

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, March 7, 1917 eBook

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, March 7, 1917

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Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

"A motor car repairer," says Mr. Justice *Bray*, "is like a plumber. Once you get him into the house you cannot get him out."... Unless, of course, you show him a burst bath pipe, when he will immediately go out to fetch his mate.

According to Herr WILDRUBE, a member of the Reichstag, Germans should "rejoice at the departure of Mr. *Gerard* and his pro-Entente espionage bureau." They have some rubes in the U.S.A., but nothing quite so wild as this.

An historical film, called "The Discovery of Germany," is being exhibited widely through the Fatherland under the auspices of the Government. A further discovery of Germany—that she has been fatally misled by her rulers—has not at present received the approval of the Imperial House.

The German Army authorities have issued an urgent warning to the public not to discuss military matters. Their own communiques are to be taken as a model of the right kind of reticence.

An American film syndicate have overcome their difficulty in finding a man to take the place of *Charlie Chaplin*. They have decided to do without.

In Vienna, so as not to infuriate the indigent poor, tables are no longer placed near the window of the dearer restaurants. Similar establishments in Germany for the same reason were long ago made sound-proof.

We note that German and Turkish diplomats have been engaged in conference for the purpose of drawing the two countries closer together. Any little pressure from outside (as on the Tigris and the Ancre) is doubtless welcome as contributing to this end.

“The right way to dissipate the submarine nightmare” is how a contemporary describes the new restrictions on imports. The embargo on tinned lobster should certainly have that effect.

A museum is to be established at Stuttgart “to interest the masses of the people in overseas Germans and their conditions of life.” Several Foreign Governments, it is understood, have expressed their willingness to supply specimens in any reasonable quantity.

Lively satisfaction is being expressed among members of the younger set at the appointment of Mr. *Alfred* BIGLAND, M.P., as Controller of Soap. They are now discussing a resolution calling for the abolition of nurse-maids, who are notorious for using soap to excess.

A Bill has been introduced into the House of Lords with the object of admitting women to practise as solicitors. The raising of the statutory fee for a consultation to 6_s._83/4_d._ is also under consideration.

At Old Street Police Court a man charged with bigamy pleaded that when a child he had a fall which affected his head. It is not known why other bigamists do it.

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At Haweswater, Westmoreland, some sheep were recently dug out alive after being buried in a snow-drift forty days. It is thought that a morbid fear of being sold as New Zealand mutton caused the animals to make a supreme struggle for life.

A lady correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* suggests that tradesmen should economise paper by ceasing to send out a separate expression of thanks with every receipted bill. A further economy is suggested by a hardened creditor, who advocates the abolition of the absurd custom of sending out a quarterly statement of "account rendered."

Beer bottles are now said to be worth more than the beer they contain, and apprehension is being felt lest the practice shall develop of giving away the contents to those who consent to return the empty bottles.

Difficulty having been found in replacing firemen called up for military service, the Hendon Council, it is rumoured, are requesting the residents not to have any conflagrations for the present at least.

Mr. *John inns*, of Stevenage, has just purchased the whole parish of Caldecote, Herts; but the report that he had to do this in order to obtain a pound of sugar proves incorrect.

* * * * *

NOTICE.

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

It is further necessary that means should be taken to restrict the circulation of *Punch*, and on and after March 14th its price will be Sixpence. The Proprietors believe that the public will prefer an increase of price to a reduction of matter.



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

In consequence of the increase in the price of *Punch* the period covered by subscriptions already paid direct to the *Punch* Office will have to be proportionately shortened.

* * * * *

Apology of A warrior minstrel.

Lucasta, don't be cruel
If my bewildered lyre
Amidst such stores of fuel
Seems reft of sacred fire.

For if you know what France is
You know how it is hard
To blend, as in romances,
The warrior with the bard.

The troubadours of story
Knew no such woes as we,
Whose hopes of martial glory
Are built on F.A.T.[1]

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With songs and swords and horses
They learned their careless role,
While we are sent on courses
That starve the poet's soul.

With gay anticipations
They feasted ere a fight,
But we in calculations
Wear out the chilly night.

And if some hour of leisure
Permits a lyric mood
My wretched Muse takes pleasure
In nothing else but food.

Thus when I am returning
Ice-cold from some O.P.,
And in the East is burning
Aurora's heraldry,

That spark she fails to waken
With which of yore I glowed,
Who, fain of eggs and bacon,
Tramp ravening down the road,

Aware, with self-despising,
Which interests me most—
The silvery mists a-rising
Or marmalade and toast.

Such are the War-bard's passions—
Rank seedlings of a time
That chokes with maths and rations
The bursting buds of rhyme.

[1]: Field Artillery Training

* * * * *

A Romance of rations.

"Not like to like, but like in difference."
"*The Princess.*"

I have always misjudged Victorine—I admit it now with shame. While other girls have become engaged—and disengaged quite soon after—she has remained unattached and solitary. As I watched the disappointed suitors turn sadly away I put it down to pride and self-sufficiency, but I was wrong. I see now that she always had the situation well in hand.

As for Algernon, he is the sort of man who writes sonnets to lilies and butterflies and the rosy-fingered dawn—this last from hearsay as he really knows nothing about it. He is prematurely bald and suffers from the grossest form of astigmatism, and I thought that no woman would ever love him. I never dreamt that Victorine had even noticed he was there.

One day I heard that they were engaged. It was too hard for me to understand.

On the third morning I went to see her.

“Victorine,” I said, “you have never loved before?”

“Never,” she assented softly.

“Now, this man you have chosen—you do not care overmuch for lilies and butterflies and rosy-fingered dawns?”

“Not overmuch,” she admitted sadly.

“Then what is it brings you together? What strange link of the spirit has been forged between you? To speak quite plainly, what do you see in him?”

“Yesterday we lunched together, and two days before that he got here in time for breakfast.”

“And the engagement still holds?” I am no optimist.

“Before that we dined. Yes, I do not exaggerate. It was my suggestion. One sees so much unhappiness now-a-days, and I wished to be quite sure we were suited to one another.”

“And you are convinced of the sincerity of the attachment?”

“Why, I feel for him as Mother does for the knife-and-boot boy, and Uncle Stephen for the charlady. We cannot be separated. It would be monstrous.”

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I ceased to be articulate. Victorine suddenly became radiant.

“We must always be together—at any rate for the duration of the War, you see. I eat under my meat and he is over. In flour and sugar—oh, how can I confess it?—I *exceed*. He is far, far below his ration. Apart we are failures; together we are perfect. We both saw it at once.”

I realised suddenly the inevitability of this mutual bond.

“So marriage is the only thing?” I asked; but I was already conquered.

She assented with a regal air.

As I went away I saw a new and strange beauty in the problem of Food Shortage.

* * * * *

Songs of food production.

IV.

The Farmer's Boy (New Style).

The Hun was set on making us fret
For lack of food to eat,
When up there ran a City man
In gaiters trim and neat—
Oh, just tell me if a farm there be
Where I can get employ,
To plough and sow for PROTH-er-O,
And he a farmer's boy,
And be a farmer's boy.

“In khaki dight my juniors fight—
I wish that I could too;
But since the land's in need of hands
There's work for me to do;
Though you call me a 'swell,' I would labour well—
I'm aware it's not pure joy—
To plough and sow for PROTH-er-O
And be a farmer's boy,
And be a farmer's boy.”



The farmer quoth, "I be mortal loth,
But the farm 'tis goin' back,
And I do declare as I can't a-bear
Any farming hands to lack;
So if you've got grit and be middlin' fit
An'll larn to cry, 'Ut hoy!'
And to plough and sow for PROTH-er-O,
You shall be a farmer's boy,
You shall be a farmer's boy."

Bold farmers all, obey the call
Of townsfolk game and gay!
And you City men put by the pen
And hear me what I say:—
Get straight enrolled with a farmer bold,
And the Hun you'll straight annoy,
If you plough and sow for PROTH-er-O
And be a farmer's boy,
And be a farmer's boy.

* * * * *

The Sex-Problem Again.

"*For sale.*—A 3-year-old Holstein gentleman cow."—*Canadian Paper*.

* * * * *

"A Liverpool master carter told the Tribunal that the last 'substitute'
sent him for one of his men backed a horse down a tip and landed him in
an expense of L50."—*Yorkshire Evening Post*.

Many men have lost more by backing a horse *on* a tip.

* * * * *

A Bare Outlook.

"THINGS YOU HAVE GOT TO DO WITHOUT.
CLOTHES AND FOOD."—*Daily Sketch*.

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This seems to bring the War even closer than the PREMIER intended.

* * * * *

MORE OR LESS.

The fleet of Dutch merchantmen which has been sunk by a waiting submarine sailed, it now appears, under a German guarantee of “relative security”: and the incident has been received in Holland with a widespread outburst of relative acquiescence. Germany, in the little ingenious arrangements that she is so fond of making for the safety and comfort of her neighbours, is so often misunderstood. It should be obvious by this time that her attitude to International Law has always been one of approximate reverence. The shells with which she bombarded Rheims Cathedral were contingent shells, and the *Lusitania* was sunk by a relative torpedo.

Neutrals all over the world who are smarting just now under a fresh manifestation of Germany’s respective goodwill should try to realise before they take any action what is the precise situation of our chief enemy. He has (relatively) won the War; he has (virtually) broken the resistance of the Allies; he has (conditionally) ample supplies for his people; in particular, he is (morally) rich in potatoes. His finances at first sight appear to be pretty heavily involved, but that will soon be adjusted by (hypothetical) indemnities; he has enormous (proportional) reserves of men; he has (theoretically) blockaded Great Britain, and his final victory is (controvertibly) at hand.

But his most impressive argument, which cannot fail to come home to hesitating Neutrals, is to be found in his latest exhibition of offensive power, namely, in his (putative) advance upon the Ancre.

* * * * *

Realism.

From a cinema announcement:—

“The management regret that ‘The Lost Bridegroom’ missed the boat on Sunday.”—*Guernsey Evening Express*.

* * * * *

A Family Affair.

From an account of a “gift sale”:

“Alderman —— advised the Committee to sell the donkey in the evening, when there would be a lot present.”—*Provincial Paper*.

* * * * *

More Impending Apologies.

I.

“Mr. —— writes from New Cross:—’Sir,—I was pleased to see that you do not intend increasing the price of ‘The Daily News,’ and hope that you will not have to reconsider your decision. If necessary I, for one, would be quite content with four pages only.”—*Daily News*.

II.

“The nurses who have a seven minutes’ walk to their home quarters, have never had a rude word said to them, ‘even,’ she added, ‘when they have had too much to drink.’”—*Daily Province (Vancouver, B.C.)*.

* * * * *

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[Illustration: "THE FREEDOM OF THE SEA."

HOLLAND. "YOU'VE TAKEN A GREAT LIBERTY WITH ME."

GERMANY. "OF COURSE I HAVE. I'M THE APOSTLE OF LIBERTY."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE THEATRE OF WAR.]

* * * * *

THE SOLACE.

Mr. William Wood, grocer, of Acton, was very tired. And no wonder, for not only had he lost his two assistants, both having been called up, but the girls who had taken their places were frivolous and slow. Moreover his errand boy had that day given notice. And, furthermore, the submarine campaign was making it every day more difficult to keep up the stock, and the rise in prices meant anything but the commensurate increase of profit of which he was accused by indignant customers.

Mr. Wood, therefore, was not sorry when, the shutters up, he could retire to his sitting-room upstairs and rest. His one hobby being reading, and his favourite form of literature being Lives and Letters, he had normally no difficulty in dismissing the shop from his mind. He would open the latest memoir from the library and lose himself in whatever society it reconstructed, political for choice. But to-night the solace could not so easily be found. For one thing, he had no new books; for another, the cares of business were too recent and too real.

He sank into his armchair, covered his eyes with his hand, and pondered.

Then suddenly he had an idea. If there were no letters of the Great to read, he would himself write to the Great and thus escape grocerdom and worry. If he were not a person of importance, he would at least pretend to be, and thus be comforted.

Seating himself at the table and taking up his pen, he composed with infinite care the following chapter from a biography of himself:—

The year 1916 was a comparatively uneventful one in the life of our hero. The principal events were the marriage of his youngest daughter with the son of the Bishop of Brighton and the rebuilding of The Towers after the fire. Perhaps the most important of his new friends were the Archbishop of CANTERBURY and Sir HEDWORTH MEUX, but unfortunately Sir HEDWORTH has not kept any of the letters. Nor is there much correspondence; but a few letters may be printed here, all testifying to the multifarious interests of this remarkable man, who not only knew everyone worth knowing, but

projected himself into their careers with so much sympathy and keenness. The first is to the then Prime Minister:—

To the Right Hon. H.H. ASQUITH, M.P.

MY DEAR ASQUITH,—This is only a line to remind you that you lunch with me at the Primrose Club on Monday at one o'clock. I have asked two or three friends to meet you, all good fellows. With regard to that matter on which you were asking my advice, I think that the wisest course at present is (to use the phrase, now a little stale, which I invented for you) to wait and see. Let me say that I thought your speech at the Guildhall a fine effort. Kindly remember me to the wife and Miss ELIZABETH, and believe me,

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Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM WOOD.

P.S.—I wish you would call me William. I always think of you as Herbert.

To the Earl of ROSEBERY.

MY DEAR ROSEBERY,—It is a great grief to me to have to decline your kind invite to Dalmeny, but there is an obstacle I cannot overcome. My youngest daughter is to be married next week to the son of the Bishop of Brighton, a most well-bred young fellow with perfect manners. Nothing but the necessity of my presence at the feast of Hymen could deprive me of the pleasure of seeing your country place. Do not stay away too long, I beg. The town is dull without you.

I am, dear ROSEBERY,
Yours most affectionately,
WILLIAM WOOD.

To Mr. RUDYARD KIPLING.

MY DEAR KIPLING,—Just a line to say how much I admire your poem in this morning's *Times*. You have never voiced the feeling of the moment with more force or keener insight. But you will, I am sure, pardon me when I say that in the fifty-eighth stanza there is a regrettable flaw, which could however quickly be put right. To me, that fine appeal to Monaco to give up its neutrality is impaired by the use of the word "cope," which I have always understood should be avoided by good writers. "Deal" has the same meaning and is a truer word. You will, I am sure, agree with me in this criticism when you have leisure to think it over.

Believe me, my dear KIPLING,

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM WOOD.

To His Grace the Archbishop of CANTERBURY.

MY DEAR ARCHBISHOP,—That was a very delightful dinner you gave me last night, and I was glad to have the opportunity of meeting Lord MORLEY and discussing with him the character of MARLBOROUGH. While not agreeing with everything that Lord MORLEY said, I am bound to admit that his views impressed me. Some day soon you must bring her Ladyship down to The Towers for a dine and sleep.

I am, my dear Archbishop,
Yours cordially,
WILLIAM WOOD.



To Lord NORTHCLIFFE.

MY DEAR ALFRED,—You cannot, I am sure, do better than continue in the course you have chosen. What England needs is a vigilant observer from without; and who, as I have so often told you, is better fitted for such a part than you? You have all the qualities—high mobility, the courage to abandon convictions, and extreme youth. If you lack anything it is perhaps ballast, and here I might help you. Ring me up at any time, day or night, and I will come to you, just as I used to do years ago when you were beginning.

Think of me always as
Yours very sincerely,
WILLIAM WOOD.

To Sir ARTHUR WING PINERO.

MY DEAR PINERO,—I am glad you liked my suggestion and are already at work upon it. No one could handle it so well as you. I write now because it has occurred to me that the proper place for Lord Scudamore to disown his guilty wife and for her impassioned reply is not, as we had it, the spare room, but the parlour.

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I am, dear old fellow,
Always yours to command,
WILLIAM WOOD

Having written thus far, Mr. William Wood went to bed, perfectly at peace with himself and the world.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Friend* (to Professor, whose lecture, “How to Stop the War,” has just concluded). “CONGRATULATE YOU, OLD MAN—WENT SPLENDIDLY, AT ONE TIME DURING THE AFTERNOON I WAS RATHER ANXIOUS FOR YOU.”

Professor. “THANKS. BUT I DON’T KNOW WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN SO CONCERNED ON MY BEHALF.”

Friend. “WELL, A RUMOUR *DID* GO ROUND THE ROOM THAT THE WAR WOULD BE OVER BEFORE YOUR LECTURE.”]

* * * * *

THE GREAT BETRAYAL.

’Twas night, and near the Boreal cliff
The monarch in seclusion lay,
A wondrous human hieroglyph,
Worshipped from Chile to Cathay;
When lo! a cry, “Sire, up and fly!
The pirate ships are in the bay!”

“Begone, ye cravens,” straight replied
The monarch with his eyes ablaze;
“No pirate on the ocean wide
Can fright me, for I know their ways.
Shall I do less in times of stress
Than soldiers who have earned My praise?”

“Yet stay,” he paused awhile, and then—
“Let messengers the country scour
On pain of death forbidding men
To speak, in hut or hall or tower,
Of what I said this night of dread,
Or where I spent its darkest hour.”



Swift flew the minions to obey;
The wearied monarch slumbered late;
Yet, in the Capital next day,
Writ large upon his palace gate,
A mighty scroll to every soul
Blazoned the words that challenged Fate.

The monarch's rage surpassed all bounds
When of this treachery he read;
A price of several million pounds
Was placed upon the miscreant's head;
But sceptics jibe—an odious tribe—
And swear that he will die in bed.

* * * * *

A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

“The Inventor of British and American Patents is desirous to Sell or License to Manufacturers, &c., &c.... The above Inventor and Patentee will be greatly obliged if anyone that he owes money to will forward the amount not later than this month, otherwise he will not acknowledge after.”—*Financial Times*.

* * * * *

“LITTLE WAR PICTURES.

A NOBLE ARMY OF OPTIMISTS IN TRANCE.”—*Straits Times (Singapore)*.

We wish our pessimists would join them.

* * * * *

THE WATCH DOGS.

LVII.

My Dear Charles,—St. John, in 1914 a light-hearted lieut., advancing and retiring with his platoon as an all-seeing Providence or a short-spoken Company Commander might direct, and in 1915 a Brass-hat with a vast amount of knowledge and only a hundred buff slips or so to write it down on, is now Second in Command of his regiment. He tells me he is encamped with his little lot on the forward slope of a muddy and much pitted ravine. On the opposite slope are some nasty noisy guns, and at the bottom of the ravine are the cooks.

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When, after much forethought, he has found something to do and has begun doing it, there is a cry of "Stand clear!" and, with that prudence which even an Englishman will learn if you do not hustle him but give him a year or two to find by experience that care should sometimes be taken, all get to earth. The guns fire; the neighbourhood heaves and readjusts itself, and a man may then come out again. By the time, however, he has collected his senses and his materials there is another "Stand clear!" and back he must go to earth. This is what is technically known as Rest.

It was not good enough for one of the battalion cooks. No man can do justice to a mess of pottage by lying on his belly at a distance and frowning at it. After many movements to and fro, he eventually said be damned to guns and "Stand clears;" stood on the top of his cooker (there was nowhere else to stand), and, holding a dixie lid in his hand and bestowing on the contents of the dixie that encouraging smile without which no stew can stew, defied all the artillery of the B.E.F. to do its worst. It did.

The cook recovered to find himself among his dixies, frizzling pleasantly and browning nicely in certain parts. Even so, professional interests over-came any feeling of personal injury. Rising majestically, he stepped down and advanced upon the nearest gun crew. "Now you've done it, you blighters!" he shouted, waving an angry fist at them. "You've been and gone and blown all the pork out of the beans."

The same man went on holiday to the neighbouring town, which is in reality an ordinarily dull and dirty provincial place, but to the tired warrior is a haven of rest and a paradise of gaiety and good things. Here he came into contact with the local A.P.M. in the following way. The latter was in his office after lunch, brooding no doubt, when in came a French policeman greatly excited in French. There was, it appeared, promise of a commotion at the Hotel de Ville. A British soldier had got mixed up in the queue of honest French civilians who were waiting outside for the delivery of their legal papers. There were no bi-linguists present, but it had been made quite clear to the Britisher that he must go, and it had been made quite clear by the Britisher that he should stay. Always outside the Hotel de Ville at 2.30 of an afternoon was this queue of natives, each waiting his turn to be admitted to the joyless sanctum of the Commissaire, there to receive those illegible documents without which no French home is complete. Never before had a British soldier fallen in with them, and, when requested to dismiss, showed signs of being obstreperous.

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The A.P.M. buckled on his Sam Browne belt and prepared for the worst, which he assumed to be but another example of the frailty of human nature when suddenly confronted with unaccustomed luxuries. When he got to his prey he found him not quite in the state expected. Usually at the sight of an A.P.M. a soldier, whatever the strength of his case, will express regret, promise reform, and make ready to pass on. This one stood his ground; on no account would he leave the queue. He explained to the A.P.M. that he was too used to the manifold and subtle devices of people who wanted to snaffle other people's places in queues. He was however quite prepared to parley, and was only too glad to find a fellow-countryman, speaking the right language and having the right sense of justice, to parley with.

He said he had taken his proper place in the line, with no attempt to hustle or jostle anyone else. He meant to do no one any harm, and he was prepared to pay the due price, in current French notes, whatever it might be. But having got his place by right he refused to give it up to anyone else, be he French or English, Field Officer or even gendarme. He had been excessively restrained in resisting the unscrupulous attempts of the gendarme to dislodge him. If he had made any threat of knocking the gendarme down he had not really intended to take that course. The threat was only a formal reply to the gendarme's proposal to stick a sword through his middle.

He was, he said most emphatically, not drunk. If the A.P.M., in whom he had all confidence, would occupy his place in the queue and keep it for him, he would demonstrate this by a practical test. In any case he ventured to insist on his point. Without claiming any special privileges for a man fighting and cooking for his country, he claimed the right of any human being, whatever his nationality, to witness any cinema show which might be in progress.

The underlying good qualities of both nations were evidenced in the sequel. When the A.P.M. had interpreted the matter the gendarme insisted on an embrace, and the cook permitted it. Later, I have reason to believe, they witnessed a most moving cinema play together, but not in the Commissaire's office at the Hotel de Ville.

Yours ever,
HENRY.

* * * * *

CHILDREN'S TALES FOR GROWN-UPS.

I.

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

It hadn't rained for forty days and forty nights.

“The reason it doesn’t rain,” said the guinea-fowl, “is that the barometer is very high.”

But no one listened to her.

“The reason is,” said the duck with the black wings, “that the pond is nearly empty. When the pond is empty it doesn’t rain.”

“It’s the hen-house,” said the black hen. “Whenever the roof drips there is rain.”

“It is certainly the hen-house,” said all the hens.

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"It comes from the trees," said the turkey. "The leaves drip and then there is rain, and the more they drip the heavier it rains."

"It is my kennel," chuckled Bruno, the wise old dog. "The more it leaks the more it rains."

At that very moment it began to rain in torrents.

"The pond is full," quacked the ducks. "Look at the pond."

"Oh, do look at the hen-house roof—dripping!" shrieked the hens.

"The leaves—look at the leaves," gurgled the turkeys.

"And my kennel leaks. I can feel it on my back," chuckled Bruno.

"The barometer has gone down," said the guinea-fowl.

But no one took any notice of her—quite properly.

* * * * *

The Housing Problem.

"Three chicken coops, also pigeon-house, for pole; suitable for lady."—*The Lady*.

* * * * *

The Open-Air Cure.

"The *Telegraaf* learns from its correspondent at the frontier that on yesterday (Monday) afternoon a fresh air attack was made on Zeebrugge."—*Morning Post*.

A pleasant change from stuffy shells.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE ETERNAL FEMININE.

"THAT SHADE. WOULDN'T 'ALF SUIT ME."

"LOR LUMMY, LIL! WOT TISTE—AN' YOU A BLONDE!"]

* * * * *

THE SONG OF THE MILL.

[Most of our water-mills have fallen into decay and disuse owing to the unsuitability of their machinery to grind imported grain. Will the revival of English grain production bring about a renewal of their usefulness?]

As by the pool I wandered that lies so clear and still
With tall old trees about it, hard by the silent mill
Whose ancient oaken timbers no longer creak and groan
With roar of wheel and water, and grind of stone on stone,

The idle mill-race slumbered beneath the mouldering wheel,
The pale March sunlight gilded no motes of floating meal,
But the stream went singing onward, went singing by the weir—
And this, or something like it, was the song I seemed to hear:—

“By Teviot, Tees and Avon, by Esk and Ure and Tweed,
Here’s many a trusty henchman would rally to your need;
By Itchen, Test and Waveney, by Tamar, Trent and Ouse,
Here’s many a loyal servant will help you if you choose.

“Do they no longer need us who needed us of yore?
We stood not still aforetime when England marched to war;
Like those our wind-driven brothers, far seen o’er weald and fen,
We ground the wheat and barley to feed stout Englishmen.

“You call the men of England, their strength, their toil, their gold,
But us you have not summoned, who served your sires of old;
For service high or humble, for tribute great and small,
You call them and they answer—but us you do not call.

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“Yet we no hoarded fuel of mine or well require,
That drives your fleets to battle or lights the poor man’s fire;
We need no white-hot furnace for tending night and day,
No power of harnessed lightnings to speed us on our way.”By Tavy, Dart and Derwent,
by Wharfe and Usk and Nidd,
Here’s many a trusty vassal is yours when you shall bid,
With the strength of English rivers to push the wheels along
And the roar of many a mill-race to join the victory song.”

C.F.S.

* * * * *

“The Berlin Municipality has issued the following order. ‘Despite the present unfavourable conditions of production, it has become possible that from Friday this week one shss will be available for every citizen of Berlin,’”—*Egyptian Gazette*.

Judging by the mystery surrounding it we infer that “shss” must be some kind of sausage.

* * * * *

[Illustration: FOOD RESTRICTION.

SCENE: *Hotel*.

Little Girl. “OH, MUMMY! THEY’VE GIVEN ME A DIRTY PLATE.”

Mother. “HUSH, DARLING. THAT’S THE SOUP.”]

* * * * *

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

“MINSTREL BOY.”—You are confusing TENNYSON’S “Brook” with the Tigris. Also it is the Turkish Army and not the river (which flows the other way) that is speaking in the famous lines—

“I come from haunts of Kut (return);
I make a sudden sally.”

“ANXIOUS INQUIRER.”—No, we are without reliable news of FERDIE. But it is rumoured that he is preparing to conform to the general movement of the Central Allied Powers, and is therefore taking a little gentle running exercise in the Vulpedrome at Vienna.

“V.T.C.”—We rejoice with you that already—not more than 21/2 years since the revival of the Volunteer Force—the War Office has recognised the desirability of giving the Volunteer a rifle to shoot with; and it now seems almost certain that he will receive one, *free of charge*, before the conclusion of peace. We welcome this wise and generous decision, for though we have never pretended to be a military authority we have always held the view that in a tight corner a man with a rifle has an appreciable advantage over an unarmed man.

“FORTUNE-TELLER.”—Like you, we are greatly impressed by the convincing arguments advanced by our military experts in support of the view that the Germans are likely to put forth a great effort this year at some point on one of their fronts; and we share your belief that the time has come when the Government should supply a long-felt want by establishing a Department of Intelligent Anticipation. It is a happy suggestion of yours to offer, for a reasonable consideration, to place at the disposal of such a Department your admirably-equipped premises in Bond Street.

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“SCHNAPPS.”—The correct version is:—

“In the matter of U-Boats the fault of the Dutch
Is protesting too little and standing too much.”

“CARILLON.”—You ask how the Germans will manage for their joy-peals now that the military authorities have commandeered the church bells. It was very bright of you to think of this. The answer is that, in view of pressing national needs, they are going to give up having victories. After all, this is an age of sacrifice. EDITOR.

* * * * *

Commercial Candour.

“Abandon housekeeping and live in comfort at the hotel -----.
Not too large to give the best of service, and not too small to be
uncomfortable.”—*Morning Paper*.

* * * * *

We feel it to be our patriotic duty to call the attention of the FOOD CONTROLLER to the conduct of a well-known restaurant which blatantly describes itself on a bill of fare as

“THE GORGE AND VULTURE.”

* * * * *

“Women lamplighters will shortly be seen in the submarine districts of
London.”—*Bradford Daily Argus*.

But to prevent disappointment we ought to mention that this phenomenon can only be witnessed by the *Argus*-eyed.

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[Illustration: ALSO RAN.

WILLIAM. “ARE YOUR LURING THEM ON, LIKE ME?” MEHMED. “I’M AFRAID I AM!”]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, February 26th.—The new Member for Roscommon has not yet appeared in the House, but he is nevertheless doing his bit more effectively, perhaps, than some of his compatriots. The SPEAKER’S ruling is “No seat, no salary”; so Count PLUNKETT will have the satisfaction of knowing that by his self-sacrificing absence he is paying the expenses of the War for at least five seconds.

With suitable solemnity Sir EDWARD CARSON gave a brief account of the exploits of the German destroyer squadrons. One of them, comprising several vessels, had engaged a single British destroyer for several minutes before cleverly executing a strategic movement in the direction of the German coast; while another had simultaneously bombarded the strongholds of Broadstairs and Margate, completely demolishing two entire houses. The damage would have been still more serious but for the fortunate circumstance that the fortresses erected on the foreshore last summer by an army of youthful workpeople had been subsequently removed.

Any gloom engendered by the fore-going announcement was quickly dissipated by Mr. BONAR LAW, who read a telegram from General MAUDE, announcing the fall of Kut-el-Amara.

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The rest of the afternoon was chiefly occupied by a further combat over the merits of Lord FISHER. Although, as Dr. MACNAMARA subsequently remarked, "this is not the time for fighting battles along the Whitehall front," I am afraid the House thoroughly enjoyed Sir HEDWORTH MEUX'S discursive account of his relations with the late FIRST SEA LORD, who really seems to be quite a forgiving person. At least it is not everybody who, after being greeted at a garden-party with "Come here, you wicked old sinner," would afterwards invite his accuser to lunch at the Ritz.

In the first statement of policy made by Mr. LLOYD GEORGE after his appointment as Prime Minister he said that the primary step towards a settlement of an age-long Irish trouble would be the removal of the suspicion of Irishmen by Irishmen. Mr. DILLON'S notion of contributing to that desirable end is to accuse Sir BRYAN MAHON, who has had to deport certain recidivist Sinn Feiners, of being the tool of a Dublin Castle gang. Not, of course, that Mr. DILLON is in sympathy with Sinn Feiners; on the contrary he dislikes them so much that he would like to keep St. George's Channel between them and himself. But by his own speeches he has hypnotized himself into the belief that everything done by the British Government in Ireland must have a corrupt motive. His colleague from West Belfast is not much wiser, to judge by the tone of his speech to-night; and I think Mr. DUKE, who is doing his best to reconcile the irreconcilable, must have been tempted to adapt one of MR. DILLON'S phrases and to say that Ireland was between the DEVLIN and the deep sea.

Tuesday, February 27.—The capture of Kut has had an exhilarating effect upon Lord CREWE. Not long ago he was warning us against excessive jubilation over the British advance in that region. Now he justified his title by coming out as a regular *Chanticleer*, and invited Lord CURZON to tell the assembled Peers that we might be confident of regaining predominance in the whole of Mesopotamia.

[Illustration: LORD BUCKMASTER'S DREAM OF A BRIGHTENED HOUSE OF LORDS.]

In these times the Lords can refuse nothing to the Ladies. In moving the second reading of a Bill to enable women to become solicitors Lord BUCKMASTER may have approached his subject in the spirit of a cautious knight-errant, as Lord SUMNER said, but he carried his argument. He owed something, perhaps, to the unintentional assistance of his opponents. Lord BUCKMASTER had incidentally mentioned that a woman once sat on the Woolsack, and there administered such very odd law that the City of London rose in mutiny. This shocked the historical sense of Lord HALSBURY, who hastened to point out that the lady in question had left the Woolsack for a reason entirely creditable to her sex, namely to become the mother of one of our greatest Kings. Then Lord FINLAY, who now occupies the seat alleged to have been filled by ELEANOR of Provence, endeavoured to frighten their Lordships by the thin end of the wedge argument. If women were admitted solicitors they would next want to practise at

the Bar, and even become Judges. But the Peers refused to be intimidated, and gave the Bill a second reading.

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Mr. MACCALLUM SCOTT'S colossal intellect, like the elephant's trunk, can grapple with the most minute objects. Yesterday it was the shortage of sausage-skins; this afternoon it was the grievance of Scottish bee-keepers, who are deprived of sugar for their charges, and compelled to put up with medicated candy at twice the price. In spite of the FOOD CONTROLLER, I understand that MR. SCOTT has no intention of parting with the very promising swarm that he carries in his national headgear.

Wednesday, February 28th.—Mr. WATT was seized with a bright idea this afternoon. The CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND had explained to Mr. GINNELL, that certain men had been convicted of having attempted to cause disaffection by singing disloyal songs. "Will the right hon. and learned gentleman give the House a sample?" interjected Mr. WATT. The notion of Mr. DUKE, *vir pietate gravis*, if ever there was one, indulging in ribald melody, caused much laughter, which was increased when the right hon. gentleman in his most portentous manner implied that his only reason for not granting the request was fear that the SPEAKER might intervene.

[Illustration: SIR FREDERICK BANBURY AND COLONEL MARK LOCKWOOD
CONSULT THE WATER LIST.]

A brief recrudescence of the MEUX-CHURCHILL duel was not much to the taste of the House, which is evidently of opinion that LORD FISHER might now be left alone both by foes and by friends. Members were glad to seek solace in the drink question, and gave a sympathetic hearing to the proposal of Mr. WING that they should voluntarily submit to the same restricted hours of consumption as they had imposed on the outside world. Mr. WING is a temperance reformer, but on this occasion he had the redoubtable assistance of Mr. GEORGE FABER, a stout friend of the "trade" whose hair had grown white, he declared (though in other respects he still looks delightfully juvenile), in fighting the Licensing Bill of 1908. In his opinion the House could no longer keep itself in a compartment apart—especially as it was not a watertight compartment. Sir FREDERICK BANBURY, who is naturally a champion of cakes—and ale—made a despairing effort to preserve the privileges of the Palace of Westminster, but did not carry his protest to a division; and after a few valedictory remarks from Colonel LOCKWOOD, including two quotations from LUCRETIUS (derived from a crib, as he modestly explained), the House unanimously decided that its habits should be in conformity with its debates—dry with moist intervals.

Thursday, March 1st.—Copies of the unexpurgated edition of the Report of the Dardanelles Commission marked "confidential" are to be sent to the SPEAKER and to the leader of every political party in the House. If Mr. BONAR LAW thought by this announcement to allay curiosity he was disappointed. Requests for a definition of the term "political party" rained upon him from all quarters. It really is a rather nice

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point. Mr. ASQUITH, Mr. REDMOND and Mr. WARDLE will, of course, receive their copies of the *editio princeps*. But what about Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN, who commands a bare half-section, even if one includes Mr. T.M. HEALY as odd file? What, too, of the Peace-without-Victory party, which is all leaders? The case of Mr. PRINGLE and Mr. HOGGE, which was publicly mentioned, presents little difficulty. Much as they love one another, neither is prepared to acknowledge the other as his leader.

The greatest crux is furnished by Mr. GINNELL and Mr. PEMBERTON-BILLING. Each of them leads a distinct party, making up by its activity and volubility for its comparative lack of size. Logically they may look forward to receiving copies of the "confidential" document too sacred for the inspection even of Peers and Privy Councillors. But I should not encourage them to hope.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Maid*. "THE DOCTOR HAS CALLED TO SEE YOU, SIR."

Government Official (faintly). "TELL HIM TO FILL UP A FORM, STATING THE NATURE OF HIS BUSINESS AND IF BY APPOINTMENT."]

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[Illustration: *Boss (to typist, a war flapper, who is very late)*. "EH, YE'VE COOM AT LAST. WE WERE JUST TALKIN' ABOUT YE."

Typist. "AH, I WONDERED WHAT MADE MY EAR BURN."]

* * * * *

CLASSICAL AMERICA.

[A correspondent of *The Westminster Gazette* remarks in a recent issue, "I am told American students sing their Pindar."]

A WRITER in the evening Press
Lays quite unnecessary stress
Upon the fact that youthful scholars,
Residing in the land of dollars,
Where men are shrewd and level-headed,
Sing songs to PINDAR'S verses wedded.
Yet why this wonder, when you think
How strongly welded is the link
That binds Columbia and its glory



To lands renowned in classic story?
There's hardly any town of note
Mentioned by MOMMSEN or by GROTE
Except Byzantium, perhaps—
Which doesn't figure in our maps.
Of Ithacas we have a score,
And Troys and Uticas galore;
Chicago has a Punic sound,
And pretty often, I'll be bound,
Austere Bostonians heavenward send a
Petition calling her *delenda*;
While Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Betray the classicising mania.
We have a Capitol, also,
As fine as Rome's of long ago;
Pompey and Romulus and Remus
(I'm not so sure of Polyphemus)
Are names with us more often worn
Than in the lands where they were born.
Then, as true classicists to stamp us,
Each College has its separate Campus,
And we have Senators whose mien
Might well have turned old BRENNUS green.
Why even the Bird that proudly soars
In majesty to guard our shores

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Before migrating to these regions
Was followed by the Roman legions.
But we have writ enough to show
What everybody ought to know,
That, spite of hustle and skyscrapers,
And Tammany and yellow papers,
The spirit of both Greece and Rome
Has found a second lasting home
Across the wide Atlantic foam.

* * * * *

More War Economy.

“Perambulator, cheap, for cash, as new; cost L9 15s., receipt shown;
owner getting rid of baby.”—*Birmingham Daily Mail*.

* * * * *

“Turn to the annals of the period 1914-1917, everlastingly to be
remembered by the Meuse of History.”—*Jamaica Paper*.

The Meuse needs no reminder.

* * * * *

“DOING WITHOUT.”

A valued correspondent writes:— “We are deluged in the Press just now with
information on how to ‘do without.’ One morning a splendid recipe for making pancakes
without eggs; another, a perfect Irish stew without potatoes; another, a Welsh rabbit
without cheese. Meatless days are to be as natural as wireless telegraphy; and the
other day we were asked seriously to consider the problem of a school without
teachers! But there is a certain little corner of the daily paper headed, ‘London
Readings,’ which could better, in war-time phrases, be expressed thus: ‘Stern Facts
must be Faced—How to do without Sunshine,’ for all that the Meteorological expert can
find to say is, ‘Yesterday Sunshine, 0.0. Previous day Sunshine, 0.0.’ O! O!”

* * * * *

What a Woman Notices.

“Sears succeeded in cashing two of the cheques at the bank, the woman cashier not noticing that they were crossed. When she came to the bank a third time, however, the cashier recognised the hat she was wearing, and caused her to be detained.”—*Times*.

* * * * *

PRIVILEGE.

Mr. Jenkins, junior partner in the firm of Baldwin and Jenkins, antique dealers, Wigpole Street, was in the habit, on fine afternoons, of walking home from business to his flat in the Brompton Road.

He invariably chose the path which runs parallel to Park Lane, just inside the Park railings.

Being middle-aged and unmarried he walked slowly and methodically, and was careful, when he came level with an entrance, to note the particular gates marked “In” and “Out.” He would, as he crossed the “Out” opening, look sharply to the right, and as he passed the “In” opening look sharply to the left. “Safety first” was a creed with him.

One mild Spring afternoon, as he was passing by an “Out” aperture, with his whole attention fixed to the right, he was aware, amid the sound of motor-horns and shouts, that the roadway had risen up and struck him on the back of the neck, and that something like the Marble Arch had kicked him at the same moment.

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A week later Mr. Jenkins recovered consciousness in a beautiful clean ward of St. George's Hospital. A smiling nurse stood by his bed and, as he tried to sit up, she told him he must be quiet and not disturb the bandages.

"Your friend Mr. Baldwin is coming to see you to-day at two o'clock," she told him. "No, it is not serious; you are out of danger. Now you have only to be quiet; so when your friend comes you mustn't talk too much."

He lay still and thought, and it all came back to him. "But, good heavens!" was his reflection, "that car must have come *in* by the '*Out*' gate! In that case," he continued, not without pleasure, "I can claim damages—very severe damages too."

At two o'clock Mr. Baldwin, his grey-bearded friend and partner, entered. "Well, Jenkins," said he, "I'm glad to see you've turned the corner. You've had rather a narrow squeak."

Mr. Jenkins looked at his friend for a moment. "Look here," he said, "I'm not allowed to speak much, but did you know that that car, when it struck me, was coming in through an '*Out*' gate, and, as that can be proved, don't you see that I can get pretty good compensation?"

His friend's face remained solemn. "I fear not," he said.

"But I must," said Jenkins. "It's as clear as can be. Scores of people must have seen it."

Mr. Baldwin shook his head horizontally.

"Heavy damages," said Mr. Jenkins, "I repeat."

"I've gone into it," his partner replied, "and it's hopeless."

"Why?" asked the sick man.

"I'll tell you," said Mr. Baldwin. "Because that car belonged to the Duke of Mudcaster."

"The more reason," said Mr. Jenkins, "for heavy damages. Very heavy. The Duke's rolling."

"Maybe he rolls," said Mr. Baldwin. "But that is not all. Listen. The Duke of Mudcaster is the only representative of the Pennecuiks, whose founder had the good fortune to be of some service to KING WILLIAM III. For this service he and his posterity were allowed the privilege of entering places by gates marked '*Out*' and leaving by gates marked '*In*.'"

Mr. Jenkins sat half up, groaned and subsided again. He said nothing.

“Well, I must say good-bye now,” said Mr. Baldwin. “Sorry I’ve depressed you about compensation, but you never had an earthly. See you again soon. So long.”

For some minutes Mr. Jenkins remained as one stunned. Then he began to think again. “I wonder,” he said once or twice, for he knew his partner,—“I wonder. Could it have been Baldwin himself in his old Ford? Could it?”

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[Illustration: *Old Lady (ruminating)*. “WHAT A POOR SUPPLY OF GAS THERE IS! AH, WELL, I MUSTN’T GRUMBLE. PERHAPS WE ARE ATTACKING WITH GAS AT THE FRONT TO-DAY.”]

* * * * *

Extract from a schoolboy’s letter:—

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"Please do not send me a cake this term, or it will go to the Red Cross Soldiers."

* * * * *

"MANAGERESS wanted immediately, small Blouse Factory, Harrogate; able to cut out and control girls."—*Harrogate Advertiser*.

She will need to be careful. A girl who has been cut out is apt to be uncontrollable.

* * * * *

HEART-TO-HEART TALKS.

(*The German KAISER and a wounded Belgian Officer, a Prisoner.*)

The Kaiser. So, then, you are still in arms against me, still persisting in your insane desire for battle and bloodshed? Will nothing content you? Must you compel us to continue in our enmity when by a word peace might be established between us, and Belgium might take her place at the side of Germany as a sister-nation striving with us to promote the cause of true civilisation?

The Belgian. It is useless, Sir, to say such things to any Belgian.

The Kaiser. Why useless? Do you not wish that death and ruin and misery should cease?

The Belgian. Certainly we do. No one more ardently than the Belgians, for it was not we who desired war or began the contest. But when you talk of stopping we must remind you that it was by your deliberate choice that war was treacherously forced on us. What could we do except defend ourselves against the dastardly blow that you aimed at our life? And after that it was not by us that Louvain was destroyed, that old men and women and children were ruthlessly massacred. Do you think such scenes can be wiped out of the memory of a nation, so that her men shall turn round and kiss the bloodstained hand that has tried to throttle them? Surely you expect too much.

The Kaiser. You speak too freely. Remember in whose presence you are.

The Belgian. There is not much fear that I shall forget. I am in the presence of one who has desired at all costs to concentrate on himself the gaze of the world, caring nothing as to the means by which he accomplished his object. This man, for he is, after all, only a poor human creature prone to anger, suspicion and foolish jealousy—this man has always gone about arrogating to himself the attributes of a god, calling upon his own people to worship him, and on all other peoples to be humble before him. Stung by his own restless vanity and the servile applause of those who are ever ready to prostrate

themselves before an Emperor, he has rushed hither and thither seeking to make others the mere foils of his splendour and his wisdom, making mischief wherever he went and striving to irritate and depress his neighbours. This man in peace was a bad neighbour, and in war a base and treacherous foe, sanctioning by his enthusiastic approval such deeds as the meanest villain would have contemplated with shame.

The Kaiser. This is too much. I gave you leave to speak, but not to revile me. You must not forget that you are in my power.

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The Belgian. A noble threat! But it is right and proper that men like you, who think they are infallible because their cringing flatterers tell them so, should sometimes hear the truth. You dare, forsooth, to talk to a Belgian of your magnanimity and your desire for peace. Cannot you realise that our nation has been tempered by outrage and ruin; that exile and the ruthless breaking of their homes only serve to make its men and women more resolute; that even if others were to cease fighting against you, and if her sword were broken, Belgium would dash its hilt in your face till breath and life were driven out of her mangled body; that, in short, we hate you for your cruelty and despise you for your baseness; and that for the future, wherever there is a Belgian, there is one who is the enemy of the thing called KAISER.

The Kaiser. Enough, enough. I did not come here to be insulted. If you have suffered, you and your nation, it is because you have deserved to suffer for having dared to set yourself against Germany, whom our good old German god has appointed to lead the way in righteousness to the goal marked out for her.

The Belgian. Sir, when you speak like that you are no doubt a marvel in your own eyes, but to others you are a laughing-stock, a mere scare-crow dressed up to resemble a man, a thing of shreds and patches to whom for a time the inscrutable decrees of Providence have permitted a dreadful power. But we are resolute to endure to the end, and your blandishments will avail as little as your threats.

* * * * *

MY WATCH.

The Sage who above a Greek signature nightly
Emits a succession of eloquent screeds,
Instructing us firmly but also politely
How best to supply our material needs,
Has specially urged us of late, in a shining
Example of zeal for his frivolous flock,
With the object of “speed” and “precision” combining
To “work with our eye on the clock.”

The precept is sound, and its due application
Is fraught with undoubted advantage to some,
But I’m free to remark that my own situation
Represents a recalcitrant re-sidu-um;
Clocks I cannot abide with their truculent ticking—
A nuisance I always have striven to scotch—
And I gain very little assistance in sticking
To work, if I’m watching my watch.



For my watch, which I treasure with ardent affection—
'Twas given to me in my juvenile prime—
Exhibits a truly uncanny objection
To keeping an accurate count of the time;
In the matter of speed it's a regular sprinter;
Repairs are a farce; it invariably gains;
And in Spring and in Autumn, in Summer and Winter
Precision it never attains.

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Mathematics to me are a terrible trial,
They plague me in age as they floored me in youth,
Or I might, when observing the hour on my dial,
Allow for the error and guess at the truth.
Then why do I keep it? Because it's a mascot,
And none of its vices can alter the fact
That the very first day that I wore it, at Ascot,
Three winners I happily backed.

* * * * *

"The annual meeting of the Court of Governors of the University of Birmingham was held yesterday at the University, Edmund Street. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor said the University had done its share in the present awful state of Europe."—*Birmingham Daily Post*.

We are sorry to hear this.

* * * * *

"The Government have apparently taken infinite pains to so 'cut their coat according to their cloth' as to provide for the least possible inconvenience and suffering to the people of these islands."—*Cork Constitution*.

Thanks to this wise provision there is still just enough coast to go round.

* * * * *

From the report of a schoolmasters' conference:—

"That we should spread our education wider, and not allow a boy to spend too much time on specialising is a good idea, but it is rather difficult to carry out in practice. It means switching the boy's mind from one subject to another. The whole day is spent in this way—switching from one subject to another, and therefore it is very difficult."—*United Empire*.

And it sounds painful too.

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[Illustration: *Jock*. "AND ME GIVIN' YON MAN AT THE STATION TWA BAWBEES TAE MIND MA GREATCOAT!"]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

It is strange to find the inexhaustible Mr. W.E. NORRIS turning towards the supernatural. Yet there is at least more than a flavouring of this in the composition of *Brown Amber* (HUTCHINSON), which partly concerns a remarkable bead, having the property of bringing good or evil luck to its various owners. As (after the manner of such things in stories) the charm was for ever being lost, and as the kind of fortune it conferred went in alternations, possession of it was rather in the nature of a gamble. All I have to observe about it is that such hazards consort somewhat better with the world of HANS ANDERSEN or the *Arabian Nights* than with those quiet and well-bred inhabitants of South-Western London whom one has learnt to associate with the name of NORRIS. Thus, in considering the nice problem of whether *Clement Drake* (as typical a Norrisian as ever buttoned spats) would or would not escape the entanglements of *Mrs. D'Esterre*, it simply irritated

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me to suppose that the event might be determined by the machinations of djins. In a word, East is East and S.W. is S.W., and never the twain shall, or should, be mixed up in a novel that pretends to anything more serious than burlesque. I am not sure also that, for different reasons, I did not regret the introduction of the War; though as a grand climax it has, I admit, a lure that must be almost irresistible to the novelist. For the rest, if you do not share my objection to the (dare I say it?) amberdexterity of the plot, you will find Mr. NORRIS as pleasant as ever in his scenes of drawing-room comedy.

A volume of remarkable interest is *In Ruhleben* (HURST AND BLACKETT), into which Mr. DOUGLAS SLADEN has gathered a variety of information concerning the life of the English civilian prisoners in Germany, its many hardships and few ameliorations. The greater part of the book is filled with a series of letters sent by one of these prisoners to his mother. Perhaps (one suspects) the writer of these was not altogether an ordinary young man. From whatever reason, the fact remains that his letters are by no means uncheery reading; his books and study, most of all his friendships (with one fellow-captive especially), seem to have kept him contented and even happy. Of course some part of this may well have been coloured for the maternal eye; it is clear that he was greatly concerned that she should not be too anxious about him. A more impartial picture of the conditions at Ruhleben is given in the second part of the volume, and in a letter by Sir TIMOTHY EDEN, reprinted from *The Times*, on The Case for a wholesale Exchange of Civilian Prisoners. I should add that the book is illustrated with a number of drawings of Ruhleben made by Mr. STANLEY GRIMM, an artist of the Expressionist School (whatever that may mean). These are vigorous and arresting, if, to the unmodern eye, somewhat formless. But they are part of a record that all Englishmen can study with quickened sympathy and a great pride in the courage and resource of our race under conditions needlessly brutal at their worst, and never better than just endurable.

* * * * *

Nothing will ever persuade me that *This Way Out* (METHUEN) is an attractive title for a novel, however effective it may be as a notice in a railway station. The book itself, however, is intriguing in spite of its gloominess. The grandfather of *Jane* and *John-Andrew Vaguener* committed a most cold-blooded murder—this in a prologue. Then, when we get to the real story, we find *Jane* tapping out popular fiction at an amazing pace, and her brother, *John-Andrew*, living on the proceeds thereof. *Jane* is noisy, vulgar, and successful in her own line, and gets on *John-Andrew's* nerves; and when he discovers that she has for once turned aside from tawdry fiction and written a play that is really good he decides that he can stand it and

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her no longer. While she was pouring out literary garbage he could just manage to endure his position, but the thought that she would be hailed as a genius while he remained an utter failure was the final stroke that turned him from a mendicant into a madman. I am not going to tell you exactly what happened, but *Jane* found a “way out,” and with her departure from this life my interest in the book evaporated. Mrs. HENRY DUDENEY has notable gifts as a descriptive writer, and my only complaint against her is that vulgar *Jane* was not allowed to live, for in the Army or out of it she was worth a whole platoon of *John-Andrews*. The *Vagueners*, I may add, were not a little mad, but then they were Cornish, and novelists persist in treating Cornwall as if it were a delirious duchy.

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I don't think I can honourably recommend Mr. HUGH ELLIOT'S volume on *Herbert Spencer* (CONSTABLE) as light reading, though the ungodly may wax merry over the philosopher's first swear-word, at the age of thirty-six, in the matter of a tangled fishing-line, and may be kindled at the later picture of a middle-aged sportsman skinning, effectively too, after a Neapolitan who had pinched his opera-glasses. Fine human traits these in a character which will strike the normal man as bewilderingly unlike the general run of the species. The serious-flippant reader, tackling Mr. ELLIOT'S elaborate and acute analyses, may get an impression of an obstinate old apriorist, a sort of White Knight of Philosophyland, with all manner of reasoned-out “inventions” at his saddle-bow (labelled “Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” “Unknowable,” “Ghost Theory,” “Presentative-Representative”), which don't seem, somehow, as helpful as their inventor assumes. And 'tis certain he took tosses into many of the pits of his dangerous deductive method. I don't present this as Mr. ELLIOT'S view. He is respectful-critical, and makes perhaps the best case for his old master's claim to greatness out of the assumption that SPENCER himself, stark enemy to authority and dogmatism, would have preferred his biographer's critical examination to any mere “master's-voice” reproduction of Spencerian doctrine. I wonder if he would!

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Miss F.E. MILLS YOUNG'S newest story has at least this much merit about it, that no one who has seen the title can complain thereafter of having been taken unawares by the course of the narrative. That is perhaps as well, for, having discovered in the opening chapters a sufficiently charming *Pamela* living in perpetual honeymoon with a partner rich, good-looking and with no particular occupation to interfere with unlimited motor trips and dinner parties, we might have imagined the tale was going to remain a jolly meaningless thing like that all through, and so have been as much shocked as the heroine herself on reading the fatal letter. But, since we knew

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the book to be called straight out *The Bigamist* (LANE), we could have no possible difficulty in foreseeing the emergence of that other wife from the buried past ready to pounce down on poor little *Pam* at her happiest. And of course she duly appeared. Not that such happiness could in any case have lasted long, for the man was, flatly, a cur, not deserving the notice of any of the rather foolish women he managed to attract—there were three of them—and not particularly worth your attention either for that matter. Having said so much I can gladly leave the rest to your perusal, or, better perhaps, your imagination, only hinting that the conclusion has something of dignity that does a little to redeem the volume. But when all is said this is not Miss YOUNG at her best, the characters without exception being unusually stilted, the plot unpleasant, and the South African atmosphere, for which I have gladly praised her before now, so negligible that but for an occasional name and a page or two of railway journey the yarn might as well have been placed in a suburb of London or Manchester as in the land of delectable sunshine.

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Mr. JOHN S. MARGERISON, in *The Sure Shield* (DUCKWORTH) sees to it that our national pride in our Fleet is thoroughly encouraged. Whether he is describing a race against the Germans in times of peace, or a fight against odds with them in these days of war, we always come out top dog. Very good. But, at the same time, I am bound to add that some of his stories compelled me to make considerable drafts on my reserves of credulity before I could swallow them. So improbable are the incidents in one or two of them that I am inclined to believe that they must be founded on fact. However that may be, their author is an expert in his subject, and writes with a vigour that is very bracing and infectious.

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[Illustration: *Tactful Customer (forestalling a rebuff at a coal order office)*. "OF COURSE, MISS, I DON'T EXPECT THAT YOU REALLY SELL COALS, BUT I SUPPOSE YOU WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO MAKING THEM A SUBJECT FOR CONVERSATION?"]

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Music in Mesopotamia.

Among the songs which have recently exhausted their popularity in the music-halls of Baghdad is:—

"Come into the Garden of Eden, MAUDE."

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“The White Star Company, the Dominion Shipping Company, and other Atlantic lines are now arranging to employ a certain number of Sea Scouts on their boats. The shipping companies will certainly be ducky.”—*Manchester Guardian*.

Or perhaps they may even happen upon a DRAKE.