

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, January 31, 1917 eBook

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Contents

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, January 31, 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.....	16
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.....	38
Page 19.....	40
Page 20.....	41
Page 21.....	43
Page 22.....	44

Page 23.....45

Page 24.....47

Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
CHARIVARIA.		1
LV.		5
XVI.		13
XVII.		14

Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

The birth-rate in Berlin, it appears, is considerably lower this year than last. We can quite understand this reluctance to being born a German just now.

The official German films of the Battle of the Somme prove beyond doubt that if it had not been for the Allies the Germans would have won this battle.

The German military authorities have declined to introduce bathless days. Ablution, it appears, is one of the personal habits that the Teuton does not pursue to a vicious excess.

Some congestion of traffic is being experienced by the Midland Railway owing to the publicity given by the *food-controller* to the Company's one-and-ninepenny luncheon basket. Many people are finding it more economical to purchase a return ticket to the Midlands and lunch in the train than to go, as formerly, to one of the regular tea-shops.

An egg four-and-a-half inches long and eight inches round has been laid by a hen at Southover, Lewes. It is understood that a proposal by the *food-controller* that this standard should be adopted as the compulsory minimum for the duration of the War is meeting with some opposition from Mr. *Prothero*.

"We must all be prepared to make sacrifices," says the *Berliner Tageblatt*. We understand that, acting upon this advice, several high command officers have volunteered to sacrifice the *crown Prince*.

The Dublin Corporation has decided to pay full salaries from the date of their leaving work to those employees who until recently have been held under arrest for participation in the Sinn Fein rebellion. The idea of making them a grant for Kit and Field allowances has not yet come under consideration.

German travellers, says a news item, are forbidden to take flowers with them into Austria. It is intended that the funeral shall be a quiet one.

Mr. *Daniels* describes the shells made by American factories for the U.S. Navy as “colossally inferior” to those submitted by a British firm. The explanation is of course that the former are primarily designed to enforce universal peace.

A Leicestershire farmer who applied for alien enemies to assist in farm-work was supplied with three Hungarians—a jeweller, a hairdresser and a tailor. His complaint is, we understand, that while he wanted his land to be well-dressed he didn’t want it overdone.

[Illustration: *Nature’s tactless mimicry.*

Curious attitude assumed by Trees in A district occupied by the Germans.]

A widely-known nocturnal pleasure resort makes the announcement that it is still open for business, the action of the Court having only deprived it of the right to sell intoxicating liquors. We fear it will be a case of *Hamlet* without the familiar spirit.

Page 2

“We are not war-weary but war-hardened,” said Mr. *Winston Churchill* in a recent address. Germany, we are happy to state, is war-weary and will soon be Maximilian-Hardened.

The question as to whether war serves any useful purpose has been settled once for all. “The War has provided many incidents for this revue,” says a stage paper of a new production.

A pig-sty has been erected in his rose-garden by a doctor in East Essex. The general idea is not new, though it is more usual to plant a rose-garden round your pig-sty, as a corrective.

It is pointed out by an evening paper that the official prohibition of “fishing, washing and bathing” in the St. James’s Park pond is superfluous, as the pond was dried up two years ago. In view of the exceptional severity of the weather the authorities will shortly replace the offending notice by another merely prohibiting skating.

Lord *Robert Cecil* has expressed his willingness to consider proposals for the reform of the British Consular service. The suggestion, however, that not more than seventy-five per cent. of our Consular representatives should be natives of Germany and the countries of her Allies seems a little too drastic.

“Without proficiency with the gloves a man cannot make a really ideal soldier,” said Lieut.-Col. *Sinclair Thomson* to the Inns of Court O.T.C. On the other hand we still have a number of distinguished soldiers who before the War attached paramount importance to their cuffs, collars and ties.

The use of luminous paint is being widely advocated with the view of mitigating the dangers arising from the darkened streets. It is pointed out that the use of luminous language has already proved of extreme value in critical situations.

“You must shorten sail,” said the Chairman of the Henley Tribunal to an employer who was said to have an indoor staff of thirteen servants. As a beginning he proposes to take a reef in the butler.

It appears that a reduction in the sale of chocolate will adversely affect the cinema. “All my young lady patrons,” says a manager, “require chocolate in the cinema.” It is feared that they will have to go back to the old-fashioned plan of chewing the corner of the programme.

At Hull, the other day, a tram-car dashed into a grocer’s shop. No blame attaches, we understand, to the driver, who sounded his gong three times.

* * * * *

To the German military picture department.

[The enemy, in his turn, is exhibiting a film of the fighting on the Somme. At the close a statement is thrown upon the screen to the effect that the Germans have “reached the appointed goal.”]

Page 3

On footer fields two goals are situated,
One, as a rule, at either end:
This for attack (in front) is indicated,
And this (to rearward) you defend;
In your remark projected on the screen
You don't say which you mean.

If you refer to ours in that ambiguous
And filmy phrase, why then you lie;
And if to yours—we hope to be contiguous
To our objective by-and-by,
But for the present, though the end is sure,
Your statement's premature.

In fact—to follow up the sporting image
In which you “reach the appointed goal”—
With many a loose and many a tight-packed scrimmage
Forward and back the fight will roll,
Ere with a shattering rush we cross your line
(This represents the Rhine).

Meanwhile, when you observe your team is tiring,
And wish the call of Time were blown,
To Mr. *Wilson*, where he stands umpiring
Gratuitously on his own,
You'll look (as drowning men will clutch a straw)
To make the thing a draw.

Pity you've broken all the rules, for this'll
Spoil WOODROW'S programme when at last,
Not having checked those breaches with his whistle,
He wants to blow the final blast;
Time will be called, I fancy, when the score
Suits us, and not before.

O.S.

* * * * *

Heart-to-heart talks.

(The KING OF THE HELLENES and the KAISER: On the Telephone).

The King. Halloa! Are you there? Halloa, halloa! Are you there, I say?



The Kaiser. All right, all right. Who's talking?

The King. King Constantine. I want a word with the *Kaiser*.

The Kaiser. Ha, *Tino*, it's you, is it? Fire away.

The King. Is that you, *Willie*?

The Kaiser. Yes; what do you want? I haven't too much time.

The King. I say, the most awful thing has happened. The Allies have sent me an Ultimatum.

The Kaiser. A what?

The King. An Ultimatum.

The Kaiser. I say, old man, you really must speak louder and more plainly. I can't hear a word you say.

The King. The Allies have sent me an ULTIMATUM!! Did you hear that time?

The Kaiser. Yes, most of it.

The King. Well.

The Kaiser. Well.

The King. What do you think about it?

The Kaiser. Not very much. Lots of other people have had ultimatums and haven't been one pfennig the worse for them.

The King. Oh, but this is the very last thing in ultimatums. It's a regular ultimattissimum.

The Kaiser. What do they want you to do?

Page 4

The King. All sorts of disagreeable things. For instance, I am to move my troops to the Peloponnese, so as to get them out of harm's way.

The Kaiser. Well, move them. What are troops for except to be moved about? You can always move them back again, you know. I keep on moving troops forward and backward all the time. It's a mere nothing when you once get accustomed to it. Just you try it and see. Anything more?

The King. Yes; I'm to release from prison the followers of the pestilential VENIZELOS.

The Kaiser. That's unpleasant, of course, for a patent Greek War-Lord; but I should do it if I were you, and then you can let me know how it feels.

The King. Look here, William, I don't know what's the matter with you, but I wish you wouldn't try to be so funny. You seem to think the whole affair's a sort of German joke. So it is, by Zeus—that's to say it's no joke at all.

The Kaiser. Manners, TINO, manners.

The King. I'm sick and tired of all this talk.

The Kaiser. If you go on like that I shall not talk to you any more.

The King. Don't say that; I could not bear such a loss. But, seriously, are you going to help as you promised?

The Kaiser. I cannot help you now. You must play for time.

The King. I've exhausted all the possibilities of playing for time. It wouldn't be the least good. They really mean it this time, and they've given me a strictly limited period for compliance.

The Kaiser. Well, I suppose you know best, but I should have thought you could have spun out negotiations for a hit—given them a little promise here and a little promise there on the chance of something turning up.

The King. The long and the short of it is that you promised to help us, but it was only a little promise here or there, and you don't mean to keep it. I shall accept the ultimatum.

The Kaiser. The what? The telephone's buzzing again.

The King. The ULTIMATUM!!

The Kaiser. Oh, the ultimatum. Yes, by all means accept it. And, by the way, I'm publishing a volume of my War-speeches, and will make a point of sending you an early copy. You might get it reviewed in the Athens papers.

The King. Gr-r-r.

* * * * *

OUR HELPFUL GOVERNMENT.

"Don't grow potatoes where they will not grow. OFFICIAL ADVICE."—*Daily Express*.

* * * * *

JOURNALISTIC MODESTY.

"The sale of yesterday's Christmas Number of the *Daily Gazette* already exceeds that of last year's Christmas Number by more than 50 per cent. The sell is still going on actively."—*Daily Gazette (Karachi)*.

* * * * *

Page 5

“Yes, I think we have it at last—I mean the stranglehold round the enemy’s neck. I seem to hear the death rattle in his guttural throat.”—*Sunday Pictorial*.

And to see the glazing of his ocular eyes.

* * * * *

“Had you shut your eyes the opening night at the Opera you might have fancied yourself back at Covent Garden, London, for the types of well-turned-out men out-Englished the English, from top hat to varnished boot.”—*American Paper*.

That’s the worst of varnished boots; they will creak so.

* * * * *

[Illustration: UNMADE IN GERMANY.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG. “AND TO THINK THAT I, WHO DEFENDED THE VIOLATION OF BELGIUM, SHOULD HAVE MY HONESTY DOUBTED. SURELY I AM FRIGHTFUL ENOUGH.”

(The Kaiser’s Chancellor has been attacked in a German pamphlet which ridicules his “silly ideas of humanity,” and says that “nobody need be surprised at the rumour which is going through Germany that he has been bought by England.”)]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Sergeant (after bringing his men to attention, to knock-kneed recruit).* “WELL, THAT WINS IT, NO. 4. ALL YOU’VE GOT TO DO ON THE COMMAND ‘STAN’ AT EASE’ IS TO MOVE YER BLINKIN’ ‘ANDS.”]

* * * * *

THE WATCH DOGS.

LV.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Notwithstanding the reckless speed of the leave train and the surfeit of luxuries and lack of company on the leave boat, our gallant warriors continue to volunteer in thousands for that desperate enterprise known as “Proceeding on leave to the U.K.” There is however a certain artfulness in the business, if only artfulness for artfulness’ sake.

In the old days the ingenuity of man was concentrated upon extending by any means short of the criminal the duration of the leave. When Robert first went on leave he was young and innocent. He had four days given him; he left his unit on the first of them and was back with it on the last of them. The second time he improved on this and left France very early on the morning of his first day and arrived in France again very late on the last night of it. Then his friend John regarded *his* leave as beginning and ending in England, which, if the leave boat happens to be in mid-Channel at midnight, is not a distinction without a difference. Robert's next leave was for seven days, and he spent nine of them in the U.K. His explanation was logically unassailable, but logic is wasted on military authorities; after that, leave got fixed at ten days net, ten days of the inelastic sort.

Page 6

Give a man an inch and he'll take an ell; give him an ell and he is no man if he doesn't improve even on that. Moreover, how is one to fill in the dismal vacuum subsequent on the return from one leave otherwise than by the discussion of subtle schemes for the betterment of the next leave? The duration of it having assumed a cast-iron rigidity, it only remained to improve the manner of travelling to and fro. John ferreted about and became aware of the existence of a civilian train to the port and of a Staff boat to the other port. He worked up a friendship with a *Fonctionnaire de Chemin de Fer*, and took the civilian train; he made a very natural, if very regrettable, mistake on the quay, and crossed in the Staff boat. He was able to repeat the friendship and the mistake on the return journey, and had therefore every reason to be proud of his efforts. Nevertheless he firmly decided to say nothing about it to anybody lest the idea should get overworked. But he told Robert in confidence, and Robert told a lot of other people, also in confidence, and the idea did get overworked and is now (*vide* General Routine Orders, *passim*) unworkable.

There was still scope however for Robert's ingenuity next time. There are other ways of getting to ports than by train. Why hold aloof from Motor Transport Drivers of the A.S.C. or be above making a personal friend or two among them? And if Orders limit the use of cars to officers of very senior rank, why be too proud to take a Colonel about with you? If when you get to the quay the leave boat wants you, but you don't want it, and if you want the Staff boat and it doesn't want you, it's no use arguing about it. You sulk unostentatiously in the background until both boats are full, and then you state a piteous case of urgent family affairs to the right officer, to find yourself eventually crossing with the comfort-loving civilians in their special boat. Robert was entirely satisfied with the way he wangled it, but, meaning to wangle it again in a few months' time, he decided to tell no one about it, not even John. But he did tell John as soon as he saw him, and John told the world. Thus, a further series of G.R.O.'s got written, published, and very carefully brought to the attention of all ranks.

The earth having become full of free booklets containing watertight rules and regulations for keeping officers to the straight and narrow path to the U.K., and the roads, railways, quays and gangways being policed with stalwarts whom it is impossible to circumvent and unwise to push into the sea, the only remaining resource is to apply to the Officer in Charge. I am told, at first hand, that there is as much variety in the reasons urged in support of applications as there is in the manner of the applicants. They attempt to melt him with piteous tales of their future in England, to shame him with gruesome pictures of their recent past in France, to hustle him with emergencies or

Page 7

special duties, or to bully him with dark references to unseen powers. I had a list of them from an M.L.O. himself, who was highly suspicious even of me, until he understood that I only wanted one thing in the world, and that was someone interesting to talk to while I waited for the leave boat to sail. Instance after instance he gave me of the low cunning of my species, to all of which, as I ventured to guess, he had proved himself equal. In the circumstances, as he said, this might suggest some hardness of heart on his part, but I readily agreed, was even the first to state, that there was no one in the wide world more anxious to assist our irrepressibles when bent on their hard-earned holiday. But he just couldn't do it. I put it for him that he was but the powerless and insignificant agent of an authority greater than himself.

To that he said "Yes, and No," always, I think, a safe answer. True, he had his duty to perform, and right well he performed it, we agreed. But he had also his powers, his responsibilities—might we say, his scope? Yet, I gathered, there were things which, not being entirely master of himself and his affairs, he could not do. Take my own case, for example. I suggested (very cautiously) that it would require a very much greater authority than himself to give relief to an ordinary person like myself, with no stronger reason to travel by the civilian boat than that my whole financial future and domestic happiness depended upon my doing so. He said nothing to that; I gave him but a very little chance. I said that I knew quite well that he would help me if he could. We were unanimous as to the kindness of his heart. It was because I quite realized that he couldn't that I didn't ask him or think of asking him. Very soon after that we parted, I to sail for England—but not by the leave boat.

Alas! for the weakness of human nature. I am no stronger nor more able to be secretive than Robert, John and the rest of the brethren. I bragged; and now I'm told there is a printed order posted outside that M.L.O.'s office, making it a crime punishable with death for any officer proceeding on leave to converse or attempt to enter into conversation with the M.L.O.

The only other thing I have to mention to you, Charles, upon this subject, is the application of a very earnest young lieutenant, who, I'm sure, would always obey all rules and regulations, both in letter and spirit, with scrupulous regard. His application is worth setting out in full:—"I have the honour to apply for leave to the United Kingdom to get married from January 9th to January 18th inclusive."

Yours ever,

HENRY.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "WONDER 'OW THE NAVY'S GETTIN' ON."

"DUNNO. AIN'T SEEN 'EM ABOUT LATELY."]

* * * * *

THREE AUGUSTS.

A WAR-TIME DRAMA.

ACT I.

Page 8

A room in Mary Gray's flat in the West End, August, 1914.

There is a door R., leading into the hall. There is also a door L., but it only leads into a cupboard that Mary really needs.

Marmaduke Beltravers, a well-dressed man of thirty-five, is standing by a small table pressing his suit (his matrimonial suit, of course), but without success. His bold black eyes are flashing. Mary's lovely face (by an ingenious manipulation of the limelight_) is quivering._

Marmaduke Beltravers (hoarsely). I have laid at your feet my hand, my heart and my flourishing business, and thus—thus I am supplanted by that puling saint, George Jeffreys. A-ha! [Gnaws his moustache.

Enter George Jeffreys, an English gentleman.

George Jeffreys (furiously). You here? You hound! You blackguard! You ...

Mary (realising that this is going to be no place for a lady). The butcher—know his ring. [Exit by door R.

G.J. (pointing fiercely to cupboard). Go!

M.B. (going). Bah! You triumph now, but my day will dawn yettah. (Starts.) What was that?

Newsboy (outside). War with Germany! War with Germany!

G.J. War? Then I am a pauper. [He does not say how, but presumably he knows best.

M.B. (ceasing to go). My day has dawned now.

G.J. How so?

M.B. Your conscience calls you, does it not, to enlist? (George nods.) I have no conscience. While you fight I shall continue to press my suit.

G.J. (despairingly to himself). Alas! what chance will that sweet girl have against his dark saturnine beauty and his wealth? (Aloud, hopefully, as a thought strikes him) But stay—war with Germany—perhaps you are a pauper also?

M.B. Not I, indeed. I am a maker of munitions. A-ha! [Twirls his moustache.

G.J. (losing his temper). Cur! [Exit, to enlist, into cupboard. Before he has time to realise his mistake the curtain falls.

ACT II.

Hyde Park, August, 1915.

A dozen energetic supers, by being extremely glad to see one another very many times, are creating the illusion of a gay and fashionable throng. Enter Marmaduke Beltravers with Mary. She is distraite.

M.B. (in full hearing of fashionable throng). Darling, I have waited patiently for you. Say that you will marry me now.

Mary. Marmaduke, you are rich, you are beautiful and you are kind to me in your rather wicked way. But, alas! I cannot forget the noble figure of George—my George. [*She sobs.*]

Page 9

Enter George Jeffreys, in the uniform of a private.

G.J. Mary!

M.B. (*intervening jauntily*). Well, my man?

G.J. (*his vocabulary strengthened by Army life*). You dash blank blighter! You ruddy plague-spot!

Mary (*gazing at him with horror*). Oh, George, those—clothes—don't—fit! [*Sobs heartbrokenly*].

M.B. (*striking while the iron is hot*). Mary, you shall choose between us, here and now.

G.J. (*yearningly*). Mary, with you to cheer me on I will win the V.C. I swear it. My beloved, come with me; there will be a separation allowance.

Mary (*shuddering*). Not in those trousers. I—can't. [*She swoons in Marmaduke's arms. George raises his fist to strike Marmaduke. Enter Sergeant Tompkins.*]

Sergt. T. 'Ere, none o' that. Private Jeffreys, 'SHUN! Right—TURN! About—TURN! Left—TURN! Quick—MARCH! [*Exit George to win V.C.*]

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

Marmaduke's Mansion in Park Lane, August, 1916.

[*Enter Mary Beltravers (nee Gray), unhappy.*]

Mary. My little dog—my only friend—I cannot find him. (*She rummages absently among the papers on her husband's desk. Suddenly she snatches up a document, reads it through and clutches at her throat.*) My husband—a German ser-py! (*She turns savagely on Marmaduke, who has just entered.*) So this—this is the source of our wealth! Your munitions arm our enemies. You play the German game.

M.B. (*simply*). I do. I have a birth qualification.

Mary (*wildly*). But I'll thwart you; I'll denounce you (*seizes telephone*). You shall rue the day you married a true daughter of England.

M.B. (*with sinister significance*). Remember, Mary, "to love, honour and OBEY." Put down that instrument. [*With a gesture of despair she lets the receiver fall, thus driving*]



the girl at the exchange nearly frantic. Suddenly the door is thrown open. Enter Captain George Jeffreys with Sergeant-Major Tompkins and squad of soldiers.

G.J. Marmaduke Beltravers, ne Heinrich Hoggenheimer, the game is up. (Marmaduke dashes to the window. The dozen supers outside raise a howl of execration mingled with cries of "Lynch the spy!") You see, there is no way of escape.

M.B. (drawing revolver). You shall not long enjoy your triumph. I have but one cartridge, but perchance it will be enough for you. [Pulls trigger, but finds action rather stiff.

G.J. Look out, Mary! These things are rather tricky in inexperienced hands. [Marmaduke succeeds in pulling trigger. There is a violent explosion and a large hole appears in George's breeches.

Page 10

G.J. (calmly to the baffled Marmaduke). Bad luck! That's my cork one. I lost the original when I got this. [Touches V.C. pinned on his breast.

M.B. (annoyed). Curse, and curse again! [Gnawing his moustache he falls in with squad.

Sergt.-Major T. Prisoner and escort, 'SHUN! Stand at—EASE. 'SHUN. Move to the right in fours. Form—FOURS. RIGHT. By the left, quick—MARCH. [Exeunt, leaving Mary in George's arms. The howls of execration redouble. Then there is a tense silence, broken by the sound of a volley.

George. Mary, my own! At last!

Mary. My hero.

CURTAIN.

* * * * *

SEASONABLE NOVELTIES.

The enterprise of the London and North-Western Railway officials, in designing a button to obviate delays at the gate caused by the new show-your-season order, has (we understand) spurred other lines to a similar ingenuity. Below are some of the latest novelties in ticket-substitutes.

THE POM-POM.—May be worn in any variety of hat. Very suitable for short travellers. A simple inclination of the head permits verification by the inspector. Made in two shades—dark green, covering any distance up to twenty-five miles of town, or red (as worn by anarchists and the staff of the L. & S.W.R.), covering a journey up to fifty miles.

UMBRELLA AND STICK TOPS, unscrewable, faced with plate-glass, permitting the insertion of a ticket, and its easy verification on being thrust under the nose of an official. Special quality fitted with small electric bulb for evening wear.

For those who desire a really striking and chic novelty, that up-to-date line, the Great Eccentric, is reported to have engaged a staff of expert tattoo artists, who will puncture the date and designation of the pass upon the left cheek of the holder. Being not only elegant in design but practically irremovable, these markings will form a permanent and increasingly interesting memento of the Great War. Price according to distance and lettering.

* * * * *

[Illustration: REAL PROBLEMS AT THE FRONT.

First C.O. “I TELL YOU WHAT. FIND ME A MAN WHO CAN COOK CUTLETS DECENTLY, AND YOU SHALL HAVE OUR SECOND-BEST PIERROT.”]

* * * * *

TACTLESS.

“THANKSGIVING SERVICE on Sunday, February 18th, Canon ——’s last day as Vicar of ——.”—*Midland Paper*.

* * * * *

ANOTHER GLIMPSE OF THE OBVIOUS.

“There is very general agreement in banking circles in the City as to the satisfactory character of the response which has already been made to the new War Loan, but good though it has been, the total must still be small compared with the need, and must fall infinitely short of the figure aimed at, which, of course, is unlimited.”—*Sunday Times*.

* * * * *

Page 11

THE SMILE OF VICTORY.

[According to Reuter's Washington Correspondent, women suffragists have of late regularly picketed the White House. When President WILSON appears "they deploy so that he cannot fail to see their banners. The President smiles broadly and passes on."]

Though LODGE in the Senate makes critical speeches
And ROOSEVELT belligerent heresy preaches,
Though Suffragist pickets keep guard at its portals—
Undismayed and unshaken the PRESIDENT chortles.

He "smiles" at them "broadly" and then hurries off
To type a new Note, or perhaps to play golf;
And, while studying closely his putts, to explore
The obscurity shrouding the roots of the War.

To cope with emergency once in a way
Is nothing to facing it every day;
And that's where the PRESIDENT'S greatness is seen,
He's consistently cheerful and calm and serene.

O happy idealist! Others may weep
At the crimes and the horrors that murder their sleep;
You've two perfect specifics your cares to beguile—
An oracular phrase, an implacable smile.

* * * * *

"A fourth headmaster wanted to know 'who would liev at Yorlb when he could live at Bournemouth?'"—*Morning Paper*.

The answer is "Because there's a 'b' in both."

* * * * *

"Terrible as this war has been, Mr. Hodge sees that if it had not come Great Britain's imagination. As the hypnotised goat is fate would have been miserable beyond swallowed by the boat-constrictor, so Great Britain would have been absorbed by Germany."—*Evening Paper*.

With a little rearrangement we can gather the general drift of the paragraph. But "boat-constrictor" puzzles us. Is it a new kind of submarine?

* * * * *

[Illustration: OUR LAND-WORKERS.

Mabel (discussing a turn for the village Red Cross Concert). "WHAT ABOUT GETTING OURSELVES UP AS GIRLS?"

Ethel. "YES—BUT HAVE WE THE CLOTHES FOR IT?"]

* * * * *

THE INFANTRYMAN.

The gunner rides on horseback, he lives in luxury,
The sapper has his dug-out as cushy as can be,
The flying man's a sportsman, but his home's a long way back,
In painted tent or straw-spread barn or cosy little shack;
Gunner and sapper and flying man (and each to his job, say I)
Have tickled the Hun with mine or gun or bombed him from on high,
But the quiet work, and the dirty work, since ever the War began
Is the work that never shows at all, the work of the infantryman.

Page 12

The guns can pound the villages and smash the trenches in,
And the Hun is fain for home again when the T.M.B.'s begin,
And the Vickers gun is a useful one to sweep a parapet,
But the real work is the work that's done with bomb and bayonet.
Load him down from heel to crown with tools and grub and kit,
He's always there where the fighting is—he's there unless he's hit;
Over the mud and the blasted earth he goes where the living can;
He's in at the death while he yet has breath, the British infantryman!

Trudge and slip on the shell-hole's lip, and fall in the clinging mire—
Steady in front, go steady! Close up there! Mind the wire!
Double behind where the pathways wind! Jump clear of the ditch, jump
clear!
Lost touch at the back? Oh, halt in front! and duck when the shells come
near!
Carrying parties all night long, all day in a muddy trench,
With your feet in the wet and your head in the rain and the sodden
khaki's stench!
Then over the top in the morning, and onward all you can—
This is the work that wins the War, the work of the infantryman.

* * * * *

WHERE IS THE CENSOR?

“A woman has been fined L10 for chipping lyddite out of a shell which
had been over-filled by means of a screwdriver.”—*Evening Paper*.

We protest against our newspapers being allowed to inform the enemy in this way of
our methods of filling shells.

* * * * *

[Illustration: A DEAD FROST.

PRESIDENT PYGMALION WILSON. “THE DURNED THING WON'T COME TO LIFE!”]

* * * * *

[Illustration: “I SAY, SOMEONE'S STOLEN MY CAR!”

“DEAR ME! IT WAS A NEW ONE, WASN'T IT?”

“YES. BUT I DON'T MIND THE CAR; THERE WAS A TIN OF PETROL IN THE BACK.”]



* * * * *

OUR NEW ARMY OF WOMEN.

From Adjutant to O.C. A Company.

Your return of trained Bombers not yet to hand. Please expedite.

(Did you see O.C. B Company's hat at church parade last Sunday? Isn't it positively the outside edge?)

ELIZABETH TUDOR JONES,
Mrs. and Adjutant.

Second-Lieut. Darling to Adjutant.

I should be obliged if I could have leave from next Tuesday, as otherwise I shall not be able to attend the sales, and my Sam Browne is quite the dowdiest in the whole battalion.

JOAN DARLING,
Second-Lieut.

O.C. Signallers to Quartermaster.

Lance-Corporal Flapper of this section has been charged for bottle, scent, one. In view of the fact that this N.C.O. has not been supplied with bottle since joining this unit I take it that such will be a free issue.

EMMA PIPP,
Lieut.

Page 13

O.C. A Company to Quartermaster.

Please note fact that the boots, khaki suede uppers, pair, one, issued yesterday to 21537 Private B. Prig, are not supplied with regulation Louis-Quinze heels. The boots are therefore herewith returned.

BOADICEA BLUNT.
Capt. O.C. A Coy.

From O.C. B Company to O.C. D Company.

Herewith A.F. 26511, with cheque for pay of 2773, Private O. Jones, B Company, attached D Company, for your attention and necessary action, please.

(Have you heard the absolutely latest? The Major is engaged, and she has asked O.C. C Company and the Quartermaster to be bridesmaids! Not that I wanted to take it on. But think of poor dear O.C. C! *Won't* she look too-too?)

MILDRED NORTON,
Capt. O.C. B Coy.

From Adjutant to Lieut. S.O. Marshall.

Please note that you are detailed as a member of a Board of Survey, which assembles at these Headquarters on January 31st for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances whereby box, powder, face, one, on charge of this unit, became used up suddenly. The Quartermaster will arrange for the necessary witnesses to attend, and the proceedings will be forwarded to the Adjutant in triplicate.

* * * * *

OUR MILITARY EXPERTS.

"The invasion of Switzerland ... if accomplished rapidly and with luck, would involve a threat to the French left and to the communications with Italy."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Our own Military Expert is of opinion that the invasion of Holland would in very much the same way threaten the British right and our communications with Scotland.

* * * * *

"The use of barkless dogs, songless cats and whispering parrots is advocated in Philadelphia, following on recent announcements from the battlefields of Europe that



'brayless' mules have been perfected for trench and other battle-front labours by a simple operation on the nostrils and the nerves affecting the vocal cords."—*Daily Paper*.

Why not speechless Presidents?

* * * * *

NURSERY RHYMES OF LONDON TOWN.

(SECOND SERIES.)

XVI.

MARYLEBONE.

Mary Lebone
She gets no meat,
She never has anything
Nice to eat;
A supper fit
For a dog alone
Is all the fare
Of poor Mary Lebone.
She squats by the corner
Of Baker Street
And snuffs the air
So spicy and sweet
When the Bakers are baking
Their puddings and pies,
Their buns and their biscuits
And Banburies—
A tart for Jocelyn
A cake for Joan,
And nothing at all
For poor Mary Lebone!

Page 14

XVII.

SCOTLAND YARD.

"How long's the Yard in Scotland?
Tell me that now, Mother."
"Six-and-thirty inches, Daughter,
Just like any other."
"O isn't it thirty-five, Mother?"
"No more than thirty-seven."
"Then the bonny lad that sold me plaid
Will never get to heaven."

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Passenger*. "I HEAR THEY'RE THINKING OF ELECTRIFYING THIS PART OF THE LINE."

Porter. "AY; THEY'RE ALLUS UP TO SOME DAFT GAME. THEY'LL BE ELECTRIFYING US NEXT."]

* * * * *

EDWARD.

Edward has red hair, a robust appearance, and a free-and-easy way with him. His free-and-easy way shows itself chiefly in his habit of smiling upon and waving his hand to all those whom he encounters on his daily walks. He is talkative at times, but his vocabulary is limited. In my opinion it is limited to one word, though his mother can distinguish several words, or says so. She must have a very much keener ear than I have—or a less rigid regard for the truth.

You will have guessed that Edward is under military age. To be exact, it is thirteen months since he first saw the light in this troubled world. Not that the world is a troubled one to Edward; on the contrary.

Edward takes his daily walks in his perambulator upon the sea-front of his native town. His free-and-easy way has secured him a large circle of acquaintance there. Elderly gentlemen stop and speak to him, which he likes, so long as they do not pat his cheek, a habit far too prevalent among elderly gentlemen. Mothers of other babies are loud in his praises, though in their hearts they are probably comparing him unfavourably with their own offspring. Altogether Edward has a cheery life.



Upon a certain day Edward fell in with a very little man—so little, indeed, that most people would have called him a dwarf. He was walking in the same direction as Edward, and overtaking him, and Edward waved his hand and smiled and waved again.

For a while the little man ignored these overtures. But at length he felt obliged to return them, and remarked to Kate, who propels the perambulator, “Seems friendly like;” to which Kate replied, “Oh, he always waves to everyone.”

Now the majority of people would have been rather repelled by that remark. For myself I may say that, though Edward always smiles when we meet, I do not greatly value it because I know he smiles in the same way upon everyone else.

But it was not so with the little man. To be classed with “everyone,” to be placed by Edward on an equality with the strong and graceful, sent a warm glow to his heart.

So Edward, in his free-and-easy fashion, had, like the boy-scouts, done one good deed that day.

* * * * *

Page 15

"The system of women and girls acting as field labourers, ploughing and shepherding, *etc.*, in itself produces a rough state of society."—*Country Life*.

However this roughness is to be corrected, as we see by the following:—

"ARRANGEMENTS FOR TO-DAY.

"Class in Elementary Polish begins, King's College, 6."—*The Times*.

Splendid! These colleges think of everything.

* * * * *

OUR CORRESPONDENCE COLLEGE.

So much good has notoriously been done during the great conflict by letters to the Press that Mr. Punch, recognising the importance of having this branch of War-work taught to the young, has engaged a gentleman of ample leisure and few responsibilities, who hides behind the *nom de guerre* "Paterfamilias," to deliver a series of instructive lectures on the subject. By the time the student has absorbed a complete course he will be qualified to write to the papers on any topic, and, to adopt every tone from the pleading and querulous to the indignant and hectoring. From this can follow nothing less than the complete rout of the Germans.

SYLLABUS OF LECTURES.

I.—A World in Darkness.

The world before newspapers—Unbearable thought—No Street and no Man in it—Unfortunate position of great Generals of history, ALEXANDER, HANNIBAL, CAESAR, *etc.*, in lacking support or criticism by military experts—Their fatal ignorance of public opinion—Serious handicaps in the past—LEONIDAS never seen at lunch by Mr. Gossip—ALCIBIADES never stimulated by attacks in Athens journals—No brainy onlooker at defeat of Armada.

II.—The Growth of the Press.

The birth of a happier era—The first English newspaper—Rapid development of the new arm—A nation made articulate—Unfortunate quietistic tendencies: ADDISON, STEELE, JOHNSON—Foreshadowings of the real thing—Arrival of the real thing—The Fourth Estate—The Tenth Muse—The Editor as Dictator—The Millennium.

III.—The Vigilant Correspondent.



The Council of Ten and the Lion's Mouth—Importance of attending to other people's affairs—True citizenship the improvement of one's neighbours—Neglect of one's own character a national virtue—Brief sketch of Paul Pry—Brief sketch of Meddlesome Matty—Keepers of the public conscience—Human alarm-clocks—Samples of reforms delayed by absence of letters to the Press—The circulation of the blood—The law of gravity—The movement of the solar system—Value of iteration and undauntability.

IV.—Range of Subject.

Every stick useful in beating dogs—Nothing too trivial to yoke with such words as “scandal” and “outrage”—Suspicion and mistrust the letter-writer's life-blood—Necessity for believing everyone in office negligent or corrupt—Reasons why it is better to write to the papers than to the individual—The sacredness of publicity—Importance also of victim seeing the indictment—Value of *Who's Who?*—Postal rates for newspapers.

Page 16

V.—Signatures.

Real names and pseudonyms—Cases where real names are best—Cases where pseudonyms are best—Danger of giving both name and address—The Knobkerry—The Dog-Whip—The Art of Self-Defence—The Law Directory—Choice of pseudonyms—Latin v. English—An Advantage of “One Who Knows” over “Audi Alteram Partem”—“Scrutator” better than “Spectator ab extra”—“One who is doing his bit” better than “Junius”—Reasons for “War-Winner” being the best at present moment.

VI.—Model Letter with Remarks.

At the present moment no type of letter is more effective than the following:—

SIR,—Could anything be more deplorable than the spectacle, which every hour of the day and night affords, of young and vigorous men made up to look like grandfathers. I am told that the theatrical costumiers and perruquiers are worn to a shadow by the overwork which these contemptible shirkers have subjected them to, and I call on you to use your powerful influence to stop it. I am credibly informed that if a courageous investigator visiting those funkholes, the clubs of London, were to snatch at the bald scalps so much in evidence there, he would in nine cases out of ten find that they came away in his hand, revealing the chevelure of the youthful and fit but craven. At any rate the experiment should be tried. I shall, of course, be told that the Tribunals are active and vigilant and their net so tightly drawn that no one can get through; but we all know what bunglers the English authorities are, whether at the War Office or elsewhere. It is only in newspaper offices that true efficiency can be found. I enclose my card and am,

Yours faithfully,
“WAR-WINNER.”

Analysis of above—Reasons for thinking it perfect—Importance of compliment to editors—Estimate of its probable result.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE FOOD CONTROLLER ADDS A NEW TERROR TO MATRIMONY.]

* * * * *

Extremes.

“He spent 233 years in the 6th Dragoon Guards (Carbineers) and commanded that famous regiment in the Boer War.”—*Evening Telegraph (Dundee)*.

“Sergeant ——, who is 2 years of age, is married, and has two children.”—*Same Paper, same date*.

* * * * *

“Mr. S.J. Rodrigo, Vidane Aratchy of Kotahena, who was bitten by a made bog on Sunday, left for Coonoor last evening by the Talaimannar train for treatment.”—*Ceylon Independent*.

But why make bogs if they are so dangerous?

* * * * *

From a shoemaker’s advertisement:

“ROUGH BOYS WELL LEATHERED.”—*High River Times (Alberta, Canada)*.

The good old slipper has not outlived its usefulness.

Page 17

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“To all anonymous correspondents who have recently written to me I have the honour to reply that they are all blackguards.”—*Advt. in Ceylon Paper.*

Though we ourselves should have waived this honour we are in full sympathy with the writer.

* * * * *

[Illustration: “OH! DO WEAR YOUR KHAKI TIE, DAD, OR ELSE NO ONE WILL KNOW YOU’RE A SOLDIER.”]

* * * * *

TRAVEL WITHOUT TRAINS.

(Suggested by some recent remarks in “The Observer” on eccentric place names.)

Now that the rise in railway fares
 (At which no patriot cavils)
Has chained us elders to our chairs
 And circumscribed our travels,
I love to play the festive game
 Of astral gravitation
To any neighbourhood whose name
 Is fraught with fascination.

I’ve never sampled in the flesh
 The varied charms of Bootle,
But mentally I find them fresh
 And redolent of footle;
And, though my steps to that resort
 I never up till now bent,
Imagination can transport
 My spirit into Chowbent.

Always alert upon the track
 Of rich and strange emotion,
To Pudsey and to Wibsey Slack
 I pay my fond devotion;
My heart is in the Highlands oft,
 Though age its glow enfeebls,



And soars triumphantly aloft
At the mere sound of Peebles.

The nightingale in leafy June,
I own, divinely warbles,
But equal magic fills the tune-
ful name of Scotia's Gorbals;
And if you ever should desire
A subject to wax funny on,
What theme more fitly can inspire
The Muse than Ballybunnion?

Some places on my astral rounds
I'm strong upon tabooing,
On anti-alcoholic grounds
Grogport and Rum eschewing;
But no such painful stigma robs
Proud Potto of its lustre,
Or rules out Crank and Smeeth and Stobs,
A memorable cluster.

The pictures rising in my brain
Are strange; sometimes I muddle 'em,
Confounding Pleck with Plodder Lane,
Titley with Tillietudlem;
In short, it's not a game of skill,
Else I should scarce essay at;
But it is harmless, costs me *nil*;
And nobody need play it.

The plan is simple; choose a spot,
Then focus with decision
Your thoughts upon it till you've got
A clear-cut mental vision;
And though from fact it widely errs,
Remember in conclusion
Only the man of prose prefers
Eyewitness to illusion.

* * * * *

FROM THE BACK OF THE FRONT.

Extract from a soldier's letter:—

"DEAR MOTHER,—I am thoroughly run down, and have grown so thin that when I get a pain in my middle I cannot tell whether it is a backache or a stomachache."

Page 18

* * * * *

“The choristers and I.C.U. enlivened each station along the route by rending sacred songs and solos as The Kano Express drew in.”—*Lagos Weekly Record*.

“That’s torn it,” said the conductor.

* * * * *

“Britons never shall be slaves if they will only remember the solemn warning of the author of the words—’To thine own self be true, and then thou canst be false to any man.’”—*Letter in Scotch Paper*.

One recognises the note of liberty, but we fear the writer must have got hold of a German edition of “Unser Shakspeare.”

* * * * *

THE HARDSHIPS OF BILLETS.

As Jim and me lies in hospital gettin’ better from our wounds we talks over what we’ve been through in this War.

There was the time when we was billeted with Mrs. Dawkins, just before we went to the Front, which dwells in our memories. When the billetin’ orficer introduced us into her kitchen Mrs. Dawkins went down on the bricks and prayed she might do her duty by the two noble defenders of her country—she meant me and Jim—who the Lord had pleased to deliver into her care. Then she begun unlacin’ Jim’s boots. In a minute Mr. Dawkins come in; he said we was hearty welcome, and was just goin’ to shake ’ands with us when Mrs. Dawkins turned on ’im and asked ’im what he meant by standin’ there like a gawk and not unlacin’ mine. Jim and me was very uncomfortable.

Then some little Dawkinses come in, Susan, Sammy, Billy and Elfreda, and was told by Mrs. Dawkins to pay their respecks to us, and do it proper or she’d know the reason why. Sammy saluted left-’anded and she cuffed him unmerciful. Jim and me begun to feel regler low-spirited.

After that she set out the tea. It was as butiful a tea as we could wish for, cakes and jam, and bloater-paste and sardines, and bein’ hungry after a long march we cheered up and looked forward to enjoyin’ it. As was correck Jim ’anded all the dishes to Mrs. Dawkins first, but she said, “No, thank you, such things are for the defenders of the country, and it is our duty to provide them, but bread-and-dripping is good enough for me and Mr. Dawkins and the children.”

Susan, Sammy, Billy and Elfreda all begun to cry, and their father sat lookin' at 'em, the picture of misery. It clean took away our appetites. She piled our plates with jam and sardines, but we couldn't swaller a mouthful with them poor kids sobbin' all round the table. We was thankful they was put to bed before supper. Mrs. Dawkins fried potatoes and sausages and set 'em down in front of me Jim, with a jug of porter, and she and Dawkins and a young man lodger sat at the other end, behind half a Dutch cheese and some water. All the meals was the same.

Page 19

There was only three rooms upstairs, and Jim and me couldn't make out how it was we had a bedroom apiece till we come across the lodger sleepin' on the kitchen table, Dawkins on the mangle and Sammy in one of the dresser drawers. Then we asked to be allowed to sleep together, with the lodger to one side; but Mrs. Dawkins said, "I thank the Lord we're blessed with two good beds in our house, and as long as I have two defenders of the country in my care I should like to catch anyone belonging to me getting into either of their beds. If we're all getting wore out for want of sleep we can't help ourselves, we're doing our duty."

Then she asked Jim if he was warm enough nights, and before he'd time to think he'd blurted out he wasn't quite. That evening she come down shiverin' to supper in her petticoat, and said what did it matter her catchin' her death of cold if them she had in her care slept warm and comfortable under her meriner skirt. We felt downright brutes.

But what hurt us most was the way them kids took against us. Me and Jim is fond of kids, and we wanted to make friends and play with 'em, but it weren't no good. They was always puttin' their tongues out at us when Mrs. Dawkins' back was turned and talkin' loud to one another: "I say, Sammy, I 'ates soldiers, don't you? Soldiers is greedy; poor little children don't have nothink where soldiers is. Daddy 'ates soldiers too. He says his 'ome is a 'ell since the soldiers come. 'Ere they are walkin' down the street. Quick, Billy! Mother ain't lookin'; turn yer nose up at 'em same as me."

To make up for her kindness to us Jim and me tried to do little odd jobs about the house for Mrs. Dawkins, but somehow it all turned to wormwood. We slipped out early one Sunday morning and begun siftin' the cinders in the backyard, but she caught sight of us and 'ollered so at Dawkins she woke up all the neighbours: "How can you lay there snorin', you great lazy good-for-nothing, and look on while the defenders of your country is wearin' themselves out 'siftin' your cinders?"

Dawkins tumbled off the mangle, thinkin' it was a fire, and he swore terrible at me and Jim.

The young man lodger took against us too. When his washin' was on the line we couldn't help noticin' he was very bad off for underclothes, and Jim and me, havin' more shirts and socks that kind ladies had give us than we knowed how' to wear, we took the liberty of wrappin' three of each in paper with a label, "Hopin' no offence," and puttin' it in the chicken-'ouse where he was in the habit of doin' his hair. We was pleased to notice next day he had got one of the shirts on. Of course we made no remark; no more did he. But at supper-time Mrs. Dawkins caught sight of his cuffs. She took the poor feller by the collar and we was afraid she would have shook the life out of him.

"You thievin' rascal!" she said. "To think I should 'arbour in my house a man as ain't ashamed to rob the defenders of his country of the shirts off their backs!" Then she begun callin' for the police.

Page 20

Jim and me tried to explain, but it weren't no use. The first chance he had the young man lodger got out through the door. He come back in half a minute with his feet bare and his weskit all anyhow. The shirts and socks was under his arm.

"Damn you and yer clothes!" he said, and flung 'em at me and Jim. It were very disheartenin'.

When it come to leavin' we felt we ought to show our gratitude for the treatment we had received by makin' Mrs. Dawkins a little present. Bein' of an uncommon disposition it were difficult to choose what would please her. I were in favour of a pink shawl; but Jim didn't seem to fancy givin' anybody any more clothes. In the end we chose a pair of earrings.

Directly we give 'em to her we saw we'd done wrong. She turned on Dawkins like a hyener. "'Ave I done my duty and starved us all to death and given them two the best in the house and slept cold every night to be paid in gewgaws?" she said. "Didn't I do it willin', and wouldn't I do it agen? and are you a man or a cur that you stand there expectin' me to put them things into my ears instead of behind the fire?" In another minute the earrings was melted. It were some consolation to me and Jim that she didn't refuse to shake 'ands with us when we come away; but Dawkins did, and so did the young man lodger, and all the little Dawkinses spit at us. We never have been able to make out who were to blame. We thinks sometimes it were Mrs. Dawkins.

* * * * *

How it strikes the Hyphenated.

An extract from *Los Angeles Germania*, which describes itself as "An American newspaper printed in the German and American languages":—

"At last the mask is removed from the hypocritical face of England. The cloven hoof of British insolence has struck square into the face of Uncle Sam."

* * * * *

Holders of the old War Loan who are not yet converted to conversion may be led to a decision by the discovery that "BONAR LAW" spells "War Loan 'B.'"

* * * * *

"LADY SECRETARY. For small Nurses' Home where nurses do not sleep."—
Women's Employment.

Applicants should beware, as insomnia is very catching.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Sergeant*. “KEEP YER POINT UP LIKE YER DOIN’ NOW, CAN’T YER? YOU WON’T NEVER GET YER MAN IF YER DON’T KEEP YER POINT UP. HAVE YER NEVER DONE NO BAYONET PRACTICE BEFORE?”

Private (just out of hospital, very bored). “I’VE DONE THIS ’ERE TO THE BLOOMIN’ BOSCHES, I ’AVE.”

Sergeant. “OH. YOU ’AVE, ’AVE YOU? NO WONDER THE WAR’S LASTED TWO AND A ’ALF YEARS.”]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

Page 21

Do you remember a clever, gloomy story that Mr. HUGH WALPOLE wrote, some years ago, about a pack of schoolmasters who got so monstrously upon one another's nerves that the result was attempted murder? I have just been reading a new story that may be regarded as the female counterpart of the same tragedy. *Regiment of Women* (HEINEMANN) is described as a first novel; and there are indeed signs of this in a certain verbosity and diffuseness of attack. But it is at least equally clear that the writer, CLEMENCE DANE, has the root of the matter in her. As in the book with which I have compared it, the setting of this is scholastic—a girls' school here, with all its restricted outlook, its small intrigues, and exaggerated friendships, mercilessly exposed. You will be willing to admit that it is at least aptly named when I tell you that not till page 135 does so much as the shadow of a man appear, and then but fleetingly as the father of the poor child, *Louise*, the tragedy of whose death is the central incident of the book. Naturally it can be nothing else than a painful story; in particular the figure of *Clare*, the adored teacher, whose cruel egoistical friendship, with its alternations of encouragement and brutality, first drives *Louise* to suicide, and all but wrecks the life of the young assistant-mistress, *Alwynne*, has in it something coldly sinister that haunts the memory. But of its power there can be no question. On one small point of psychology I am at issue with the writer. I doubt whether the child *Louise* could have played *Arthur* in the school theatricals so marvellously as we are asked to believe without cheering herself, by such an artistic success, out of the temptation to suicide. But the ways of morbidity are unsearchable, and this is no more than an expression of individual opinion. It is not meant to qualify my admiration for the skill of this remarkable and arresting story.

* * * * *

If the long postponement of the appearance of another novel—*Vesprie Towers* (SMITH, ELDER)—by the late Mr. THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON, means (I am careful not to say it does) that the author never intended it to see the light of day, honesty obliges one to admit that there may have been wisdom in that decision, for the story of *Violet Vesprie*, though touched with a certain charm and distinction, sadly lacks the imaginative intensity of *Aylwin*. The plot is commonplace, being the familiar record of how the country seat of a once illustrious family nearly, but of course not quite, passed into the hands of strangers when the last of the race came to poverty. Even the inevitable flight to London is not spared us or the heroine, and it is really only when the writer tires of his attempted conventionality that he comes more nearly to his own. The return of *Violet* to her old home, for instance, is most fortunate in its failure to follow the rules, that

Page 22

attractive young lady being quite content to be whisked back in the turning of a page from destitution in Lambeth to the place she loves, without knowing or caring at all how the miracle has been wrought; while we, reader and author alike, equally in the dark, are too happy to have her home to worry about it either, preferring to wander with her through the dear old rooms and let explanations go hang. Anyhow, perhaps one can forgive a certain amount of looseness in a story that holds such pleasant things as a family rainbow, an “osier ait” and a sailor-poet worshipping from afar. And indeed, though far from brilliant, the book is really rather lovable.

* * * * *

In *The Leatherwood God* (JENKINS) Mr. W.D. HOWELLS has written a powerful and very interesting study of an unusual theme. Religious mania, and those queer manifestations of it that hover uncertainly between fraud and hysteria, have always provided a subject of attraction for the curious. Mr. HOWELLS sets his romance in the early days of the last century, at the backwoods settlement of *Leatherwood*, where the community of the faithful are perturbed by the arrival amongst them of a stranger, one *Dylks*, who claims divine origin and the power to work miracles. Actually, this *Dylks* was about as bad a hat as any made. He had deserted his legal wife, *Nancy*, and allowed her, in supposed widowhood, to marry a *de facto* husband whom she adored. So you will see that the turning up again of Number One, unrecognised and surrounded by the trappings of god-head and the adoration of the Elect, creates for *Nancy* a very pretty and absorbing problem in social ethics. But Mr. HOWELLS has done more than this. Having shown *Dylks* as the arch-villain and impostor that he is, he proceeds to the subtler task of enlisting our sympathy for him. It is this that gives the story its higher quality. The horror of the poor wretch's position, driven on by his own words, almost, in time, coming himself to a kind of belief in them, haunted always by the increasing demands of his dupes, is most powerfully portrayed. So much so that in the end we hear of his death (by suicide or accident) with an emotion of relief and pity that is a real tribute to his creator. *The Leatherwood God* is not a long story, but for concentrated power it deserves to be classed amongst the outstanding work of the season.

* * * * *

I should call Mrs. VICTOR RICKARD a bold plotter—of course in a strictly literary sense. It must at this moment have required some courage to make your hero an agent of the British Secret Service. And having done this she certainly shirks none of the unpleasant possibilities of the situation so created. In the interest of his profession, and for no reward save the service of his country, *Marcus Janover* is called upon to sacrifice love, friendship, even

Page 23

his personal honour. Just how all this comes about I leave you to discover by *The Light above the Cross Roads* (DUCKWORTH). It is a powerful and highly original story that has the distinction of breaking entirely new ground in war-novels. The scenes of it, laid partly in Ireland, partly in Berlin, or behind the German lines, are themselves guarantees of the unusual. One slight criticism that I have to make rises from the question whether so expert an "agent" as *Marcus* would really employ blot-producing ink for his map tracery when, on his own confession, he might have used pencil. But if the blots had not been there the Prussians (oddly obtuse as to the real meaning of *Marcus's* presence amongst them) would never have arrested *Ursule*, and thus provided a dramatic and unhackneyed situation. There is a gravity and distinction, moreover, about the tale that somehow reminds me of the late Monsignor BENSON. It is undoubtedly a story that should be read.

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I am rather puzzled what to say about the *The Grey Shepherd* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), because it is essentially a story that will appeal very differently to readers of different temperaments. Some people will say, "How beautiful!" Others perhaps, "How precious!" and both with a certain truth. For my own part, I should select a middle course, and say that Mrs. J.E. BUCKROSE has had a wholly admirable idea for a short story, which she has done her best to spoil by enlarging it to book dimensions, and a little over-sweetening it. There is real delicacy and beauty in her theme. The youth forced by partial blindness to give up all the hopes for which he had been educated, who becomes a shepherd, solacing himself with his pipe (musical) and the simplicities of country lore for the loss of love and ambition; and eventually, after his death, is deified by rustic tradition into a supernatural helper of "all things that are kind"—here is an idea for the tenderest handling. My feeling is, while giving Mrs. BUCKROSE every credit for such an inspiration, that she should have been a little sterner with herself over the treatment, and thus avoided a certain stickiness that may irritate those who prefer the simplicity of nature to a not quite sufficiently concealed art. But, as I began by saying, it all depends on the individual palate; and, anyhow, the book has the historic excuse of being a very little one, which you can read, with pleasure or irritation, within the hour.

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If you should chance to hanker for a change from novels in which the hero and heroine dally over-long in falling in love you will get it by reading *The Fur-Bringers* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON). No time is wasted upon preliminaries, not a minute; and as soon as *Ambrose Deane* and *Colina Gaviller* have met and discovered at sight that they are just made for each other the really exciting part of the story begins. I forget how many times *Ambrose* is arrested during the course of the tale, but I do know that things keep

on happening all the time, and that the rescue of the hero by the Indian girl *Nesís* is delightfully told. Altogether Mr. HULBERT FOOTNER'S picture of the life of a trader in Athabasca is particularly attractive. I like it all, including the cover.

Page 24

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[Illustration: THE DOUCEUR.]

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“At Leicester Assizes Levi Durance, aged thirty-four, a discharged soldier, was sentenced to ten months’ imprisonment for bigamy.”—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

A proper verdict this, that for a while
Turns LEVI DURANCE into durance vile.