

# **Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, April 18, 1917 eBook**

## **Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, April 18, 1917**

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# Page 1

## Title: **Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 152, April 18, 1917**

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## **PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.**

*Vol.* 152.

April 18th, 1917.

## **CHARIVARIA.**

The growing disposition to declare war against her is causing genuine concern in Germany, where it is feared that there may not be enough interned German vessels to go round.

\*\*\*

An Austrian General is reported to have been overwhelmed by an avalanche of snow, and at Easter-time a number of patriotic English people were offering, in view of the usefulness of the stuff for military purposes, to forgo their own ration.

\*\*\*

The question of Parliamentary reform has been under discussion in the House of Commons. That the Legislature should attempt to deal with reforms of any kind which have not been previously demanded by the Daily Press is regarded in certain quarters as a most dangerous precedent.

\*\*\*

Immediately north of the Siegfried line, the experts explain, is a new German position, which they have christened the Wotan line. It will not be long before we hear of fresh German activities in the Goetterdaemmerung line.

\*\*\*

Thousands of men at the docks are boycotting public-houses as a protest against increased prices. A deputation of licensed victuallers will shortly wait upon the Government to inform them that their action in restricting the brewers' output is likely to have the deplorable effect of making drinking unpopular.

\*\*\*

There has been some slight activity on the Dublin front, but beyond a few skirmishes there is little to report.

\*\*\*

One of the most recent additions to the Entente Alliance proves that the art of war as practised by Germany is such a horrible travesty that even the Cubists condemn it.

\*\*\*

Goat-skin coats are mentioned by a lady writer as quite a novelty. She is in error. Goats have worn them for years.

\*\*\*

A wedding at Huntingdon, the other day, was interrupted by the barking of dog within the vicinity of the church. It is a peculiar thing, but dogs have never looked upon marriage as the serious thing it really is.

\*\*\*

We are sorry to contradict a contemporary, but the assertion that men are losing their chivalry cannot be lightly passed over. Only the other night in the tube a man was distinctly heard to say to a lady who was standing, "Pray accept my seat, Madam. I am getting out here."

## Page 2

\*\*\*

[Illustration: *Small Invalid (to visitor). "I've had A lot of diseases in my time — measles — whooping-Cough — influenza — tonsilitis — but (modestly) I haven't had dropsy yet."*]

\*\*\*

Mr. *Duke* has just stated that there is work for all in Ireland. This is not the way to make the Government popular in the distressed isle.

\*\*\*

The *Vienna Zeit* says the worst enemy of the people is their appetite. Several local humourists have been severely dealt with for pointing out that eating is the best way of getting rid of this pest.

\*\*\*

A Stepney market porter attempted last week to evade military service by hiding in a cupboard, but the police captured him despite the fact that he attempted to throw them off the scent by making a noise like a piece of cheese—a very old device.

\*\*\*

On one day of Eastertide there was an inch of snow in Liverpool, followed by hailstones, lightning, thunder and a gale of wind. Summer has certainly arrived very early this year.

\*\*\*

The *Berliner Tageblatt* makes much of the fact that a recent submarine expedition was carried out by means of German Naval officers on board a trawler "disguised as ordinary men." A clever piece of masquerading.

\*\*\*

"Members of the Honor Oak Golf Club," says a contemporary, "are arranging to play their rounds to the music of grunting pigs, cackling fowls and bleating lambs." With a little practice these intelligent animals should soon be able to convey their appreciation of the more elementary strokes.

\*\*\*

WOLF'S comet is approaching the earth at the rate of 1,250,000 miles a day, and our special constables have been warned.

\*\*\*

England, said Lord *Leicester* recently, is neglecting her trees during the War. But with our Great Tree (Sir *Beerbohm*) it is the other way about.

\*\*\*

The overseer of one of the workhouses in the vicinity of London is to receive an additional four pounds a year in place of beer. It is hoped that this sum will buy him a nice glass of stout for his next Christmas dinner.

\*\*\*

In justice to the thieves who removed 1-1/2 cwt. of sugar from a grocer's shop in Kentish Town it should be stated that had it not been for an untimely alarm it was their intention to have taken a sufficient quantity of other articles to justify their appropriation of that amount of sugar.

\*\*\*

"Only the older generation recalls the glass of sherry and slice of Madeira that used to be the invariable refreshment offered in the farmhouses of the Southwest."—*Daily Telegraph*.

Our own recollection is that it was sometimes a glass of Madeira and a hunk of sherry.



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\* \* \* \* \*

*A School for statesmen.*

[The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, in an article on our Ambassador at Petrograd, ascribes his success as a diplomat to his passion for golf— “if one can speak of passion in connection with this cold game of meadow billiards.” “The conditions,” it goes on to say, “in which this rather tiresome game is played do really produce the qualities necessary for any statesmanlike or diplomatic work.... Silent, tough, resigned, unbroken ... the good golfer walks round his field, keeps his eye on the ball and steers for his goal.... Sir George Buchanan walked round the whole golf field of Europe for years until at last he was able in Petrograd to hurl the ball into the goal.”]

Oft have I wondered as my weapon's edge  
Disintegrated solid chunks of greenery,  
Or as my pillule flew the bounding hedge  
Into outlying sections of the scenery,  
What moral value might accrue  
From billiards played beneath the blue.

Little I fancied when I topped the sphere  
And on its candour left a coarse impression,  
Or in the bed of some revolting mere  
Mislaid three virgin globes in swift succession,  
That I was learning how to grip  
The rudiments of statesmanship.

Yet so it was. I schooled myself to gaze  
Upon the object with a firmly glued eye,  
And, though I moved by strange and devious ways,  
To keep in view the goal, or *finis ludi*,  
And ever let my language be  
The language of diplomacy.

Thus *Balfour* learned the politician's game,  
And thus *Lloyd George* was trained to be a Premier;  
Thence many a leader who has leapt to fame  
Got self-control, grew harder, tougher, phlegmier,  
Reared in the virtues which prevail  
At Walton Heath and Sunningdale.

Golf being then the source of so much good,  
I own my conscience suffers certain wrenches  
Recalling how the links of Chorley Wood

Have seen me on the Sabbath carving trenches,  
Where Tommies might be taught to pitch  
The deadly bomb from ditch to ditch.

For I reflect that my intruding spade,  
That blocked the foursome and debarred the single,  
May well have cheeked some statesman yet unmade,  
Some budding *Hogge*, some mute inglorious *Pringle*;  
And that is why my shovel shrinks  
From excavating other links.

O.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

“In reply to your valued inquiry, we enclose illustration of Dining Tables of Oak seating fourteen people with round legs and twelve people with square legs, with prices attached. Hoping to have your order.”— *The Huntly Express*.

Mr. Punch is now engaged upon an exhaustive examination of the extremities of his staff before deciding whether to replace his existing Round Table.

## Page 4

\* \* \* \* \*

*"British Press back Hun rearguards."*—Newspaper headline.

Happily it is only a small section of the British Press that adopts this unpatriotic attitude.

\* \* \* \* \*

SHAKSPEARE on the *food controller*:—

"No man's pie is free'd  
From his ambitious finger."—*Henry VIII., Act I. Scene I.*

\* \* \* \* \*

HEART-TO-HEART TALKS.

*(The GERMAN CROWN PRINCE and Marshal HINDENBURG).*

*Hindenburg.* So your Royal Highness proposes to leave us again?

*The Prince.* Yes, Marshal, I'm going to leave you for a short time. I have made arrangements which will render my absence from the Front as little disadvantageous as may be possible. My orders have been carefully drawn up so as to provide for every contingency, and I trust that nothing the enemy can do will find my stout fellows unprepared, while I am devising fresh triumphs for them in my temporary retirement.

*Hindenburg.* We shall all regret the absence of your Royal Highness from those fields in which you have planted new proofs both of German courage and of German intellectual superiority; but no doubt your Highness will be all the better for a short rest. May I, perhaps, ask the immediate cause of your Highness's departure from the Front?

*The Prince.* No, Marshal, you mustn't, for if you do I shall not answer you fully. *(Hums)* *Souvent femme varie; fol qui s'y fie*—do you know what that means, you rogue?

*Hindenburg.* I know your Highness spoke in French, which is not what I should have expected from one who stands so near to the throne.

*The Prince.* Now, you mustn't be angry; only dull people ever get angry.

*Hindenburg.* Your Royal Highness means to say—?

*The Prince.* I mean to say that you're not dull—not *really* dull, you know, and that therefore you can't be allowed to get angry about a mere trifle. Besides, our predecessor, the GREAT FREDERICK, always spoke in French and wrote his poetry in

French—very poor stuff it was too—and had a violent contempt for the German language, which he considered a barbarous jargon.

*Hindenburg.* I care not what the GREAT FREDERICK may have thought as to this matter—there are other points in which it might be well to imitate him first rather than to remember what he thought and said about our noble German language—but for me it is enough to know that the Emperor and King whom I serve holds no such ideas.

*The Prince.* Of course he doesn't; he holds no ideas at all of any kind.

*Hindenburg.* At least he would be angry to hear such—

*The Prince.* Of course he would; he's dull enough in all conscience for that or anything else.

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*Hindenburg (after a pause).* Your Royal Highness will, perhaps, forgive me if I draw your gracious attention to the fact that I have much work to do and but little time to do it in.

*The Prince.* Of course, my dear Marshal, of course. They're making things warm for you, aren't they, in the direction of Arras? I was saying to myself only this morning, "How annoying for that poor old HINDENBURG to have his masterly retreat interrupted by those atrocious English, and to lose thirteen thousand prisoners and one hundred-and-sixty guns, and I don't know how many killed and wounded. Where's his wall of steel now, poor old fellow, and his patent plan for luring the enemy on?" That's what I said to myself, and now that we have met I feel that I must offer you my condolences. I know what it is, though of course it wasn't *my* fault that we failed to bring it off against the French at Verdun. Heigho! I'm really beginning to believe that I shall never see Paris.

*Hindenburg.* !!! !!! !!!

*The Prince.* You needn't look so stuffy, dear old thing. I'm going. But remember I shall be your Emperor some day; and then what shall I do with you? I know; I shall have you taught French.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: DYNASTIC AMENITIES.

LITTLE WILLIE (*of Prussia*). "AS ONE CROWN PRINCE TO ANOTHER, ISN'T YOUR HINDENBURG LINE GETTING A BIT SHAKY?"

RUPPRECHT (*of Bavaria*). "WELL, AS ONE CROWN PRINCE TO ANOTHER, WHAT ABOUT YOUR HOHENZOLLERN LINE?"]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Sergeant*. "PUT YOUR THUMBS DOWN BEHIND THE SEAMS OF YOUR TROUSERS, NUMBER SIX! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK THE SEAMS OF YOUR TROUSERS ARE PUT THERE FOR?"]

\* \* \* \* \*

CAUTIONARY TALES FOR THE ARMY.

## I.

*Sergt.-Instructor George Bellairs, who imagined himself to be a master of strong language.*

Sergt.-Instructor George Bellairs  
Prided himself on dreadful swears,  
And half the night and all the day  
He thought of frightful things to say.  
On his recruits in serried squad  
He'd work them off; he said, "You clod!"  
"You put!" "You closhy put!" (a curse he  
Got from *The Everlasting Mercy*,  
Which shows one can't take care enough,  
Not knowing who may read one's stuff).  
With joy he saw his victims quiver,  
With wicked joy beheld them shiver.  
Six stretchers in attendance waited  
To carry off the men he slated.

## Page 6

But early in the War there came  
A squad of men of rowing fame.  
With them, his choicest oaths he found  
Fell upon bored and barren ground.  
He lavished all his hoard, full tale;  
They did not blench, they did not quail.  
His plethora of plums he spilt;  
They did not wince, they did not wilt.  
Poor fellow! As they left him there,  
He heard one beardless boy declare,  
“Jove! what a milk-and-water chap!  
I thought non-coms. had oaths on tap.”  
Another said, “We’d soon be fit  
If we were only cursed a bit!”

Sergt.-Instructor George Bellairs,  
He stands and stares, and stares *and* stares;  
Then (he who late so freely cursed)  
Tried to express himself and—burst!

\* \* \* \* \*

### SPRING FASHIONS FOR MEN.

“Lord ——, who managed to be present, wore a festive air with a  
button-hole of lilies of the valley.”—*Ramsey Courier*.

\* \* \* \* \*

“LOST, between Huddersfield and Saddleworth, on the 7th inst, Two Swing  
Doors.”—*Provincial Paper*.

What became of the rest of the storey?

\* \* \* \* \*

The SULTAN has presented the GERMAN KAISER with a sword of honour—“Same I  
massacred the Armenians,” as *Rawdon Crawley* would have said.

\* \* \* \* \*

“The launching of the first great Allied offensive of this year has fallen at such a time in  
the week that it is unfortunately impossible to deal with it at all thoroughly in the present  
number.”—*Land and Water*.

Sir DOUGLAS HAIG ought to be more considerate.

\* \* \* \* \*

A RATIONAL QUESTION.

Dear Mr. Punch,—Seeing from your cartoon that you have views of your own on Food Control, may I put a puzzling case to you? The other evening, after the theatre, I wished to give some supper to a hungry young soldier friend who any day now may be summoned to France. It was a quarter past eleven and I led him to a restaurant near Piccadilly Circus which was still open and busy. But the door-keeper refused to admit him. I might go in—oh, yes—but not a soldier. Now I am an elderly civilian, doing very little for my country except carrying on my own business and paying my way and my taxes; but this boy is a fighter, prepared to die for England if need be. Yet it is I who am allowed to eat at night, and not he, however much in need of food he may be! Surely there is some want of logic here?

I am, Yours faithfully,  
PERPLEXED CIVILIAN.

\* \* \* \* \*

“April came in yesterday with none of the mildness  
eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeelllllll xflf vbg emf shr tao hr which is proverbially  
associated with that month.”—*Glasgow Evening Times*.



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We can almost hear the printer's teeth chattering.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Mother*. "SO YOU'RE THE BOTTOM BOY OF YOUR CLASS. AREN'T YOU ASHAMED OF YOURSELF?"

*Peter*. "BUT, MOTHER, IT'S NOT MY FAULT. THE BOY WHO'S ALWAYS BOTTOM IS AWAY ILL."]

\* \* \* \* \*

### FIRST LINES.

After having spent an hour or so with WORDSWORTH'S sonnets I found my head so full of his sonorous adjuratory music that when in the middle of the night I woke as usual—from three to four is the worst time—my wooing of reluctant sleep took on a new fashion, and instead of repeating verses I made them. But I only once proceeded farther than the first line. Anybody who finds pleasure in poetic pains may add the other thirteen; to me such a task would savour of bad luck. Here, however, are some of my brave Rydalesque beginnings, with titles:—

*To the ASSISTANT CONTROLLER of FOOD, wishing him success.*

JONES, who wouldst keep potatoes for the poor—

*To the Ex-PREMIER, now in very active retirement.*

ASQUITH, till recently our honoured head—

*To a prominent K.C. who has become First Lord of the Admiralty.*

CARSON, who latterly hast taken salt—

*To an Ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs, on a bed of sickness.*

GREY, who wouldst Represent Proportionally—

*To a Second-in-Command.*

BONAR, who speakest for the absent GEORGE—

*To the PRIME MINISTER, on a notable innovation.*

GEORGE, who receivest Yankee journalists—



*To the KAISER.*

WILHELM, who dost thy damnedst every day—

*To the CROWN PRINCE.*

Namesake of mine, but O how different!

*To an Ex-Colonel.*

WINSTON, whose fighting days, alas! seem o'er—

*To an assiduous Watcher of the literary skies.*

SHORTER, who tellest readers what to think—

I then essayed two lines:—

*To an Incurable Wag.*

SHAW, who, in khaki, with that gingery beard,  
Joyous and independent scann'dst the Front—

With this effort I fell asleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

DAWN OF HUMOUR IN SCOTLAND.

"Summer time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday morning. Clocks should be put back an hour on Saturday night."—*Ross-shire Journal*.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE SECRET OF LONGEVITY.

"The death occurred on Friday of Mr. —, at the age of 94. Deceased had lived through the reigns of George IV., William IV., Victoria, Edward VII."—*Provincial Paper*.

\* \* \* \* \*

From a picture-dealer's advertisement:—

"Corot got originally 500 francs for his painting of 'The Angelus,' which ultimately brought 800,000 francs."—*The British Magazine* (Buenos Aires).

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Poor MILLET, it appears, got nothing.

\* \* \* \* \*

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE.

### PART I.

Angelo Armstrong was a man of thirty. He had no capital, but by dint of honest and meritorious toil he found himself eventually earning a moderate salary as clerk in a London Insurance Office. He had been rejected for the Army on account of a defective knee-cap. Outside his work his tastes lay in the direction of botany and bibliomancy, which latter, according to the dictionary, is "Divination performed by selecting passages of Scripture at hazard." He also indulged in good works and was President of the Society for the Preservation of the Spiritual Welfare of the Deputy Harbour Masters at our English Seaports. Thus he was worthy of the name of Angelo by which his mother had insisted that he should be christened, after seeing a picture of the famous historical incident of "*Non Angli sed Angeli*."

Strangely enough he had never yet come under the influence of love. The three diversions given above had filled his spare hours, and woman was to him a sealed book. One morning he found a letter on his breakfast-table from an old family friend; it read as follows:—

*"Ton Repos," Woking,  
December 11th, 1916.*

"DEAR MR. ARMSTRONG,—Do tear yourself away from grimy London and come and spend the Christmas holidays with us. Only a small party and one of War-workers. We are all workers nowadays, aren't we? You *must* come!

Sincerely yours,  
AUGUSTA POGSON-DELABERE.

N.B.—Our house is a long way from the Crematorium!

This settled it; he decided to go.

### PART II.

The Pogson-Delaberes' party at "Ton Repos" consisted of four guests: Col. Maxton, from Aldershot, commanding the 106th Battalion of the Drumlie Highlanders; Miss Agatha Simson, a middle-aged munition-worker; our hero, and, oh! the lovely Miss

Sylvia Taunton, another War-worker, aged 22. The result may be easily guessed. For two days the young people were left, naturally, very much together. They quickly fell into an easy intimacy, and on the third and last day of the holiday Angelo was profoundly in love. Gone were the botanizers, gone the bibliomants, gone the Deputy Harbour Masters. There was but one thought in his evacuated brain, to make the fair Sylvia his own.

His opportunity came after dinner that night when the rest of the party had gone out to look at some condemned pheasants which were to be shot at dawn. She was at the piano playing that deservedly popular song, "I've chipped my chip for England," by Nathaniel Dayer, when he suddenly leant over her. "Miss Taunton—Sylvia," he ejaculated, "you will be surprised at this suddenness, I know, but I cannot keep it in any longer; I love you enormously. Is there any chance for me?"

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She had just reached that passage in Nathaniel's song where a triumphant ascending scale in G rings out. She faltered and played D-flat instead of D-natural, the first dissonance that night—would it had been the last! Quickly she turned on the music-stool and on him, and spoke with averted head.

"Mr. Armstrong, I will own frankly that I like you more than a little. Though we only met three days ago I am more drawn to you than I have ever been to any other man."

"Aha," he cried exultingly.

"But," she said, "I must say something about myself. While I am a War-worker, I have never told you yet what I am doing. I am a clerk in Marr's Bank, in Cheapside."

"There is nothing dishonourable in that," he almost shouted.

"There is not," she answered, haughtily drawing herself up.

"I keep my account there," he said.

"I know," she replied; "I am in the Pass-book department."

He stood quite still, but the lapels of his dinner-jacket shook slightly.

"My duties," she went on quietly, "are to report each evening to my chief, Mr. Hassets, on our clients' balances. Yours has never been higher than L24 7\_s.\_9\_d.\_ during the eighteen months that I have been there. I am very sorry, but I cannot marry you."

He looked straight into her inscrutable eyes and the right repartee froze on his lips.

On the morrow he left at dawn, just as the birds were beginning to drop; and before the day was over he had transferred his account from Marr's Bank to Parr's.

\* \* \* \* \*

"CHAPLAIN — ASKS GUIDANCE FOR THE AUTHORITIES.

Prays that recent events may be prevented."—*Baltimore News*.

Surely this is asking too much.

\* \* \* \* \*

"British troops in Macedonia are now in possession of Deltawah and Sindiayah, some thirty-five miles north of Bagdad, and of Falluyah on the Euphrates, thirty-six miles west of Bagdad."—*Sunday Paper*.

We know on *Fluellen's* authority that Macedon and Monmouth are very much alike; and so, it seems, is Mesopotamia.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### BACK TO THE LAND.

The wintry days are with us still;  
The roads are deep in liquid dirt;  
The rain is wet, the wind is chill,  
And both are coming through my shirt;  
And yet my heart is light and gay;  
I shout aloud, I hum a snatch;  
Why am I full of mirth? To-day  
I'm planting my potato patch.

The KAISER sits and bites his nails  
In Pots- (or some adjoining) dam;  
He wonders why his peace talk fails  
And how to cope with Uncle Sam;  
The General Staff has got the hump;  
In vain each wicked scheme they hatch;  
I've handed them the final thump  
By planting my potato patch.

## Page 10

The U-boat creeps beneath the sea  
And puts the unarmed freighters down;  
It fills the German heart with glee  
To see the helpless sailors drown;  
But now and then a ship lets fly  
To show that Fritz has met his match!  
She's done her bit, and so have I  
Who dig in my potato patch.

And later, when the War is won  
And each man murmurs, "Well, that's that,"  
And reckons up what he has done  
To put the Germans on the mat,  
I'll say, "It took ten myriad guns  
And fighting vessels by the batch;  
But we too served, we ancient ones,  
Who dug in our potato patch."

ALGOL.

\* \* \* \* \*

"IT."

PHASE I.

The doctor says, perfectly cheerfully and as though it were really not a matter of vital importance, that there is no doubt that I have got IT. He remarks that IT is all over the place, and that he has a couple of hundred other cases at the present time.

I resent his attitude as far as I have strength to do anything at all. I did not give permission for him to be called in just to have my sufferings brushed aside like this. He only stays about three minutes altogether, during which time he relates two funny stories (at least I suppose they are funny, because my nurse laughs; I can't see any point in them myself), and makes several futile remarks about the War. As though the War were a matter of importance by comparison! Then he goes, talking breezily all the way down the stairs.

Well, I think darkly, they will be sorry presently. I have no intention or expectation of getting better, and when they see me a fair young corpse then they'll know.

Already I loathe the Two Hundred. Not that I believe for a minute the story of my own disease being the same as their miserable little complaints. In recurring periods of conscious thought I go through the list of things I know for a fact I have got—rheumatic



fever, sciatica, lumbago, toothache, neuritis, bronchitis, laryngitis, tonsilitis, neuralgia, gastritis, catarrh of several kinds, heart disease and inflammation (or possibly congestion) of the lungs. I shall think of some more presently, if my nurse will let me alone and not keep on worrying me with her “Just drink this.” Bother the woman! Why doesn’t she get off the earth? What’s the use of my swallowing that man’s filthy medicine when he doesn’t know what’s the matter with me?

I hate everybody and everything, especially the eider-down quilt, which rises in slow billows in front of my eyes and threatens to engulf me. When in a paroxysm of fury I suddenly cast it on the floor, it lies there still billowing, and seems to leer at me. There is something fat and sinister and German about that eiderdown. I never noticed it before. *Two Hundred German eider-downs!*

The firelight flickers weirdly about the room and I try to count the shadows. But before I begin I know the answer—TWO HUNDRED.



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I drift into a nightmare of Two Hundred elusive cabbages which I am endeavouring to plant in my new allotment, where a harsh fate forces me to dig and *dig* and DIG, and, as a natural consequence, also to ache and *ache* and ACHE.

PHASE II.

I can stand up with assistance from the bed-post and totter feebly to an arm-chair by the fire, where I sit in a dressing-gown and weep. What for? I couldn't say, except that it seems a fit and proper thing to do.

I am still of opinion that I am not long for this world, and my favourite occupation at present is counting up the number of wreaths that I might justifiably expect to have sent to my funeral. I don't tell my nurse, who would immediately try to "cheer me up" by talking to me or giving me a magazine to look at. And I would *much* rather count wreaths. The Smiths probably would not be able to afford one....

My thoughts are distracted by the sudden apparition of a little meal. I begin to take an interest in these little meals, which are of such frequent occurrence that I am reduced to tears again, this time at the thought of the extra expense I am causing. And all for nothing. Why don't they save the money for wreaths?

The doctor comes while I am swallowing my egg, miserably yet with a certain gusto, and I dry my eyes hastily as I hear him bounding up the stairs.

"Hullo," he calls out before he is well through the door, "how are we to-day, eh? Beginning to sit up and take notice? I think we'll change your medicine."

"I think," I remark resignedly, "that it will be best for someone to dig a hole and bury me."

"Jolly good idea," he agrees heartily. "In fact why not do it to all of us? Please the Germans so too. But it can't be done, you know—there's a shortage of grave-diggers."

Heartless brute!

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Regimental Sergeant-Major (to lady driver of motor ambulance)*. "I SEE YOU'VE GOT STRIPES. HAVE YOU GOT A SERGEANT-MAJOR?"

*Corporal Maud Evans*. "HAVE WE GOT A SERGEANT-MAJOR? I SHOULD THINK WE HAVE—THE CAT!"]

\* \* \* \* \*

“By fixing five potatoless days hope is entertained that supplies, which are scent, will be left to poor people who most require them.”—*Daily Chronicle*.

This explains the remark of the Irishman who protested that it was weeks since he had tasted even “the smell of a potato.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“It will take years to cleanse the AEgean stables.”—*Civil and Military Gazette*.

Still, M. VENEZELOS has made a good beginning with Samos, Lemnos and several other 'osses.

\* \* \* \* \*

From the report of a prohibition meeting at Peebles:—

“A pleasant and most enjoyable addendum was a series of lantern slides depicting the havoc wrought by the Huns in Belgium.”—*Peebleshire Advertiser*.

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It is still “Peebles for pleasure” at any cost.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: TRIALS OF A HEAVYWEIGHT.

“I HOPE YOU WON’T MIND, UNCLE, BUT I’VE LENT YOU TO MRS. ROBINSON FOR HALF-AN-HOUR AFTER LUNCH. SHE’S GOT AN AWFULLY STIFF BIT OF GROUND TO GET THROUGH.”]

\* \* \* \* \*

THE HINDENBURG LINE.

In our earnest endeavour to discover exactly where this impregnable barrier is likely to be encountered we have collected the following references to it in the German Press of the next few months:—

... Our troops, according to plan, are now operating to the east of the Vimy Ridge where the fighting is taking the direction intended by us. We have succeeded in restoring a condition of voluntary elasticity, preparatory to the occupation of the famous Hindenburg Line, which covers Douai, St. Quentin and La Fere.

... Our rearguard actions to the east of St. Quentin are developing in accordance with our wildest dreams, our troops, after their brief respite in the so-called Wotan Line, displaying their ability in a war of rapid movement. The hesitating British are disconcerted by the recrudescence of fluidity on the front. We learn with satisfaction that our Northern divisions are now safely established in the Hindenburg Line—to the east of Douai.

... We learn to-day with the very keenest emotion of the complete and brilliant evacuation of the Siegfried Line, to the east of Douai, and the re-establishment of a new measure of liquidity. British aeroplanes (of which 133 have been brought down according to plan) have been making long flights over our territory with a view to observation of the Hindenburg Line—on the left bank of the Meuse. It is said that two of our machines are missing, but a recount has been ordered. There must be some mistake.

... A shrewd blow has been dealt to the British by our abandonment, in agreement with the prospectus, of the Beckmesser Line. All has gone according to our hopes, our longings and our prayers. We have crossed the Meuse.

... The secret is out at last. The Hindenburg Line, about which there has been so much speculation, is now known to run through Liege, Luxemburg and Metz. According to schedule we are now approaching this position, which has only been attained by an

amazing display of spontaneous volatility on our part. The fighting of the last few weeks, in the neighbourhood of the Pogner, Sieglinda, Kurvenal and Lohengrin Lines, fell out as had been prognosticated by us.

... The importance of Cologne, as the main bastion of the impregnable Hindenburg Line, cannot be over-rated. Our strategical, voluntary and gratuitous crossing of the Rhine was carried out according to *agenda*....

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE IMPERFECT ECONOMIST.

"I wear my very oldest suits,  
I go about in shocking boots,  
And (bar potatoes) feed on roots  
And various cereal substitutes  
For wheat, and non-imported fruits.  
No meat my table now pollutes,  
But, though I spare warm-blooded brutes,  
I sometimes sup on frogs and newts.



## Page 13

I often spend laborious days  
Supported by a little maize;  
And rice prepared in divers ways  
My appetite at luncheon stays.  
From sugar I avert my gaze;  
Unsweetened tea my thirst allays;  
I never go to any plays  
Or smoke expensive Henry Clays."

*Our excellent Economist  
His pet extravagance forgets,  
Which rather spoils his little list—  
His fifty daily cigarettes.*

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: "SWOOPING FROM THE WEST."

[It is the intention of our new Ally to assist us in the patrolling of the Atlantic.]]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: ON AN OUTLYING FORT.

*Orderly Officer.* "ANYTHING SERIOUS TO REPORT, SERGEANT?"

*Sergeant.* "GUNNER JONES FEELS 'OMESICK, SIR, AND MAY HE SEND FOR 'IS PARROT?"]

\* \* \* \* \*

THE GENERAL.

Last night, as I was washing up,  
And just had rinsed the final cup,  
All of a sudden, 'midst the steam,  
I fell asleep and dreamt a dream.  
I saw myself an old, old man,  
Nearing the end of mortal span,  
Bent, bald and toothless, lean and spare,  
Hunched in an ancient beehive chair.  
Before me stood a little lad  
Alive with questions. "Please, Granddad,  
Did Daddy fight, and Uncle Joe,  
In the Great War of long ago?"



I nodded as I made reply:  
"Your Dad was in the H.L.I.,  
And Uncle Joseph sailed the sea,  
Commander of a T.B.D.,  
And Uncle Jack was Major too——"  
"And what," he asked me, "what were you?"  
I stroked the little golden head;  
"I was a General," I said.  
"Come, and I'll tell you something more  
Of what I did in the Great War."  
At once the wonder-waiting eyes  
Were opened in a mild surmise;  
Smiling, I helped the little man  
To mount my knee, and so began:  
"When first the War broke out, you see,  
Grandma became a V.A.D.;  
Your Aunties spent laborious days  
In working at Y.M.C.A.'s;  
The servants vanished. Cook was found  
Doing the conscript baker's round;  
The housemaid, Jane, in shortened skirt  
(She always was a brazen flirt),  
Forsook her dusters, brooms and pails  
To carry on with endless mails.  
The parlourmaid became a vet.,  
The tweeny a conductorette,  
And both the others found their missions  
In manufacturing munitions.  
I was a City man. I knew  
No useful trade. What could I do?  
Your Granddad, boy, was not the sort  
To yield to fate; he was a sport.  
I set to work; I rose at six,  
Summer and winter; chopped the sticks,  
Kindled the fire, made early tea  
For Aunties and the V.A.D.  
I cooked the porridge, eggs and ham,  
Set out the marmalade and jam,  
And packed the workers off, well fed,

## Page 14

Well warmed, well brushed, well valeted.  
I spent the morning in a rush  
With dustpan, pail and scrubbing-brush;  
Then with a string-bag sallied out  
To net the cabbage or the sprout,  
Or in the neighbouring butcher's shop  
Select the juiciest steak or chop.  
So when the sun had sought the West,  
And brought my toilers home to rest,  
Savours more sweet than scent of roses  
Greeted their eager-sniffing noses—  
Savours of dishes most divine  
Prepared and cooked by skill of mine.  
I was a General. Now you know  
How Generals helped to down the foe.”  
The little chap slipped off my knee  
And gazed in solemn awe at me,  
Stood at attention, stiff and mute,  
And gave his very best salute.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Prescriptions (C.P.—197/30).—The replies to your queries are as follows:—(a) Refuse; (b) refuse; (c) refuse; (d) refuse; (e) No.”—  
*Pharmaceutical Journal*.

We have often felt like that about prescriptions ourselves, but have never ventured to say so.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: THE RECRUIT'S FAREWELL TO HIS BOWLER.]

\* \* \* \* \*

JOLLYMOUSE.

In what I will particularise as the —— area of the War zone, there is a small village-by-a-stream where Generals stride about the narrow streets or whirl through them in gigantic cars, and guards at every corner clank and turn out umpty times a day. Down in the

hollow the stream by the village laughs placidly along, mocking at the Great War, but I doubt if the Generals have much time to listen to it, for the village-by-the-stream is a Corps Headquarters.

However the Doctor led us (which includes the War Babe and James the Acting Adjutant) to the village-by-the-stream, where, just across the stone bridge, he indicated on the wall of a house the legend:

RESTAURANT FOR OFFICERS.

TEA, COFFEE, CHAMPAGNE AND ALL SUCH ARTICLE IS SELL HERE.

“Tea,” he said feelingly, “and there will be china cups and thin bread-and-butter, and real milk and come along in.”

It was rather a composite restaurant. There was a glassed-in balcony with tables and chairs; and all around there were puttees, handkerchiefs, paper-weights, inkstands, wrist-watches and electric torches. There were loose-leaved pocket diaries of abominable ingenuity (irresistible to Adjutants); collars and ties to clothe the neck of man, and soap to wash it withal. Hair lotions, safety-razors, *pate de foie gras*, sponges and writing-pads jostled each other on the shelves. Walking-sticks and bottles of champagne lay in profusion on the floor. It was less of a restaurant than an emporium, but the Doctor sat down contentedly and rang the bell; and the War Babe threw out battle patrols to reconnoitre the position.

He passed unscathed through the barrage of sticks and diaries; evaded skilfully the indirect fire of electric torches; reached his first objective among the soap-boxes, and there met his fate.



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"Doctor," he demanded suddenly, "what's 'savon jollymouse'?"

"Savon," the doctor began didactically, "is a preparation of fatty acids saponified with alkali. It is principally manufactured from coker-nut oil, although other similar, if less offensive, substances are sometimes employed. In the English tongue it is known as 'soap,' and——"

"You idiot," said the War Babe amiably, "I know what 'savon' is. But what's a 'jollymouse'?"

"A rodent," replied the Doctor—"a small rodent in a state of mental exhilaration or merriment."

"Rats."

"Yes, the same definition would also apply to rats. *Jolly* rats, that is to say."

"You're very bright to-day, Doctor," said the War Babe, "but it doesn't happen to be that kind of mouse at all. It's j-o-l-i, jolly; m-o-u-s-s-e ——"

"Why didn't you say that before? That's quite different. It's pronounced moose—— zholimoose."

The War Babe sniffed.

"I don't believe you know what it means any more than I do."

"Son of Mars," the Doctor answered gravely, "you are measuring my ignorance by your own—a great mistake. As a matter of fact that word is put on the packet simply to deceive unwary Babes. It has nothing whatever to do with soap."

"Well, since you know so much," said the War Babe, closing with his opponent, "what *is* a jollymouse or whatever you call it?"

"A zholimoose, my dear," the Doctor began, "is very hard to describe and has to be seen to be believed. A War Babe would probably not recognise one if he saw it. To give you a rough idea, however, it is an airy Will-o'-the-wispish——"

The bell had done its work at last, and there suddenly entered by an inner door a fair-haired, fair-skinned French girl almost too pretty to be real. The Doctor paused with his eyes on her and then his face lit up with triumph.

"Gentlemen," he said, in a low vibrating tone, "behold the zholimoose. Hush. It will probably come closer if you don't frighten it."



“Have you got the landing-net?” whispered James hoarsely.

“Yes. And the killing bottle. It’s this War Babe I’m afraid of. He’s sure to scare it. Don’t glare at her like that, War Babe. Pretend you’re a soap-box.”

She hovered on the threshold. It seemed touch and go... and then the War Babe broke the ice in his choicest French.

“Mademoiselle!”

“Messieurs!” She came daintily forward and looked inquiries at us all.

“Tay avec—er bread-and-butter, si-vooplay,” the Doctor ground out in his execrable lingo. “And—er—I never can remember the French for milk.”

“Lait?” I suggested.

“That’s it. Now, Mademoiselle-lay. But not canned stuff. Vray lay.”

Her eyes grew wider and wider at this strange jargon.

“Comment, M’sieur?”

“Vray lay.”

“I suppose you mean lait an naturel,” growled James.

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"Du lait frais," I hazarded.

"Ah. Comprends. C'est triste. Pas de lait frais. Les hopitaux prennent tout."

"No milk?" wailed the Doctor. He looked fixedly at the table and one saw from the movement of his lips that he was mustering his forces for another plunge into the language. Meanwhile the War Babe, whose eyes had not left the girl's face, ventured again on the thin ice of speech.

"Mademoiselle," he began hesitatingly.

"Oui, M'sieur." She turned to him, the picture of rapt attention.

"Ou est la jollymouse—moose, I mean?"

She looked from one to another of us in perplexity.

"Qu'est ce qu'il veut dire?" she asked.

"Il veut voir la jolimousse," we explained, and the War Babe held out the soap-box, pointing with expressive pantomime to the words on it. Her eyes twinkled appreciatively.

"Nous—nous supposerons que—vous etes—la jolimouse," said the War Babe slowly, choosing his words with care.

"Bien sur," James added affirmatively.

"Moi?" She rippled with laughter. "Oh non. Attendez, Messieurs. Ouait one mineet." She flitted through the door like some beautiful butterfly, and in a moment returned with the smallest, softest, warmest lump of blue-grey fur nestling against her. It was a tiny blue Persian kitten.

"Voila!" she said, caressing it tenderly, "la jolimousse." She handed it gravely to the War Babe, who received it with almost reverend care.

It seems perhaps a little worldly to return to the subject of tea, but doctors are worldly creatures. However, at this point the doom of the gods descended, for there was no tea to be obtained, only coffee; no bread-and-butter, only little hard biscuits; and the cups, though certainly china, were but little larger than liqueur-glasses. But one of us at least was impervious to disappointments. The War Babe sat silently, with the kitten in his lap, like a seer of visions, until, just as we were about to leave, an impulse suddenly galvanized him. "I'll pay," he said, and marched into the inner room....

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Victim*. "CONFOUND YOUR DOG, MADAM! IT'S NEARLY BITTEN A PIECE OUT OF MY LEG."

*Owner (distressed)*. "I AM TRULY SORRY, SIR. NAUGHTY LITTLE DAPHNE! AFTER ALL MY EFFORTS TO MAKE WEDNESDAY YOUR MEATLESS DAY."]

\* \* \* \* \*

#### DOMESTIC STRATEGY.

*Mr. Meanly*. My dear, I see that *The People's Adviser* is inviting its readers to send details of their individual food reforms for publication. *Pour encourager les autres*. Just tell me what our rules are.

*Mrs. Meanly*. Certainly, dear. We have meat only on two days a week; potatoes only on two days a week (*and so on*).

*Mr. Meanly*. Good. I will write a letter. And then the day after it appears in print you might send out invitations to dinner. There are a lot of arrears to make up and we'll clear them off now. Say a series of three parties.

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*Mrs. Meanly.* But, dear, ought we to do it in war-time?

*Mr. Meanly.* After the publication of our system of meals, it will be quite safe to send the invitations, my love.

\* \* \* \* \*

### A CURRENT EVENT.

Years ago Mr. Punch, in a moment of inspiration (I wrote the article myself), suggested that some benevolent American millionaire might alter the course of the Gulf Stream so that it flowed right round these islands. In the eye of imagination he saw date palms bordering the Strand, costers sitting under their own banana trees, and stately cavalcades of camels bearing wearied City men to Balham or Putney. (Unhappily he could not look so far into the future as to forecast the allotment holders returning home laden with sugar-canes).

Now a writer in *The Times* suggests that the chill of the present season is due to the effect of the Panama Canal on the Gulf Stream. This is an insidious attempt to make bad blood between ourselves and our new allies. We could only feel the bitterest hostility towards anyone in any way responsible for the present season. Why, this spring has spread such devastation through the land that writers of nature notes have been unable to pay their plumbers' bills.

But while we repudiate the implication of American responsibility we think it well to be absolutely on the safe side; so we suggest that it would be a friendly act, and consonant with the new spirit of alliance, if she would kindly keep the Panama Canal plugged for the next few weeks. One would like to make sure of hearing the cuckoo in Victory Year.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Only ninety-two pigs came to Vienna's Easter market, of which ninety-four were allotted to hospitals."—*Daily Mail*.

The two extra ones, it is understood, came from HINDENBURG'S "strategic reserve."

\* \* \* \* \*

"It is expected that an official announcement will shortly be made of a scheme which will put practically the whole of the topmaking industry of Bradford at the disposal of the Government."—*Daily Telegraph*.

That ought to make things hum.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Napoleon was desolated were he left in the same room with a cat ... but he was not in the least afraid of being alone in the same room with Anne of Austria, whose claws were of a far more formidable capacity.”— *West Australian*.

NAPOLEON’S intrepidity may have been due to his knowledge that ANNE of Austria died about a century before he was born.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: “MY POOR REGINALD IS IN ’ORSPITAL WITH RHEUMATICS IN HIS LEGS. THE SCOTCH COSTUME, YOU KNOW.”]

\* \* \* \* \*

AT THE PLAY.

“THE OLD LADY SHOWS HER MEDALS.”

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Mrs. Dowey (actually a virgin spinster), felt herself out of it because she had no son at the Front to talk about. I gathered that it was not so much a case of unsatisfied yearning for motherhood, as that she wanted to hold her own with the other charwomen who were represented in the trenches. So she assumed the relationship of an anonymous *marraine* towards a certain unknown namesake in the Black Watch, and made boastful pretence of having received letters from her son.

Suddenly she is confronted with this *Private Dowey*, home on leave—a lonely soldier with no family ties. The joy that she had taken in her imagined sense of proprietorship is dashed by fear of exposure and of possible resentment on his part. At first he treats her intrusion almost brutally, but is soon mollified by the offer of food and other hospitality; and by the time his leave is up he has developed an almost filial regard for her. Their parting is as the parting of a tender-hearted mother and a rather unemotional son. The pathos of this scene, though designed and interpreted with a very sensitive restraint, was comparatively obvious—a commonplace, indeed, of these heart-rending days. There was a far more subtle and original note of pathos in the contrast between the brusque humour of the man's casual acceptance of the situation and the timorous, adoring, dog-like devotion of the woman. Here tears and laughter were never far apart.

I could wish that the impression left by this picture had not been a little spoiled by the final scene, in which she lingers lovingly over the medals and uniform of the dead soldier. No good purpose, dramatic or other, was served by this gratuitous appendage to a finished work of art.

Miss JEAN CADELL was simply wonderful; and Mr. MULCASTER, as *Private Dowey*, typically Scottish in his cautious reservations, was admirable. Mr. EDGAR WOOD played capably as one of our many eligible but non-combatant clergymen; and the chorus of aggressively humorous charwomen, though perhaps they had rather too much to say, said it very well.

[Illustration: "SEVEN WOMEN" AND ONE SAILOR.

*Leonora* ... Miss IRENE VANBRUGH.

*Captain Rattray, R.N* ... MR. GORDON ASH.]

Sir JAMES BARRIE'S other one-Act play, *Seven Women* (all rolled into one), suffered, as might be expected, from compression. *Leonora* had to be a clinging motherly creature, a desperate flirt, a gifted humourist, a woman without humour, a murderess (out of an old play by the same author), and two other types which escape me. In the course of about a quarter of an hour she had to give a succinct *precis* of the different moods which her versatile personality might in actual life conceivably have assumed if she had had a month to do it in. Miss IRENE VANBRUGH, with her swift humour and

her skill as a quick-change artist, naturally revelled in this *tour de force*, and, thanks to her, the author came very near to being justified of his caprice.



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Between these two plays was sandwiched Mr. A.A. MILNE'S

"WURZEL-FLUMMERY."

There was never any doubt about the freshness and spontaneity of Mr. MILNE'S humour. The only question was whether an author so fastidiously unstagey, who never underlines his intentions, would be able to accommodate himself to the conditions of a medium that discourages the elliptical method. Well, he did it, and very artfully. He began by making concessions to the habits of his new audience. He wouldn't try them too high at first. In the person of *Robert Crawshaw, M.P.* (Mr. NIGEL PLAYFAIR), he introduced them to a more or less conventional type—exposed, it is true, to a very unusual test of character but dealing with it as such a type was bound to deal. Then, having inspired confidence, he created a rarer atmosphere, and in *Denis Clifton*, a blend of solicitor and play-wright, he produced a figure of fantasy whose delightfully irresponsible humour might have found his audience a little shy at an earlier stage. There was a real note of distinction, extraordinarily well maintained, in *Clifton's* dialogue with *Crawshaw* and the boy-clerk, and Mr. MILNE was particularly fortunate to have the part interpreted by Mr. DION BOUCICAULT, who developed qualities undreamed of in my previous estimation of his gifts.

When that inveterate cynic, *Anthony Clifton*, made a will (it is not Mr. MILNE'S fault that, since he wrote his play before going out to the Front, we have had two others turning on eccentric bequests) leaving £50,000 each to two perfect strangers on the condition that they adopted the preposterous name of Wurzel-Flummery, he hoped to have the grim satisfaction of witnessing, from the grave, an exhibition of human weakness. Of the two legatees—politicians on opposite sides of the House—*Crawshaw*, whose whiskers gave him the air of a successful grocer of the mid-Victorian period, found reasons sufficiently convincing to himself for accepting the testator's terms; while *Richard Meriton*, who had little besides his salary as an M.P., took the high line of proper pride and declared his determination to refuse. Mr. MILNE, by the way, did not specify the respective politics of these two, but I judge, from my knowledge of his own, that *Crawshaw* was meant to be a Tory and *Meriton* a Liberal.

The latter eventually succumbed to pressure on the part of *Crawshaw's* daughter, who cared nothing for names so long as she could marry the man of her choice—a prospect denied to her by her father, who thought little of poor men. Meanwhile *Meriton's* lofty attitude of general contempt for money, and particular contempt for it when offered on degrading terms, gave scope for a little serious relief.

[Illustration: THE POLITICIAN AT HOME.

*Robert Crawshaw, M.P.* ... MR. NIGEL PLAYFAIR.

*Mrs. Crawshaw* ... MISS HELEN HAYE.]

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There are, of course, more ways of viewing the question than could be compressed into so short a play. Myself, I confess to a sneaking sympathy with the standpoint of *Crawshaw*. Money for him did not mean mere self-indulgence; it meant outward show—a house in a better neighbourhood, a more expensive car, a higher status in the opinion of his world—all the things that somehow help in what is called a career. By accepting the fifty thousand pounds he would gain something in the public eye; by assuming the name of Wurzel-Flummery he would lose something. He weighed the two against one another, and concluded that he would gain more than he would lose. This argument furnished a good enough motive according to his lights.

*Meriton*, on the other hand, after professing to prefer a clean heart to filthy lucre, is persuaded by *Violet Crawshaw*, who argues that he would surely make any sacrifice to save her from starving, and she was starving for love. So he yields, saying, in effect, to Honour, “I love thee, dear; I love thee much; but I love *Violet* more.” Incidentally he takes care to overlook the fact that he was not nobly suffering an indignity for the sake of a great cause—such, let us say, as the founding of a hospital—but that he himself stood to gain at least as much as the girl. I am almost afraid that *Meriton* was a bit of a hypocrite. Certainly, in view of his exalted standards, he came out of the business worse than *Crawshaw* did. Perhaps, after all, Mr. MILNE meant him to be a Tory.

But I must not exploit the pleasant field of casuistry opened up by the author’s theme, but content myself with complimenting him very heartily on his share of this triple bill, in which, at the first attempt, he held his own in the company of so experienced an artist as Sir JAMES BARRIE. I ought to add that he had an excellent cast, very quick to appreciate and reproduce the iridescent gaiety of his humour.

O.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

“MOTORS & CYCLES.

Wanted to purchase a few good 1916 laying Pullets.”—*South Bucks Free Press*.

Having regard to the second item in the heading a correspondent suggests that “Pullets” is a misprint for “Pushits.”

\* \* \* \* \*

From a feuilleton:—

She had not wanted to come at all, for she avoided everyone now. But Olive had begged her, with ears in her eyes.”—*Daily Paper*.

If *Olive* was, as we are inclined to suppose, a flapper, she was remarkably well equipped.

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *The Padre*. OWING TO A COLD, PRIVATE STAYER WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SING 'FROM SATURDAY NIGHT TILL MONDAY MORNING' AS INTENDED, BUT SERGEANT STICKETT HAS KINDLY CONSENTED TO PLAY 'FOR ALL ETERNITY,' AND AS IT WILL THEM BE GETTING! RATHER LATE WE WILL CONCLUDE WITH THE NATIONAL ANTHEM."]

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\* \* \* \* \*

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

*The Life of Algernon Charles Swinburne* (MACMILLAN) is a book that may be regarded as filling, at least partially, what has long been an aching void in our biographical shelves. I say partially, because the time has not perhaps fully come for an unreserved appreciation of a character whose handling must present exceptional difficulties. One cannot but notice how many obstacles Mr. EDMUND GOSSE has had to overcome, or avoid, in the present volume. The result inevitably is a certain sense of over-discretion that makes the whole study so detached as to be at times lacking in vitality. Even, however, with these reservations the figure of the poet stands out, bewildering as it must have been in life, with its strange blend of frailty and genius. Stories abound also (sometimes one suspects Mr. GOSSE of having fallen back upon anecdote with an air of relief); they range from the early days of brilliant "failures" at Eton and Balliol to those when in the watchful security of Putney the lamp was guarded by hands so zealous that its flame was ultimately extinguished. Two of the tales remain pleasantly in my memory, one of them describing how young ALGERNON, lately sent down from Oxford and a pupil at the rectory of the future Bishop STUBBS, scared away his host's rustic congregation by leaning upon the garden-gate one Sunday morning, looking, with his red-gold hair and scarlet dressing-gown, like some "flaming apparition." The other, less picturesque but more credible, has also a bishop in it, and concerns an untimely recitation of *Les Noyades*. I will leave you to find this for yourself in a book that forms at least an interesting, if not altogether final, study of a fascinating subject.

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For an old hand BENJAMIN SWIFT shows a poor discretion in crowding too many characters into his pages to allow of anything like adequate characterisation, and indeed, in *What Lies Beneath* (CHAPMAN AND HALL), he is too much concerned with his main purpose of tract-making to be sufficiently interested in the subsidiary business of good story-telling. A Mr. Ravendale, an unpleasant, hoary-bearded patriarch and opulent seller of Bibles, who has buried three wives and lives in a fat Bloomsbury house with the collected offspring of his three marriages, and one or two step-children thrown in, is haunted by a doubt as to whether the beautiful *Ruby Delmore*, daughter of the widow *Delmore*, his second wife, is also the daughter of the late *Mr. Delmore* or of himself, whose attitude towards *Mrs. Delmore* had not been as correct as that of a seller of Bibles is reasonably expected to be, especially by people like the author who don't believe in Bibles. At any rate *Sebastian*, son by the first marriage, is desperately in love with *Ruby*—so,

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you see, the old man had something to worry about. However, it all turns out to be, in fact, mere illusion, developing into a fatal monomania, and the family business is left to be carried on by such of the next generation as have not been convinced by the formidable array of evidence, anti-Theistic and anti-Christian, of two of the characters (who, it is clear, have sedulously read the same books). *Sebastian* loses his faith apparently because he has been distressed by the sight of a wounded horse in the great War, as if it were necessary to wait for the great War for this kind of a difficulty! A certain rough earnestness lies beneath this rather crude presentment of a world-old problem. But I wonder how much of the honest patriotism which fills the book would survive a rationalism as perverse and shallow as Mr. SWIFT applies to traditional faiths. Does he imagine they have no better defences than those which he puts into the weak mouth of silly *Mr. Teanby*, the parson?

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The arrangement of Lady POORE'S new volume of recollections, *An Admiral's Wife in the Making* (SMITH, ELDER), reminded me quaintly of certain romances familiar to my boyhood, in which the fortunes of the hero were traced from cadetship in aspiring sequence. Because, of course, this is exactly what happens to the hero of the present book; the chief difference being that he himself makes only a brief personal appearance therein (though the chapters in question, formed from letters and diaries of Commander POORE during the Nile Expedition of '85, are by no means the least interesting part of the volume). For the rest, one might perhaps call it a draught of Naval small beer, but a very sparkling beverage and served with a highly attractive head upon it. To drop metaphor, Lady POORE has brought together a most entertaining collection of breezy reminiscences of life ashore and on the ocean wave. There is matter to suit all tastes, from her recollections of economies in a furnished villa at Paramé, where chickens were to be bought for thirty-two sous, to more exalted anecdotes connected with the time when her hero had been advanced as far as the post of Commander of the Royal Yacht *Victoria and Albert*. It is all kindly gossip, not ill suited to the best-tempered service in the world. Especially did I like Lady POORE'S gently maternal attitude towards the many junior officers who figure very attractively in her pages (e.g. the jovial pic-nic party in the Blue Mountains, who slaked their thirst from the Government rain-gauge, and thereby disorganised the meteorological records of Jamaica). Certainly the book could not have appeared in times more apt to give it a hearty welcome.

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*The Stars in their Courses* (UNWIN) is not, as you might possibly suppose, a work of theatrical history, but just the latest volume in that admirable series, the First Novel Library. While I am not claiming for it any startling pre-eminence, it is at least a story of more than ordinary promise, and one that easily contrived to hold my interest. This is, perhaps, the more odd, since Miss HILDA M. SHARP has apparently of deliberate intent called in every one of the three conventions that all good young novelists are bidden to avoid—the long-nourished revenge, the missing will, and the super-quixotic self-sacrifice. Naturally the last is the worst. Thus when old *Mr. Yardley* (who had, I fancy, more than a touch of the melodramatic habits of the late *Mr. Dombey*) planned to revenge himself upon a faithless wife by bringing up his and her son with extravagant tastes, and leaving him penniless, I winced but endured. When, repenting of such inhuman intentions, he revoked them by a will, carefully placed, for subsequent discovery, between the pages of a put-away book, I still held an undaunted course. But, when *Patrick*, the disinherited spendthrift, took upon himself, for the thinnest reason, all the blame of his supplanter's evil doing and kept up this idiotic fraud till the girl of his heart, and indeed everyone who cared for him, turned their backs in disdain, then I confess to having felt that Miss SHARP was trying my forbearance too high. But even so the fact that I could not throw the book down unfinished seems to show that whoever selects Mr. UNWIN'S *debutantes* has spotted another winner. If, in short, Miss SHARP will forget all the novels she may ever have read, and choose for her next story something a little nearer to life, I believe the result may be remarkable.

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*Nursing Adventures*, with its sub-title, *A F.A.N.Y. in France*, is a notable addition to the series of War-literature which is bringing grist to Messrs. HEINEMANN'S windmill. F.A.N.Y., in case it has you puzzled, means First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. Starting from one woman this corps now has over fifty members working in the zone of the armies, and I shall believe that no one can read of their efficiency and courage without genuine admiration. This is not an official account of the F.A.N.Y. Corps—that is to come when the Hun is beaten—but the author has told enough to convince us of the sound work that has been and is being done by these brave and gentle-hearted women. Fortunately she has the gift of selection, in spite of a rather breathless style, which however goes excellently well with a narrative full of excitement and danger. Here too once more a fine tribute is paid to the incorrigible courage of the Allies in face of an enemy that has forgotten the elementary rules of humanity.

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Those who have sampled any reasonable selection of the eighty or so published works of “KATHARINE TYNAN” will know what pleasant fare to expect in *Kit* (SMITH, ELDER). *Kit* is a pretty, red-haired, peasant girl approved for her gentle ways and honest breeding by Madam of the big house, and sent, on the advice of one of Mrs. HINKSON’S nice, human, friendly priests, to a convent for the higher education. She stirs the sentimental soul of one of the English quality, *Captain Guy Dering*; is plunged into, and rather chilled by, high-life in the modern English manner, and eventually goes back to her own people and her girlhood’s friend, *Donal Sheehy*, who returns from America a made man. ’Tis not a chronicle to set the Liffey afire, but it is wholesome, escapes being mawkish, and may be confidently recommended for an anxious old person to give to sensitive young persons—if there be still any such. Mrs. HINKSON, though she loves her own, is no blind partisan and does not spare her criticism. So that you get a plausible picture of a kindly decent native Irish folk of all sorts, not a little helpful in these days of stress and promise.

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[Illustration: A MODEL FOR THE HUNS IN BELGIUM.

HENGIST AND HORSA KINDLY CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A THREE-LEGGED RACE AT THE SPORTS IN AID OF THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF THE BRITONS.]

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“The bride was attended by her sister and Miss —— as bridesmaids, all being very strongly under the influence of drink.

Very choice—Brothers’ Coffee.”—*Provincial Paper*.

The last line is reassuring. We were afraid for the moment that it was something stronger.