

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, March 21, 1917 eBook

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, March 21, 1917

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, March 21, 1917 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	4
Page 1.....	5
Page 2.....	7
Page 3.....	9
Page 4.....	11
Page 5.....	13
Page 6.....	15
Page 7.....	17
Page 8.....	18
Page 9.....	20
Page 10.....	22
Page 11.....	24
Page 12.....	26
Page 13.....	28
Page 14.....	30
Page 15.....	32
Page 16.....	34
Page 17.....	36
Page 18.....	37
Page 19.....	38
Page 20.....	40
Page 21.....	42
Page 22.....	43



Page 23.....	45
--------------	----

Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
CHARIVARIA.		1
III.		2
III.		5

Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

There is a convict at Pentonville who is said to be exactly like the *Kaiser*. He feels that in view of the great inconvenience he has suffered it is the KAISER'S duty at once to remove his moustache or grow side whiskers.

The *Kaiser* is in a bit of a hole. Attending a special service for the success of the War, he is reported to have "sung the *De Profundis* at the top of his voice." All the rest of him, including the lower part of his voice, seems to have been submerged.

The revolutionary spirit in Germany seems to have extended to the vegetable kingdom. In a riot at Barmen which occurred recently the chief of police was "seriously wounded" by a turnip.

The *Berliner Tageblatt* states that for appearing at a private concert a famous opera singer has been paid in food, including sixty eggs. The custom is not unknown to some of our own music-hall artistes, who however are usually more than content with receiving "the bird."

According to a *Globe* report Mr. *Charles Gulliver* is giving at the Palladium "a programme of real entertainers." Enterprise and originality are always to be commended in a manager.

A telegram from Mexico City announces that General *Carranza* has been elected President of the Mexican Republic. It is expected that a full list of the casualties will be published shortly.

A Melbourne despatch states that Mr. *Hughes* has been offered thirty-four seats in the forthcoming elections. The Opposition, it is understood, has expressed its willingness to allow Mr. *Hughes* to occupy all thirty-four.

So effective has been the attempt to reduce circulation that we are not surprised to find a provincial paper advertising in *The Daily Telegraph* for “A Reader.”

“There is no monument more enduring than brass,” writes Mr. *George Bernard Shaw*, War Correspondent. The general feeling, however, is that there is a kind of brass that is beyond enduring.

The idea of blaming *Queen Elizabeth* for the Dardanelles fiasco is so entirely satisfactory to all parties concerned that it is being freely asked why the Commission couldn't have thought of that itself.

The new order prohibiting newspapers from printing contents bills is bearing hardly in certain quarters, and it is rumoured that at least one sensational contemporary has offered to forgo publishing itself in return for the privilege of selling its posters.

By order of the General Officer Commanding the London District the Grafton Galleries have been placed out of bounds. Or, as they say in the best War-time dancing circles, out of leaps and bounds.

Page 2

[Illustration: *Progress.*]

Kensington Council states that 300,000 tons of food are consumed annually by thousands of dogs which serve no useful purpose. The dogs, on the other hand, are asking what would become of the nation's womanhood if there were no dogs to take it out for exercise in the afternoon.

The Government, it appears, is determined to keep Charing Cross Railway Station on the North side of the river. All the objections to the present site, they point out, are easily outweighed by its proximity to the National Gallery.

At Highgate, says a news item, a man named *yells* was fined for having in his possession pork which was not sound. It was suggested that defendant had held back the squeal for his own purposes.

An applicant recently informed the House of Commons' Tribunal that cutting sandwiches was highly skilled work, which could not be done satisfactorily by women. The difficulty appears to consist not in the actual cutting, but in conveying the hammy taste from the knife to the bread without actually parting with the ham itself.

Skippping is recommended as a healthy recreation. Several Germans on the Ancre say they already owe their lives to this practice.

It is now proposed that Telephone Directories should be charged for. The idea appears to be to bring them into line with other light literature; but *Punch* fears no rivals.

It has been decided by Mr. *Paul Taylor* at Marylebone that bacon is meat. Lord DEVONPORT, now that his suspicion has been judicially confirmed, has announced his intention of going ahead on that basis.



From a school-girl's examination paper:—"Question. What do you know of Tantalus?
Answer: Tantalus suffered from continual hunger and thirst in internal regions."

* * * * *

Children's tales for grown-ups.

III.

Its own reward.

"What fun!" cried the wasp.

"Where?" asked the bee looking up with a subdued smile.

"I mean I can't help laughing," said the wasp.

"A disgusting habit," said the bee.

"Look at those people nearly out of their wits. Here goes for old Bless-my-Soul again!"
He flew off and buzzed round the old gentleman's neck and then flew back to the bee,
laughing louder than ever at his purple rage.

"I don't know what you think of your conduct," said the bee severely, "but I think it is
insects like you who give us all a bad name."

"Be hanged to your bad name," scoffed the wasp. "A short life and a merry one, say I."

"A busy life and a useful one, rather," said the bee. "I am proud to be the friend of man."

Page 3

“Good heavens!” shouted the wasp. “Here comes old Bless-my-Soul bent on murder. Look out! I’m going for his neck.”

Old Bless-my-Soul slashed wildly with his table-napkin and slew the bee. He went back triumphantly with his spoil.

“A bee!” shouted everybody. “I thought it was a wasp. I didn’t know bees were like that.”

“All insects are vicious,” said old Bless-my-Soul.

* * * * *

Another Impending Apology.

“*London Pavilion. Cheerio!* at 8.30.—’Just the thing for a dull evening.’”—*Daily News*.

* * * * *

“A few of the waiting women abandoned hope of getting potatoes, and substituted the purchase by parsnips and sweres.”—*Daily Mirror*.

In the circumstances who shall blame them?

* * * * *

Notice.

In order to meet the national need for economy in the consumption of paper, the Proprietors of *Punch* are compelled to reduce the number of its pages, but propose that the amount of matter published in *Punch* shall by condensation and compression be maintained and even, it is hoped, increased.

It is further necessary that means should be taken to restrict the circulation of *Punch*, and its price has been raised to Sixpence. The Proprietors believe that the public will prefer an increase of price to a reduction of matter.

Readers are urged to place an order with their Newsagent for the regular delivery of copies, as *Punch* may otherwise be unobtainable, the shortage of paper making imperative the withdrawal from Newsagents of the “on-sale-or-return” privilege.

In consequence of the increase in the price of *Punch* the period covered by subscriptions already paid direct to the *Punch* Office will be proportionately shortened; or the unexpired value will be refunded, if desired.

The next issue of *Punch* (March 28th) will be a Navy Double Number, price Sixpence. The Proprietors regret that arrangements for this Number were completed before the further drastic restrictions in the paper supply were announced.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Unlucky One* (after perusing latest list of honours). "NEVER HAVE HAD ANY LUCK. MONTHS AGO I SAVED A SERGEANT CHAP FROM A ROTTEN PLACE—CARRIED THE FELLOW ALL THE WAY BACK—AND TOLD HIM NOT TO SAY A WORD ABOUT IT!"

Friend. "WELL, WHAT'S WRONG? HAS HE BEEN TALKING?"

Unlucky One. "NOT A WORD, CURSE HIM!"]

* * * * *

THE MUD LARKS.

When I was young, my parents sent me to a boarding school, not in any hopes of getting me educated, but because they wanted a quiet home.

At that boarding school I met one Frederick Delane Milroy, a chubby flame-coloured brat who had no claims to genius, excepting as a *litterateur*.

Page 4

The occasion that established his reputation with the pen was a Natural History essay. We were given five sheets of foolscap, two hours and our own choice of subject. I chose the elephant, I remember, having once been kind to one through the medium of a bag of nuts.

Frederick D. Milroy headed his effort "THE FERT" in large capitals, and began, "The fert is a noble animal—" He got no further, the extreme nobility of the ferret having apparently blinded him to its other characteristics.

The other day, as I was wandering about on the "line," dodging Bosch crumps with more agility than grace, I met Milroy (Frederick Delane) once more.

He was standing at the entrance of a cosy little funk-hole, his boots and tunic undone, sniffing the morning nitro-glycerine. He had swollen considerably since our literary days, but was wearing his hair as red as ever, and I should have known it anywhere—on the darkest night. I dived for him and his hole, pushed him into it, and re-introduced myself. He remembered me quite well, shook my chilblains heartily, and invited me further underground for tea and talk.

It was a nice hole, cramped and damp, but very deep, and with those Bosch love-tokens thudding away upstairs I felt that the nearer Australia the better. But the rats! Never before have I seen rats in such quantities; they flowed unchidden all over the dug-out, rummaged in the cupboards, played kiss-in-the-ring in the shadows, and sang and brawled behind the old oak panelling until you could barely hear yourself shout. I am fond of animals, but I do not like having to share my tea with a bald-headed rodent who gets noisy in his cups, or having a brace of high-spirited youngsters wrestle out the championship of the district on my bread-and-butter.

Freddy apologised for them; they were getting a bit above themselves, he was afraid, but they were seldom dangerous, seldom attacked one unprovoked. "Live and let live" was their motto. For all that they *did* get a trifle *de trop* sometimes; he himself had lost his temper when he awoke one morning to find a brawny rat sitting on his face combing his whiskers in mistake for his own (a pardonable error in the dark); and, determining to teach them a lesson, had bethought him of his old friend, the noble fert. He therefore sent home for two of the best.

The ferrets arrived in due course, received the names Burroughs and Welcome, were blessed and turned loose.

They had had a rough trip over at the bottom of the mail sack and were looking for trouble. An old rat strolled out of his club to see what all the noise was about, and got the excitement he needed. Seven friends came to his funeral and never smiled again. There was great rejoicing in that underground Mess that evening; Burroughs and Welcome were feted on bully beef and condensed milk, and made honorary members.

For three days the good work went on; there was weeping in the cupboards and gnashing of teeth behind the old oak panelling. Then on the fourth day Burroughs and Welcome disappeared, and the rats swarmed to their own again. The deserters were found a week later; they had wormed through a system of rat-holes into the next dug-out, inhabited by the Atkinses, and had remained there, honoured guests.

Page 5

It is the nature of the British Atkins to make a pet of anything, from a toad to a sucking pig—he cannot help it. The story about St. George, doyen of British soldiers, killing that dragon—nonsense! He would have spanked it, may be, until it promised to reform, then given it a cigarette, and taken it home to amuse the children. To return to our ferrets, Burroughs and Welcome provided no exception to the rule; they were taught to sit up and beg, and lie down and die, to turn handsprings and play the mouth-organ; they were gorged with Maconochie, plum jam and rum ration; it was doubtful if they ever went to bed sober. Times out of number they were borne back to the Officers' Mess and exhorted to do their bit, but they returned immediately to their friends the Atkinses, *via* their private route, not unnaturally preferring a life of continuous carousal and vaudeville among the flesh-pots to sapping and mining down wet rat-holes.

Freddy was of opinion that, when the battalion proceeded up Unter den Linden, Burroughs and Welcome would be with it as regimental mascots, marching behind the band, bells on their fingers, rings on their toes. He also assured me that if he ever again has to write an essay on the Fert, its characteristics, the adjective “noble” will not figure so prominently.

* * * * *

HERBS OF GRACE.

III.

SWEET MARJORAM.

"Sweet Marjoram! Sweet Marjoram!"
(Sang an old dame standing on the kerb);
"You may hear a thousand ballads,
You may pick a thousand salads,
Ere you light on such another herb.

Sweet Marjoram! Sweet Marjoram!
(Let its virtues evermore be sung);
Oh, 'twill make your Sunday clo'es gay,
If you wear it in a nosegay,
Pretty mistress, like when I was young.

"Sweet Marjoram! Sweet Marjoram!"
(Sing of sweet old gardens all a-glow);
It will scent your dower drawer, dear,
Folk would strew it on the floor, dear,
Long ago—long ago—long ago.

"Sweet Marjoram! Sweet Marjoram!"
(Sang the old dame standing on the kerb);
"You may hear a thousand ballads,
You may pick a thousand salads,
Ere you light on such another herb."

* * * * *

"The recipients [of the medals] were:—Sergeant W.A. Norris, D.C.M. and Military Private A. Trichney, M.M., and tootompPUF. Medal ..." *Daily Paper*.

Private TRICHNEY'S second distinction was awarded presumably for something extra good in the bombing line.

* * * * *

"Lord Beauchamp, opening an Economy Exhibition at Gloucester on Saturday, said that among many interesting exhibits was one described as 'Frocks for the twins from Uncle's pyjamas.' He hoped that the child who sent this exhibit would get the prize it deserved."—*Daily Mail*.

Uncle has probably seen to that.

Page 6

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE BREAKING OF THE FETTERS.]

* * * * *

ELLA REEVE.

One can't be too careful how one boasts, especially if there is the chance of the boast being put quickly to the proof. In fact, it is better perhaps not to boast at all.

I was sitting with a friend and a stranger in a London restaurant, having joined their table for coffee. The stranger, on introduction, turned out to be connected with the stage in some capacity as agent, and among his regular clients were the managers of various big provincial theatres, for whom he provided the leading lights of pantomime, or, as he would call it, panto. Panto was indeed the mainstay of his business; it was even the warp and woof of his life. He lived for panto, he thought panto, and he talked panto. No one, according to him, had a more abysmal knowledge of principal boys with adequate legs, principal (if that is still the word) girls with sufficient voices, contralto fairy queens with abundant bosoms, basso demon kings, Prince Dandinis, Widow Twankays, Ugly Sisters, and all the other personages of this strange grease-paint mythology of ours. Listening to him, I learned—as those who are humble in spirit may learn of all men. I learned, for example, that Ugly Sisters are at Christmas-time always Ugly Sisters, and very often use again the same dialogue, merely transferring themselves from, say, Glasgow to Wigan, or from Bristol to Dublin; and this will be their destiny until they become such very old men that not even the kindly British public will stand it any longer. England, it seems, is full of performers who, touring the halls from March to December, are then claimed for panto as her own, arriving a little before Christmas not less regularly than the turkey; and the aim of all of them is as nearly as possible to do the next Christmas what they did last Christmas.

Not only did my new acquaintance know all these people, their capabilities and the lowest salary that could be offered to them with any chance of acceptance, but he was also, it seemed, beloved by them all. Between agent and client never in the history of the world had such charming relations subsisted as between every pro. on his books and himself.

It was then that Ella Reeve came in.

Accompanied by two expensive-looking men, whose ancestors had beyond any doubt crossed the Red Sea with Moses, this new and glittering star, who had but just “made good,” or “got over,” or “clicked” (my new acquaintance used all these phrases indiscriminately when referring to his own Herschellian triumphs as a watcher of the skies), walked confidently to a distant table which was being held in reserve for her

party, and drew off her gloves with the happy anticipatory assurance of one who is about to lunch a little too well. (All this, I should say, happened before the War. I am reminded of it to-day by the circumstance that I have just heard of the death of the agent whom I then met.)

Page 7

The impact of the lady on this gentleman was terrific.

"Look, look!" he said. "That's Ella Reeve, one of my discoveries. She was principal boy at Blackpool two years ago. I put her there. She got fifteen pounds a week, and to-day she gets two hundred. I spotted her in a chorus, asked her to call and see me, and this is the result. I made her. There's nothing she wouldn't do for me, she's so grateful. If she knew I was in the room she'd be over here in a jiffy."

Having told us all this, he, being a very normal man, told it again, all the while craning his neck in the hope that his old client (she had now, it seemed, passed out of his hands, having forsaken panto for London and revue) might catch sight of his dear face. But she was far too much occupied either with the lobster on her plate or with the yellow fluid, strange to me, that moved restlessly in a long-stemmed shallow glass at her side.

And then, being, as I say, not in any way an eccentric or exorbitant character, the agent told it us a third time, with a digression here and there as to the deep friendships that members of his profession could form and cement if only they were decent fellows and not mere money-grubbing machines out for nothing but their commission. "That's what the wise man does," he concluded; "he makes real friends with his clients, such as I did with Ella Reeve. The result is we never had any hitches, and there's nothing she wouldn't do for me. She's a darling!"

Getting a little tired of this, but obviously anything but unwilling to shake the new star's slender hand and listen to the vivacious flow of speech from such attractive lips, my friend said at last, "Well, as you and she are such pals, and as she has only to know that you are here to jump over the tables to get to you, why not send your card to her?"

The agent agreed, and we watched the waiter threading his way among the tables towards that one at which the new and grateful star was seated and hand the card to her.

The end of this story is so tragic that I should prefer not to tell it.

Ella Reeve took the card, read it, laid it down, and resumed conversation with her friends. She did not even glance in our direction.

I felt sorry for the agent, whose mortification was very real, though he made a brave effort to carry it off; and now that he is dead I feel sorrier. As for Ella Reeve (which is not really her name, but one which with great ingenuity I devised for her from the French: thus, *Elle arrive*) I often see her, under her true style, in her triumphs, and I always wonder whether her treatment of the agent, or his assurance of her dependence on his cordiality, represents more nearly the truth. She looks such a good sort. Some day, when the War is over, I must acquire a shiny tall hat and a glossy shirt front and a youthful manner and get someone to introduce me, and then, bit by bit, extract the truth.

Page 8

Meanwhile the fact remains that it is dangerous to boast.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Tommy (back from Blighty)*. “YUS, I GRANT YER A BIT O’ LEAVE’S ALL RIGHT. BUT IT’S AWFUL DEPRESSIN’, TOO, AT HOME—NOTHIN’ BUT WAR—WAR! IT GIVES YER THE FAIR ’UMP.”]

* * * * *

“JAPANESE POLITICS.

PRIME MINISTER’S ATTACK ON THE DIET.”—*Daily Paper*.

We wouldn’t be the Food Controller in Japan for anything.

* * * * *

“Wanted situation as Groom Coachman or Coachman General; disengaged early in March; can milk and care motor if required.”—*Irish Paper*.

A modern improvement, we suppose, on “the cow with the iron tail.”

* * * * *

“At a special meeting of the Duma held to-day, the Minister for Agriculture, M. Rittich, in reply to an urgent question on the measures for supplying Petrograd, stated the supplies were sufficient for the present. Difficulties in purchase are due to excessive building and storing by individuals in the shape of rusks.”—*Daily Chronicle*.

No authority for this remarkable statement is given, but we suspect the *Russky Invalid*.

* * * * *

“A trifle of a trinket for his women-folk is the only saving as an insurance for the poor against famine and starvation for a rainless day.”—*A Native Writer in “The Times of India.”*

KIPLING was right, East is East and West is West.

* * * * *

“The undersigned has great pleasure in informing all the ladies, gentlemen and the other travellers in the Station that a very nice comfortable motor car can be obtained on hire from him for a walk in or out of the Station for any period of time at very reasonable charges.”—*Peshawar Daily News*.

The petrol shortage evidently extends to India.

* * * * *

“Ireland is accustomed to disappointment; she is accustomed to what she signalises as betrayal, but her spirit remains unbroken, and she goes on her way undaunted to seek, it may be by new methods and a new road, her appointed gaol.”—*Manchester Guardian*.

Irishmen may justifiably resent this cynicism on the part of an old friend.

* * * * *

[Illustration: A MODIFIED SALIENT.

The Old 'Un (surveying recently called-up warrior). “WELL, JARGE, YOU’M STILL TURR’BLE FAT, BUT THE ARMY DO ZEEM TO ’AVE REARRANGED IT, LIKE.”]

* * * * *

GOLD BRAID.

Same old crossing, same old boat,
Same old dust round Rouen way,
Same old narsty one-franc note,
Same old “Mercy, sivvoo play;”
Same old scramble up the line,
Same old 'orse-box, same old stor,
Same old weather, wet or fine,
Same old blooming War.



Page 9

*Ho Lor, it isn't a dream,
It's just as it used to be, every bit;
Same old whistle and same old bang,
And me to stay 'ere till I'm 'it.*

'Twas up by Loos I got me first;
I just dropped gently, crawled a yard
And rested sickish, with a thirst—
The 'eat, I thought, and smoking 'ard ...
Then someone offers me a drink,
What poets call "the cooling draft,"
And seeing 'im I done a think:
"Blighty," I thinks—and laughed.

I'm not a soldier natural,
No more than most of us to-day;
I runs a business with a pal
(Meaning the Missis) Fulham way;
Greengrocery—the cabbages
And fruit and things I take meself,
And she has daffs and crocuses
A-smiling on a shelf.

"Blighty," I thinks. The doctor knows;
'E talks of punctured damn-the-things.
It's me for Blighty. Down I goes;
I ain't a singer, but I sings;
"Oh, 'oo goes 'ome?" I sort of 'ums;
"Oh, 'oo's for dear old England's shores?"
And by-and-by Southampton comes—
"Blighty!" I says and roars.

I s'pose I thort I done my bit;
I s'pose I thort the War would stop;
I saw myself a-getting fit
With Missis at the little shop;
The same like as it used to be,
The same old markets, same old crowd.
The same old marrers, same old me,
But 'er as proud as proud....

The regiment is where it was,
I'm in the same old ninth platoon;
New faces most, and keen becos



They 'ope the thing is ending soon;
I ain't complaining, mind, but still,
When later on some newish bloke
Stops one and laughs, "A blighty, Bill,"
I'll wonder, "Where's the joke?"

Same old trenches, same old view,
Same old rats and just as tame,
Same old dug-outs, nothing new,
Same old smell, the very same,
Same old bodies out in front,
Same old *strafe* from 2 till 4,
Same old scratching, same old 'unt,
Same old bloody War.

*Ho Lor, it isn't a dream,
It's just as it used to be, every bit;
Same old whistle and same old bang
And me out again to be 'it.
A.A.M.*

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE NEW POSTER.]

* * * * *

"The important now development in the cotton situation is that the 1/2
Prime Minister has consented to receive a deputation."—*Manchester
Guardian*.

All the same, he refused to adopt a 1/2 measure.

* * * * *

"The history of the development of the 3/4eppelin is well-known."—*Daily
Chronicle*.

Particularly since our airmen ceased to give it any quarter.

Page 10

* * * * *

From an official notice of the sale of an enemy business:—

“Lot 2. The goodwill of the business of the company attaching to goods shipped from England to Nigeria, marked with the unregistered or common-law trade-marks known as ‘Eagle on Rocks’ and ‘Lion and Flag.’”

We are not surprised to hear of the “Eagle on Rocks” when it had the “Lion and Flag” after it.

* * * * *

[Illustration: TILLERS OF THE SOIL.

STUDY OF URBAN DWELLERS PREPARING FOR THE WORST.]

* * * * *

THE JOY-RIDER AT THE FRONT.

(Being a free version of Mr. BERNARD SHAW’S articles in “The Daily Chronicle” on his visit to the seat of War.)

“Since the good man, RAMSAY MACDONALD, while touring in the East
Went out to shoot the tiger, that homicidal beast,
The most electrifying humanitarian stunt
Has been my khaki joy-ride along the British Front.

“It wasn’t my own suggestion; I went as the Government’s guest,
Invited to see how the brass-hats were running the show on the West;
I’ve never been sweet on soldiers, but I only went for a week,
And it gave me heaps of chances of studying war technique.

“If they really thought to convert me by the loan of a khaki suit,
Or by conferring upon me the right to claim a salute,
It wouldn’t at all surprise me, for dullards have always tried
To bribe true men of genius to take the popular side.

“Well, I went, I saw, I ‘joy-rode,’ and my verdict remains the same;
There’s no use having a country unless she’s always to blame;
For of all the appalling prospects that human life can lend
The worst is to be unable to play the candid friend.



“Men talk of France, the Martyr; of her precious blood outpoured;
Of the innocent helpless victims of the brutal Hunnish horde;
Presuming, insensate idiots, to label as beast and brute
The race that has always held me in the very highest repute!

“While France has failed completely, at least in those later days,
To show appreciation of my Prefaces and Plays;
It wouldn't be therefore worthy of a genuine superman
To show undue compassion for the sorrows of 'Marianne.'

“And as for the sheer destruction of noble and ancient fanes
Which the prejudiced Hun-hater indignantly arraigns,
The simple truth compels me in honesty to state
That the style of some ruined buildings was utterly second-rate.

“But to quit these trivial matters—let weaklings wail and weep,
The loss of a few cathedrals will never affect my sleep—
What lifts this Armageddon to an altitude sublime
Is the crowning fact that it gave me a perfectly glorious time.

“As an ultra-neutral observer I entered the battle zone
And emerged unmoved, unshaken, with a heart as cool as a stone;
No sight could touch or daunt me, no sound my soul untune;
From pity or tears or sorrow I still remained immune.

Page 11

"I own that before my arrival I felt an occasional qualm
Lest the shock of the unexpected might shatter my wonted calm;
But it gave me the richest rapture to find I was wholly free
From the crude and vulgar emotions that harass the plain V.C.

"I inspected the great war-engine, and, instead of its going strong,
I saw that in each of its workings there was always something wrong;
In fact, with the old black powder and the obsolete Brown Bess
The chances of missing your target were infinitely less.

"The so-called arm of precision scores only by lucky hits,
Though the 'heavies' and high explosives may possibly blow you to bits;
I saw one corpse on my 'joy-ride,' the head had been blown away,
And the thought of this painless ending produced in me no dismay."

*Now he's back in the finest feather from his holiday with the Staff, And we're sure that
no one will grudge him the meed of this epitaph: "He went through the fiery furnace, but
never a hair was missed From the heels of our most colossal Arch-Super-Egotist."*

* * * * *

"GREAT WHITE SALE.

UNREPEATABLE BARGAINS IN LINGERIE."—*Daily Paper*.

We respect this reticence.

* * * * *

"The public are responding but slowly to the appeal of the Post Office
to facilitate the delay of correspondence in London by using the new
numbered addresses."—*Daily Mail*.

If that is really the object, why hurry?

* * * * *

[Illustration: CANCELLED

BY ORDER OF THE COMPETENT MILITARY AUTHORITY.]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, March 12th.—Having declared war upon the Government the Nationalists are seeking a suitable plan of campaign. The Home Rule demand never obtained much support among the Irish farmers until FINTAN LALOR hitched it on to the Land question, and ever since Mr. WYNDHAM'S Land Purchase Act turned the tenants into prospective owners it has been steadily losing momentum. Mr. GINNELL, who made his reputation as a perverse species of cowboy, now witnesses with grim satisfaction the efforts of his colleagues to borrow his policy and break up the grass farms. It was rather hard on him that the Parliamentary printer should have ruined one of his questions on the subject by making him say "that the reason"—instead of the season—"for breaking this land is passing away."

The HOME SECRETARY is regarded by those who do not know him intimately as a somewhat austere person, but given the right atmosphere he can be as lively as anybody. Questioned about the reopening of Ciro's, he betrayed a minute acquaintance with the details of its programme. I was beginning to wonder if he were related to that famous Early-Victorian family, the Caves of Harmony, when his knowledge broke down. On being asked by his old friend Mr. BUTCHER to define a cabaret-entertainment he was nonplussed, and could only refer him to Colonel LOCKWOOD as a probable authority.

Page 12

No one was more delighted at Mr. BONAR LAW'S announcement of the capture of Baghdad than the Member for Cockermouth, who knows the region well. Mesopotamia may or may not be the Garden of Eden, but Baghdad was at one time unquestionably the abode of BLISS.

Mr. CATHCART WASON was a little puzzled when Mr. FORSTER informed him that the peeling of potatoes by Army cooks is strictly forbidden, "except when the dietary of the troops makes it necessary." Why should there be any exception at all, he wondered, until a neighbour, better informed about the new meat-ration, whispered, "Sausages and *mashed*."

A grave statement by Mr. MACPHERSON as to the recent losses of the Royal Flying Corps on the Western Front, and the increased activity of the German airmen, created some natural depression, which might have been more pronounced had not Mr. PEMBERTON-BILLING seized the occasion to reiterate his charges of "Murder" already condemned as baseless by two judicial tribunals. The House will do anything in reason, but it refuses to accompany Mr. BILLING in his flights of imagination.

Tuesday, March 13th.—In the Lords, the Bill to deprive enemy peers of their titles was supported by Lord MIDLETON, who nobly offered to sacrifice his Red Eagle on the altar of patriotism. On the other hand Lord COURTNEY condemned it; but there is no truth in the story that the Yellow Waistcoat which he habitually wears was originally conferred upon him by the KAISER. It is, I understand, an example of protective colouring, designed to ward off the attacks of the Yellow Press.

Wednesday, March 14th.—The explosive qualities of cotton when suitably combined with other ingredients are well known. Of these ingredients the Lancashire spirit is perhaps the most potent. Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN began his defence of the proposed Indian cotton duties with an appeal to Imperial sentiment based upon what India had done and was doing. The Maharajah of BIKANIR, seated in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery, listened with appreciation to the praises of his famous Camel Corps. Then followed what might be called the Home Rule argument—we could not refuse what the Indian people so much desired—delivered with so much earnestness that Mr. JEREMIAH MACVEAGH loudly invited Mr. CHAMBERLAIN to "come over and sit on these benches."

[Illustration: MEGAPHONES FOR MINISTERS. A SUGGESTION FROM THE PRESS GALLERY.]

But his best card was his last, when, after a tribute to Mr. ASQUITH'S "loyalty to colleagues," which roused tremendous cheering from the Liberals, he invited the late Prime Minister to cast his vote with the Government. Mr. ASQUITH did even more, for at the end of a speech, critical but not censorious, he suggested an amendment to the Resolution which enabled his Free Trade followers to "save their face." A few stalwarts

from Lancashire insisted none the less on taking a division, and were joined on general principles by the Nationalists and other habitual malcontents. But India, the Government and Mr. ASQUITH had the comfortable majority of 140.

Page 13

Thursday, March 15th.—Under the present rules of procedure (the products of Irish obstruction in the past) the Nationalists find it difficult to put their declaration of war against the Government to much effect. Their best chance comes during the first hour of the sitting, and their most useful weapon is the Supplementary Question. No sooner has Mr. DUKE read the official reply to the inquiry on the Paper than there comes a strident “Arising out of that, Mr. SPEAKER-R.” Fortunately the CHIEF SECRETARY possesses a Job-like patience, and is rarely betrayed into any departure from his polite if somewhat ponderous manner. To badger Mr. BIRRELL was an exciting pastime rather like punching the ball. To heckle Mr. DUKE is like hammering a sandbag.

It would be interesting to know how many Members of the House of Commons have volunteered under the National Service scheme. I only know of one; that is Dr. MACNAMARA, who modestly avowed the fact when challenged by Mr. PRINGLE, though I doubt whether the Admiralty will consent to dispense with his services. On the other hand I only know of one who has not; and that is Mr. PRINGLE himself, who, on the same challenge being put to him, replied, “No, and don’t intend.” There is evidently someone, possibly Mr. HOGGE, who thinks Mr. PRINGLE’S present services indispensable to the winning of the War.

The debate on the new Vote of Credit dragged along in a thin and somnolent House until Mr. BONAR LAW woke it up with the startling news that there had been a revolution in Russia, and that the TSAR had abdicated. Everybody seemed pleased, including Mr. DEVLIN, who was quite statesmanlike in his appreciation. But no one noticed that henceforward we must rank the late Sir HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN among the prophets. Addressing the Members of the Inter-parliamentary Conference assembled in the Palace of Westminster on July 23rd, 1906, just after the dissolution of Russia’s first elected Parliament, he said, “*La Duma est morte; vive la Duma!*” For a Prime Minister this outburst was regarded as a little tactless; its essential wisdom has been justified by the event.

Friday, March 16th.—To-morrow being St. Patrick’s Day, Mr. BONAR LAW seized the opportunity to address a little homily to Members from Ireland. Unless they mend their ways pretty soon they may have to go back to their constituents and tackle the Sinn Feiners themselves.

* * * * *

WINGED VICTORY.

“*Per ardua ad astra.*”

“One of our machines did not return.”



I like to think it did not fall to earth,
A wounded bird that trails a broken wing,
But to the heavenly blue that gave it birth
Faded in silence, a mysterious thing,
Cleaving its radiant course where honour lies,
Like a winged victory mounting to the skies.

Page 14

The clouds received it and the pathless night;
Swift as a flame, its eager force unspent,
We saw no limit to its daring flight;
Only its pilot knew the way it went,
And how it pierced the maze of flickering stars
Straight to its goal in the red planet Mars.

So to the entrance of that fiery gate,
Borne by no current, driven by no breeze,
Knowing no guide but some compelling fate,
Bold navigators of uncharted seas,
Courage and youth went proudly sweeping by,
To win the unchallenged freedom of the sky.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Curate (to unfailing supporter)*. "OH, MISS TOOTSBY, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU HERE AGAIN. IT WOULDN'T SEEM LIKE A JUMBLE SALE WITHOUT YOU."]

* * * * *

HEART-TO-HEART TALKS.

(Enter *PASHA* and the *Sultan of TURKEY*.)

The Sultan. Then you want me to press the GERMAN KAISER to come to Constantinople and pay me a visit. Is that it?

Enver. Yes, your Majesty, that is about it. It would produce a splendid effect on the populace and would electrify the soldiers.

The Sultan. But I've already told you that I cordially dislike this KAISER of yours. Wherever he goes he turns everything upside down, and there's not a moment's peace or repose for anybody. He must have reviews of troops morning, noon and night, and it's all quite useless, for our Generals tell me that he doesn't really understand anything about soldiers and their movements. You know they've had to keep him away from the fighting, both in France and Russia, because he would insist on giving the most absurd orders, and when things didn't go right immediately he always broke out into shouting and cursing, and praying and crying until his Staff felt so ashamed of him and themselves that they didn't know which way to look. There's never any knowing what a man like that will do. He's as likely as not to want to preach a sermon in St. Sophia, or to ride his horse up the steps of the Palace.

Enver. These are certainly faults, but they are the faults of an enthusiastic nature.



The Sultan. Well, I don't like that kind of enthusiastic nature. I prefer something quieter. Besides, I am told that his behaviour in the house and his table-manners are dreadful. He's quite capable, if he doesn't like a dish, of throwing it at the attendants. Then he gets so angry when people don't agree with him; the least contradiction makes him purple, absolutely purple, with passion. My dear ENVER, you would have to pretend you knew nothing about Turkey when you talked with him—at any rate nothing in comparison with his knowledge—and I'm sure you wouldn't like that; nobody would. No, I can't say the prospect of having him here as my guest allures me, but of course, if you say it *must* be done, I'm ready to sacrifice myself. Only I warn you it will spoil everything for me to have him here prancing about in a Turkish uniform.

Page 15

Enver. I didn't know your Majesty's feelings were so strong on the subject. Perhaps it will not, after all, be necessary. I will see what can be done.

The Sultan. Yes, do, there's a good fellow. If I had to entertain that man for a week I should suffer from indigestion for the rest of my life.

Enver. If possible we will see that your Majesty is spared such an affliction. With your Majesty's leave I will now withdraw.

The Sultan. Do by all means. No—stop; you haven't given me any of the War news. I keep on asking for it, but nobody pays any attention to my requests. Honestly, I don't see much use in being a Sultan if one can't get anyone to do what one asks.

Enver. Oh, you want to hear some War news, do you? Well, I may as well tell you now as later. Baghdad's gone.

The Sultan. What—captured?

Enver. Yes, the infernal English have got it.

The Sultan. I knew it was bound to happen. I told you so only last Tuesday—at least, if it wasn't you it was somebody else. "Baghdad," I said, "is sure to be captured. The English are in great force, and if we don't watch it carefully they're sure to snatch it from us." That's what I said; but you wouldn't have it. You were all so cock-sure, and now where are you?

Enver. Who can fight against treachery?

The Sultan. Treachery? It's simply stupidity and incompetence. You and your KAISER keep patting one another on the back, and then one fine morning you wake up and discover that Baghdad has fallen. ENVER, you'll find it rather difficult to explain this to the people. They know my advice hasn't counted for anything in this; they'll put it all down to you; and you can't murder them all, as you murdered poor old NAZIM.

Enver. Silence, or—

The Sultan. Yes, I know, but I will not keep silence. Rather, I will ask again, why have you sent my best regiments to help the Austrians and Germans on their own fronts? Even I could have managed better than that. And why are we fighting in this War at all? Answer me that.

Enver. We fight for the greatness of Turkey.

The Sultan. Well, we don't seem very successful. It was a good deal bigger before we lost Erzerum and Baghdad...

(Left wrangling.)

* * * * *

Conscience-Money?

“The Commissioners of Inland Revenue acknowledge the receipt of first half of L100 note from ‘Berlin.’”—*Daily Paper*.

* * * * *

“Half-a-dozen deer escaped from Hatfield Park some weeks ago through a gate having been carelessly left open. A wholesale clearance of vegetables followed in the district, and the damage was so serious that, with the Marquis of Salisbury’s approval, shooting parties of farmers went out, and the raiders have now been run to earth.”—*Manchester Paper*.

It looks as if they were only rabbits, after all.

Page 16

* * * * *

AT THE PLAY.

“REMNANT.”

I wish now that I had not been compelled to postpone my visit to the Royalty, for I think the fall of Baghdad must have put me a bit above myself. Anyhow, I was less moved than usual by the triumph of virtue and the downing of vice; and permitted myself to wonder how a play like *Remnant* ever found its way into the Royalty (of all theatres), and what Mr. DENNIS EADIE (of all actors) was doing in this galley, this melted-butter boat. And indeed there were moments when I could see that Mr. EADIE himself shared my wonder, if I rightly interpreted certain signs of indifference and detachment in his performance. I even suspected a sinister intention in the title, though, of course, Messrs. MORTON and NICCODEMI didn't really get their play off in the course of a bargain sale of superannuated goods.

Apart from the Second Act, where Miss MARIE LOeHR (looking rather like a nice Dutch doll) delivered the blunt gaucheries of *Remnant* with a delightfully stolid naivete, the design of the play and its simple little devices might almost have been the work of amateurs. The sordid quarrels between *Tony* and his preposterous mistress (whom I took to be a model, till I found that he was only an artist in steam locomotives) were extraordinarily lacking in subtlety. In all this Bohemian business one looked in vain for a touch of the art of MURGER. What would one not have given for something even distantly reminiscent of the *Juliet* scene—“*et le pigeon chantait toujours*”? And it wasn't as if this was supposed to be a sham Americanised *quartier* of to-day. We were in the true period—under Louis PHILIPPE. Indeed I know no other reason (costumes always excepted) why the scene was the Paris of 1840. For the purposes of the play *Tony* might just as well have been a British designer of tanks (London, 1916). Nor was there anything even conventionally French about the girl *Remnant*, who might have been born next-door to Bow Bells.

[Illustration: REMNANT BARGAIN DAY.

Tony ... MR. DENNIS EADIE.

“*Remnant*” ... MISS MARIE LOeHR.]

Miss MARIE LOeHR was the life and soul of the party. Her true comedy manner, when she was serious, was always fascinating. She said with great discretion her little Barresque piece about the desirability of babies, and she did all she knew to keep the sentiment from being too sickly-sweet. Here she had strong assistance from Mr. EADIE as her lover *Tony*; for, though he got a fine flash out of the green eye of jealousy when he suspected his patron, *Jules*, of jumping his love-claim, it was obvious at the end that



the success of his professional ambitions was far more to him than any affair of the heart. And, after all, when *Remnant* complained of a curious *bourdonnement* in her ears, and *Tony* had to reply solemnly, "That which you hear is the beating of your heart to the music of your soul," you could hardly expect a man with Mr. EADIE'S sense of humour to throw much conviction into the statement.

Page 17

Mr. C.M. LOWNE was a very passable *beau*, and made love to *Remnant* with that rich fruitiness of voice of which he is a past master. It was her business (as she explained to *Tony* when he surprised their two faces within kissing distance of each other) to keep *Jules* in good humour since *Tony's* chances depended upon his patronage. But it couldn't have helped much to tell *Jules* with such appalling candour that the shiver produced by his kiss was the same kind as she had once felt when a rat ran over her face during sleep. However, *Jules* was not a *beau* for nothing and could afford this exceptional set-back to one of his many amours. There was, by the way, an excellent little comedy scene between him and his wife, played by Miss MURIEL POPE with a quiet humour as piquant as her gown.

As *Manon*, the querulous termagant that *Tony* had taken for mistress, Miss HILDA MOORE was not very kindly served by her part—so rudimentary that its highest flight was achieved when, with a Parthian shot, she referred to *Tony* as a geni-ass.

I will not forecast a limited success for this play, for who would dare to say that there is not always room in the broad British bosom for yet another triumph of sentiment over ideas—I speak of the play itself and not of the performance? If only for Miss LOeHR'S sake I could wish that the best of fortune may attend it; for to have worn her hair as she did in the Second Act, out of regard for the period, was a sacrifice as fine as any that women have shown in the course of Armageddon (if I may judge of them by their portraits in the Photographic Press), and she ought to have her reward, bless her heart! O.S.

* * * * *

“GENERAL POST.”

It would be easy to make fun of the exaggerations and ultra-simplifications of Mr. TERRY'S new comedy. It is much pleasanter (and juster) to dwell on its wholesomeness, its easy humour and its effect of honest entertainment. Not a highbrow adventure, it is not to be judged by highbrow standards. It is decently in key, and an exceptionally clever cast carried it adroitly over any rough places. Remarkable, too, as almost the first popular testimonial since the War began to the too-much-taken-for-granted Territorials, who worked in the old days while we scoffed and golfed. That's all to the good.

[Illustration: THE TAILOR WHO DID NOT NEED TO PRESS HIS SUIT.

Sir Dennys Broughton ... MR. NORMAN MCKINNEL.

Lady Broughton ... MISS LILIAN BRAITHWAITE.

Edward Smith (tailor) ... MR. GEORGE TULLY.]

Page 18

Our author's hero is an excellent provincial tailor, who is also keen *Captain Smith* in the Sheffingham Terriers. As tailor his chief customer, as soldier his contemptuous scandalised critic, is *Sir Dennys Broughton*, whose wayward flapper daughter *Betty* is in the early fierce stages of revolt against the stuffiness of life at Grange Court, meets *Smith* over some boys' club work, and, finding brains and dreams in him (a formidable contrast to her loafing brother), falls into passionate first-love. *Smith* is just as badly if more soberly hit, and recognising the impossibility of the situation (quite apart from demonstrations by the alarmed *Broughtons*) decides to take his tape and shears to his London house of business. The date of all this being about the time of the misguided *Panther's* fateful leap on Agadir.

Act II. brings us to the second year of the War. Young *Broughton*, puppy no longer, is gloriously in it, and has just been gazetted to a Territorial regiment whose Colonel bears the not uncommon name of *Smith*. Our tailor, of course, and a rattling fine soldier too. Having discovered this latter fact and also formed a remarkably cordial relationship apparently in a single day, the enthusiastic cub subaltern (distemper and snobbishness over and done with) motors up his C.O., who is visiting his brother and partner, and brings him in to Grange Court on the way. *Sir Dennys*, now a brassarded private and otherwise a converted man, is still confoundedly embarrassed, and stands anything but easy in the presence of his youngster's Colonel. *Lady Broughton*, least malleable of the group, is frankly appalled by this new *mesalliance*. Perhaps Mr. TERRY'S version of blue-blooded insolence and fatuity is for his stage purpose rather crudely coloured, but who shall say that the doctrine that a man in khaki who has been an elementary schoolmaster or a tailor is a man for a' that, is quite universally accepted in the best circles even in this year of grace? *Betty*, now a grown girl in the cynical stage, revenges herself with feline savagery on the knight of the shears for the imagined slight of his defection.

Act III. is dated 19? just after peace is declared. The tailor is not (as I half expected) back in his shop, but a *Brigadier-General Smith, V.C.*, is being invested with the freedom of Sheffingham and is making a spirited attack on the defences of *Betty*. She puts up enough of a fight to ensure a good Third Act, and capitulates charmingly to the delight, now, of all the *Broughton* household—butler included. I hope Mr. TERRY is right and that the places taken in this great war game of *General Post* and the values registered will have permanence.

Page 19

I won't deny that the excellent moral of the play goes far to disarm one's critical faculty. Why not confess that one lost one's heart to the nicest tailor since *Evan Harrington*? Indeed, Mr. TULLY (always, I find, quite admirable in characterisation, and that no mere matter of outward trick, but duly charged with feeling) made just such a decent, lovable, sideless officer as it has been the pride of the nation of shopkeepers to produce in the day of challenge. Whoever was it dared cast Mr. MCKINNEL for the part of a weak kindly old ass of a baronet, without any ruggedness or violence in his composition? Congratulations to the unknown perspicacious hero and to Mr. MCKINNEL! Miss MADGE TITHERADGE flapped prettily as a flapper; bit cleanly and cruelly in her biting mood; surrendered most engagingly. This is less than justice. She used her queer caressing voice and her reserves of emotional power to fine effect. Miss LILIAN BRAITHWAITE made her *Lady Broughton* nearly credible and less "unsympathetic" than was just. Mr. DANIELL is new to me. He played one of those difficult foil parts with a really nice discretion.

The audience was genuinely pleased. It dragged from the author a becomingly modest acknowledgment. He *did* owe a great deal to his players, but a writer of stage plays need not be ashamed of that. T.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Ethel (playing at grown-ups)*. "IS YOUR HUSBAND IN THE WAR, MRS. BROWN?" *Mabel*. "OH YES, OF COURSE, MRS. SMITH."

Ethel. "IS HE IN FRANCE?" *Mabel*. "NO, HE'S IN THE WAR LOAN."]

* * * * *

THE PLOT PRECAUTIONARY.

(*The KAISER addresses his Transatlantic Faithful.*)

Ye stalwart Huns and strident,
Who can't come home again,
Because base Albion's trident,
Though largely on the wane,
Still occupies successfully the surface of the main;

Give ear, my gallant fellows,
While I the truth declare;
Britain's expiring bellows
Will shortly rend the air;
Wiping the earth up then will be a simplified affair.



But, while at home our Hunnish
Valour obtains the day,
It must be yours to punish
The craven U.S.A.,
Debouching on them unawares from Sinaloa way.

I make the rough suggestion,
And it shall be your care
To solve the minor question
Of how and when and where,
Aided by Gen. CARRANZA, the party with the hair.

Some pesos and centavos
He will of course demand
Before he leads his bravos
Across the Rio Grande;
Offer the fellow all he wants—in German notes of hand.

Meanwhile the Hyphenated,
Busy with bomb and knife,
Will likewise hand the hated
Gringos a taste of strife,
Starting with Colonel ROOSEVELT and the Editor of *Life*.

Page 20

These are, in brief, the vistas
That swim before my ken;
So tell the Carranzistas
To up and act like men;
And say the money's coming on, but do not mention when.

Bid them with sword and fire wreck
The pale Pacific West;
And tell SYLVESTER VIERECK
And BARTHOLDT and the rest
To call the Lagerbund to arms and jump on WILSON'S chest.

There'll be some opposition—
That I can quite foresee;
But bear in mind your mission
Must primarily be
To keep the swine-dog Yankees from jumping on to *me*!
ALGOL.

* * * * *

Our Commercial Stylists.

“—, SONS & CO., LTD.,

ARE SHOWING A DELIGHTFUL RANGE OF CORSETS, EMBRACING THE MOST
APPROVED MODELS.”—*Glasgow Herald*.

* * * * *

“Dover: Gas up 5d. a 1,000.
Tunbridge Wells: Gas up 2d. a 1,000.
Lord Selborne is up again, after a chill.”—*Evening News*.

Good, but how much?

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

The Snare (SECKER) impressed me as a tale emphatically prededicated to the footlights. Actually, by the way, Mr. RAFAEL SABATINI has dedicated it “to LEON M. LEON, who told me this story”—which, of course, only strengthens my belief. Anyhow,

it has every mark of the romantic drama—a picturesque setting, that of the Peninsular War, rich in possibilities for the scenic and sartorial arts; and a strongly emotional plot, leading up to a situation that could be relied upon to bring down the house. I shall, of course, not tell you the plot. It contains a jealous husband, an injudicious wife, a hero and heroine, a villain (of foreign extraction) and a god in the machine, who is none other than our IRON DUKE himself. And the situation in the last Act offers as pretty a piece of table-turning as any audience need desire. I wish I could explain how the DUKE plays with his enemies, and finally—but no, I said I wouldn't, and I will keep my word. Two little carpings, however. Surely it is wrong to speak of “catch half-penny” journalism in the time of WELLINGTON. My impression is that the journalists of those days caught at least fourpence by their wares. And I confess to an emotion of disappointment when the heroine bounced up at the court-martial and said that the hero couldn't have committed the murder because he was “in her arms” at the time. Of course he hadn't been; and I very much doubt whether any Court would have believed her for two minutes. But leading ladies love saying it, so I suppose the very out-worn device will have to be retained in the stage version. I look forward to this with much pleasure.

* * * * *

Page 21

That clever lady, ELINOR MORDAUNT, has collected into the volume that she calls *Before Midnight* (CASSELL) a series of short stories of a psychic (though not always ghostly) character, which, while not very eerie, or on the same high level, are at their best both original and impressive. The first of them, which affords excuse for a highly-intriguing cover-picture, is at once the most spooksome and the least satisfactory. That is to say that, though it opens with a genuine and quite horrible thrill, the “explanation” is obscure and tame. Far more successful, to my mind, is “The Vision,” a delicate little idyll of a Midland schoolmarm, to whom is shown the death of Adonis and the lamenting of his goddess-lover. The writing of this touches real beauty (the high-fantastic, instead of the merely high-falutin’, which in such connection would have been so fatally easy). To sum up, though one at least of these “dreams before midnight” may quite possibly become a nightmare after it, I fancy that, to all lovers of the occult, the game will be found well worth the bed-room candle.

* * * * *

There are qualities in *The Bird of Life*, by GERTRUDE VAUGHAN (CHAPMAN AND HALL), which cause me to look forward to this lady’s future work with very considerable interest. In the present novel she sets out the life story of *Rachel* up to a point boldly given as being beyond the conclusion of the War, in which, by the way, both her husband and the man whom she ought to have married are killed on the same day. The first eighty-four pages of the book raised my hopes very high. They describe with great simplicity and sympathy the thoughts and feelings, the romances and difficulties, of an affectionate and lonely little girl living with her *Uncle Matthew* and her *Aunt Elizabeth*, and loving them both with a childlike fervour. There is no exaggeration; the writing goes true to its mark, and the effect designed by the writer is admirably well made. Then *Uncle Matthew* dies and *Rachel* finds a new home in the Vicarage of *Mr. Venning*, a family man if ever there was one, for he has fifteen children. From this point the interest is slightly diluted, and the excellence of the book diminishes. One does not recognise in the more mature *Rachel* the girl one had expected to find after one’s initiation into the secrets of her baby mind. She marries *Edward Venning*, and finds too late that he is, like his father, made up of convention and narrowness. She plans a disappearance, and leaves some of her belongings on the edge of a bottomless tarn. Then, being hypothetically dead, she begins to live her life in her own way. Later on she returns to *Edward*, “on approval for six months”; but this period was apparently not sufficient to break the chain that bound her to Another, and, the War intervening, she is left almost doubly widowed. I feel that I have not quite done justice to Miss VAUGHAN’S book, but, on the other hand, I am sure that she has not quite done justice to her unquestionable talent.

Page 22

* * * * *

A volume entitled *Friends of France: The Field Service of the American Ambulance* (SMITH, ELDER) has appeared in a happy hour to remind one, if that were necessary, that in the great nation that awaits Mr. WILSON'S call there have always been found some eager to give their services and, if need be, life itself to prove their love for the other great Republic. I don't think either you or I will grudge such an affection at this date, founded historically though it may be on a mutual dislike of ourselves, and consequently it is a very pleasant impression that is produced by this record of American efficiency and courage in Red Cross work on the French front. This being clearly remembered one need not be afraid to admit that in detail the book will be of interest mainly to the friends of those concerned, since the method of multiple authorship adopted necessarily involves overlapping, and a good deal of the volume is given up to monotonous, though undoubtedly well-earned, "tributes and citations" from the French authorities. Neither is the bulk of the matter, most generously illustrated though it is, particularly intriguing, for by now one is sufficiently familiar with accounts of the removal of wounded under fire and the sort of work at which these four hundred American University men proved themselves so adept at half-a-dozen points between Flanders and Alsace. Americans, long at odds with "ruthlessness" (and at last forced to the inevitable logical conclusion in regard to it), may well be glad to be able to point, amongst other creditable things, to this history of service given without hesitation in acknowledgment of their debt to the civilisation of the Old World; and we also shall be no less glad to remember it.

* * * * *

It is perhaps natural that in *Winnowed Memories* (CASSELL), by Field-Marshal Sir EVELYN WOOD, V.C., one should look at first to see what references they contain to modern events. On these matters, as on all others covered by this volume, we are told nothing that is not invigorating and to the point, and the tributes here paid to the fighting qualities of our armies of to-day form a fitting conclusion to a book that is full of sound sense and good cheer. Sir EVELYN has had a vast experience and enjoys an evergreen vigour. What is rarer still, he has a kindly nature that admits no trace of the disappointments he must from time to time have suffered. As everyone knows, he was always an advocate of Compulsory Universal Service for Home Defence, but he casts no stone at those who so long and parlously delayed to learn their lesson. Like the true soldier that he is, he seems to have no time or taste for those recriminations which are best left to small political fry. And I rejoice that in a book of such authority the note is largely one of happiness and hope.

* * * * *

“Owing to congestion on the railways there is a food shortage in Petrograd, which has led some of the less irresponsible citizens to demonstrate during the session of the Council of the Empire and the Duma.”—*Daily Sketch*.

Page 23

Subsequent news shows that “less irresponsible” was not a misprint but a prophecy.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Sympathetic Newsboy (to proprietor of Coffee Stall.)* “WOT YER TRYIN’ TO DO WIV THE OLD ‘OTEL, GUVNER? TAKIN’ IT ‘OME FOR FEAR OF ‘AVIN’ IT COMMANDEERED?”]

* * * * *

“It is claimed that about thirty Merman firms construct the Diesel motors originally used for submarines.”—*Daily Telegraph*.

We wish these motors a speedy return to the fishy scenes of their origin.

* * * * *

“Several eligible sires for workmen’s dwellings, of which some 300 are needed, have been selected by the Southport Town Planning Committee.”—*Daily Paper*.

They must not be confused with “the rude forefathers of the hamlet” mentioned by GRAY.