment. My indispensable steel mirror with patent lanyard and powder puff for attachment to service revolver is in perfect working order. I already possess two pairs of marching boots with indispensable trapdoors in each heel containing complete pedicure set and French-Portuguese dictionaries. My indispensable fur waistcoats, Indian clubs, ponchos, collapsible Turkish baths, steel aprons and folding billiard tables have already brought the weight of my kit nearly up to the allotted thirty-five pounds. My indispensable cigar cabinet, camouflaged to look like a water-bottle; my patent and absolutely essential convertible gramophone which can be changed at a moment's notice into a tin hat; my caviare lozenges and shampoo tabloids—I have them all. I want a trench-coat and nothing else."

His face had fallen a little as I spoke. But it lit up again with a sort of cunning excitement when I said "trench-coat." I wondered why—then. Now I know. I thought that he was baffled and would say no more, but I had forgotten the developments of trench warfare.

"This way, Sir," said the shopman.

He led me to a room which combined the architectural style of the Crystal Palace and Waterloo Station with a touch of the dentist's waiting-room. There was a khaki tent in the midst of it, and he led me towards this with the air of a broody hen anticipating the number of her chickens.

"The Vadecumomnibus trench-coat," said he.

"But it's a tent," I protested.

"It has collapsible aluminium centre seam," he retorted rapidly, "which can be used as a tent pole in severe weather. On buttoning the top button this pole telescopes automatically and forms a bullet-proof spine protector. Each sleeve can be unscrewed and used in an emergency as a Lewis gun. This is indispensable—"

"Of course," I interrupted. "But I require something quite simple and straightforward. Just a trench-coat, you understand."

"We have here," he said immediately, "the Gadget coat. It possesses three hundred button-holes and three hundred buttons. Every single portion of the coat can be buttoned on to every other part at a moment's notice. The pockets are detachable and can be used as coffee cups or finger bowls. The coat itself, when stretched on our patent aluminium framework, makes an admirable hip-bath."

I played nervously in my pocket with the pin of a live Mills grenade (overlooked by the A.M.L.O.).

“A simple, straightforward trench-coat,” I repeated.

“This,” said the shopman, handing me something very like a slice of plum-pudding—
“this is the cross-section of a piece of the cloth out of which our ‘Stopablitey’ trench-coat is manufactured. It shows the strata of the material, consisting of alternate layers of old motor tyres and reinforced concrete—the whole covered with alligator skin and proofed with our patent indispensable—”

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It was then that I killed him and buried him under a pyramid of indispensable gadgets. It will be years before they find him.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Wife* (Time 3.45 A.M.). "WHERE ARE YOU GOING?"

Special Constable. "AIR-RAID DUTY, DEAR."

Wife. "WELL, DON'T LET THE CAT OUT."]

* * * * *

If TROTSKY is the Enver Pasha of Russia, ENVER PASHA may be described as the Turkey Trotzky.

* * * * *

OUR POPULAR EDUCATORS.

A recent article in *The Daily Mail* began, "Jerusalem, the famous city of the Bible..."

There is nothing like taking precautions not to talk over the heads of your readers. We offer a few suggestions on similar lines:—

"Germany, the powerful enemy against whom we are contending in the present War (1914 onwards)..."

"SHAKSPEARE, the immortal author of *Hamlet* (the tragedy)..."

"'Blighty', the British soldier's name for England..."

"MOSES, the distinguished lawgiver and prophet..."

"The GERMAN CROWN PRINCE, eldest son of KAISER WILHELM II..."

"EVE, the heroine of the Garden of Eden story..."

"Economy, the virtue imposed on us by the present shortage of food..."

"*The Daily Mail*, a newspaper..."

* * * * *

HELLO, GIRLS!

“CIVIL SERVICE LADIES FOR LONDON TELEPHONE EXCHANGES, over 1 and under 30 years of age. Minimum height 5ft.”—*Evening Paper*.

Many ladies of our acquaintance, although just over the minimum age, are not yet quite up to the required height.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Lady (displaying costume in which she is to appear as the Queen of Sheba in “Biblical Beauties” tableaux at charity matinee)*. “RATHER SWEET, ISN’T IT?”

Friend. “MY DEAR, ABSOLUTELY TOPPING. IT MAKES ME FEEL I OUGHT TO BE DOING WAR-WORK TOO.”]

* * * * *

TO SANTA CLAUS.

Historic Santa! Seasonable Claus!
Whose bulging sack is pregnant with delight;
Who comest in the middle of the night
To stuff distracting playthings in the maws
Of stockings never built for infant shins,
Suspended from the mantelpiece by pins.

Thou who on earth wast named Nicholas—
There be dull clods who doubt thy magic power
To tour the sleeping world in half-an-hour,
And pop down all the chimneys as you pass
With woolly lambs and dolls of frabjous size
For grubby hands and wonder-laden eyes.

Not so thy singer, who believes in thee
Because he has a young and foolish spirit;
Because the simple faith that bards inherit
Of happiness is still the master key,
Opening life’s treasure-house to whoso clings
To the dim beauty of imagined things.

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Wherefore, good Kringle, do not pass me by,
Who am too old, alas! for trains and blocks,
But stuff the Love of Beauty in my socks
And Childlike Faith to last me till I die;
And there'll be room, I doubt not, in the toes
For Magic Cap and Spectacles of Rose.

And not a song of beauty, sung of old,
Or saga of the dead heroic days,
And not a blossom laughing by the ways,
Or wind of April blowing on the wold
But in my heart shall have the power to stir
The shy communion of the worshipper.

Hark! On the star-bright highways of the sky
Light hoofs beat and the far-off sleigh-bell sounds!
Is it old Santa on his gracious rounds
Or one dead legend drifting sadly by?
Not mine to say. And, though I long to peep,
Santa shall always find me fast asleep.

ALGOL.

* * * * *

"A clerk was at London Mansion House yesterday charged with stealing a blouse the property of the governor and directors of the Bank of England.

"She said she could not understand what made her take it, and, believing she acted from sudden temptation, the Lord Mayor bound her over."—*Daily Mail*.

We do not think the "Old Lady of Threadneedle Street" ought to wear such tempting garments in these times.

* * * * *

"WITH THE ITALIAN ARMY.—The battle, which continues with unabated fury, is gradually extending along the front from the Brenta to the Piave, a line of over 11 miles, with its wings on the Col della Berretta and Monte Spinoncia, north-east of Grappa." "I learn that for 24 hours the fighting was marked by a determination in counter-attacks which has never yet been exceeded. No fewer than four times Colonel della Berretta changed hands."—*Scots Paper*.

We hope the gallant officer is none the worse for his game of Hunt-the-Skipper.

* * * * *

[Illustration: AN INEXPENSIVE LUXURY.

FIRST KAISER (WILHELM). "I AM THINKING OF SENDING THIS BIRD OF PEACE FORTH AGAIN. WE CAN AFFORD TO BE MAGNANIMOUS."

SECOND KAISER (KARL). "WELL, WE CERTAINLY CAN'T AFFORD ANYTHING ELSE."]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, December 17th.—On the whole the Lords gave a friendly reception to the Franchise Bill. They have learned a good deal since 1911. Even Lord SALISBURY forebore on this occasion his usual intention to die in the last ditch, and was ready to let the Bill pass, provided that Proportional Representation was included in it. The most vehement criticism came from Lord BRYCE, who viewed with alarm the addition of six million women to the electorate. Women, he declared, neither met nor talked—an assertion which surprised the more married peers. Lord BURNHAM supported "P.R." with the self-sacrificing argument that the Press would become too powerful if minorities had no way of expressing their views except in the newspapers. Perhaps he doesn't want another letter from Lord LANSDOWNE.

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[Illustration: A QUEUE FOR THE COMMONS.]

Mr. HOGGE is usually so assiduous in his attendance that I was surprised at his sudden departure just before Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE put a question to the FOOD CONTROLLER. But when I found that the question related to “the political as well as the economic effect of the new regulation governing the sale of pigs” I recognised the delicacy of his action in withdrawing. Mr. CLYNES, however, had nothing to say on the political aspect of the question; and shortly afterwards Mr. HOGGE reappeared.

The Members whose interrogatory activities it is sought to curb are, for the most part, like the objects in a museum, more curious than exhilarating; but there are some, I am afraid, whose questions are intentionally mischievous, and by their mere appearance on the notice-paper give comfort and even information to our foes. Mr. BONAR LAW’S announcement that the Government would, during the Christmas holidays, consider how to mitigate the nuisance met with noisy objection from Mr. LYNCH, Mr. PRINGLE and other Members. The most original contribution to the discussion came from Mr. HOLT, who innocently inquired whether the Government would mind laying before the House a statement of the harmful questions which had been asked. Possibly he was thinking of the famous edition of MARTIAL in which all epigrams of doubtful propriety were excluded from the main text and collected in the appendix.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND, speaking at break-neck speed, managed to give the House within the space of ten minutes an outline of the Bill which he hopes will maintain for Scotland her primacy in education. The new MUNRO doctrine did not, however, appeal to everybody, and there were ominous cries of dissent when he announced his intention of disestablishing the School Boards and putting the denominational schools on the rates.

Lord RHONDDA listened from the Peers’ Gallery to the debate on Food Control, and received a quantity of advice which should help him to mind his p’s and q’s, particularly the latter. His lieutenant, Mr. CLYNES, improved the reputation that he has already acquired at Question-time, and was able to bring a little personal experience to bear upon the most vexed question of the day. “Members of my own household,” he said, “have stood in these queues, and I know something of their hardships.” That is why, no doubt, he has urged upon his chief the formation of a Consumers’ Council, to aid the Ministry in its deliberations. Mr. TILLET seized the opportunity to make his maiden speech, and reminded the House that when they talked of queues at home they should not forget those other queues in the trenches. For the sake of the men who had lined up in our defence it was for us to see that their wives and children got their proper supply of food.

Tuesday, December 18th.—It was curious to hear Mr. LEES-SMITH, that stickler for freedom of expression, complaining that a London paper had published an article attacking M. CAILLAUX; and the House was amused by Lord ROBERT CECIL’S

suggestion that the hon. Member should furnish him with ideas for the more stringent control of newspapers.

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Mr. PETO was alarmed by an alleged increase in the export of footwear to Switzerland, and particularly to villages on the German frontier. He yields to none in his desire to give the KAISER the boot, but not in any surreptitious manner. Lord WOLMER comforted him with the statement that the bulk of the exports consisted of women's and children's shoes, quite useless to the Germans until they get down to their 1930 class.

The HOME SECRETARY announced an increase in the War-bonus to the police from eight shillings to twelve shillings. With leather at its present price it was good to hear that the Government had been mindful of their extremities.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Coastguard (rung up by the Military)*. "NOT SO MUCH OF YER 'ACK! ACK! AND YER OLD 'PIP EMMA!' LET'S 'AVE THE BLOOMIN' MESSIGE."]

* * * * *

THE YOUNGEST GENERATION.

"What shall he have that killed the deer?" someone asks somebody else in *As You Like It*. But there is a better question than that, and it is this—"What shall they have that preserve the little dears?" and the answer (if I can do anything to influence it) is—honour and support; for there can be no doubt that in these critical times, when the life of the best and bravest and strongest is so cheap, no duty is more important than the cherishing of infancy.

At a *Creche* in Notting Hill I watched, the other day, some of this cherishing in progress, and it was a pleasant and stimulating sight. The institution was in existence in a small way before the War, but it has recently been enlarged and made scientific, to meet the greater needs which the War has set up, and it is now able to act as foster mother to seventy mites, from the age of one month to four years, whose real mothers are for the most part engaged in war work. That is a good piece of citizenship, is it not? And to watch it in being is an education in those wonderful things to the eye of man—the solicitude and patience and capability of woman. The noise alone, whether of joy or of transitory grief, would drive most men frantic; but these devoted souls, knowing that it is all part of the game, proceed with an unearthly composure through it all—undressing their charges, dressing them, washing them, feeding them, beguiling them; in a word, tending them, from morning till evening.

The children begin to arrive, brought either by their mothers, their "Little Mothers" (I mean sisters) or their brothers, between 8 and 9—some in arms and some in perambulators and some in go-carts; and then they are immediately divested of their home clothes, popped into warm baths three or four at a time, and dressed in the clothes belonging to the *Creche*. For the rest of the day they wear these clothes and



sleep, eat, play and, when it amuses them more to do so, cry, until the time comes to be put back into their own garments and be taken away. By some strange instinct their relations, I am informed, know them again, and very few mistakes occur; and so gradually, in the neighbourhood of seven o'clock, peace descends on this corner of Notting Hill once more.

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The place is sheer Lilliputia: for everything is on a reduced scale. Scores of little beds round the walls, with little pillows and little coverlets; scores of little chairs; a long table so low that it seems to be the footstool of a giant's wife, with little benches beside it for their little meals. In the centre of the room are two little pounds, with railings so close together as not to be crawled through, where the more adventurous ones can be kept out of mischief in the company of woolly toys; and outside is a loggia place with little cradles for the babies who want more air to sleep in.

Such is the Stoneleigh Street Creche, and in order to realise what admirable and desirable functions it fulfils—principally by voluntary aid, for the capitation fee of half-a-crown a week is, of course, quite insufficient to maintain it—one has only to imagine what the lot of these helpless little creatures would be if they were left in their motherless homes. Not only would they be far less happy but far less healthy; and it is upon healthy babies that England's future must be founded. If any reader of *Punch*, then, should be in doubt as to what to do with a little surplus money, let the little requirements of these little people be remembered. The address to which donations should be sent is: The Secretary, Notting Hill Day Nursery, Stoneleigh Street, Notting Hill, W.

* * * * *

INTERESTING EXAMPLE OF LONGEVITY?

“Richard ——, D.D., a member of the elder branch of the family, was a contemporary and friend of Ben Jonson, and his portrait in oils, by Romney, is now an heirloom.”—*Provincial Paper*.

* * * * *

“The stationmaster was then kidnapped—he is a married man.”—*Standard (Buenos Aires)*.

Possibly henpecked as well.

* * * * *

[Illustration: “A SEASON FOR FRESH AIR AND ROOM TO BREATHE.”—*Quotation from one of the above Railway's advertisements.*]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

Those who like to read familiar letters—and I confess it is one of my favourite literary distractions—will find matter very much to their mind in *Some Hawarden Letters* (NISBET), compiled by L. MARCH-PHILLIPS and BERTRAM CHRISTIAN. It is a collection of letters addressed to Miss MARY GLADSTONE before and after her marriage to Mr. DREW. Sitting at the centre she seems to have held together her circle by golden threads of confidence and intimacy. Here you will learn how RUSKIN was brought to visit Hawarden, and how he entirely altered his views on Mr. GLADSTONE, going so far as to suppress a number of *Fors Clavigera* in which slighting allusion had been made to him. Here, too, you will find Lord ACTON, who deeply disapproved

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of Mr. GLADSTONE'S conduct in paying a memorial tribute of respect and eulogy to Lord BEACONSFIELD. ACTON'S list of the hundred best books (or, to be strictly accurate, of ninety-nine of them) is also given. It provides heavy reading for a hundred years at the very least. As a set-off to this ponderosity there are the letters of BURNE-JONES, fresh, amiable and delightful, as also those of Professor JAMES STUART, which are among the best in the collection. Mr. A.J. BALFOUR appears as the owner of four concertinas, on which he was willing "to play with anyone who would accompany him through any of the oratorios of Handel." RUSKIN writes to CARLYLE, addressing him as "Dearest Papa," and signing himself "Ever your faithful and loving son." The letters of GEORGE WYNDHAM are a charming collection, shining with hope and idealism yet never losing their touch of the firm earth. This book was nearly completed by the late Mr. MARCH PHILLIPS, and after his untimely death the task was brought to a conclusion by Mr. CHRISTIAN. On the whole the work has been done with great discretion, but there is a passage relating to GEORGE ELIOT on pp. 193, 194 which ought to have been omitted.

* * * * *

Miss MILLS YOUNG tells us that *John Musgrave*, the middle-aged hero of *Coelebs* (LANE), "was not a prig, but he came perilously near to being one at times." Well, if anyone ought to know, it is his creator, so I will accept her word for it, though for myself I should have called him a first-class prig. The little village in which he lived his bachelor existence was invaded by some up-to-date people who took the Hall, and proceeded to liven up things. *Mrs. Chadwick* freely shocked the poor man; she smoked, was a reckless conversationalist and had modern ideas, all which disturbed the decorous manner of his life. Moreover, she had taken upon herself the heavy task of finding him a wife, and *John's* phlegmatic heart began to flutter when he saw *Peggy*, her lady-gardener and niece, standing on a ladder, in blue trousers. He was incensed by such apparel, but he was also intrigued. From that moment his number, as they say, was up. Apart from a dog-incident, which is far too prolonged, and some rather cheap sarcasm at the expense of a wretched spinster, this tale of *John's* conversion from something drier than dust to a human being is neatly told. All the same I prefer Miss YOUNG'S South African stories.

* * * * *

My conjecture about *The Magic Gate* (HUTCHINSON) is that its author, MAUD STEPNEY RAWSON, found herself with two stories to choose from, one of the Gate itself, and another of the romance of *Lydia* and *John Wodrush*. In my opinion she chose the wrong one. The history of the *Wodrush* elopement, compressed to a couple of pages, seems to me far more original and interesting than the present rather unwieldy

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tale. *The Magic Gate* is a war-novel confessed, and I can only fancy that the thronging new sensations of the past three years have proved a little too much for Mrs. RAWSON'S sense of form. She is so anxious that her heroine and her readers shall miss nothing of it all that in the result the plot is lost in a maze of incidents that lead nowhere. The effect produced on a small country society by the early phases of the War is shown deftly enough. But perhaps posterity will find in such a record a more compelling interest than we can to whom it is still so familiar in every unforgettable detail. One other ground of complaint I have against the book is that its most original and attractive character, the American woman to whose generosity *Jennet* owes her occupancy of Fullbrook Manor, is banished at an early page, and submarined just when I was looking for her reappearance. Hers is yet another story with which Mrs. RAWSON might have entertained me better than by this of *The Magic Gate*, which I found a trifle creaky on its hinges.

* * * * *

Senlis (COLLINS) is one of the many places that have been systematically destroyed by the Germans. It is difficult for anyone who has not seen the results with his own eyes to realise the business-like thoroughness which the Hun brings to this congenial task. That a part (and the most beautiful) of the town still stands does not imply that he yielded either to slackness or to aesthetic refinement. True that Miss CICELY HAMILTON relates a pleasing story that *Senlis* was saved from utter destruction by the entreaties of the *cure*, but, all the same, I think the real reason why the Bosch did not complete his work was that he was bundled out bag and baggage before he had time to add the finishing touches. Miss HAMILTON clearly and soberly states the case against him, and makes it all the more damning by her frank recognition that many of the horrors of war, whoever makes it, are inevitable. Her delightful account of *Senlis* itself, admirably illustrated with photographs, is certain to appeal to all lovers of the charm of old French towns; and the more poignantly when they recall how narrowly the best of its beauty escaped from the hand of the spoiler.

* * * * *

[Illustration: EPILOGUE]

* * * * *

MR. PUNCH AS PROPAGANDIST.

I don't know what decided him to do it. I think he must have been a little fed up with our silly British way (rather attractive, all the same) of assuming that the whole world is

bound to recognise the justice of our point of view without the use of propaganda to stimulate its intelligence.

Or else he had read somewhere that the Bolsheviks had been flooding the Hun trenches with Socialist literature and that the German Headquarters Staff had protested against this kind of thing as being contrary to etiquette, and he thought he couldn't go far wrong if he did something that was contrary to Bosch etiquette.

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Anyhow he started off in his Bouverie biplane to distribute a million or so leaflets of his own composition over the whole expanse of the Fatherland. It has been my privilege to read a sample which he handed to me just before leaving earth. It runs as follows:—

“GERMANS—Your Kaiser has taken good care that his Press should keep you in ignorance of the feelings with which your nation is regarded by the civilized world. I am therefore about to oblige you with a few home-truths.

“You have probably heard a rumour that we and our Allies have no quarrel with the German people, but only with its rulers. Don’t you believe a word of it. Possibly we still respected you when the War began, for we had not guessed how many of you had been looking forward for years to the coming of ‘The Day.’ It is what we have found out about you since you started fighting that has made us loathe and despise you.

“When, as a nation, you accepted without protest the filthy savagery of your armies in Belgium and other occupied lands; when even your women were vile in their cruelty to the helpless prisoners you had taken; when you rang your church bells and waved flags and took holidays for joy of the murder of innocent women and children, we were not deceived by apologists who explained that your only defect was that you were the slaves of a brutal militarism (though you were that, all right). We knew that you must have something of the beast in your hearts. How it got there was another matter; we only knew that it was there and that while it remained you were not fit for intercourse with decent men.

“Another thing that you may have heard (for even some of our own statesmen, reputed intelligent, have said it, and it has no doubt been eagerly seized upon by the officials who control your Press), is that your form of Government, the particular pattern of tyranny under which you elect to grovel, is no concern of ours. Well, don’t you believe that either. This is no question of private taste, like the cut of your shoulder-pads or the shape of your women’s waists, which are matters of purely local interest. Your type of Government is as much our concern; as the quality of your poison-gas or the composition of the bombs that you drop on our babies.

[Illustration:]

“I am reminded of the nonsense that used to be talked by responsible statesmen at the time when you were feverishly building a fleet to dispute our right to ensure the freedom of the seas. We were told that you were at perfect liberty to do so if you chose, and that it was not for us to interfere with your arrangements. Yet everybody knew all the time that there was nothing in the world that concerned us so closely. If France had been massing troops on your frontier you would at once have asked her to state her intentions, or even possibly have taken action without asking her. Well, the sea is our frontier.

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“You are to understand, then (whatever anybody may say), that everything done in Germany that bears immediately upon our relations with your State is of prime concern to us. Our desire for peace is as strong as your need of it; but we cannot afford to make terms with a Government whose word, as we have proved, is not worth the paper they write it on—who would treat any peace as a mere armistice to give them breathing-space for preparing a fresh war. No, if you want peace you will have to displace your present rulers. You are so good at ‘substitutes’ that you ought to have no difficulty about that.

“And the sooner the better for you. For as this War drags on we are not getting to love you more. Even now it will take you at least a generation to purge your offence and get back into the community of civilized nations. But there is another thought that is more likely to affect your thick commercial hides, and it is this. Unless you take steps, and pretty soon, to put yourselves in a position in which we can treat with you, you will be boycotted in the markets of the world, and you will go bankrupt. It is for you, the German people, to decide whether you choose this fate. Meanwhile Time presses and the sands run low.”

Such was the matter of the leaflet that Mr. Punch rained down from his Bouverie biplane (fortunately invulnerable) upon the cities of the Fatherland. Till now the German people, fed on windy tales of triumph in place of solid food, had borne their sufferings patiently as trials incident to all wars even when you are told that you are winning them. This was the first intimation they had received of the facts. For the first time they had a chance of seeing themselves as others saw them.

He carried no bombs, but as he flew over Potsdam he could not refrain from letting fall, by way of reprisal, a weighty souvenir upon the purlieus of the Imperial Palace. Dropped at a venture, there is reason to believe that it fell within measurable distance of the head-piece of the All-Highest. It was Mr. Punch’s

[Illustration: “One Hundred and Fifty-Third Volume.”]

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[Illustration: FINIS]