

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

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

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

Vol. 152.

February 21st, 1917.

CHARIVARIA.

Count *Bernstorff*, it appears, was very much annoyed with the way in which certain Americans are supporting President *Wilson*, and he decided to read them a lesson they would not soon forget. So he left America.

Things are certainly settling down a little in Hungary. Only two shots were fired at Count *tisza* in the Hungarian Diet last week.

The famous Liquorice Factory which has figured so often in the despatches from Kut is again in the hands of our troops. Bronchial subjects who have been confining themselves to black currant lozenges on patriotic grounds will welcome the news.



The German Imperial Clothing Department has decreed that owners of garments “bearing the marks of prodigal eating” will not be permitted to replace them, and the demand among the elderly dandies of Berlin for soup-coloured waistcoats is said to have already reached unprecedented figures.

“On the Western front,” says *The Cologne Gazette*, “the British are defeated.” Some complaints are being made by the Germans on the spot because they have not yet been officially notified of the fact.

A neutral diplomat in Vienna has written for a sack of rice to a colleague in Rome, who, feeling that the Austrians may be on the look-out for the rice, intends to defeat their hopes by substituting confetti.

By the way the *food controller* may shortly forbid the use of rice at weddings. We have long held the opinion that as a deterrent the stuff is useless.

“The British,” says the *Berliner Tageblatt*, “what are they? They are snufflers, snivelling, snorting, shirking, snuffling, vain-glorious wallowers in misery...” It is thought likely that the *Berliner Tageblatt* is vexed with us.

Count *Plunkett*, although elected to the House of Commons, will not attend. It is cruel, but the *count* is convinced that the punishment is no more severe than the House deserves.

A North of England Tribunal has just given a plumber sufficient extension to carry out a large repair job he had in hand. This has caused some consternation among those who imagined that the War would end this year.



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Lord DEVONPORT'S weekly bread allowance is regarded as extravagant by a lady correspondent, who writes, "In my own household we hardly eat any bread at all. We practically live on toast."

An informative contemporary explains that the Chinese eggs now arriving are nearly all brown and resemble those laid in this country by the Cochin China fowl. This, however, is not the only graceful concession to British prejudice, for the eggs, we notice, are of that oval design which is so popular in these islands.

[Illustration: *Pro Patria.*]

An *Evening News* correspondent states that at one restaurant last week a man consumed "a large portion of beef, baked potatoes, brussels-sprouts, two big platefuls of bread, apple tart, a portion of cheese, a couple of pats of butter and a bottle of wine." We understand that he would also have ordered the last item on the menu but for the fact that the band was playing it.

A Carmelite sleuth at a City restaurant reports that one "Food Hog" had for luncheon "half-a-dozen oysters, three slices of roast beef with Yorkshire pudding, two vegetables and a roll." The after-luncheon roll is of course the busy City man's substitute for the leisured club-man's after-luncheon nap.

There is plenty of coal in London, the dealers announce, for those who are willing to fetch it themselves. Purchasers of quantities of one ton or over should also bring their own paper and string.

One of the rarest of British birds, the great bittern, is reported to have been seen in the Eastern counties during the recent cold spell. In answer to a telephonic inquiry on the matter Mr. *Pocock*, of the Zoological Gardens, was heard to murmur, "Once bittern, twice shy."



A stoker, prosecuted at a London Police Court for carrying smoking materials into a munitions factory, explained in defence that no locker had been assigned to him. The Bench thereupon placed one at his disposal for a period of one month.

On the Somme, says *The Times*, the New Zealand Pioneers, consisting of Maoris, Pakehas and Raratongans, dug 13,163 yards of trenches, mostly under German fire. The really thrilling fact about this is that we have enlisted the sympathy of the Pakehas (or "white men"), who, with the single exception of the Sahibs of India, are probably the fiercest tribe in our vast Imperial possessions.

The announcement that the Scotland Yard examination will not be lowered for women taxicab drivers has elicited a number of inquiries as to whether "language" is a compulsory or an alternative subject.

"The feathers are most quickly got rid of by removing them with the skin," says the writer of a recently published letter on "Sparrows as Food." He forgets the very considerable economy which can be achieved by having them baked in their jackets.



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We are glad to note an agitation for a bath-room in every artisan dwelling. Only last week we were pained by a photograph in a weekly paper showing somebody reduced to taking his tub in the icy Serpentine.

Motto for Housekeepers:—

“Weigh it and see.”

* * * * *

National service.

War has taught the truth that shines Through the poet’s noble lines:— “Common are to either sex *Artifex* and *opifex*.”

* * * * *

William v. The world.

Doubtless you feel that such a fight
Would be a huge *reclame* for Hundom;
That Earth would stagger at the sight
Of *Gulielmus contra Mundum*;
That *William*, facing awful odds,
Should prove a spectacle for men and gods.

(’Tis true you have Allies who share
The toll you levy for the shambles,
Yet, judging by the frills you wear
In this your most forlorn of gambles,
One might suppose you stood alone
In solitary splendour all your own.)

And if the game against you goes,
As seems, I take it, fairly certain,
The Hero, felled by countless foes,
Should make a rather useful curtain;
You could with honour cry for grace,
Having preserved the thing you call your face.



I shouldn't count too much on that.
 The globe is patient, slow and pensive,
 But has a way of crushing flat
 The objects which it finds offensive;
 And when it's done with you, my brave,
 I doubt if you will have a face to save.

O.S.

* * * * *

A lost Leader.

"Mr. Law began his speech with intermittent cries for Mr. Lloyd George."—*The Saturday Westminster Gazette.*

We can well understand Mr. *Law's* sense of loneliness, and our contemporary has performed a genuine service in recording this pathetic incident, which seems to have escaped all the other reporters of the opening of Parliament.

* * * * *

"His mother died when he was seven years old, while his father lived to be nearly a centurion."—*Wallasey and Wirral Chronicle.*

Hard lines that he just missed his promotion.

* * * * *

"ROYAL FLYING CORPS.

FLIGHT COMDRS.—Lt. (temp. Capt.) F.P. Don, and to retain his temp. tank whilst so empld."—*The Times.*

We commend this engaging theme to the notice of Mr. LANCELOT SPEED, in case the popularity of his film, "Tank Pranks," now being exhibited, should call for a second edition.

* * * * *

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“Four lb. of bread (or 3 lb. of flour), 2-1/2 lb. of meat, and 3/4 lb. of sugar—these are the voluntary rations for each person for a week, and in a household of five persons this works out at 23-1/3 lb. of bread and flour, 9 lb. of meat, and 4 lb. of sugar.”—*Weekly Scotsman*.

We always like to have our arithmetic done for us by one who has the trick of it.

* * * * *

“WANTED, False Teeth, any condition; highest price given, buying for Government.”—*Local Paper*.

This may account for the statement in another journal that “the new Administration is going through teething troubles.”

* * * * *

Mr. Punch begs to call the attention of his readers to an exhibition of original War-Cartoons to be held by his namesake of Australia at 155, New Bond Street, beginning on February 22nd. The cartoons are the work of Messrs. GEORGE H. DANCEY and CHARLES NUTTALL, of the Melbourne *Punch*.

* * * * *

HEART-TO-HEART TALKS.

(*The PRESIDENT of the United States and Mr. GERARD.*)

The President. Here you are then at last, my dear Mr. GERARD. I am afraid you have had a long and uncomfortable journey.

Mr. Gerard. Don't say a word about that, Mr. President. It's all in the day's work, and, anyhow, it's an immense pleasure to be back in one's own country.

The President. Yes, I can well believe that. Living amongst Germans at this time can be no satisfaction to an American citizen.

Mr. G. No, indeed, Mr. President; you never said a truer word than that in your life. The fact is the Germans have all gone mad with self-esteem, and are convinced that every criticism of their actions must have its foundations in envy and malignity. And yet they feel bitterly, too, that, in spite of their successes here and there, the War on the whole has been an enormous disappointment for them, and that the longer it continues the worse their position becomes. The mixture of these feelings makes them grossly arrogant and sensitive to the last degree, and reasonable intercourse with them

becomes impossible. No, Mr. President, they are not pleasant people to live amongst at this moment, and right glad am I to be away from them.

The President. And as to their submarine warfare, do they realise that we shall hold them to what they have promised, and that if they persist in their policy of murder there must be war between them and us?

Mr. G. The certainty that you mean what you say has but little effect on them. They argue in this way: Germany is in difficulties; the submarine weapon is the only one that will help Germany, therefore Germany must use that weapon ruthlessly and hack through with it, whatever may be urged on behalf of international law or humanity at large. Humanity doesn't count in the German mind because humanity doesn't wear a German uniform or look upon the KAISER as absolutely infallible. Down, therefore, with humanity and, incidentally, with America and all the smaller neutrals who may be disposed to follow her lead.

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The President. So you think patience, moderation and reasonable argument are all useless?

Mr. G. See here, Mr. President, this is how the matter stands. They imagine they can ruin England with their submarines—they 're probably wrong, but that's their notion—but if they give way to America this illegitimate weapon is blunted and they lose the war. Sooner than suffer that catastrophe they will defy America. And they don't believe as yet that America means what she says and is determined to fight rather than suffer these outrages to continue. The Germans will try to throw dust in your eyes, Mr. President, while continuing the submarine atrocities.

The President. The Germans will soon be undeceived. We will not suffer this wrong, and we will fight, if need be, in order to prevent it. God knows we have striven to keep the peace through months and years of racking anxiety. If war comes it is not we who have sought it. Nobody can lay that reproach upon us. Rather have we striven by all honourable means to avoid it. But we have ideals that we cannot abandon, though they may clash with German ambitions and German methods. There we are fixed, and to give way even by an inch would be to dishonour our country and to show ourselves unworthy of the freedom our forefathers won for us at the point of the sword. That is the conclusion I have come to, having judged these matters with such power of judgment as God has given me.

Mr. G. And to that every true American will say Amen.

* * * * *

[Illustration: WAR-SAVINGS.

SULTAN. "THE OLD 'UN SEEMS TO WANT THE WHOLE WORLD AGAINST HIM, SO AS TO SAVE HIS FACE WHEN HE'S BEATEN."

FERDIE. "I DON'T CARE WHAT BECOMES OF HIS FACE SO LONG AS I SAVE MY HEAD."

SULTAN. "SAME HERE."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: HOME DEFENCE.

"AND WHAT'S YOUR CORPS, MY LAD?"

"PARKS-AND-OPEN-SPACES-WIRE-WORM-CABBAGE-CATERPILLA R-AND-INSECT-PEST-EXTERMINATING-PATROL, SIR."]

* * * * *

THE WATCH DOGS.

LVI.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—The weather is very seasonable for the time of year, is it not? A nice nip in the air, as you might say; thoroughly healthy for those at liberty to enjoy it *al fresco*. I assure you the opportunity is not being wasted out here; all the best people are out-of-doors all the time. For myself, with thirty degrees of frost about, it seemed to be the exact moment to slip over to England and help keep the home fires burning.



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Accordingly I repaired to a neighbouring port, and when I got there an officer, who appeared to be looking for something, asked me what my rank was. In peace times I should have loved a little unexpected sympathy like this; as a soldier, quite an old soldier now, I dislike people who take an interest in me, especially if they have blue on their hats. I thanked him very much for his kind inquiry, but indicated that my lips were sealed. His curiosity thereupon became positively acute; he was, he said, a man from whom it was impossible to keep a secret. He still wished to know what my rank was. I said it all depended which of them he was referring to, since there are three in all, the "Acting," the "Temporary" and the Rock-bottom one. In any case, at heart I was and always should remain a plain civilian mister. Should we leave it at that, and let bygones be bygones? He was meditating his answer, when I asked him if he realised how close he was standing to the edge of the quay, and when he turned round and looked I also turned round and went...

The fellow who was standing next to me all this time was either too young or too proud to conceal his stars beneath an ordinary waterproof. Blue-hat didn't need to ask him what his rank was; he recognized at a glance just the very type of officer he was looking for. So he led off the poor fellow to the slaughter, and put him in charge of two hundred N.C.O.s and men proceeding on leave to the U.K. I've no doubt the fellow spent the best part of his days on the other side trying to get rid of his party. I have not been two years in France without discovering that you simply cannot be too careful when you are attempting to get out of it.

When I reached England my feelings with regard to myself changed. I was no longer reticent about my rank. I displayed my uniform in a public restaurant, without any reserve. In consequence they'd only let me eat three-and-sixpence worth for my first meal. This time I was not so clever, it appeared, as I thought. I had erroneously supposed that by not being a civilian I should get more than two courses. As it was I got less, and so it was with a full heart and an empty stomach that I fell in for home. If I'd known I should have kept my waterproof on for luncheon.

Do you realise how dismal a thing it is for us to be separated from our own by a High Sea all these months and years? It ain't fair, Sir, it simply ain't fair. In my case there is not only a wife amongst wives, but also a son amongst sons. Now, Charles, I am the very last person to call a thing good merely because it is my own, nor am I that kind of fool who thinks all his geese are swans. If my son had a fault I should be the very first to notice and call attention to it. But he has not; dispassionately and from an entirely detached and impersonal view, I am bound to say that there is about him an outstanding merit which at once puts him on a different level from all others.



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It isn't so much his four and a half teeth I'm thinking of, nor is it the twenty-seven overgrown and badly managed hairs which wander about at the back of his bald head and give him the look of a dissipated monk. It is just his intrinsic worth, clearly evidenced in everything about him. Obviously a man of parts, he has brains, a stout heart and an unfailing humour. Blessed with a keen perception, he delights those who can understand him with his singularly happy and apt turn of speech. You will, I think, accept my word as an officer and a gentleman that he *is* unique.

Anticipating the welcome greeting of my wife and many pleasant hours to be spent in discussing with my son the things which matter, I put on all my waterproofs, gave the porter a twenty-five centime piece, which he mistook for a shilling, even as earlier on I had myself been led to mistake it for a franc, and hastened home.

The welcome greeting seemed all right, but I had not been long in the company of my wife before I discovered that Another had come between us. I had not been long with my son before I discovered who that Other was.... I determined to have it out with him at once. Feeling that the situation was one for tactics, I manoeuvred for position and, to get him entirely at a disadvantage, I surprised him in his bath and taxed him with his infamy. I addressed him more in sorrow than in anger. I told him I was well aware of his personal charm, but in this instance I was bound to comment unfavourably on the use he had made of it. The very last thing I had expected of him was that at, or indeed before, the early age of one he would be stealing the affections of another man's wife.

He was not ashamed or nonplussed; he was not even embarrassed by his immediate environment. In fact he turned it to his own advantage, for his hairs, duly watered and soaped down on to his cranium, lost their rakish look and gave him the appearance of a gentleman of perfect integrity, great intellect and no little financial stability. As between one man and another, he did not attempt to deny the truth of my assertion, gave me to understand, with a jovial smile, that such little incidents must always be expected as long as humanity remains human, and repudiated all personal responsibility in this instance. He even went so far as to suggest that it was the woman's fault; it was always she who was running after him, and his only offence had been that of being too chivalrous abruptly to repel her advances. I confess I was painfully surprised at the attitude he adopted; it consisted in putting his foot in one half of his mouth and breathing stentorously through the other moiety. And when he started making eyes at the nurse I was too shocked to stay any longer.

Never a man to take a thing sitting down, I waited till the next morning for my revenge. As the trustee of his future wealth I had him in my power. Stepping across to the nearest bank I borrowed an immense sum of money in his name and passed it all on to the Government, then and there, to be spent, *inter alia*, on the B.E.F. And what's more,

I told him to his face that I'd done it. What reply do you suppose he made? He merely called for a drink.



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However, my revenge did not end there. On my way back to France I seized the opportunity of looking in at Cox's and there took back from the Government for my own sole and absolute use some of those very pounds my son had borrowed from the bank to give it. But I lost in the end, for my wife, whom I had taken with me to witness her and his discomfiture, had all the money off me again, in order, I gather, to put it in my son's money-box, for him to rattle now and spend later. The only result of my efforts therefore was to land me in a financial transaction so complicated that I cannot even follow it myself.

Yours ever,

HENRY.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Shocked Sister*. "OH, BOBBY, YOU MUSTN'T HAVE A SECOND HELPING! YOU'LL LENGTHEN THE WAR."

[*Bobby, like a true Briton, desists.*]]

* * * * *

NURSERY RHYMES OF LONDON TOWN.

(SECOND SERIES.)

XX.

MILLWALL.

I leaned on the Mill-Wall
Looking at the water,
I leaned on the Mill-Wall
And saw the Nis's Daughter.

I saw the Nis's Daughter
Playing with her ball,
She tossed it and tossed it
Against the Mill-Wall.

I saw the Nis's Goodwife
Busy making lace
With her silver bobbins
In the Mill-Race.



Then I saw the old Nis,
His hair to his heel,
Combing out the tangles
On the Mill-Wheel.

The Miller came behind me
And gave my ear a clout—
“Get on with your business,
You good-for-nothing lout!”

XXI.

CORNHILL.

The seed of the Corn, the rustling Corn,
The seed of the Corn is sown;
When the seed is sown on the Cornhill
My love will ask for his own.

The blade of the Corn, the rustling Corn,
The blade of the Corn is shown;
When the blade is shown on the Cornhill
I'll promise my love his own.

The ear of the Corn, the rustling Corn,
The ear of the Corn is grown;
When the ear is grown on the Cornhill
My love shall have his own.

The sheaf of the Corn, the rustling Corn,
The sheaf of the Corn is mown;
When the sheaf is mown on the Cornhill
My love will leave his own.

* * * * *

ONE OF OUR OPTIMISTS.

“WANTED, few cwt. White Sugar, cart self; pay cash; state price.”—*Manchester Guardian*.

* * * * *

“M. Trepoff accepted the leadership of the Right in the Council of Empire after the party had pledged itself to eschew a retrograd course.”—*Manchester Evening Chronicle*.

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Preferring a Petrograd one, of course.

* * * * *

“His Majesty’s Government has declared that it is ready to grant sage-conducts to Count Bernstorff and the Embassy and Consular personnel.”—*Daily Mail*.

Hitherto his Excellency has been sadly lacking in this hyphenated article.

* * * * *

THE HARDSHIPS OF BILLETS.

II.

Nobody knows the misery of bein’ lapped in luxury in a billet better than me and Jim. Mrs. Dawkins, as I told you, give us the best of everything in the ‘ouse and our lives wasn’t worth livin’ owin’ to Mr. Dawkins and the little Dawkinses and a young man lodger takin’ against us in consekence. Seein’ that they ‘adn’t a bed between ‘em while we was given one apiece and their end of the table had next to nothin’ on when ours was weighed down with sausages and suchlike, it were not surprisin’ that Mr. Dawkins and the lodger swore at us and the little Dawkinses put their tongues out. But it were upsettin’, and Jim and me did ‘ope when we was moved to Mrs. Larkins’s that we had a better time in store.

“Just goin’ to the Front, ain’t they, poor fellows?” she said to the billetin’ orficer. “I’ll do my best by ‘em. Nobody wouldn’t like to coddle ‘em better than I should, but ‘twould be crule kindness to ‘em, I knows. If ‘ardships are in store for ‘em let ‘em ‘ave a taste before they goes, I says, and it won’t fall so ‘eavy on ‘em when they gets there.”

“There’s as comfortable a feather bed as you could wish to sleep on ready and waitin’ for you,” she said to us, “but who with a woman’s heart in her could put you on a feather bed knowin’ you’ll be sleepin’ on the bare earth before three weeks is over your poor heads? I’ve put you a shake of straw on the floor for to-night. I’ll take it away to-morrow so as you shall get used to the boards. I’ve wedged the winders top and bottom to make a draught through; that’ll help you to bear the wind over there.”

It were a north-east wind, and it reglar took ‘old of Jim. He’s inclined to toothake, and in the mornin’ his face were as big as a football. “I *am* thankful I thought of the winders,” Mrs. Larkins said; “you’d ‘ave suffered terrible if you’d ‘ad the faceake for the first time in the trenches; now you’ll get used to it before you gets there. A pepper plaster ‘ud ease you direckly, but you’re goin’ where there’s no such things as pepper plasters, and it ‘ud be a sin to let you taste the luxury of one over ‘ere.”



Jim was for runnin' to the doctor to 'ave the tooth took out, but Mrs. Larkins wouldn't 'ear of it. "My poor fellow," she said, "do you think a doctor'll come along with his pinchers all ready to take your tooth out in the trenches? You'll more like 'ave to do it yourself with a corkscrew. I'll lend you one willin'." But Jim said he wouldn't trouble her just at present, he was feelin' a little easier.



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She didn't cook us nothin' to eat. "My fingers itch to turn you out beyutiful dishes as your mouths 'ud water to come to a second time," she said, "but it 'ud be a crule kindness, knowin' you'll be fendin' for yourselves in a 'ole in the ground in three weeks' time. Better learn 'ow to do it now. There's a bit o' meat, and you can dig up any vegetables you fancy in the garden. I'll rake the fire out so as you shall learn 'ow to light a fire for yourselves; and I'll put the saucepans out of your way; it ain't likely you'll 'ave saucepans over there."

We was never nearer starvin' than we was at Mrs. Larkins's. She said it made her heart bleed to see us, but we should be grateful to 'er one day for teachin' us 'ow to cook our vittels for ourselves or go without 'em.

One of Jim's buttons come loose on his tunic and he asked Mrs. Larkins if she would be so kind as to sew it on for him. "Nothin' would please me better than to sew 'em all on, they're mostly 'angin' by a thread," she said; "but do you expect to find a woman in the trenches all 'andy to sew on your buttons? You'll 'ave to sew 'em on yourself, and the sooner you learn 'ow to do it the better."

We was accustomed to 'ave our washin' done for us in our other billets, but when the second Sunday come at Mrs. Larkins's and there wasn't no sign of a clean shirt we felt obliged to mention it to 'er. "'Ere's a bit o' soap and a bucket," she said, "and you knows where the well is."

When we'd washed 'em we was goin' to 'ang 'em round the fire to dry; but she wouldn't 'ear of it. "Where'll you find a fire to dry 'em by over there?" she said; "you'll 'ave to wear 'em wet." And when we got the rheumatics she said, "Ah, a wet shirt's sure to do it. You'll never be without it over there. It's a mercy you've got a touch now. I shouldn't be sorry if I see you limpin' a bit more."

It took us some time in the trenches to get over our 'ardenin' at Mrs. Larkins's.

* * * * *

"The Ministry therefore appeals to all users and buyers of paper to be content with lower shades of whiteness, and generally to refrain from all demands that would interfere with the desired economy. All that is asked for is the sacrifice of anaesthetic requirements, in view of national need."—*East Anglian Daily Times*.

If all the Press is to turn Yellow, the prospect is certainly painful and we must insist on an anaesthetic.

* * * * *

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* * * * *



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GENERAL LITERATURE.

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IN A SCULLERY AT SOFIA.

IN A SERVANTS' HALL AT
BUDA-PESTH.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Neutral Waiter*. "I SHALL NEVAIR ONDERSTAND ZIS LANGUAGE. ZAT OFFICER—I SAY TO HIM, 'GOOT MORNING, 'OW ARE YOU?' 'E SAY, 'DAM 'ONGRY AND FED OP'!"]

* * * * *

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.



[The management of *The Times*, of which the price was raised on Monday to twopence, is anxious, in view of the paper famine, to restore the old custom by which this journal was subscribed for jointly or loaned, whether gratuitously or by newsagents at one penny a perusal. Having “determined to restrict the sale and encourage the circulation of each copy in several houses daily, the managers will not hesitate, as a last resort, to increase the selling price to sevenpence per copy.”]

From “The Evening Uproar.”



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BATTLE IN THE WEST-END.

Piccadilly Circus was the scene of an appalling fracas this afternoon. Shortly after two o'clock a quietly-dressed middle-aged man, at present unidentified, was observed stealing cautiously from the Tube station with a thick wad of Treasury notes in one hand and a copy of "*The Times*" in the other! The sight of this latter seems to have sent several passers-by completely mad. The wretched stranger was instantly set upon, his journal torn from his hand and his limbs very severely mauled. The Treasury notes, unremarked in the fearful *melee*, fell into the mud and were devoured by a passing Pekinese. Those now in possession of the priceless document were in turn set upon by others, until all Piccadilly Circus became a battlefield. The deplorable behaviour of motor-bus and taxicab drivers added greatly to the carnage, for these men, rendered frantic by the thought of the loot within their reach, repeatedly drove their vehicles into the seething mass of humanity in their efforts to acquire this unthinkable treasure. No official estimate of the casualties is yet to hand.

Stop Press.—Reason to believe unknown archdeacon got away West with part of sheet of "Finance and Commerce." Police, specials, military and fire-brigade now in pursuit.

From the Press generally.

AMAZING GIFT TO CHARITY.

At Gristie's to-day there will be put up for auction an unread and unsoiled copy of yesterday's *Times*. The donor of this superb gift desires to remain anonymous, but his incredible generosity is expected to benefit charity to the extent of several thousand pounds.

From "The New Britain."

SOMETHING LIKE PATRIOTISM.

A sterling example of patriotism has just come to the notice of the Rag and Bones Controller. A copy of *The Times* (including the Uruguay Supplement of 94 pages), issued four months ago, was purchased, under permit of the R. and B. Controller, by Baron Goldenschein, who read it from the top of col. 1, page 1, to the foot of col. 6, page 108. The entire household then read from col. 1, page 1, to col. 6, page 108. Baron Goldenschein tells us that his cook with difficulty could be persuaded to tear herself away from the Uruguay Supplement. All the tenants on the estate—some eighty souls—then enjoyed the paper, each tenant in turn posting it to relatives in various parts of the United Kingdom. At the end of three months it is estimated that over one thousand persons had read this copy of *The Times*. The Baron also informs us that each post brings him a fragment of the paper from remote parts of the country. When



sufficient fragments have been collected and pasted together the whole will be despatched to those residents in the Isle of Man who have never heard of *The Times*.

From "The Wiggleswick Weekly":—

IMPORTANT NOTICE.



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From Monday next the price of *The Wiggleswick Weekly* (with which is incorporated *The Bindleton Advertiser* and *The Swashborough Gazette*) will be 17_s._ 6_d._ per copy. If this—the forty-seventh—increase in price does not bring about the desired reduction in circulation we shall unhesitatingly advance the price to L1 9_s._ 5-3/4_d._ per copy. The management of *The Wiggleswick Weekly* is determined, at no matter what sacrifice, to limit the circulation to forty copies weekly.

* * * * *

From an ecclesiastical magazine:—

“The Vicar of —— has promised to address our branch of the C.E.M.S. as soon as he can arrange a fine and moonlight evening.”

We should be greatly obliged if the reverend gentleman would let us have the prescription. There should be money in it.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Doctor's Wife*. “SO GLAD TO SEE YOU OUT AGAIN. THE DOCTOR AND I HAD NO IDEA YOU'D BEEN SO ILL TILL WE CAME TO MAKE UP THE BOOKS.”]

* * * * *

SOME MORE BAD WORDS.

In a recent verse adventure
I compiled “a little list”
Of the verbs deserving censure,
Verbs that “never would be missed”;
Now, to flatter the fastidious,
Suffer me the work to crown
With three epithets—all hideous—
And one noisome noun.

First, to add to the recital
Of the words that gall and irk,
Is the old offender “vital,”
Done to death by overwork;
Only a prolonged embargo
On its use by Press and pen
Can recall this kind of *argot*
Back to life again.



I, in days not very distant,
Though the memory gives me pain,
From the awful word “insistent”
Did not utterly refrain;
Once it promised to refresh us,
Seemed to be alert enough;
Now I loathe it, laboured, precious—
Merely verbal fluff.

Thirdly, in the sheets that daily
Cater for our vulgar needs,
There’s a word that figures gaily
In reviewers’ friendly screeds,
Who declare a book’s “arresting,”
Mostly, it must be confessed,
Meaning just the problem-questing
Which deserves arrest.

Last and vilest of this bad band
Is that noun of gruesome sound,
“Uplift,” which the clan of *Chadband*
Hold in reverence profound;
Used for a dynamic function
'Tis a word devoid of guile,
Only as connoting unction
It excites my bile.

*Why, fastidious poetaster,
Waste your energy and breath
Like a petulant schoolmaster
Only doing words to death?
Needlessly you slate and scourge us;
War, that sifts and tries and tests,
May be safely left to purge us
Of these verbal pests.*



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* * * * *

England, February, 1917.—“The great loan land.”

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE LAST THROW.]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, February 12th.—Question-time, which towards the end of last Session was extended by a quarter-of-an-hour, to-day reverted to its old limits. Consideration for overworked officials was assigned as the reason, but I think the House as a whole was rather relieved at the disappearance of what was often a *triste quart d'heure*. One can easily have a surfeit of the piquant humours of Mr. GINNELL, Mr. KING and the rest of the *Rosa Dartles* of the House.

The new Administration received some useful support from an unexpected quarter. Mr. MCKENNA, a little disturbed, perhaps, by the discovery that he had been a trifle of 350 millions out in his Budget estimate of the cost of the War, was fain to rebuke the Government for proposing two big Votes of Credit on one day. This unprecedented demand, he insisted, must have some dark purpose behind it. Were the Government contemplating a General Election? Mr. BONAR LAW quietly reminded him that exactly the same thing had been done this time last year when Mr. MCKENNA himself was at the Exchequer.

“Luff, boy, luff,” whispered Mr. ASQUITH to his discomfited lieutenant, who thereupon went off on another tack and proceeded to express doubts as to the wisdom of over-sea expeditions. But his course was again unfortunate. “Why did you go to Salonika?” interjected a voice from below the Gangway. As Major GODFREY COLLINS afterwards observed, neither the House nor the country will stand much criticism of the new Government by members of the old one.

Tuesday, February 13th.—Lord BERESFORD, in latter days heard with difficulty in the House of Commons, has found his voice again in the ampler air of the Gilded Chamber. His speech this afternoon on the submarine peril and how to defeat it might have wakened the echoes in the Admiralty at the far end of Whitehall. It evoked an admirable reply from Lord LYTTON, who, though not exactly a typical British tar in appearance, has evidently absorbed a full measure of the sea-spirit. Necessarily reticent as to the exact nature of the steps that are being taken to deal with the sea-highwaymen, he made the comforting announcement that already we had achieved very considerable success. This was endorsed by Lord CURZON, who revealed the interesting fact that



he too is now a member of the Board of Admiralty, and was able to state that, after two years of "frightfulness," the British mercantile marine was only a small fraction below its tonnage at the commencement.

The British revolution goes on apace. The Game Laws, over which so many Parliamentary battles have been fought, were swept away in a moment this afternoon when Captain BATHURST announced in his usual level tones that British farmers would in future be allowed to destroy pheasants with as little compunction as if they were rabbits, and with no regard to the sacredness of close-time.



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After this momentous announcement, which transforms (subject to the opinion of the law-officers) every tenant-farmer into a pheasant-proprietor, Members took a little time to recover their breath. But some of them were soon hard at work again heckling the Government over the multiplication of new departments and secretariats. Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL, whose reverence for the Constitution (save in so far as it applies to Ireland) knows no bounds, could hardly contain his fury at the setting up of a War Cabinet—"a body utterly unknown to the law"—and the inclusion therein of Ministers without portfolios but with salaries.

[Illustration: THE GREAT PUSH. CONGESTION ON THE TREASURY BENCH.]

He received a certain amount of rather gingerly support from Mr. RUNCIMAN and Mr. SAMUEL, who had evidently not forgotten what happened to Mr. MCKENNA yesterday. Mr. SAMUEL was a distinguished Member of a Government under which both the Ministry and the bureaucracy were swollen in peace-time to unprecedented size; but that did not prevent him from complaining that under the present *regime* the Administration had been further magnified until, if all its members, including Under-Secretaries, were present, they would fill not one but three Treasury Benches. Already it is a much-congested district at Question-time and is the daily scene of a Great Push.

If underlying these criticisms there was a hope that they would draw the PRIME MINISTER from the seclusion of his private room, it was doomed to disappointment. Mr. BONAR LAW, asserting his position as Leader of the House, and not, as some people seemed to imagine, the PRIME MINISTER'S deputy, made a spirited defence of the new Ministerial arrangements as being essential for the conduct of the War, and challenged his opponents, if they wanted to make sure of the PRIME MINISTER'S presence, to move a Vote of Censure.

At Question-time Mr. LAW had instructed the House how to discover the emblems on the new Treasury Note—the rose, the thistle, the shamrock and the daffodil (this last for Wales). On the Treasury Bench the daffodil is rarely to be descried; but the thistle is in full bloom all the time.

Wednesday, February 14th.—To-day the Vice-Chamberlain of the Household bore a message from the KING in reply to the Address. The House on these occasions is apt to be less interested in the message than in the messenger, and watches eagerly to see if he will trip in his backward march from the Chair, or forget one of the customary three bows. The present holder of the office does his work so featly and with such obvious enjoyment as to give a new significance to the phrase ... "With nods and BECKS and wreathed smiles."

Most of us only remember the late King THEBAW of Burma as a bloodthirsty and dissipated despot. It has been reserved for Sir JOHN REES to find a redeeming feature in his character. Among all his crimes, he never, it seems, prohibited the consumption



of drink in his realm, though I fancy that his own efforts in that line considerably reduced the amount available for his subjects. Implored by the hon. Member not to turn Burma into a "dry" State, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN would say nothing more than that he declined (very properly) to take THEBAW as his model.



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No Leader of the House, perhaps, since Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE'S time has occupied a more difficult position than Mr. BONAR LAW. But he is daily becoming more at home in the saddle, and can even venture upon a joke or two. Mr. PRINGLE opposed the suspension of the Eleven-o'clock Rule on the ground, *inter alia*, that "he only wanted to get away." "That," said Mr. LAW suavely, "is a result which can easily be attained," and the House, which is getting a little weary of Mr. PRINGLE'S frequent and acidulated interposition, noted his discomfiture with approving cheers.

Thursday, February 15th.—Lord CURZON, in a happy phrase, described the late Duke of NORFOLK as "diffident about powers which were in excess of the ordinary." Is not that true of the British race as a whole? Only now, under the stress of a long-drawn-out conflict, is it discovering the variety and strength of its latent forces.

There are, of course, exceptions to this rule—strong men who are fully conscious of their strength. Lord MIDLETON, for example, who sought a comprehensive return of all the buildings commandeered and staffs employed by the multifarious new Ministries, and was told that to provide it would put too great a strain on officials fully engaged on work essential to winning the War, promptly replied that if the Government would give him access to their books he would draw up a return in a couple of days. Either the evil has been greatly exaggerated or Lord MIDLETON is a super-statistician for whose services another hotel or two ought to be immediately secured.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Officer.* "I DON'T THINK MUCH OF THAT CORPORAL, SERGEANT."

Sergeant. "THAT'S ALL RIGHT, SIR; HE'S IN FOR A COMMISSION."]

* * * * *

"Black billy, 11 months, dam good milker; 10s."—*The Bazaar.*

It's no use swearing; we simply don't believe it.

* * * * *

"This week three crows had landed at Cardiff who had been sunk by submarines twice, and in some cases three times."—*Manchester Guardian.*

If only they had stayed in the crow's-nest this might not have happened.

* * * * *



“Matrimony.—Gentleman coming into means desires to correspond with Lady having means; this is genuine.”—*Scotch Paper*.

But suppose she won't have him; would he be “coming into means” then?

* * * * *

THE QUESTION OF THE DAY.

What are a rational nation's national rations?

* * * * *

“Outwardly, this has been a week devoted both at home and abroad to preparation for the campaign in the spring. Actually, a great deal of water has passed under the Thames.”—*Liverpool Paper*.



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Something seems to have gone wrong with the Thames tunnel.

* * * * *

From a report of Mr. BONAR LAW'S speech at Liverpool:—

“When the War was over there would be parties again. (A voice, 'I hope not.')

Yes, there would be parties—no free country with free institutions was ever without them—but he did not think they would be quite the sane parties.”—*The Times*.

But were they ever?

* * * * *

“A telegram from Budapest ... announces that the newspaper ‘A Nap’ has been suppressed by the Hungarian Government for publishing an article the contents of which were considered to be dangerous to the interests of the war campaign.”—*Westminster Gazette*.

We are sorry to hear this. We used to take “A Nap” pretty regularly of an evening, and must now forgo this simple luxury.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Giles*. “THAT BEANT NO MANNER O' USE TO THE LIKES O' WE, MEASTER.”

Farmer. “WHAT'S WRONG WI' THE BEER? AIN'T THERE ENOUGH 'OPS FOR YOU?”

Giles. “‘OPS? THE ONLY 'OP THAT'S EVER 'AD WERE OUT O' THE BLOOMIN' WELL!”]

* * * * *

THE ART OF DETACHMENT.

(*Being a letter from a cloistered lady visiting London to her sister in the Shires.*)

My dear Ruth,—Beginning at the beginning, let me tell you that you must at once go to the station to inquire how it is that they forced me to pay thirty shillings for my ticket, instead of one pound. Although the price one pound is printed on the ticket, I couldn't get it until I had paid ten shillings extra. There was no time to get a proper explanation, so I want you to do so. Very likely it is sheer blackmail by that man in the booking-office, whom I never cared for. You had better see the station-master about it.



The next thing I want to tell you is that most of our ideas of London are wrong. You remember how we used to be told about its wonderful lighting at night, and the comfort of its hotels, and the bright shops, and the crowds of taxis, and so on. Well, this isn't true at all. So far from being well-lighted, I assure you that our few little streets and market square are a blaze compared with this city. Some streets here are absolutely dark, and even in the great thoroughfares there is so little light that crossing the road is most perilous. The thing could be put right in a moment if they would only see to it that the lamps were cleaned; I looked closely at several of them and I could see exactly what was wrong—a coat of grimy stuff has accumulated on the glass. Now to get this off would be quite easy, but it does not seem to have occurred to anyone to do it. I suppose that London is very badly managed; and here again I think the advantage lies with us, for I am certain that our District Council would never allow such a state of things. Probably the LORD MAYOR is lazy.

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The funny thing is that there is plenty of good light, only they don't know how to apply it. Every night, directly it begins to be dark, great streams of light are turned on from all parts of the city; but would you believe it, they are directed, not downwards so that they could illumine the street, but upwards into the empty sky! If the Chairman of our District Council could see this, how he would laugh! I wish you would tell him.

Then there is coal. I went, as we arranged, first to the Jerusalem Hotel, but it was like ice. When I asked the hotel people why the central heating was not on, they said that there is no coal. At least it seems that there is coal, but no one to deliver it. Just think of our coal-merchant returning such a reply to us when the cellar was getting empty. But in London they seem to be ready to put up with any excuse. Why the men who ought to deliver the coals are not made to, I can't imagine. Anyhow, as I was freezing, I moved into lodgings, where there is coal, although an exorbitant price is asked for each scuttle.

The great topic of conversation everywhere has been some new speculation called the War Loan, and I have to confess that as it is so well spoken of and is to pay the large dividend of 5-1/4 per cent. I have arranged to invest something for each of us in it. I don't know who the promoter—a Mr. BONAR LAW—is, but it would be awful for us if he turned out to be a JABEZ BALFOUR in disguise. Still, nearly all investment is a gamble, and we can only hope for the best. He must have some peculiar position or the papers would not support his venture as they do; and there is even a campaign of public speakers through the country, I am told, taking his prospectus as their text and literally imploring the people to invest. Quite like the South Sea Bubble we read of in MACAULAY; but please Heaven it won't turn out to be another.

I asked the landlady here about it, but she knew nothing, except that her family could not afford to put anything in. "But your daughters earn very good money," I said. "That's true," she replied, "but all that they have over after their clothes, poor girls, they spend on the theatre or the pictures; and I'm glad to think they can do so. I wouldn't grudge them their pleasures, not I."

Judging by the crowded state of all the myriad places of entertainment in this city there are millions who are like them. But I couldn't help thinking that if so much money seems really to be needed, and this Mr. LAW is really a public benefactor, it might not be a bad idea to try to divert some of the thousands of pounds being paid every day in London alone for sheer amusement. Of course if England had the misfortune to be at war most of these places would naturally be shut up.

By the way, Germans are strangely unpopular in London just now. I have heard numbers of people, all in different places, such as the Tube and omni-buses and tea-shops, using very strong terms about them. It has been quite a series of coincidences.



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No more for the present from

Your affectionate

LOUISA.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "NOW, BOBBY, BE A GOOD BOY AND COME AND SAY YOUR PRAYERS."

"I DON'T WANT TO."

"BUT YOU MUST, BOBBY. COME ALONG AT ONCE."

"ALL RIGHT, THEN. I SHALL PRAY FOR THE GERMANS.]"

* * * * *

SONGS OF FOOD PRODUCTION.

III.

Tub-swill, tub-swill! *have* you any tub-swill?
 I will send my footman to fetch it, if I may;
 For I'm hoping *all* the restaurants and all the nicest clubs will
 Give me broken victuals, if I send for them each day;
 In the Park, in Piccadilly,
 Down at Ascot, in the Shires,
 We've been up in terms like "filly,"
 "Dams" and "sires,"
 "Smooths" and "wires;"
 Now it's "gilts" and it's "boars"
 And it's "suckers" and it's "stores"—
 The terms that one acquires
 Now we're keeping pigs to pay.

Hog-wash, hog-wash! *are* you selling hog-wash
 In a pretty bottle with a nice pneumatic spray?
 Nevermore in perfume shall a useless little dog wash;
 In my heart and boudoir precious piggy's holding sway.
 Oh, indeed, it's *worse* than silly
 If a person now admires
 An inedible young filly,



Dams and sires,
Smooths and wires;
For in gilts and in boars
And in suckers and in stores
Proper keenness one acquires
Now we're keeping pigs to pay.

* * * * *

"A Berlin telegram says that the Kaiser has created the Austrian Emperor a Field-Marshal.

The material damage done was insignificant."—*Glasgow Evening Times*.

But the moral effect was tremendous.

* * * * *

"More Food.—Wanted, Partner, either sex, to increase stock open-air pig-farm."—*Morning Paper*.

An opening for one of the Food Hogs we read so much about.

* * * * *

OXFORD REVISITED.

Last week, a prey to military duty,
I turned my lagging footsteps to the West;
I have a natural taste for scenic beauty,
And all my pent emotions may be guessed
To find myself again
At Didcot, loathliest junction of the plain.

But all things come unto the patient waiter,
"Behold!" I cried, "in yon contiguous blue
Beetle the antique spires of Alma Mater
Almost exactly as they used to do
In 1898,
When I became an undergraduate.

"O joys whereto I went as to a bridal,
With Youth's fair aureole clustering on a brow
That no amount of culture (herpeccidal)
Will coax the semblance of a crop from now,
Once more I make ye mine;
There is a train that leaves at half-past nine.



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“In a rude land where life among the boys is
One long glad round of cards and coffin juice,
And any sort of intellectual poise is
The constant butt of well-expressed abuse,
And it is no disgrace
To put a table-knife inside one’s face,

“I have remembered picnics on the Isis,
Bonfires and bumps and BOFFIN’S cakes and tea,
Nor ever dreamed a European crisis
Would make a British soldier out of me—
The mute inglorious kind
That push the beastly war on from behind.

“But here I am” (I mused) “and quad and cloister
Are beckoning to me with the old allure;
The lovely world of Youth shall be mine oyster
Which I for one-and-ninepence can secure,
Reaching on Memory’s wing
Parnassus’ groves and Wisdom’s fabled spring.”

But oh, the facts! How doomed to disillusion
The dreams that cheat the mind’s responsive eye!
Where are the undergrads in gay profusion
Whose waistcoats made melodious the High,
All the *jeunesse doree*
That shed the glamour of an elder day?

Can this be Oxford? And is that my college
That vomits khaki through its sacred gate?
Are those the schools where once I aired my knowledge
Where nurses pass and ambulances wait?
Ah! sick ones, pale of face,
I too have suffered tortures in that place!

In Tom his quad the Bloods no longer flourish;
Balliol is bare of all but mild Hindoos;
The stalwart oars that Isis used to nourish
Are in the trenches giving Fritz the Blues,
And many a stout D.D.
Is digging trenches with the V.T.C.

Why press the search when every hallowed close is
Cluttered with youthful soldiers forming fours;



While the drum stutters and the bugler blows his
Loud summons, and the hoarse bull-sergeant roars,
While almost out of view
The thrumming biplane cleaves the astonished blue?

It is a sight to stir the pulse of poet,
These splendid youths with zeal and courage fired,
But as for Private Me, M.A.—why, blow it!
The very sight of soldiers makes me tired;
Learning—detached, apart—
I sought, not War's reverberating art.

Yain search! But see! One ancient institution
Still doing business at the same old stand;
'Tis Messrs. Barclay's Bank, or I'm a Proossian,
That erst dispensed my slender cash-in-hand;
I'll borrow of their pelf
And buy some War Loan to console myself.

ALGOL.

* * * * *

THE GREAT INVESTMENT.

I am a fair man, even to Huns. When Germany pays an indemnity of L2,000,000,000 I think we might knock off a tenner or so because the KAISER has done so much to beautify our banks. Once they were cold cheerless places. A suspicion of an overdraft always swept through them. Now I love to go to the bank and see the beautiful blonde and brown and auburn heads bent over the ledgers. If I could be quite certain that they were not looking up the details of my account I should be perfectly happy.



Page 21

Somebody told me that I could buy War Loan at 5-1/4 per cent. by borrowing money from my bank at five per cent. This seemed to be the kind of investment I had been looking for. I found that if I took a million on those terms I should draw a net income of L2,500 a year. But I am a patriot. It seemed to me that L2,500 a year was rather more than I was worth to the nation. Was I better value than six M.P.'s? Of course I might be worth six RAMSAY MACDONALDS. However I resolved to avoid greed and ask for a simple hundred thousand.

So I went to my bank and said to a blue-eyed, Watteau type of beauty, "I want to see the manager, please. Concerning an important investment in War Loan," I added hastily, fearing lest the damsel should conclude that I wanted an ordinary overdraft.

I was ushered into the manager's private room.

"About this War Loan," I began. "I understand that you advance money at five per cent. to make the purchase."

"Yes, that is so," said the manager, beaming.

I leapt for joy. I had thought that there must be a catch somewhere.

"Put me down for a hundred thousand," I said.

The manager nearly fell out of his swing-chair. "My dear Sir," he gasped, "have you any prospect of being able to save a hundred thousand during the next year or so?"

"Am I a milk-dealer or a munition-worker?" I replied. "I should be both surprised and gratified if I saved that sum in a year. Still I might do it, you know. I should have to give up tobacco, of course. Or suppose relations hitherto unknown to me died and left me handsome legacies. You are always seeing these things in the papers. 'Baker Inherits Half-Million From Lost Australian Uncle.'"

"A hundred," amended the manager. "Shall we say a hundred? You need not pay a deposit. I'll give you a form."

"Where's your patriotism?" I demanded. "A hundred, you say? Well, I decline your overdraft. Keep your ill-gotten much-grudged gain. I'll pay cash."

I left the bank sadly. I had thought of intimating to the blonde, brown and auburn beauties that I had just put a hundred thousand in War Loan. I had imagined their eyes gleaming at the spectacle of one-tenth of a millionaire.

And now I can't go to the bank again. At least not till I have worked up my balance a little above its present total, namely L2 1s. 9d.



* * * * *

[Illustration: *Instructor (to very nervous lady, who, with a view to war-work, is inquiring about tuition). "OF COURSE YOU WOULD BEGIN ON A LOW-POWERED CAR, AND THEN WE SHOULD TAKE YOU IN A 40—50, AND FINISH YOU OFF IN TRAFFIC."*]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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



Page 22

If Wishes were Horses (HURST AND BLACKETT) is one of the most engaging novels that I have met for some time. The matter of it, perhaps, is nothing very new: a story of expanding fortunes and contracting sympathies. But the writer, Countess BARCYNKA, has, before all else, the inestimable gift of making you believe in her people. All the characters are vigorously alive. The result is that one follows with quite unusual interest the chequered career of her central figure, *Martin Leffley*, from his introduction as a frankly unpleasant youth, very red about the ears, "which was where he always blushed," to the final glimpse of him, titled, an M.P., and, incidentally, a bowed and better man, purified by the wonderful devotion of *Rose*, the wife whom throughout the tale he has bullied and undervalued. Nor is *Rose* herself, with her unwavering belief in her clay idol, a less memorable figure. Of the others, my chief affection went to *Aunt Polly*, the kindly dealer in old clothes, who imagined the Savile to be a night club. But, as I say, the whole cast is astonishingly real. Only once did I fear for the story, when it seemed as though the machinations of a super-villainous M.P. were about to lead it astray into the paths of melodrama. But the danger proved to be brief, and the unexpected beauty and dignity of the closing chapter would have redeemed a more serious lapse.

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Forced to Fight (HEINEMANN) is the record of a Schleswig Dane set forth by ERICH ERICHSEN and very capably translated from the Danish by INGEBORG LUND. It is a book that with a singular skill and with a passion that never gets out of hand so as to convey the impression of hysterical exaggeration lays bare the heart of a youth who was at the storming of Liege, fought in Flanders, then on the Russian Front and again in the Argonne, whence a shattered elbow sent him home broken and *aged*—that is what his chronicler emphasises—not by the wound, but by the long horror and fatigue of the successive campaigns. The poignancy of his sufferings lay in the fact that as a Dane he went without any of the great hopes and passions that inspired his German comrades, of whom however he speaks with no ill-will. He took part by order in some of the "punishments" of Belgian villages, loathing the savage cruelties of them and deeply convinced that the rape of Belgium was an inexpiable wrong which the world will remember to the lasting dishonour of the German name. You get an impression of the added horror of this War for the imaginative temperamental, and some pathetic pictures of all the suffering among simple innocent machine-driven people on the other side, who had no will to war and no illusions as to the splendour of world-dominion—a vision of desolate homes and countrysides empty of all but very old men.

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The first lines of *Still Life* (CONSTABLE), which begins in “the night train from the German frontier to Paris,” gave me much the same impression of impossibility (was there ever such a train?) that I should have felt about a story that opened in the moon. But the shock of this was nothing to some, different in character, that were to follow. Frankly, I confess that Mr. MIDDLETON MURRY’S book has me baffled. Others perhaps may admire the pains lavished by the author in analysing the emotions of a group of characters whose temperaments certainly give him every opportunity for this exercise. An impressionist, and impressionable, youth, whom I have (reluctantly) to call hero, intrigues his unpleasant way through the plot; first in Paris—where you may make a shrewd guess at his pre-occupations—then in an English village, to which he has eloped with the wife of a friend; in France again, and so on. The emotions to which these amorous adventures expose him are handled by the author with a care that suggests rather the naughtiness of the antique nineties than anything belonging to these more vigorous days. I am far from suggesting that, as a study in super-sensibility, the book lacks skill. There are indeed scenes of almost painful cleverness. My complaint is that it is out of date, or (I should perhaps better say) conspicuously out of harmony with the present time. But if you hanker for these pictures of the past that is another matter. I will merely issue a warning that you should preserve this book on some shelf not too accessible by those who are still young enough to overestimate its importance.

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It was an odd experience to turn, as I did, directly from the new Haymarket play, of which the late TOM GALLON was part author, to what I suppose was the last story he ever wrote, *The Lady in the Black Mask* (MILLS AND BOON), which begins in a theatre with the heroine watching a play. It begins, moreover, very well and excitingly; much better, I regret to add, than it goes on. When the heroine arrived home from the theatre, the girl whose companion she was, pleading fatigue, persuaded her to go out again to a masked ball, wearing the dress and indeed assuming the personality of her mistress. The two girls, *Ruth*, the heroine, and *Damia*, lived in a gloomy house with old *Mr. Verinder*, who was *Damia*’s guardian. But when *Ruth* returned from the ball she found that this arrangement no longer held good, *Verinder* having been melodramatically stabbed during her absence. And as no one knew, or would ever believe, that it was *Damia* and not herself who had remained at home you recognise a very pretty gambit of intrigue. Unfortunately, as I said above, the tension is not quite sustained, partly because the characters all behave in an increasingly foolish and improbable fashion (even for tales of this genre); partly because there is never sufficient uncertainty as to who it was (not, of course, *Damia*) who really killed *Verinder*. Still, of its kind, as the sort of shocker that used to be valued at a shilling, but appears, like everything else, to have risen in price, *The Lady in the Black Mask* is fairly up to the average. I fancy her profits might have been greater before the discouragement of railway travelling. That is precisely the environment for which she is best fitted.



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In the series of "Chap" books which is emerging from The Bodley Head I have no doubt that *Canada Chaps* will be welcome. I hope, however, that Mrs. SIME will not mind my saying that the best of her tales are those which have more to do with Canada than its "chaps." Her stories of fighting and of fighters seem to me to have a note in them that does not ring quite true. It is just the difference between the soldier telling his own artless and rugged tale and someone else telling it for him with a touch of artifice. But when the author merely uses the War as her background she writes with real power. The straining for effect vanishes, and so little do the later stories resemble the earlier that I should not have guessed that they were written by the same hand. "Citoyenne Michelle" and "The King's Gift," for instance, are true gems, and they are offered to you at the price of paste. Nowhere will you find a better bargain for your shilling.

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HELEN MACKAY, in *A Journal of Small Things* (MELROSE), sets before us with, it might seem, almost too deliberate simplicity of idiom little scenes and remembered reflections of her days in France since the July of the terrible year. An American to whom France has come to be her adopted and most tenderly loved foster-country, she tells of little things, chiefly sad little things, seen in the hospitals she served or by the wayside or in the houses of the simple and the great, shadowed alike by the all-embracing desolation of the War. The writer has a singular power of selecting the significant details of an incident, and a delicate sensitiveness to beauty and to suffering which gives distinction to this charming book. Less happy perhaps and much less in the picture are the episodes learnt only at second hand and suggesting the technique and unreality of the imagined short story.

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[Illustration: THE PRICELESS PLUMBER—AN INCIDENT OF LAST WEEK'S THAW.

Troubled Householder (writing). "THERE IS A SLIGHT LEAKAGE IN ONE OF OUR WATER-PIPES. KINDLY PUT MY NAME DOWN AS A HUMBLE CANDIDATE FOR YOUR ESTEEMED SERVICES."]

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ANOTHER IMPENDING APOLOGY.

From a paragraph about Mr. JOHN BUCHAN:—

"It is said that he writes his novels as a cure for insomnia."—*News of the World*.

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THE CENSOR ABROAD.

“When the High Court is sitting, the Resident Magistrate’s Court is held in a room about upteen feet long by about upteen feet wide.”—*East African Standard*.

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“CURES STOMACH TROUBLE OR MONEY BACK.”—*Advt. in South African Paper*.

This “Money Back” seems a new disease.

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From an article in the *Berliner Tageblatt* descriptive of life on the Western Front:—

“Perhaps the sun will soon bring warm wind, and how glad one would be of a thaw in the trenches. But then the accursed time will come again when the whole surface of Northern France sticks to the boot of the German soldier.”—*The Times*.

Our brave police must look to their laurels.