

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 101, November 28, 1891 eBook

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 101, November 28, 1891

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Page 1

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PUNCH,

Or the London charivari.

Vol. 101.

November 28, 1891.

LETTERS TO ABSTRACTIONS.

No. VII.—To vanity.

Dear vanity,

Imagine my feelings when I read the following letter. It lay quite innocently on my breakfast-table in a heap of others. It was stamped in the ordinary way, post-marked in the ordinary way, and addressed correctly, though how the charming writer discovered my address I cannot undertake to say; in fact, there was nothing in its outward appearance to distinguish it from the rest of my everyday correspondence. I opened it carelessly, and this is what I read:—

[Illustration]

Ridiculous being,—In the course of a fairly short life I have read many absurd things, but never in all my existence have I read anything so absurd as your last letter. I don't say that your amiable story about HERMIONE MAYBLOOM is not absolutely true; in



fact, I knew HERMIONE *very slightly* myself when everybody was raving about her, and I never *could* understand what all you men (for, of course, you are a man; no woman could be so foolish) saw in her to make you lose your preposterous heads. To me she always seemed *silly* and *affected*, and *not in the least* pretty, with her snub nose, and her fuzzy hair. So I am rather glad, not from any personal motive, but for the sake of *truth* and *justice*, that you have shown her up. No; what I do complain of is, your evident intention to make the world believe that only women are vain. You pretend to lecture us about our shortcomings, and you don't seem to know that there is no vainer creature in existence than a man. No peacock that ever strutted with an expanded tail is one-half so ridiculous or silly as a man. I make no distinctions—*all men are the same*; at least, that's my experience, and that of every woman I ever met.

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How do you suppose a woman like HERMIONE succeeds as she does? Why she finds out (it doesn't take long, I assure you) the weak points of the men she meets; their wretched jealousies, affectations and conceits, and then artfully proceeds to flatter them and make each of them think his particular self the lord of creation, until she has all the weak and foolish creatures wound round her little finger, and slavishly ready to fetch and carry for her. And all the time you go about and boast of your conquest to one another, and imagine that *you* have subjugated her. But she sits at home and laughs at you, and *despises* you all from the flinty bottom of her heart. Bah! you're a pack of fools, and I've no patience with you. As for you personally, if you *must* write any more, tell your fellow men something about their own follies. It won't be news to *us*, but it may open *their* eyes. If you can't do that, you had better retire into your tub, and cease your painful barking altogether. I've got my eye on you, so be careful. I remain (thank goodness)

A WOMAN.

* * * * *

Now that was not altogether an agreeable breakfast dish. And the worst of it was that it was so supremely unjustifiable. Had my indignant correspondent honoured me with her address, I should have answered her at once. "Madam," I should have said, "your anger outstrips your reason. I always intended to say something about men. I had already begun a second letter to my friend VANITY on the subject. I can therefore afford to forgive your hard words, and to admit that there is a certain amount of truth in your strictures on us. But please don't write to me again so furiously. Such excessive annoyance is quite out of keeping with your pretty handwriting, and besides, it takes away my appetite to think I have even involuntarily given you pain. Be kind enough to look out for my next letter, but don't, for goodness' sake, tell me what you think about it, unless it should happen to please you. In that case I shall, of course, be proud and glad to hear from you again."

I now proceed, therefore, to carry out my intention, and, as usual, I address myself to the fountain head. My dear VANITY, I never shall understand why you take so much trouble to get hold of men. They are not a pleasing sight when you have got them, and after a time it must cease to amuse even you to see yourself reproduced over and over again, and in innumerable ridiculous ways. For instance, there is Dr. PEAGAM, the celebrated author of *Indo-Hebraic Fairy Tales: a new Theory of their Rise and Development, with an Excursus on an Early Aryan Version of "Three Blind Mice."* Dr. PEAGAM is learned; he has the industry of a beaver; he is a correspondent of goodness knows how many foreign philosophical, philological, and mythological societies; his record of University distinctions has never been equalled; his advice has been sought by German Professors. Yet he carries all this weight of celebrity and learning as lightly as if it were a wideawake, and seems to think nothing of it. But he has his weak point, and, like Achilles, he has it in his feet.

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This veteran investigator, this hoary and venerable Doctor, would cheerfully give years off his life if only the various philosophers who from time to time sit at his feet would recognise that those feet are small, and compliment him on the fact. They *are* small, there is no doubt of it, but not small enough to be encased without agony in the tiny, natty, pointed boots that he habitually wears. Let anybody who wants to get anything out of Dr. PEAGAM lead the conversation craftily on to the subject of feet and their proper size. Let him then make the discovery (aloud) that the Doctor's feet are extraordinarily small and beautiful, and I warrant that there is nothing the Doctor can bestow which shall not be freely offered to this cunning flatterer. That is why Dr. PEAGAM, a modest man in most respects, always insists on sitting in the front row on any platform, and ostentatiously dusts his boots with a red silk pocket-handkerchief.

Then, again, who is there that has not heard of Major-General WHACKLEY, V.C., the hero who captured the ferocious Ameer of Mudwallah single-handed, and carried him on his back to the English camp—the man to whose dauntless courage, above all others, the marvellous victory of Pilferabad was due? Speak to him on military matters, and you will find the old warrior as shy as a school-girl; but only mention the word poetry, and you'll have him reciting his ballads and odes to you by the dozen, and declaiming for hours together about the obtuseness of the publishing fraternity.

I don't speak now of literary men who value themselves above LAMB, DICKENS, and THACKERAY, rolled into one; nor of artists who sneer at TITIAN; nor of actors who hold GARRICK to be absurdly overrated. Space would fail me, and patience you. But let me just for a brief moment call to your mind ROLAND PRETTYMAN. Upon my soul, I think ROLAND the most empty-headed fribble, the most affected coxcomb, and the most conceited noodle in the whole world. He was decently good-looking once, and he had a pretty knack of sketching in water-colours.

But oh, the huge, distorted, overweening conceit of the man! I have seen him lying full length on a couch, waving a scented handkerchief amongst a crowd of submissive women, who were grovelling round him, while he enlarged in his own pet jargon on the surpassing merits of his latest unpublished essay, or pointed out the beauties of the trifling pictures which were the products of his ineffective brush. He will never accomplish anything, and yet to the end of his life, I fancy, he will have his circle of toadies and flatterers who will pretend to accept him as the evangelist of a glorious literary and artistic gospel. For unfortunately he is as rich as he is impudent and incompetent. And when he drives out in a Hansom he never ceases to simper at his reflected image in the little corner looking-glasses, by means of which modern cab-proprietors pander to the weakness of men. Such is your handiwork, my excellent VANITY. Are you proud of it?

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Yours, &c.,

DIOGENES ROBINSON.

* * * * *

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

“ONE WHO DOESN’T KNOW EVERYTHING.”—You ask, What are the duties of “the Ranger”? Household duties only. He has to inspect the kitchen-ranges in the kitchens of Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Balmoral, and Osborne. Hence the style and title. He also edits Cook’s Guides.

“ANOTHER IDIOT” wishes to know if there is such an appointment in the gift of the Crown as the office of “Court Sweep.” Why, certainly; and, on State occasions, he wears the Court Soot, and his broom is always waiting for him at the entrance! At Balmoral and Osborne there is a beautiful sweep leading the visitor right up to the front door.

“ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE” writes us,—“Sir, in what poem of MILTON’s does the following couplet occur?—

I’ll light the *gas* soon,
To play the *bas*-soon.

How are the lines to be scanned?” *Ans.*—On internal evidence, we question whether the lines are MILTON’s. In the absence of our Poet, who is out for a holiday, we can only reply, that if shortsighted, you can scan them by the aid of a powerful glass—of your favourite compound.

* * * * *

[Illustration: “THE SWEET LITTLE CHERUB THAT SITS UP ALOFT.”

(*Modern Version, as it must be.*)]

[“The Associated Chamber of Commerce ask that the Coastguard stations, shore-lighthouses, rock lighthouses, and light-ships of the United Kingdom, should, as far as possible, be connected by telegraph or telephone with the general telegraph system of the country, ‘as a means for the protection of life and property, as well as for national defence.’... France and America, Holland and Denmark, provide their seamen with this great safeguard in the hour of their utmost need. IS England content to let her sailors die by hundreds for want of a little money, or for want of a little care?”—*Times.*]



Prospero. Why, that's my spirit!
But was not this nigh shore?

Ariel. Close by, my master.

Prospero. But are they, Ariel, safe?

Ariel. Not a hair perish'd.

Tempest, Act I., Scene 2.

CONTENT? There's many an English heart will hear with fierce amaze That England lags so far behind in these electric days— England, whose seamen are her shield, who vaunts in speech and song, The love she bears her mariners! Wake, CAMPBELL, swift and strong Of swell and sweep as the salt waves you sang as none could sing! Rouse DIBDIN, of the homelier flight, but steady waft of wing! Poetic shades, *this* question, sure, should pierce the ear of death, And make ye vocal once again with quick, indignant breath. *Content?* Whilst round our rocky coasts the souls who guard them

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sink, Death clutching from the clamorous brine, hope beaconing from the brink, With lifted hands toward the lights that beam but to betray, Because dull Britons fail to think, or hesitate to pay? No! With that question a fierce thrill through countless listeners went, And, hoarse with indignation, rings the answer, "*Not Content!*" When the Armada neared our coast in days now dubbed as "dark," Pre-scientific Englishmen, whom no Electric Spark Had witched with its white radiance, yet sped from height to height Of Albion's long wild sea-coast line the ruddy warning Light. "Cape beyond Cape, in endless range, those twinkling points of fire"[1] *Reveille* shot from sea to sea, from wave-washed shire to shire, Inland, from hill to hill, it flashed wherever English hand Helpful at need in English cause could grip an English brand. To-day? Well, round our jutting cliffs, across our hollowing bays Thicker the light-ship beacons flash, the lighthouse lanterns blaze. From sweep to sweep, from steep to steep, our shores are starred with light, Burning across the briny floods through the black mirk of night, Forth-gleaming like the eyes of Hope, or like the fires of Home, Upon the eager eyes of men far-straining o'er the foam. Good! But how greatly less than good to fear, to think, to know That inland England's less alert against a whelming foe Than when bonfire and beacon flared mere flame of wood and pitch, From Surrey hills to Skiddaw!

Science-dowered, serenely rich,
Safe in its snugly sheltered homes, our England lies at ease, Whilst round her cliffs gale-scourged to wrath the tiger-throated seas Thunder in ruthless ravening rage, with rending crash and shock, Through the dull night and blinding drift on leagues of reef and rock. More furious than the Spaniards they, more fierce, persistent foes, These deep-gorged, pallid, foaming waves. Yes, bright the beacon glows, Warmly the lighthouse wafts its blaze of welcome o'er the brine; The shore's hard by, but where the hands to whirl the rescuing line? To launch the boat?—to hurl the buoy? The lighthouse men look out Upon their wreck-borne brethren there, their hearts are soft as stout, But signals will not pierce this dark, shouts rise o'er this fierce roar, Rescue may wait at hand, but—*there's no cable to the shore!*

Content with *this*? Nay, callous he whom this stirs not to rage,
Punch pictures, with prophetic pen, a brighter cheerier page,
Which *must be turned*, and speedily:
Good Mr. PROSPERO BULL,
Your *Ariel* is the Electric Sprite, DIBDIN, of pity full
For tempest-tost Poor JACK, descried a Cherub up aloft
Watch-keeping o'er his venturous life. That symbol, quoted oft,
Must find new form to fit the time. The *Ariel* of the Spark
Must watch around our storm-lashed coast in tempest and in dark,
Guardian of homeward-bound Poor JACK, to spread the news of fear,
And tell him, battling with the storm, that rescuing hands, though near,
Are not made helpless in his hour of agonising need,
By ignorance that heeds not, and neglect that fails to heed.

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[Footnote 1: MACAULAY's *Armada*.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: NATURAL HISTORY.

"OH, LOOK, MUMMIE! NOW IT'S LEFT OFF RAINING, HE'S COME OUT OF HIS KENNEL!"]

* * * * *

ALL BERRY WELL.

SIR,—As there is so much talk just now about the best way in which to make Coffee, I will mention the plan I adopt, in the hope that some of your readers may imitate it in their own homes. It is very simple. You take some of the excellent "Coffee Mixture," sold by the "Arabo-Egyptian Pure Parisian Berry Company, Limited," at sixpence the pound. You need not give more than one tea-spoon to every four persons, as the coffee is very good and thick. Add condensed milk, and fill with water, after which, let the pot stand on the hob an hour before use. You would be surprised at the quality of the fluid which results. It gives general satisfaction in my own circle. My nephew, who lives with me, declares that it is the only genuine coffee he has drunk since he returned from the East. He usually, however, has his breakfast out. My General Servant says that "she prefers it to beer" (though she takes both), and has asked me for some to send to an Aunt of hers with whom she has quarrelled. I think this very nice and forgiving of her, and have allowed her a quarter of a pound for that purpose. My son-in-law, who unfortunately is rather addicted to drink, says it is "the finest tap he ever tasted," and adds that if he could be sure of always having such Coffee, he would join the Blue Ribbon Army at once. Hitherto he has not joined.

Yours humbly,
MARTHA HUSWIFE.

SIR,—At my "Home for Elderly Orphans of Defective Brain Power," I give an *excellent* Coffee, made of five parts chicory, and one of Mocha, supplied at a cheap rate by a House in the City, which owes me money, and is paying it off in this way, with skim-milk added, in moderation, and no sugar. None of the orphans has ever complained of my Coffee. I should like to catch them doing so. It is nonsense to say the art of coffee-making is unknown in England.

Yours, indignantly,
CLEOPATRA JONES.

SIR,—Here is the recipe for Coffee which we use at this Buffet:—

“Place one pound of the 'Nonpareil Turkish Pasha's Special Brand Extract of finest Mocha' in the urn in the morning. Pour on boiling water to half-way up. Let it stew all day. Draw off as wanted, and dilute with 'Anglo-African Condensed Cows' Milk.'”

Strange to say, we do not find great demand either for Coffee or Tea (made on similar principles); but it is as well that the Public should know that we have both in constant readiness, and of first-class quality. The traveller who has drunk a cup of this Coffee in conjunction with one of our celebrated Home-made Pork Pies, does not require anything else till the end of the very longest journey, and, probably, not even then.

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KEEPER OF THE REFRESHMENT ROOM, STARVEM JUNCTION.

* * * * *

THE GEORGIAN ERA AT THE ALHAMBRA.—Mrs. ABBOTT is an electric wonder. Not strong muscularly, but with sufficient electric power to support four or five of the inferior sex heaped anyhow on a chair. Such a woman is a crown to a husband—nay, any amount of crowns at £200 per week—and capable of supporting a family, however large, all by her own exertions, or indeed, with scarcely any exertion at all. At present, though married, she is a *femme seule*: but how long will she remain the only electric wonder in London? Many years ago there was a one-legged dancer named DONATO. Within sixteen weeks there were as many one-legged dancers. We don't speak by the card, of course, but one-legged dancers became a drug in the market. Already we hear of "A Dynamic Phenomenon" at the Pavilion. Little Mrs. ABBOTT is an active, spry little person, yet her "*vis inertiae*" is, at present, without a parallel.

* * * * *

THE TRAVELLING COMPANIONS.

NO. XVI.

SCENE—*Terrace and Grounds of the Grand Hotel Villa d'Este, on Lake Como. PODBURY and CULCHARD are walking up and down together.*

Podbury. Well, old chap, your resigning like that has made all the difference to *me*, I can tell you!

Culchard. If I have succeeded in advancing your cause with Miss PRENDERGAST, I am all the better pleased, of course.

Podb. You have, and no mistake. She's regularly taken me in hand, don't you know—she says I've no intelligent appreciation of Italian Art; and gad, I believe she's right there! But I'm pulling up—bound to teach you a lot, seeing all the old altar-pieces I do! And she gives me the right tips, don't you see; she's no end of a clever girl, so well-read and all that! But I say—about Miss TROTTER? Don't want to be inquisitive, you know, but you don't seem to be much *about* with her.

[Illustration: "Bound to teach you a lot, seeing all the old altar-pieces I do!"]

Culch. I—er—the feelings I entertain towards Miss TROTTER have suffered no change—quite the reverse, only—and I wish to impress this upon you, PODBURY—it is undesirable, for—er—many reasons, to make my attentions—er—too conspicuous. I—I



trust you have not alluded to the matter to—well, to Miss PRENDERGAST, for example?

Podb. Not I, old fellow—got other things to talk about. But I don't quite see why—

Culch. You are not *required* to see. I don't *wish* it, that is all. I—er—think that should be sufficient.

Podb. Oh, all right, *I'll* keep dark. But she's bound to know sooner or later, now she and Miss TROTTER have struck up such a friendship. And HYPATIA will be awfully pleased about it—why *shouldn't* she, you know?... I'm going to see if there's anyone on the tennis-court, and get a game if I can. Ta-ta!

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Culch. (alone). PODBURY knows very little about women. If HYP—Miss PRENDERGAST—once found out *why* I renounced my suitorship, I should have very little peace, I know that—I’ve taken particular care not to betray my attachment to MAUD. I’m afraid she’s beginning to notice it, but I must be careful. I don’t like this sudden intimacy between them—it makes things so very awkward. They’ve been sitting under that tree over there for the last half-hour, and goodness only knows what confidences they may have exchanged! I really must go up and put a stop to it, presently.

UNDER THE TREE.

Hypatia. I only tell you all this, sweetest one, because I *do* think you have rather too low an opinion of men as a class, and I wanted to show you that I have met at least *one* man who was capable of a real and disinterested devotion.

Maud. Well, I allowed that was about your idea.

Hyp. And don’t you recognise that it was very fine of him to give up everything for his friend’s sake?

Maud. I guess it depends how much “everything” amounted to.

Hyp. (annoyed). I thought, darling, I had made it perfectly plain what a sacrifice it meant to him. *I* know how much he—I needn’t tell you there are certain symptoms one can_not_ be deceived in.

Maud. No, I guess you needn’t tell me *that*, love. And it was perfectly lovely of him to give you up, when he was under vow for you and all, sooner than stand in his friend’s light—only I don’t just see how that was going to help his friend any.

Hyp. Don’t you, dearest? Not when the friend was under vow for me, too?

Maud. Well, HYPATIA PRENDERGAST! And how many admirers do you have around under vow, as a regular thing?

Hyp. There were only those two. RUSKIN permits as many as seven at one time.

Maud. That’s a vurry liberal allowance, too. I don’t see how there’d be sufficient suitors to go round. But maybe each gentleman can be under vow for seven distinct girls, to make things sort of square now?

Hyp. Certainly not. The whole beauty of the idea lies in the unselfish and exclusive devotion of every knight to the same sovereign lady. In this case I happen to know that the—a—individual had never met his ideal until—

Maud. Until he met you? At Nuremberg, wasn't it? My! And what was his name? Do tell!

Hyp. You must not press me, sweetest, for I cannot tell that—even to you.

Maud. I don't believe but what I could guess. But say, you didn't care any for *him*, or you'd never have let him go like that? *I* wouldn't. I should have suspected there was something behind!

Hyp. My feelings towards him were purely potential. I did him the simple justice to believe that his self-abnegation was sincere. But, with your practical, cynical little mind, darling, you are hardly capable of—excuse me for saying so—of appreciating the real value and meaning of such magnanimity!

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Maud. Oh, I guess I *am*, though. Why, here's Mr. CULCHARD coming along. Well, Mr. CULCHARD?

Culch. I—ah—appear to have interrupted a highly interesting conversation?

Maud. Well, we were having a little discussion, and I guess you're in time to give the casting vote—HYPATIA, you want to keep just where you are, do you hear? I mean you should listen to Mr. CULCHARD's opinion.

Culch. (flattered). Which I shall be delighted to give, if you will put me in possession of the—er—facts.

Maud. Well, these are the—er—facts. There were two gentlemen under vow—maybe you'll understand the working of that arrangement better than I do?—under vow for the same young lady. [HYPATIA PRENDERGAST, sit still, or I declare I'll pinch you!] One of them comes up and tells her that he's arrived at the conclusion the other admirer is the better man, and, being a friend of his, he ought to retire in his favour, and he does it, too, right away. Now *I* say that isn't natural—he'd some other motive. Miss PRENDERGAST here will have it he was one of those noble unselfish natures that deserve they should be stuffed for a museum. What's *your* opinion now?

Culch. (perspiring freely). Why—er—really, on so delicate a matter, I—I— [*He maunders.*]

Hyp. MAUD, why *will* you be so headstrong! (*In a rapid whisper.*) Can't you see ... can't you *guess*?...

Maud. I guess I want to make sure Mr. CULCHARD isn't that kind of magnanimous man himself. I shouldn't want him to renounce *me*!

Hyp. MAUD! You might at *least* wait until Mr. CULCHARD has—

Maud. Oh, but he *did*—weeks ago, at Bingen. And at Lugano, too, the other day, he spoke out tolerable plain. I guess he didn't wish any secret made about it—*did* you, Mr. CULCHARD?

Culch. I—ah—this conversation is rather ... If you'll excuse me— [*Escapes with as much dignity as he can command.*]

Maud. Well, my dear,—that's the sort of self-denying hairpin *he* is! What do you think of him *now*?

Hyp. I do not think so highly of him, I confess. His renunciation was evidently less prompted by consideration for his friend than by a recollection—tardy enough, I am afraid—of the duty which bound him to *you*, dearest. But if you had seen and heard

him, as I did, you would not have doubted the *reality* of the sacrifice, whatever the true reason may have been. For myself, I am conscious of neither anger nor sorrow—my heart, as I told you, was never really affected. But what must it be to *you*, darling!

Maud. Well, I believe I'm more amused than anything.

Hyp. Amused! But surely you don't mean to have anything more to do with him?

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Maud. My dear girl, I intend to have considerable more to do with him before I'm through. He's under vow for *me* now, anyway, and I don't mean he should forget it, either. He's my monkey, and he's got to jump around pretty lively, at the end of a tolerable short chain, too. And I guess, if it comes to renouncing, all the magnanimity's going to be on *my* side this time!

IN AN AVENUE.

Culch. (to himself, as he walks hurriedly on). I only saved myself in time. I don't *think* MAUD noticed anything—she couldn't have been so innocent and indifferent if she had.... And HYPATIA won't enlighten her any further now—after what she knows. It's rather a relief that she *does* know.... She took it very well, poor girl—very well. I expect she is really beginning to put up with PODBURY—I'm sure I *hope* so, sincerely!

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

[Illustration]

"I dearly love reading a ghost-story," quoth the Baron, "when, as the song says, 'The lights are low, And the flickering shadows, Softly come and go.' And I did hope that *Cecilia de Noel* was going to be just the very sort of book for a winter's fireside. Disappointed. There is a ghost in it, and there's *Cecilia de Noel* (good Christmassy name, isn't it?) who instructs the ghost in his neglected Catechism; for the ghost is as much an Atheist as the unbelieving Sadducee in this same story, who, after all, is not converted. 'Alas! Poor Ghost!' Very poor ghost! Bring me another ghost!" cries the Baron. No other ghost is forthcoming to the invocation, but a book is placed in his hands entitled *Fourteen to One*. The Baron was about to dismiss it as a betting book—judging by its title—when his eye caught the name of ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS as authoress. So he read many of the short stories therein. She has in many places the touch of DICKENS. All are good; but for pathos, keen observation, and dramatic surprise, "give me," says the Baron, emphatically, "the short story of *The Madonna of the Tubs*." Admirable! Those who take and act upon the Baron's tip, will do well to ask for *Fourteen to One*, and see that they get it.

What are the Baron's sentiments as to Christmas things? He refused to have anything to say to games and cards. Cards—well, we all know whose books some puritanical party said *they* were. But these comic and artistic Christmas Cards of RAPHAEL TUCK do not come into that category; and same is to be said of Messrs. HILDESHEIMER's, so there's an end on't. Henceforth, says the Baron, "No Cards."

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"Come to me, O ye children," as some one sings—ARTHUR CECIL for choice—and it might be adapted for the occasion by the Publishers of *Chatterbox*, in which box there's a prize. Messrs. ROUTLEDGE go in for the old, old tales. They've kindly given *Mother Hubbard* a new dress; and as for their Panorama of the "Beasteses," it is like a picture-walk in the Zoo. *Some Historic Women*, well selected by DAVENPORT ADAMS, who should have styled it *Christmas Eves by Adams*. With Mrs. MOLESWORTH's *Bewitched Lamp* the Baron's Assistant is much pleased. Pictures ought to have been in oil, and there should have been a Wicked Fairy in it,—but there isn't.

My "Co." reports that Mrs. GRIMWOOD's long-expected book, *My Three Years in Manipur* (BENTLEY), is worthy of the theme, and adds a fresh laurel to the chaplet worn by the lady on whose breast the QUEEN pinned the Red Cross. The moving story is told with a simplicity that looks like the development of the highest art. But the heroine of Manipur is unmistakably artless. She is content to jot down, as if she were writing a letter home, her impressions of what she sees, and her account of what passes before her eyes. She has the gift of reproducing with a few strokes of the pen, portraiture of anything that has struck her. The only thing missed is detailed report of her own brave bearing through the fearful night when the Residency was attacked, and during the dreadful days that followed on the flight towards Cachar. No one reading Mrs. GRIMWOOD's narrative would guess what splendid part she played in that tragedy. Fortunately that has been told elsewhere, and the omission is an added charm to a book that has many others—including a portrait of the author.

THE BARON DE BOOK-WORMS AND CO.

* * * * *

CIVIL SERVICE EXHIBITION.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—The Military Exhibition was such a success, and the Naval Exhibition was such a successor, that we Government Clerks invoke your powerful aid to help us to establish next year a Civil Service Exhibition. The Public have really no idea what wondrous curiosities there are in the Civil Service, and would, I feel sure, be amused and instructed at a well-organised and representative Exhibition. At 10.15 A.M. they would see real live Clerks sign real Attendance-Books, and insert (real or unreal) times of arrival. In the course of the morning there might be an Exhibition of Civil Servants over sixty-five years of age, who didn't want to retire, with a similar number of Civil Servants, of fifty-five years of age, who didn't want them to stay. In the afternoon, in the Arena, would daily be attempted the difficult feat of proceeding from the Second Division to the Higher Division. The obstacles would be represented by real Treasury Clerks and Civil Service Commissioners, holding Orders in Council and Treasury Minutes; and the Clerk successful in performing the feat might be created a Duke.

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In one of the kiosks a lecture on "*Sick Leave and how to spend it*," by the Earl and the Doctor, might be delivered hourly. In another kiosk, official C.B.'s would be on show; Jubilee C.B.'s being classed together on one side, and special prominence being given to those C.B.'s who hadn't applied for the honour, and to those who had obtained it for real services otherwise unrecognised. After dark the "Treasury Ring" might join hands and dance round the flashing light of their own unassisted intellect.

The different refreshment rooms (furnished by the Office of Works) would be classified according to the varying rates of Subsistence Allowance in force in the Service. Here the dinner for the L1-a-day man—there the tea for the 10s.-a-day man. Special luncheon rates for those not absent from home at night, but absent for more than ten hours.

Visitors might be searched on arrival and departure by real Custom House Officers. This would be sure to make it popular. Please, dear *Mr. Punch*, do help us. Yours, &c.,

A GOVERNMENT CLERK.

* * * * *

ENGLISH OPERA AS SHE ISN'T SUNG.

[Illustration: "Very sorry, my dear Sir Ivanhoe, but you're rather too heavy for this Carte. We shall get along better with a lighter weight."]

It seems impossible to support a Royal English Opera House with its special commodity of English Opera, that is, Opera composed by an Englishman to an Englishman's *libretto*, and played by English operatic singers. *Ivanhoe*, a genuine English Opera, by a genuine English Composer (with an Irish name), produced with great *eclat*, has, after a fair run and lots of favour, been *Doyle-ecarte*, in order to make room for the *Basoche*, an essentially French Opera, by French Composer and Librettists, done, of course, into English, so as to be "understood of the people." The *Basoche* has "caught on," and our friends in front, including Composer, Librettist, and Middlemen—DRURIOLANUS, who bought it, and DOYLY CARTY, who bought it of Sir DRURI—are all equally pleased and satisfied. Considered as a matter of business, what signifies the nationality as long as the spec pays?—*tout est la*. Only why retain the differentiating title of "English" for the establishment? Why not call it "The Cosmopolitan Opera House"? Of course this applies, nowadays, to Covent Garden Theatre, which is no longer the Italian Opera House, but simply the Covent Garden Opera during the Operatic Season, when French, English, Italian, and German Operas are played by a Babel of singers. By the way, while on the subject of nomenclature, why not "The Royal Babel Opera House"?

* * * * *

[Illustration: A LUCID INTERVAL.

(*THINGS ONE WOULD RATHER HAVE EXPRESSED DIFFERENTLY.*)

Doctor. "HOW IS THE PATIENT THIS MORNING?"

Nurse. "WELL—HE HAS BEEN WANDERING A GOOD DEAL IN HIS MIND. EARLY THIS MORNING I HEARD HIM SAY, 'WHAT AN OLD WOMAN THAT DOCTOR IS!'—AND I THINK THAT WAS ABOUT THE LAST REALLY *RATIONAL* REMARK HE MADE."]

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* * * * *

THE LITTLE GERMANIA MAGNATE;

OR, TRYING TO SWAY THE SCEPTRE.

[*"Suprema lex regis voluntas."* Words reported to have been written by the German Emperor in the Visitors' Book of the City Council at Munich.]

No more let men chatter of such a small matter
As Ladies Magnetic, with mystical forces,
Whose billiard-cue business strikes with sheer dizziness
Muscular Miloes who're game to lift horses.
As MITCHELL the bulky was made to look sulky
By slight Mrs. ABBOTT, the Georgian Mystery,
She is struck silly by Behemoth BILLY,
That young Teuton Titan, the toughest in history.

O Oracle Mighty (though vocally flighty),
Great Creature, omniscient (if a bit youthful),
Panjandrum-plus-CAESAR, Herculean Teaser
Of tendencies vicious, or tame, or untruthful!
You mastered the Moral while sucking your coral—
You set the world right—in idea—in your cradle.
Omnipotent Bumble, our pride let us humble,
And take our opinions—like soup—from *your* ladle!

You *are* such a fellow! The sages turn yellow,
The wits all go pallid, and so do the heroes;
Big Brontes grow jealous when *you* blow the bellows,
A fig for your CAESARS, ISKANDERS, and NEROS!
You lick them all hollow, great Vulcan-Apollo,
Sole lord of our consciences, lives, arts, and armies!
But (like Mrs. A., Sir) 'twould floor you to say, Sir,
Where, what, in the mischief the source of your charm is!

Say, how *do* you do it? That Georgian's cue, it,
Compared with your sceptre, is just a mere withy.
You quietly front in with that calm "*Voluntas*,"
(Expressed for our guidance in epigrams pithy)
You hint you can rule us, and guide us, and school us,
"All off your own bat," without Clergy or Minister,



Giving swift gruel to stage-prank, or duel,
Or any thing else *you* think stupid or sinister.

O Autocrat fateful, we ought to be grateful
For such an infallible, all-potent party,
At *this* time of day too, to show us the way to—
Wherever you'd lead us, with confidence hearty.
And as for those duffers, your confidence suffers
To tug at the sceptre, with vain thoughts of swaying it,
What can it matter? "The Magnet" can shatter
Their strength; at its pleasure controlling or staying it.

In vain "Blood and Iron," with foes that environ
Your sceptre, smart Press-man, or Socialist spouter,
May struggle together; you hold them in tether,
Or so you proclaim, you, whom foes call "the Shouter."
The pose is imposing, if ere the scene's closing,
The "Little Germania Magnate" gets beaten;
Well, put at the worst, Sir, you are not the first, Sir,
Who playing the Thraso has humble-pie eaten!

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* * * * *

“DINNER FORGET.”—Lord RANDOLPH is coming home by a Union Company’s Steamer. The distinguished Unionist is to have a special cook to attend to him. Does this mean that he returns as a Special COOK’s Tourist?

* * * * *

AN ELECTION ECHO.

GLADSTONIAN LAMBERT,
Of course, as he should,
This last bye-election
Considered was good.
But Unionist BULLER
Has said, on reflection,
That to him it seemed rather
A Good-Bye election!

* * * * *

NEW WORK.—*A Merry England in a Cat’s Cradle*, by the Author of *Across England in a Dog-Cart*.

* * * * *

A VERY REVOLTING PLACE.—Brazil.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE LITTLE GERMANIA MAGNATE;
OR, TRYING TO SWAY THE SCEPTRE.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: JONES, SHOOTING IN NEW BOOTS, IS KNOCKED OUT SIX MILES FROM HOME, AND ACCORDINGLY IS TOLD OFF TO “MARK” FOR THE PARTY. WIND N.N.E., VERY FRESH. THERMOMETER 28 deg..]

* * * * *

OUR FINANCIAL COLUMN.

I have been forced by the enormous increase of my business to take larger offices, and to engage two hundred additional clerks to carry on my immense correspondence. I merely mention this as it may be satisfactory to my countless well-wishers. But of course the old address—"CROESUS: London" will still find me. I publish below a selection from the letters received during the week.

(1.) SIR,—You informed me in a private communication, that the Patent Spills Manufacturing Co. stock was a splendid investment. Acting on this, I bought. From that moment, Spills have fallen steadily. Kindly explain.

Yours,

INDIGNANT.

[To this I can only answer, that the complaint is ludicrous, and preposterous. If you had bought on the day I advised, and sold out ten minutes afterwards, you would have realised a handsome profit of one farthing a share. Moreover, how can anything fall steadily? I never did, which shows what a fool "INDIGNANT" must be.

CROESUS.]

(2.) SIR,—I send £22,000 19s. 83/4d., which I wish tied up as tightly as possible in the Unlimited Packthread Stock Company, which you say is as safe as a house. Let me know which particular house you mean. The money belongs (or belonged) to my Maiden Aunt.

Yours sincerely,

BALIK RASH.

[Consider it done, my dear Sir; consider it done. I return the three farthings, for which I have no possible use. The rest is invested. Transfers await your signature at my new office.

CROESUS.]

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(3.) SIR,—I have saved L4 5s. 2d. during the last twenty years, and now send it to you in the Automatic Toast and Muffin Distributor Co., which I see guarantees a return of 500 per cent., with an anticipated increase of 200 per cent. from the sale of concessions in suburban districts. “The Muffins,” you say, “will always be kept at toasting point, and, by a novel and ingenious arrangement, a perpetual supply of the best butter will spread itself over every Muffin as it is distributed to the Public.” I like this very much. Pray, therefore, place me on toast to the enclosed amount.

Yours,

ONE IN THE SLOT.

[Have done what you wish. You have already cleared profit of over L500. We shall add buns and crumpets to our business to-morrow, and tea-cakes on the following day, so as to place it in everybody’s power to take the cake, if he wants to.

CROESUS.]

I have little more to add this week, but I think it only right to hint that I am engaged in perfecting the details of a scheme which will revolutionise finance. I am not allowed, *at present*, to enter into full particulars, but I may say that I have been in close conference with the very highest person in the world of finance, and that he is to submit my plan to the next Cabinet Council. Briefly, when my scheme is floated, Consols will immediately go to par, and will be converted into a security bearing ten per cent. interest—and this without a single penny being added to the tax-payers’ burdens. I have been authorised by the officials of the Treasury to receive any investments that my readers may offer. Now, therefore, is your time. Next week I may have to take a short holiday, owing to the strain on my nerves, caused by my numerous anxieties. But the good work will go on as before.

“CROESUS LONDON.”

* * * * *

GLORY AT THE LOWEST PRICE.

[There is nothing whatever to hinder a civilian from organising and managing an efficient army, and there are at any given moment a score of men in the City of London, who could carry out the work with perfect ease.—*Daily Paper, November 19, 1891.*]SCENE —*The Army Universal Provision Company Limited (Managing Director, Mr. BLACKLEY).* Enter Recruit in Department No. 1. He looks round him surprised at the business-like activity that greets him on every side.



Foreman (politely). Anything I can do for you, Sir, to-day? We have an assortment of Queen's Shillings fresh from the Mint. Curiosities, Sir, quite out of date, but interesting. Can I tempt you?

Recruit (with some hesitation). Well, I thought of joining the Army, and—

Foreman (interrupting). Certainly, Sir. Doctor in that room. Magistrate in that. Be medically passed and sworn to allegiance while you wait. (*Ushers Recruit into various Departments—whence he emerges duly enrolled.*) And now, Sir, which branch of the Service would you like to see?



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Recruit. Well, I did think of the Tenth Hussars.

Foreman (promptly). Quite right, Sir. First-class Regiment, commanded by His Royal Highness Field Marshal the Prince of WALES. (*To Assistant.*) Show this gentleman the way to the outfitting-room—Tenth Hussars.

[Recruit in less than no time is fitted out. On his return to the Central Hall he is once more greeted by a principal official.]

Foreman. Now, Sir, you would like to learn your drill?

Recruit. Well, yes—

Foreman. Quite so. We teach it in six easy lessons, at twelve shillings a lesson. You can pay for it either out of your reserved pay, or now. If the latter, we allow five per cent. discount.

Recruit (without hesitation). I think I will pay it later.

Foreman (putting up his receipt-book). Certainly, Sir, No difference to us. And now, Sir, perhaps you will take your lessons.

[Recruit goes through a course which soon puts him to-rights. At the end he shakes Foreman warmly by the hand.]

Recruit. You are sure that I really know my drill?

Foreman. Quite. Why, Sir, you are letter perfect. And now, is there anything more we can do for you?

Recruit. Well, I did join the Army with the intention of going to the wars.

Foreman (apologetically). Very sorry, Sir, but we haven't the article on hand just at present. Sure to have some by-and-by. Is there anything else we can do for you, Sir?

Recruit. Well, failing a war, I should like a passage to India.

Foreman (in a deprecatory tone). Well, Sir, frankly, we cannot recommend it. But if you have made up your mind, we must ask you to step over to the Waste Department. They settle such-like matters there. See over yonder, Sir, where that venerable General on crutches is. He has just got a Colonelcy, but he can't hold it very long, as he is over eighty! And now I must say adieu, as I have other pupils claiming my assistance. Good day!

*[Starts off, and prepares food for powder in other quarters.
Curtain.*

* * * * *

[Illustration: "BREEZY BRIGHTON."]

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[Illustration: THE REVOLT OF THE RATEPAYERS AGAINST KING KOUNTY KOUNCIL
THE FIRST.

(TEMPLE, WEMYSS, AND SAVORY LEAD THE ATTACK.)]

* * * * *

THE BOARD ON BOTH SIDES.

*SCENE—A Railway Carriage. Present two Passengers
discussing the Topics of the Day.*

First Passenger. And then there's the School Board! I am on my way to record my
vote.

Second Pass. And so am I. I hope, Sir, we are of both of the way of thinking?

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First Pass. I hope so, too. My idea is to give the children of the poor every possible advantage. Let them learn all they can. Yes, Sir, let them learn all they can.

[Illustration: "Why, it's as plain as the Nose on your face!"]

Second Pass. (excitedly). But, my dear Sir, what can be the good of that? It will be of no use to them in their future, and will only make them dissatisfied with their position.

First Pass. (calmly). Ah, my dear Sir, you evidently take a narrow view of the subject. Why should not the poor enjoy equality with the rich? It is only the accident of birth that divides the peasant from the Peer.

Second Pass. (obstinately). I do not care about the cause, I only look to the result—the rich *are* divided from the poor. It is ridiculous that an orange-girl should play the piano, and a ploughman paint a picture.

First Pass. (smiling). I do not see why. Surely the poor should have their little amusements? And do we not have it on decent classical authority, "that Art polishes the manners, and renders them less ferocious!"

Second Pass. (contemptuously). Ah! You take a sentimental view of it! Believe me, the people would be all the better were they to receive a practical—a technical education—say were they to be taught how to sweep chimneys, or to blacken boots!

First Pass. (complacently). They will engage in both those useful industries with the greater *gusto* if they know that when they are at leisure they can understand MACAULAY or enjoy BEETHOVEN.

Second Pass. (with conviction). But you must admit that there is a good deal of waste. Consider Mr. FORSTER calculated that the rate would be threepence in the pound, and now it's a shilling, and will go higher still! Remember that Londoners pay far more dearly than citizens of many provincial towns, for an article not one whit better.

First Pass. (with, a genial smile). Ah, I see you are quoting from the Press.

Second Pass. (earnestly). And why not? Is it true, or is it not, that money is squandered upon rotten buildings, upon excessive salaries to teachers, and upon the provision of refinements in education?

First Pass. (smiling). Still quoting! But if I admit that there is something in what you say, is it not always the case? Have we ever unmixed good, or unmixed evil? And I contend that the same advantages derivable from a School-Board education entirely compensate for a little loss.

Second Pass. (rather out of temper). Well, you take it calmly enough.

First Pass. (amiably). Why not? It is my theory that every child should have the best possible education. The infant should have enough mental food to last him for life. It is our duty that he should got it.

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Second Pass. (with irritation). Well, at least you take an unselfish view of the case.

First Pass. (smiling sweetly). I don't see that! As a matter of fact, I am sufficiently successful not to care for competition. I believe that I am first-rate in my own walk; and, however the School Board may educate, they will not reach my standard.

Second Pass. (drily). I was not thinking of that, although it is a consideration. But how about the rates, my dear Sir—the rates?

First Pass. (with a good-humoured laugh). Oh, bother the rates! I don't see where they come in.

Second Pass. (with ghastly jocularly). But I do—by the front door.

First Pass. (condescendingly). Tut, tut! But what have the rates to do with the matter?

Second Pass. (astonished). Why, at a shilling in the pound and more to follow, you must admit they make a hole in a modest income?

First Pass. (enthusiastically). And what if they do, Sir—what if they do? Have we no duty to our fellow man? Ought we not to sacrifice something on his behalf—for his sake? And, my dear Sir, I speak all the more dispassionately, because my rates are paid—*by my Landlord!* [*Curtain.*]

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—“HISTORICAL GARDENER.”—Yes, certainly—it was “The Gallows-tree,” from which “The Hanging Gardens of Babylon” took their name. Any school-boy knows this.—“INQUIRING BUOY.”—No; the Nore Light is not a candelabrum.

* * * * *

HOW IT'S DONE!

[Illustration]

DEAREST MADGE,

You have asked me to tell you some scandal!

You seem to forget how I hate such a theme—

How I loathe and detest every girl who's a Vandal,

Destroying that fine work of Art, Nature's Scheme.

Why, I *never* talk scandal, you goose, and you know it;

It's no fascination whatever to *me*.



I *could* tell some, of course, for we county folk grow it
Like so many apples and pears on a tree.

I repeat, I detest such a thing beyond measure.
I'm not like dear MAUD, who my husband declares
Was invented and made to exist on the pleasure
Of dragging to light other people's affairs.
She would forward you scandalous tales by the dozen—
There's no one like *her* if you want any news.
I declare she's as bad as her wretch of a cousin,
Who's bolted with Major FITZ-DASH, of the Blues.

Now, for instance, she told me (in confidence, mind you)
That Captain BLANK CARTRIDGE, when playing at Nap,
Has an odious habit of getting behind you,
And calling according to what's on your lap.
(By the way, we have only just heard that the Major,
Who gave Lady B. such a beautiful horse,
Is a perfect *Don Juan*, and quite an old stager
At playing a prominent part in divorce.)

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More than that, she assures me (although I don't doubt it)
That D., though apparently sober and staid,
Is a flirt, and that people are talking about it
Indignantly here. And it's true, I'm afraid;
For I heard Mrs. PARSONS, the wife of the Vicar,
Inform Countess C. (who's forgiven, you know)
That each day she appears to get thicker and thicker
With N., though engaged to be married to O.

MAUD has written to mother, and said in her letter
(Marked "private ") that T., who has taken to drink,
And been sent to a sort of a home, is no better,
And quenches his thirst, when he can, with the ink.
And the Dowager Duchess of M. (the old sinner!)
Has dropped all the money she had backing gees;
While the Colonel, who's said to have spotted the winner,
Owns most of the horses that *lost*, if you please!

But dear MAUD is the one for the news that's exciting.
You've wasted your paper in sending to *me*.
I would just as soon think, love, of flying as writing
One word of the scandal of afternoon tea.
Give my love to your mother, and kisses to DORA—
(She's doing the season with you, I presume?)
And believe me your ever affectionate, FLORA.

P.S. Mrs. K. has eloped with her groom!

Scandal Hall, Torking.

* * * * *

ONLY FANCY!

We find the following paragraph in a contemporary:—

A meeting on the Somersetshire floods has been summoned by the
Earl of CORK, Lord-Lieutenant of the County, for to-morrow, at
Bridgewater.

We are bound to observe that this arrangement displays a lamentable lack of
consideration for others on the part of the noble convener. It is all very well for the Earl
of CORK to select the Somersetshire floods for a place of meeting. But whilst CORK is
bobbing up and down, buoyantly enjoying himself, what is to become of ordinary

persons foregathered in such circumstances? We presume that boats, or at least life-belts, will be provided for the movers and seconders of the various resolutions. Or does Bridgewater cover everything?

* * * * *

Walking down St. James' Street the other day, whom should we meet but the Earl of PORTSMOUTH, long known in the House of Commons as Lord LYMINGTON. Opportunity was taken to inquire whether a recent event in South Molton had led to any estrangement between his Lordship and his former constituents.

"No, TOBY," said the belted Earl; "I think I may say, that, between me and my old constituents, the wing of friendship has not Molton a feather."

* * * * *

In the foregoing paragraph, the phrase "belted Earl," is used advisedly. At the period of which Sir WALTER SCOTT wrote (*vide* any of his novels) it will be found that members of this rank of the Peerage are all spoken of as belted. For some time the fashion fell out of use. The belt was appropriately revived by the late Earl of BEACONSFIELD, and is now quite a common thing with the aristocracy. The Earl of SELBORNE is very particular about the fit and cut of his.

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Mr. BOYCE, in his interesting and picturesque work, *Snowdon and Rained Upon*, insists on the desirability of taking only a light luncheon when engaged upon a pedestrian tour. He adds, "I walked up Snowdon on two hard-boiled eggs." The remark seems scarcely relevant, but it records a notable achievement. Considering the height of Snowdon, and the occasional stoniness of the path, to walk up it on two eggs, howsoever hard-boiled, is a feat that puts in the shade the Music-hall trick of riding up an inclined plane of rope on a bicycle. Mr. BOYCE does not say what he came down upon. Probably his back.

* * * * *

We hear from Munich that underneath the motto, *Suprema lex regis voluntas*, written in the Visitors' Book by the Emperor of GERMANY, there now appears the following line—*Rex est major singulis, minor universis*. Herr HITHERCLIFT, the well-known German authority, having made a careful examination of the page, states his opinion that the handwriting is that of Prince BISMARCK, or is an excellent imitation.

* * * * *

A WARLIKE TALE FROM THE PACIFIC.

(FRAGMENT FROM THE POSSIBLE DIARY OF A REALISTIC NOVELIST.)

Well, now I think I have got matters pretty straight. The question is, whether the Baron will accept my last message as chaff, or resent it. Let me see, how does it read—"It is suggested, for the President's consideration, that rumours uncorrected or unexplained acquire almost the force of admitted truth." Quite so—so they do. Let me see—"That any want of confidence between the governed and the Government must be hurtful"—well, to us both. Yes! That's all right. So it will! Lastly, "That the rumours, in their present form, tend to damage the white races in the native mind, and to influence for the worse the manners of the Samoans." Now, that *ought* to fetch him! A wink is as good as a nod to a blind pig! However, he is quite ass enough to do nothing! Everybody saying that he is going to blow us all up, himself included! Why it's enough to make the natives rise and kill every white man in the place. Still, good idea for a story.

Later. The idiot! Instead of promptly denying the facts, he says he won't have anything to do with us, because "we care so little for the correctness of the facts we deal with." We only asked for information. Are we going to be blown into smithereens, or are we not? That's the point, and he won't tell us! Wants to know what business it is of ours? The situation is decidedly dramatic—but unpleasant!

Later Still.—Have replied that “the matter very much concerns us.” Tell him, we wrote, not for protection, but for information. “Are we going to be blown up, or are we not?” An answer will oblige.

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A Little Later.—No, he is not to be drawn. Won't swerve an inch. So now we are trying another dodge. Will he resign his dual office? He says he will resign one. But he knows that won't do. If he remains chief adviser to the King, we shall be nowhere. His last idea is to resign the Presidentship of the Municipal Council. Why, we are the Council, and we should have kicked him out if he hadn't! Very funny, but it's hard to laugh when one's within an ace of a massacre or an explosion.

Latest.—Still in doubt. However, have a subject for something in the dramatic line. What the entertainment will be, depends upon the future development of the plot. At present it may turn out a Tragedy—or an *Opera-bouffe*.

* * * * *

NOTICE.—Rejected Communications or Contributions, whether MS., Printed Matter, Drawings, or Pictures of any description, will in no case be returned, not even when accompanied by a Stamped and Addressed Envelope, Cover, or Wrapper. To this rule there will be no exception.