

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, April 25, 1917 eBook

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, April 25, 1917

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Page 1

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

Vol. 152.

April 25th, 1917.

CHARIVARIA.

The Gazette des Ardennes states that German is becoming a more and more "popular tongue" in the occupied districts. The inhabitants, we understand, are looking forward with great pleasure to telling the Huns in German what they have always thought of them in French.

It is now reported that, following the example of Professor *Smythe*, of Chicago, a number of distinguished Americans have bequeathed their brains to the Cornell Institute for scientific research. The rumour that the German *Crown Prince* has offered the contents of his headpiece awaits confirmation.

The British offensive has been arrested, says the *Vossische Zeitung*. Presumably for exceeding the speed limit.

A gossip-writer says he is of the opinion that there will be a great revolution in Germany and that the *Kaiser* will be at the head of it. It would be only decent to give him, say, a couple of lengths start.

Over one million persons visited the Zoo last year. The chief attraction appears to have been a German gentleman from the Cameroons who is being accommodated in the Monkey House.

A North London employer is advertising for men "any age up to one hundred years." The nature of the employment is not stated, but it is generally assumed to be akin to that of our telegraph boys.

A woman shopper in Regent Street one day last week was accompanied by a white parrot. It is thought that this example will be widely followed by people who are not particularly good at repartee.

Count REVENTLOW has informed the *Kaiser* that without victory a continuation of the Monarchy is improbable. The *Kaiser* is expected to retort that without the Monarchy the continuation of Count REVENTLOW is still more precarious.

"Have you not thought," asked a distinguished cleric recently, "that all this bad weather may be a punishment for working on Sundays?" For our part we are convinced that our cynical abandonment of the sacred practice of throwing rice at weddings has had something to do with it.

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It was stated in Parliament last week that up to April 6th only 2,800 persons had been placed in employment by the National Service Department. The Government, it was felt, could have done better than that by the simple process of creating another new Department.

[Illustration: *Scotland for ever!*]

The *Journal* in a recent message states that the British have ample supplies of ammunition. The Germans near St. Quentin and Lens also incline to this view.

A resident of Northfleet, who wrote to a friend in Philadelphia in 1893, has just had the letter returned to him through the American Dead Letter Office. It is only fair to state that the letter was not marked "Urgent."

Fortunately in our hour of need one man at least has undertaken to do his best for his country. Mr. *Frank Harris* has told an American newspaper man that he does not intend to return to Great Britain.

Owing to the increased cost of beer, several seaside resorts are announcing to intending visitors that they cannot guarantee a visit from the sea-serpent this summer.

April 14th is said to be "Cuckoo Day" in this country, but several days before that the *Kaiser* promised political reform to his people after the War.

The other night a motor car driven by a French aviator, who was accompanied by three friends, made a tour of Paris, in the course of which it ran down six policemen. It is evident that the gallant fellow could not have been trying.

The Star is advocating the abolition of betting news in the daily papers, and it is rumoured that its "Captain Cue" is prepared to offer ten to one that this good thing won't come off.

As a protest against the Government's attitude towards *The Nation* it is rumoured that Mr. *Winston Churchill* is about to buy another hat.

A safe which had been stolen from a Dublin business house has now been discovered in a field nine miles away, but the whole of the contents are missing. It is believed to be the work of burglars.

Potatoes are being grown on all the golf links around London. An enthusiast who is cultivating the ninth hole on one course is offering long odds that bogey will be not less than two tons.

An electrical engineer has been sent as a substitute for a milker to a Sussex farmer, who, with the characteristic obstinacy of his class, refuses to accept the expert's assurance that all his cows are suffering from dry cells.

A writer in *The Daily Chronicle* claims that there are no railway stations in Stoke Newington. It seems incredible that the artistic sense of a Metropolitan community could be so hopelessly stunted.



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The axe is being laid to the roots of our trees by the so-called weaker sex; and the proper way of toasting the new woodwoman is to sing, "For she's a jolly good feller."

* * * * *

The great sacrifice.

Dark lies the way before us, O my sweet!
Never again, until the final trumpet
Shall sound the Cease-fire, may our glances meet
Over the Sally Lunn or crisp brown crumpet;
Never again (the prospect makes my soul,
Unnerved by going beefless once a week, ache)
Shall you and I absorb the jammy roll
Nor yet the toasted tea-cake.

Never for us shall any fancy bread—
The food of vernal Love, and very tasty—
On lip and cheek its subtle savour shed,
Blent with the lighter forms of Gallic pasty;
Never shall any bun, for you and me,
Impart to amorous talk a fresh momentum,
Except its saccharine ingredients be
Confined to ten per centum.

The days of decorative art are done
That made the toothsome biscuit more enticing
(Even our wedding-cake when we are one
Will be denuded of its outer icing);
Yea, purest joy of all that we resign,
A ban is laid upon the luscious tartlet
By him who has for your sweet tooth and mine
No mercy in his heartlet.

And yet, if England, in her night of need,
Debauched by pastry-cook and muffin-monger,
Would have us curb our natural gift of greed
And merely mitigate the pangs of hunger,
Let us renounce life's sweetness from to-day,
And turn, for Hobson's choice, to something higher;
"Good-bye, Criterion!" let us bravely say,
And "Farewell, Rumpelmeyer!"

O.S.

* * * * *

A proper proportion.

(An Interview with Mr. H.G. WELLS).

I found the Sage, as I had expected, in his study at Omniscience Lodge. There he sat in his new suit of Britlings, surrounded by novels and stories in *Ms.* dealing with every aspect of human affairs, sixty of the more important being specifically devoted to the War and the various ways in which it might conceivably terminate. I modestly approached and presented myself.

"You have come," he said with a courteous gesture, "to discover my views on the present conflict?"

"Not exactly," I said.

"Ah," he said; "which is it, then? You can take your choice, you know. All you have to do is to select the subject," and he handed me a volume resembling *Kelly's Directory* in size and colour, and entitled "*Classified Catalogue of Subjects on which Opinions can be furnished at the Shortest Notice.*" I turned the pages breathlessly until I came to "Class V, Voter; sub-class P, Proportional Representation." "There," I said, "is what I want," and I pointed the place out to him.

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"Dear me," he said, "you desire guidance on a very simple matter."

"Well," I said, "I'm not so sure about that. It has rather flummoxed us in our office. We can't make head or tail—"

"You may thank your stars," he interrupted, "that you've come to the right shop. I'll make it all as clear as daylight in two shakes of a pig's whisker. Are you ready?"

I said I was, and he began to pour forth at once.

"Imagine," he said, "a constituency of 40,000 voters who elect four representatives. Obviously anyone who gets 40,001 votes is elected. Well then, there are ten candidates. All you have to do is to take the quotient of x divided by y , where x can be raised to the n th power and y can be raised to the n th-1, and add to this the least common denominator of the number of votes cast for the last three candidates, taking care to eliminate in each case the square root of z , where z equals the number of voters belonging to the Church of England, *minus* Archdeacons and Rural Deans, but inclusive of Minor Canons and Precentors. Do you follow me?"

"Ye-es," I said.

"I thought you would," he said. "Next we proceed to take the multiples of the superhydrates mathematically converted into decimals, and then, allowing, of course, for the kilometric variation of the earth's maximum temperature reduced by the square of the hypotenuse, you begin the delicate operation of transferring votes from one candidate to another in packets of not less than one hundred. That's easy, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes," I said, "that's quite easy."

"Very well then," he said. "You have now got two candidates elected, A. and B. You take from them 653 votes, which do not legitimately belong to them, and you mix them up with the surplus votes of the remaining eight candidates. Unless C. is a congenital idiot, or a felon, or otherwise incapacitated, he will then be found to have 4,129 votes, and he too will be elected. For the last place you must proceed on a basis of geometrical progression. There are still seven candidates, but four of these have no earthly and must be withdrawn by a writ of *Ne exeat regno*, taking with them the 2,573 votes which are properly or improperly theirs, and leaving 3,326 votes to be added to those already recorded for D., who, being thus elected into the position of fourth letter of the alphabet, will be returned as elected on the Temperance and Vegetarian ticket. So finally you get your members duly elected without the blighting interference of the Caucus and the party wire-pullers generally. You see that, of course?"

"Yes," I said, "I suppose I see it."

“Of course you do, and the others will see it too. And they’ll realise that the House of Commons will be a different place when the old system is destroyed and every shade of opinion is represented. But what chiefly appeals to me in it is its extraordinary simplicity and perspicuous ease. A child could perform the duties of counter or returning officer, and any voter, male or female, can master the system in about five minutes.”

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I thanked Mr. WELLS for his courtesy and staggered dizzily back to Bouverie Street.

* * * * *

On “How to Dig,” from a recently-published military manual:—

“To dig well one must dig often. Any series of complex co-ordinated movements can be performed with the greatest economy of effort only when they have become semi-reflex; and for this to happen the correlated series of nervous impulses must be linked up by higher development of the brain cells.”

A spade is useful, too.

* * * * *

“I did not hear yesterday of the insufficiency of bread supplied at Restaurants being made up by cakes and guns brought from home.”—*Irish Paper*.

We have heard, however, of an insufficiency of alcoholic refreshment being made up by a “pocket-pistol.”

* * * * *

“After all, the custom of marrying only into Royal houses came to us from Germany, and dates from the Hanoverians.... The case of Henry VIII. is well known. Four of his wives were plain Englishwomen....”—*Sunday Herald*.

Not so plain, however, as the German one, ANNE OF CLEVES.

* * * * *

[Illustration: CANNON-FODDER—AND AFTER.

KAISER (to 1917 Recruit). “AND DON’T FORGET THAT YOUR KAISER WILL FIND A USE FOR YOU—ALIVE OR DEAD.”

[At the enemy’s “Establishment for the Utilisation of Corpses” the dead bodies of German soldiers are treated chemically, the chief commercial products being lubricant oils and pigs’ food.]]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Aunt*. “THIS IS A TERRIBLE WAR. ALL OF US MUST GO WITHOUT SOMETHING.”

R.F.C. Officer. "WELL, I TRY TO BE BRAVE ABOUT IT, AUNT. BUT THIS ZEPPELIN SHORTAGE HITS ME VERY HARD."]

* * * * *

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING.

I.

Lewis Gun Officer.—... So let me repeat and impress upon you, men, that the rifle is an effete weapon—extinct as the—what-you-call-it bird. It played its part, a good part, in the South African War, but we who observed what the machine gun did then and foretold its immense development [*he was just nine years old at that time*] knew that the rifle would soon be in the museums along with the bows and arrows. Pay attention, Private Jones. The Lewis Gun, the weapon of opportunity, is a platoon in itself. I don't know what the Government want to worry about men for. The Germans don't fill up their front trenches with a lot of soldiers to be killed with shrapnel. No, a machine gun every twenty or thirty yards is quite enough to hold any defensive line. So just bear these things in mind; and don't forget what we have learnt to-day. All right. Nine o'clock to-morrow.

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II.

Physical Training Sergeant-Instructor.—Forward be—end. Ster—retch. Be—end. Ster—retch. Feet together—place. 'Ands—down. Stan—zee. Squad —'shun. Fingers straight, that man. Wotjer say? WOT? I can't 'elp wot the drill-sergeant tells yer. When I sez "'Shun" I want fingers *straight down*. On the command "Sitting—down" every man sits *down* tailor-fashion. Sitting—down. [*This is the position in which Swedish drill squads hear words of wisdom.*] Listen. An' look at me over there—not that I likes the look of yer—as to put up with that, but when I torks I wants attention. Let me arsk yer this. Wot sort of men do we want in France? Why, fit men. 'Ow do yer get fit? *I* makes yer fit. 'Ow? Why, physical. Wot's the good of a bloke in the trenches if he's sick parade every bloomin' day? Arsk any of the serjents who is it wakes blokes up and makes 'em live men? *Me*. In about six weeks you will be able to run ten miles before brekfast in full marchin' order, carryin' 120 rounds, gettin' over six-foot walls and jumpin' eight-foot ditches. Don't look *frightened*, Private West. I 'ave seen weedier and uglier-lookin' blokes than you do it when *I've* done with 'em. One more thing....

III.

Musketry Officer.—... Therefore you see an infantry soldier has one weapon and one only—the *rifle*. You fellows will be out at the Front pretty soon. Now, if a man gets up the line, no matter how strong he is, how well drilled, if he can't use his rifle he might just as well not be there for all the good he is to his country. All the money that's been spent on his trainin', food, clothin'—absolutely wasted; might as well have been thrown into the sea. Why, the other day a party of our fellows were heavin' bombs at about twenty Bosches—threw *hundreds*; couldn't reach 'em. And *one* sniper went out and killed the lot in two minutes. And so ...

IV.

Sergeant-Instructor of Bayonet-Fighting.—On guard. Long point. Withdraw. On guard. Rest. Now, when I snap my fingers I want to see you come to the high port and get roun' me *like lightning*. Some of you men seem to be treatin' this bizness in a light-'earted way. We don't do *this* work to prevent you gettin' into mischief. Not much. Wotjer join the army for? To fight. Right. I shows yer how to fight. 'Ow many Fritzes jer think I've killed, by teachin' rookies the proper use of the baynit? This is *the goods*. 'Ow are we goin' to win this bloomin' war? With the rifle? No. With bombs? No. With machine guns? No. 'Ow then? By turnin' 'em out with the baynit. Cold steel. That's it. An' I'll show yer where to pop it in, me lads—three inches of it. That's all you want—three inches ... (*For sheer bloodthirstiness there is no patter like that of the Bayonet Department.*)

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V.

Bombing Officer.—Sit down. Smoke if you want to—and listen. My job is to teach you fellers all about what has turned out to be of the highest importance in this trench warfare, namely, bombs and grenades. This is a trench war; has been for three years. The nature of the fighting may alter, of course. We all hope it will. But we must think of *trenches* at the moment. Now, the German is a clever feller, and he soon saw that you'd never kill off the enemy if you just sat down behind a parapet with a rifle in your hand. So he started inventing and developing these things. But we're catching him up. We've caught him up. Now, this is a Mills ...

VI.

The Adjutant (after two hours' extended order drill and attack practice).—Just sit down. Close in a bit. Light your pipes if you wish. Let me tell you that the sort of work we've been doing this afternoon is the *only* way we're ever going to finish off the Hun—absolutely. You can never win a war by squatting down in a hole and lookin' at the other fellow. No, open fighting—that's what the new armies have got to learn. I fear it's been badly neglected; but not in *this* battalion. Now, with regard to the screen of skirmishers, I want ...

VII.

Drill Sergeant.—On 'er left, form—squad. For—erd, by the ri.' Mark—time. For—erd. Wake up, Thomson; we don't want no blinkin' *dreamers* in the Army. Pick up the step there, Number Three, fron' rank. 'Ep, ri'; 'ep, ri'; 'ep, ri. Sker-wad—'alt. Stan' still. 'Alt means 'alt. No movin' at all; just 'alt. Right—dress. Eyes—front. 'Swer. Eyes—front. Stanat—'ipe. 'Swer. Stanat—'ipe. Stan' easy. Now listen to me, me lads. The chiefest dooty of a soljer is O-bedience. Drill an' discipline is 'ow you gets that. Stop chewin, 'Arris. You'll be losin' your name again, me lad. Don't pay to lose your name twice—not in this regiment it don't. You'll learn a deal of other stuff 'ere; but take it from me it's the barrick-square work wot makes a soljer. Wot *is* a soljer? Why, a *drilled* man. 'Ow jer think I 'ave turned some 'undreds of blankety militiamen into the real thing? If a bloke can't stan' still on parade I don't want to hear about his doin's on the range or 'ow he can chuck a Mills. Sker-wad—'shun. Dis—miss. 'Swer. No call to go salootin' me, Private McKenzie. I ain't an oficer—yet. Dis—miss.

Private Jones (young and keen, and a trifle confused).—Good 'evins, Bill; they carn't *all* be bloomin' well right, can they?

Lance-Corporal Smith.—No, boy. It's the 'appy mejium we gets wiv 'em all, yer see. That's it—the happy mejium.



* * * * *

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[Illustration: *Sentry*. "HALT! WHO GOES THERE?"

Officer. "VISITING ROUNDS."

Sentry. "ADVANCE ONE AND RECOGNISE YERSELF."]

* * * * *

THE NEW NOTE IN THEATRICAL ADVERTISING.

(The sort of thing we are now getting in the daily papers in place of the antique boastings of expenditure and magnificence.)

FRIVOLITY THEATRE.

On Monday next, at 8 o'clock, will be produced

THE BELLE OF BELLONA,

A NEW MUSICAL ECONOMANZA IN TWO ACTS.

Largely reduced Orchestra.

Cheap Jokes. Old Scenery.

* * * * *

DUST OF BABYLON

AT THE EMPEROR'S THEATRE.

AN UNSPECTACULAR TALE OF THE EAST.

Practically no Costumes.

Support the production that saves money on wardrobe expenses.

* * * * *

We understand that Miss Taka Topnote, the well-known revue artiste, is bringing an action for defamation against the dramatic editor of *The Morning Chatterbox*, who recently published a statement that her salary was fifteen hundred a week. The lady informs us that as a matter of fact she is now drawing thirty-five shillings, with half fees for matinees.

* * * * *

Mr. Buckram, the famous actor-manager, writes: "A great deal of nonsense has been published about the so-called stupendous sums supposed to be expended on my shows. How such stories get about I am at a loss to imagine. Thus my present entertainment is reported to have cost me £25,000 before the curtain rose. All I can say is that, were this the case, the curtain would never have risen at all. To speak by the book (which anyone is at full liberty to inspect) I find my total initial outlay to have been £43 11s. 5d., inclusive of free drinks at the dress-rehearsal. All the members of my cast are paid as little as possible, usually in postage-stamps."

* * * * *

It is stated that the new problem play shortly to be produced at the Vegeterion Theatre will be unique in the matter of economy. It will be played throughout upon a bare stage, the scene represented being "A Theatre during Rehearsal." The cast will be entirely composed of stage hands and dramatic students; moreover, as both the dialogue and situations have been gratuitously borrowed from other works of a similar character, there will be no author's fees. The very gratifying result of these measures is that the management is enabled to present to the public an entertainment that has cost *nothing at all*. Patriotism could no further go.

* * * * *

"Meanwhile, the turnip trade is booming, and prices going higher: People seem to be talking to them in place of potatoes."—*Newcastle Evening Chronicle*.

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Yes, and their language is often very regrettable.

* * * * *

TO FRANCE.

If so it be for every generous thought
Spring scents are sweeter yet.
For every task with high endeavour wrought
Earth's gems are fairer set—
Primrose and violet;

If for each noble dream in dormant seed
The life-spark stirs and glows;
If for the fame of each heroic deed
Some bloom the lovelier grows—
White lily or red rose;

Then, France, thou shouldst be lavish of thy flowers
For all our dead and thine,
And for all women's tears, or thine or ours,
Put forth some tender sign—
Heartsease or eglantine.

* * * * *

CHILDREN'S TALES FOR GROWN-UPS.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE ASS.

VII.

It was in the year that the donkey was elected judge, because only he and the mule came to vote and the mule spoiled his voting-paper.

The weasel came before the court to make a serious complaint against the rat.

"Most learned judge," said the weasel, "the rat came to me for advice. 'Tell me,' he said, 'how I can obtain a delicious piece of cheese I have seen.' I showed him how he could get it. He ate the cheese, and since then he has not ceased to revile me."

"Most unjust," said the judge. "What has the rat to say?"

"The rat does not appear," said the mule, who was usher.



“And why not?” asked the judge.

“He is still in the trap,” said the usher.

“I showed him the way in,” said the weasel proudly.

“But not the way out,” said the rat’s prospective widow.

“He only asked me how he could get the cheese, and I showed him,” said the weasel.

“The weasel shall have the reward of virtue,” said the judge. “As for the rat I shall fine him for contempt of court in not appearing.”

“Justice!” cried the rat’s prospective widow. “I demand my husband.”

“You shall have him,” said the ass. “I order the weasel to show you the way into the trap.”

* * * * *

An Indian Circus handbill:—

“Programme of the Bengal Grand Cirkcus Co:
Performings begin P.P.M.

PART I.

1. Some horses will make very good tricks.
2. The Klown will come and talk with the horses therefore audience will laugh itself very much.
3. The lady will walk on horses back when horses jumping very much.
4. The Klown will make a joking word and lady will become too angry, then Klown will run himself away.
5. The boy he will throw a ball to upside and he will catch the ball in downward journey.
6. This is very jumping tricks.

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PART II.

1. One man will make so tricks on trapees that audience will fraid himself very much.
2. Some dogs will play and role himself in the mud.
3. This is the grand display of tricks.
4. The lady will make himself so bend that everyone he will think that he is rubber lady.
5. The man will walk on wire tight. He is doing so nicely because he is professor of that.
6. Then will come grand dramatic.

NOTICE.

No stick will be allowed in the spectators and he shall not smoke also."

* * * * *

EXCELSIOR.

"Our ascent to the sun makes our enemy envious."—*Koelnische Zeitung*.

The night fell fast, but faster still
A youth came down the darkening hill,
A super-youth, whose super-flag
Flaunted the strange but hackneyed brag,

"Excelsior!" His eyes betrayed through gold-rimmed prism
Myopia and astigmatism;
But, head in air, he proudly strode,
Declaiming down the fatal road,

"Excelsior!" The sign-posts clustered left and right
And waved their arms towards the height;
He heeded not, but through the mist
Plunged steeply down and fiercely hissed,

"Excelsior!" "Put on the brake!" Experience said;
"The stars, my boy, are overhead;
The pit of Tophet's deep and wide."
A sudden snarl of hate replied,

“Excelsior!” “O stay,” cried Sanity, “and cool
Thy fevered head in yonder pool!”
The balefire smouldered in his eye,
And still he muttered, hurtling by,

“Excelsior!” “Beware the awful precipice!
Beware the bottomless abyss!”
This was Discretion’s last Good-night.
He gurgled, as he dropped from sight,

“Excelsior!” At day-break, when the punctual sun
Explored the hill-tops one by one,
And scoured the solitary steep,
An echo rose from out the deep,

“Excelsior!” And, from the deeper depths that lay
Beyond the farthest reach of day,
A thin voice wailed, and, mocking it,
Crackled the laughter of the pit,

“Excelsior!”

* * * * *

SOME JUMBO.

“Jumbo, the giant elephant of the Stosch-Parasani Circus in Berlin, has been killed for food, telegraphs the Amsterdam correspondent of The Daily Express. He yielded fifty-five tons of flesh.”—*Evening Paper (Glasgow)*.

If this statement had not come from Amsterdam we should have found some difficulty in believing it.

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* * * * *

“At a meeting of the King George High School, Kasauli: ‘Resolved, that the school be closed for to-day to commemorate the recapture of Kut, for which permission has been so kindly accorded by Pundit Hari Das Sahib, M.A.’”— *Indian Paper*.

We are all, General MAUDE included, very much obliged to the Pundit.

* * * * *

A MISNOMER.

Once upon a time, in the midst of the most detestable Spring ever known—a Spring consisting entirely of hopes of better weather, raised for no other purpose than to be so thwarted and dashed that the spirits of that brave and much harassed creature, man, might sink still lower—once upon a time, even in this Spring, there was a fine evening. It was more than fine, it was tender, and, owing to a North wind, wonderfully luminous, and I walked slowly along the hedges—which were still bare, although April was far advanced—and listened to the blackbirds, and marvelled at the light that made everything so beautiful, and was filled with gratitude to the late WILLIAM WILLETT for re-arranging our foolish hours.

I soon reached a favourite meadow, with a view of the hills and clumps of gorse in it, and, since there were clumps of gorse, many, many of those alluring little creatures which live in the ground and provide man with numbers of benefits—such as sweet flesh to put into pies; and cheap, soft, warm fur to wrap Baby Buntings in; and stubby tails, or scuts, to be used in hot-houses for transferring pollen that peach-blossoms may be fertilised, and (latterly) symbols for Government clerks who prefer civilian clothes and comfort to khaki and warfare; and (in Wales) toasted cheese. I refer to rabbits.

As I stood motionless in this meadow watching the yellowing sky, I was aware of an Homeric contest quite close to me. Two rabbits wore engaged in a terrific battle. They kicked and they scratched and made the most furious attacks on each other. The fur flew and the ground resounded to their thuds. First one seemed to be winning and then the other, but there was no flinching.

I had heard of rabbits fighting, but I had never seen it before. “Very unfair to have called them Cuthberts,” I said to myself.

* * * * *

“The —— Company have several second-hand cars for sale, starter and non-starter models; petrol consumption low.”—*The Autocar*.

Particularly that of the non-starters.

* * * * *

“Good General: sold cheap if taken over this week; good reasons for leaving.”—*Liverpool Paper*.

Can this be HINDENBURG?

* * * * *

“The Rev. Stuart Holden, on behalf of the Strength of Britain Movement, spoke of the enthusiasm for prohibition of audiences throughout the country.”—*The Times*.

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We understand, however, that this enthusiasm for the prohibition of audiences has not yet extended to the theatrical profession.

* * * * *

[Illustration: SPORTING DAYS WITH THE FOOD-PRODUCER'S STAFF.]

* * * * *

THE FOOD QUESTION.

RATIONING AT THE ZOO.

"In the Northern area," says a despatch from Mr. POCOCK, "a, period of inactivity has set in which is partly due to the fact that the dromedary has been placed on a vegetarian diet. There has been a cold snap in the crocodile house. Three of our keepers have disappeared."

An attempt to substitute salsify for bloaters in the dietary of the sea-lion was not successful.

Complaints have been received from the elephant-house to the effect that buns sold for the benefit of the occupants have not reached their destination. Should this abuse continue it will be necessary to make arrangements to have every child under the age of twelve submitted to an X-ray examination before leaving the Gardens.

The use of human food for the nourishment of animals is, however, being discouraged; and for the future guinea-pigs and broken glass will be the staple diet of boa-constrictors and ostriches respectively. Peppermint-balls for grizzly bears are to be discontinued; also egg-nogg for anthropoid apes.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Alice (saying her prayers, after a quarrel with her sister).* "AND, PLEASE GOD, BLESS BETTY."

Betty. "DON'T YOU DARE TO PRAY FOR ME!"]

* * * * *

HINTS TO YOUNG FOOD-PRODUCERS.

Jugged Hare.—A well-known firm of hare-raisers in Carmelite Street informs us that young rabbits fed on sponge-cake soaked in port wine have a flavour which renders them indistinguishable from hare.



Celeriac.—This appetising vegetable has been little cultivated owing to a general but erroneous belief that it was the name of a new kind of motor-car. “Celeriac” is of course a compound of the word “celery” and the Arabic suffix “ac,” which means “bearing a resemblance to” or “a small imitation of.” Thus it would be correct for the writer to speak of the salariac he earns by writing this sort of thing.

[*Note*.—“Earns” would *not* be correct.—ED.]

* * * * *

NAVIGATION EXTRAORDINARY.

“Although the stern and screws of the vessel were well out of the water she was able to make the port under her own steam.”—*Daily Mail*.

* * * * *

“Portatoes in the usual forms have disappeared this week.—LORNA.”—*British Weekly*.

These must be the Devonportatoes of which we have heard so much.

* * * * *

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AT BEST.

[Baron MORITZ FERDINAND VON BISSING, the German Military Governor- General of Belgium, the murderer of Nurse CAVELL and instigator of the infamous Belgian deportations, after being granted a rest from his labours, is reported to have died “of overwork.”]

Tired of pillaging and sacking,
Tired of bludgeoning and whacking,
Tired of torturing and racking,
BISSING takes his “rest.”

For the sport of shooting nurses,
Gloating o’er his victims’ hearses,
Answering appeals with curses,
He had lost his zest.

All his diabolic striving
To intensify slave-driving
Could not slay the soul surviving
In a Nation’s breast.

Still the flame burns ever brighter
Underneath the blouse or mitre;
Still the smitten greets the smiter
With undaunted crest;

While the arch-tormentor, flying
From the hell about him lying,
Mid the fire and worm undying
Takes his endless rest.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE WANING OF FAITH.

GUARDIAN OF STATUE. “YOU WISH TO HAMMER ANOTHER NAIL INTO THE
COLOSSUS OF
OUR HINDENBURG?”

EX-ENTHUSIAST. “NO; I WANT MY OLD ONE BACK.”]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Tuesday, April 17th.—The re-opening of the House of Commons found Lord FISHER in his accustomed place over the clock. What is the lure that brings him so often to the Peers' Gallery? I think it must be his strong sense of duty. As Chairman of the Inventions Board he feels he ought to lose no opportunity of adding to his stock.

Quite the most striking feature of the afternoon was the pink shirt worn by a well-known Scottish Member, whose name I refrain from mentioning to spare him any additional blushes. It was of such an inflammatory hue that his brother-legislators at first took it for a well-developed case of measles (probably German) and sheered off accordingly. Nobody knows what caused him to indulge in the rash act, but it is hoped in the interests of coherent debate that he will not do it again.

Mr. DILLON was so much disturbed by the apparition that, having started out to demand an immediate General Election unless the Government at once granted Home Rule to the whole of Ireland, he finished by declaring that he would be satisfied if they would promise to reform the franchise on the lines proposed by the SPEAKER'S Conference. Incidentally he drew a fancy picture of himself and his colleagues striving consistently for thirty-five years to convert their brother-Irishmen to constitutional methods; from which I infer that Mr. DILLON, very wisely, does not make a study of his own old speeches.

[Illustration: PAPER SHORTAGE AT A GENERAL ELECTION.

[The Political Slate (with Sponge) has its obvious compensations.]]

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As the engineer of two successive extensions of the life of Parliament Mr. ASQUITH offered whole-souled support to the proposal to give a third renewal to its lease. Apart from anything else, how could a General Election be satisfactorily conducted when there was a shortage of paper and posters were prohibited? "What's the matter with slates?" whispered a Member from Wales. If every Candidate paraded his constituency sandwiched between a couple of slates showing the details of his political programme, it would certainly add to the gaiety of the nation, besides providing an easy method of expunging such items as in the course of the contest might prove unpopular.

A good many silly things have been said in the last month or two about HINDENBURG and his imaginary "line," but the silliest of all perhaps was the remark of *The Nation* that the German retreat on the Somme "has found our soldiers wanting." This article naturally gave great comfort to the enemy, who possibly overestimates the importance of Mr. MASSINGHAM and the significance of the title of his paper. It also found its way to the British trenches, and caused so great an increase in the habit traditionally ascribed to the British Army when in Flanders that Sir DOUGLAS HAIG is understood to have suggested that an embargo should be placed upon the further export of such literature.

What most strikes the imagination is that amid the most stirring events of the greatest war in history British Legislators should devote three of their precious hours to so trumpery an affair. Was this what the old jurist had in mind when he called the House of Commons "The Great Inquest of the Nation"?

Wednesday, April 18th.—On the motion introduced in both Houses to express the welcome of Parliament to our new Ally, Mr. BONAR LAW, paraphrasing CANNING, declared that the New World had stepped in to redress the balance of the Old; Mr. ASQUITH, with a fellow-feeling no doubt, lauded the patience which had enabled President WILSON to carry with him a united nation; and Lord CURZON quoted BRET HARTE.

A fresh injustice to Ireland was revealed at Question-time. England and Scotland are to enjoy an educational campaign, in which hundreds of speakers all over the country will dilate upon the necessity of reducing the consumption and preventing the waste of foodstuffs. But like most other patriotic schemes it is not to apply to John Bull's other island, though I gather that it is at least as much wanted there as here.

On the third reading of the Parliament Bill the debate was confined to Irish Members. Mr. FIELD, who is in the live-stock trade, led one particularly fine bull into the Parliamentary arena. After complaining that Members had no longer any power in the House, he went on to say, "We are simply ciphers behind the leading figures on the Front Bench." Surely that, arithmetically speaking, is the position in which ciphers are most powerful.

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Thursday, April 19th.—The mental processes of Sir WILLIAM BYLES are normally so mysterious that his suggestion that, with the Americans coming in and the Germans making off, this was the psychological moment for the British Government to initiate proposals for peace, did not strike the House at large as specially absurd. It was, however, both surprised and delighted when Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL interposed with an inquiry whether it would not be time enough to talk about peace when the Germans ceased to blow up hospital ships. When Mr. BONAR LAW tactfully observed that the Supplementary Question was better than the answer he had prepared, one felt that the prospects of an Anglo-Irish *entente* had appreciably improved.

When the new MINISTER FOR EDUCATION deposited upon the Table a vast packet of manuscript, and craved the indulgence of the House if he exceeded the usual limits of a maiden speech, I thought of the days when the headline, “The Duke of Devonshire on Technical Education,” used to strike on my fevered spirit with a touch of infinite prose. Mr. FISHER began in rather professorial style, but he soon revealed a glowing enthusiasm for his subject which thawed the House. His ambition is to transform the teachers in our elementary schools from ill-paid drudges into members of a liberal and liberally remunerated profession. Our record in the War has shown that, as a Naval Officer wrote to him, “there is something in your d——d Board School education after all.”

* * * * *

“The bride, who was given away by her father, was attended by Miss —— as demonsoille d’honneur.”—*Hawkes Bay Herald (New Zealand)*.

We fear this marriage was not made in heaven.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Polite Foreigner*. “IS ZAT YOUR BEAUTIFUL ENGLISH THAMES—YES?”

London Dame (“on her guard”). “I HAVEN’T THE SLIGHTEST IDEA.”]

* * * * *

A PAPER PROBLEM.

Copy of a letter from the Reverend Laurence Longwind to the Archbishop of CANTERBURY:—

*The Rectory,
Little Pottering,*

April 1st, 1917.

My LORD ARCHBISHOP,—I am writing to ask whether Your Grace would be so kind as to assist me in resolving a case of conscience which, I feel sure, must be exercising the minds and hearts of many of my brother clergy at the present time.

The matter to which I refer is closely connected with the sad shortage of paper. It is no doubt known to Your Grace that many ministers of the Gospel, though capable of eloquence of a high order, *write* their sermons. Old sermons tend to increase and multiply at an alarming rate. I myself have a chest of drawers literally stuffed with them. What, in Your Grace's opinion, should be done with these?

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Would it be right, in view of the purpose for which they were written, to tear them up and send them away to be pulped? Long and earnestly as I have considered the problem in all its bearings I am still utterly unable to arrive at a solution.

No doubt I could sell them and devote the proceeds to charitable purposes. There is, I am informed, a large and steady demand for old sermons amongst the younger clergy who have not that ripe experience of life which sixty years in a rural parish cannot fail to provide. But I am informed that the dealers do not always offer appropriate prices. And I should hesitate to make a traffic in holy things unless I could make quite certain that no breath of scandal could result from inadequate remuneration.

I have sounded my churchwardens on the subject, but without reaping any benefit from the advice given. "Do you see any harm in selling them simply as paper?" I asked one of them, a Mr. Bloggs. "Not a rap! Not a rap! Get rid of 'em!" was his reply. Naturally I felt hurt. It was not so much what he said as the way he said it. The mere mention of my sermons always seems to make him irritable. Why I cannot imagine.

My dear wife advises me to send them down to the schoolhouse. The children, she thinks, might use the backs (I write on one side of the paper only) for their sums. But I fear such an expedient might give rise to a spirit of irreverence.

Would Your Grace hold me greatly to blame were I to raffle them at our next rummage sale? I feel sure they would fetch a good price. Only yesterday Miss Tabitha Gingham remarked to her sister, Miss Mary, "We had a good long sermon from the Rector this morning." I was passing behind their laurel hedge at the moment, and could not fail to overhear this meed of praise. Miss Tabitha is, I should explain, very hard to please, and if *she* thinks them good there must be others in the parish of the same opinion. I might be able to raise quite a nice sum for our local Seed Potato Committee by a Spring raffle of my longer and more elaborate compositions. And since everybody is beginning to take a modern view of Bonus Bonds I do not think that a raffle for such a purpose need arouse serious opposition.

Trusting that Your Grace will be able to give me your considered opinion in this matter, which is arousing so much attention at the present time,

I am, Your Grace's humble and obedient Servant,
LAURENCE LONGWIND.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Resident at Boarding House (to waiter).* "DO YOU CALL THIS STUFF MARGARINE OR MARJARINE?"

Mike. "SURE, SORR, IT'S HERSELF WOULD SLING ME OUT IF I CALLED IT ANNYTHING BUT BUTTHER."]

* * * * *

FORE AND AFT.

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The A.S.C.'s a nobleman; 'e rides a motor-car,
'E is not forced to 'ump a pack, as we footsloggers are;
'E drives 'is lorry through the towns and 'alts for fags and beer;
We infantry, we does without, there ain't no shops up 'ere;
And then for splashin' us with mud 'e draws six bob a day,
For the further away from the line you go the 'igher your rate of pay.

My shirt is rather chatty and my socks 'ud make you larf;
It's just a week o' Sundays since they sent us for a barf;
But them that 'as the cushy jobs they lives in style and state,
With a basin in their bedrooms and their dinners on a plate;
For 'tis a law o' nachur with the bloomin' infantry—
The nearer up to the line you go the dirtier will you be.

Blokes at the base, they gets their leave when they've bin out three
munse;
I 'aven't seen my wife and kids for more 'n a year, not once;
The missus writes, "About that pass, you'd better ask again;
I think you must 'ave been forgot." Old girl, the reason's plain:
We are the bloomin' infantry, and you must just believe
That the nearer up to the line you go the less is your chance of leave.

* * * * *

"We cussed at Grosvenor House and some steps in this direction may be
expected if the demands of retailers become more rapacious."—*Daily
Mail*.

It is no good abusing the FOOD CONTROLLER, however, or prices would long ago
have been down to zero.

* * * * *

MAB DREAMS OF MAY.

The day-dim torches of chestnut trees stand dreamily, dreamily;
In myriad jewels of glad young green, smooth black are the broad beech
boles;
The fragrant foam of the cherry trees hangs creamily, creamily,
And the purpling lilacs and the blackthorn brakes are singing with all
their souls!

The pinky petals of lady's-smocks peer maidenly, maidenly;
Meadow-sweet, donning her fragrant lace, is daintiest friend of the



breeze;

Hyacinths wild, blue-misting the woods, hang ladenly, ladenly,
And tiniest bird's-eye burns deep blue in thickets of tall grass trees!

Daylong I lie, daylong I dream, swung swooningly, swooningly,
In an old-time tulip of flaming gold, red-flaunted and streaked with
green,
While song of the birds, of water and bees comes crooningly, crooningly,
And Summer brings me her swift mad months with scent and colour and
sheen.
Winter is gone, I ween,
As it had never been!

Dance! dance! Delicately dance!
Revel with the delicatest stamp and go!
Dance! dance! Circle and advance,
Curtsey, twirl about,
Shatter the dew and whirl about,
Stamp upon the moonbeams—heel and toe!

* * * * *

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MORE NEWS FROM THE AIR.

THE ALLIES.

The other day I was in a country house whose owners are so lost to shame as still to keep pets. There is a dog there which is actually allowed to eat, in defiance of all those *Times'* correspondents whose sole idea of this stimulating and unfailingly devoted animal is that it is personified greed on four legs. There are two or three horses of unusual intelligence, which no doubt our friend the Hun would long since have devoured, but which, even though hunting is over, are by some odd freak of sentiment or even of loyalty still kept alive. There are rabbits. And there is a bird in a cage against the wall of a small yard. This bird is a chaffinch, which a friend had brought over from France.

After I had fraternised shamefully with all these deplorable drones, my hostess drew my attention to the French chaffinch, a line big fellow, very tame and cheerful. "We will feed him," she said, "and then you will see something that happens every day. Something very interesting."

So saying she poured into a receptacle for the purpose enough seed, no doubt, to make, mixed with other things, several admirable thimble-loaves of bread substitute, and told me to watch.

I watched, and very soon the French chaffinch, having eaten a certain amount of the seed, dashed his beak amid the rest with such violence that it was spilt over the pan, out of the bars and down to the ground below.

"That's very wasteful," I said. "Lord DEVONPORT wouldn't like that—Lord DEVONPORT wouldn't;" this being the kind of facetious thing we are all saying just now, and something facetious being in this particular house always, for some reason or other, expected of me.

"Wait a minute," my hostess replied. "There's more reason in it than you think."

And there was.

The whole point of this mediocre narrative consists in the fact that within a few seconds some dozen sparrows had descended to the yard and were feeding busily while the chaffinch watched from above. And this happens at every mealtime.

To what extent we are contributing to the French Commissariat I cannot say; but with my own eyes I have seen a French citizen being systematically generous to his English cousins.

* * * * *

“The sale [of potatoes] started at 6 a.m., and the first omnibus from London brought over 200 buyers down.”—*Weekly Dispatch*.

A gross case of overcrowding.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Civilian (who has been asked to luncheon at outlying fort)*. “I SAY, YOU KNOW, I CAN’T POSSIBLY LAND BY THAT ABSURD LITTLE LADDER.”

Host. “ROT, OLD CHAP. I’VE HAD THE VERY DICKENS OF A JOB TO GET YOU A PASS—AND, BESIDES, PEOPLE DON’T OFTEN FALL IN.”]

* * * * *

DOUBLE ENTENTE.

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["In view of the fact that M.C. is also the abbreviation for 'Military Cross' ... it has been recommended that the abbreviations for the degrees of Bachelor of Surgery and Master of Surgery be altered from B.C. and M.C. to B.Ch. and M.Ch."]

In view of the fact that P.M. is also the abbreviation for Prime Minister and Post-Mortem, the London and North-Western Railway recommend that in future the abbreviation for afternoon be A.L. (After Luncheon).

In view of the fact that (as every schoolboy knows) D.D. is also the abbreviation for Double Donkey, the Upper House of Convocation recommend that in future the abbreviation for Doctor of Divinity be Doc. Div.

In view of the fact that Q.S. is also the abbreviation for Quarter Sessions, the Committee of the Pharmaceutical Society recommend that in future the abbreviation for Quantum Suff. be S.W. (Say When).

* * * * *

"Herbert Spencer made a rough outline of his 'Sympathetic Philosophy' when forty years old."—*Weekly Paper*.

Alas! he never lived to fill in the details.

* * * * *

A PERSONAL TRIUMPH.

Always at the same point of my railway journey North I drop my paper and wait till a certain trim red-roofed ivy-clad cottage comes into view across the fields to the right. Till yesterday there were two reasons why I should hail this cottage with delight. First of all, it stands where trim cottages are rarer than pit-heads and slag heaps; and, secondly, GEORGE STEPHENSON once lived there. From now onwards, however, I have a third and more compelling reason for respecting the old building. You shall hear.

Know, then, that I have a friend called Smithson. The Athenians would have had a short way with him; and I admit that there have been times in the course of our relationship when hemlock would really have been the only thing to meet the case. Our conversations (it is no fault of mine) are always dialectical. They take the following form. Light-heartedly I enunciate a proposition. Smithson is interested and asks for a clearer statement. I modify my original position. Smithson purrs. Seeing trouble imminent, I modify my modification, and from that point onwards I make a foredoomed but not (as I flatter myself) an unplucky fight against relentless logic. The elenchus comes soon or late, but it always comes. Only in dreams am I ever one up on Smithson. The old trick of cramming up hard parts of the Encyclopaedia overnight is no good. I tried it once with "Hegesippus" and "The Hegira." You don't know what either of

these words mean? Smithson did—and he knew the articles. No doubt he and Mr. GLADSTONE had written them in collaboration.

Well, yesterday, Smithson and I were in the neighbourhood of the cottage which I have told you of. Having an hour to spare from work of national importance, we took our sandwiches and were eating them in view of the jolly old house.

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"What's that thing over the door?" I said.

"That I take to be a sun-dial," said Smithson with his accustomed reserve of strength.

"What a delightful stile," I said. (You always have stiles on sun-dials. I knew that).

"*Qua* stile it is perfect. What do you make of the inscription?"

I went at it bald-headed. "*Percunt et imputantur*," I said.

"You may be right, of course," replied Smithson, "though it certainly begins with an A."

"True," I corrected. "*Anno Domini*."

"Conceivably—but the second letter is a U."

I left Smithson painfully to reconstruct A-U-G-U-S-T from among the ivy. He had got to the M of a long date when a burst of sun cast a crisp shadow across the dial.

"I don't think much of GEORGE STEPHENSON after all," I said. "His beastly clock doesn't know the right time."

Smithson snorted. Here was a challenge to the omniscient.

"That's all right," he said, recovering himself in a moment "All properly constructed dials have a compensating table; we shall find one no doubt behind the ivy; there! I see it, to the left—a compensating table by which you have to correct the actual record of the shadow. For example, we are now in Lat. 55 N. The month is April. At Greenwich—"

But I wasn't listening. A bright truth had flashed into my mind, and I couldn't hold myself back any longer. "It's just about an hour slow," I said. "You don't think that Daylight Saving has anything to do with it, do you?"

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Busdriver*.—"ALL RIGHT—ALL RIGHT! I SEE YER, YER NEEDN'T KEEP ON SURRENDERING."]

* * * * *

"About twenty-four hours later one of the ship's officers saw something bobbing on the water a few hundred years dead ahead."—*New York Evening Post*.

America evidently foresees a long war.

* * * * *



THE STRIFE OF TONGUES.

(Lines suggested by the recent demise of the inventor of Esperanto.)

As a patriotic Briton
I am naturally smitten
 With disgust
When some universal lingo
By a zealous anti-Jingo
 Is discussed.

Some there are who hold that Spanish
In the end is bound to banish
 Other tongues;
Some again regard Slavonic
As a stimulating tonic
 For the lungs.

I would sooner bank on Tuscan,
Ay, or even on Etruscan,
 Than on Erse;
But fanatical campaigners,
Gaelic Leaguers and Sinn Feiners
 Find it terse.

Some are moved to have a shy at
Persian, thanks to the *Rubaiyat*,
 And its ease;
But it's quite another matter
If you're anxious for to chatter
 In Chinese.

To instruct a brainy brat in
Canine or colloquial Latin
 May be wise;
But it's not an education
As a fruitful speculation
 I'd advise.

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French? All elegance equips it,
But how oft on foreign lips it
Runs awry;
German, tainted, execrated,
Is for ages relegated
To the sty.

As for brand-new tongues invented
By professors discontented
With the old,
Well, the prospect of a “panto”
Played and sung in Esperanto
Leaves me cold.

* * * * *

“One of the most striking—and satisfactory—features of the new restaurant regime is the disappearance of the bread-basket.”—*Daily Telegraph*.

Or, at any rate, a considerable shrinkage in its contour.

* * * * *

“If there must be duplication of electric light installations, the apparati might, at least, be made uniform. And it would not be expecting too much if they were made in some way to harmonise with the telephone service.”—*Australian Paper*.

Or even with the Latin Grammar?

* * * * *

“5-Seater Car for Sale; must sell; chauffeur at the Front; own body cost over L73. What offers?—RECTOR.”—*Times*.

These personal details seem to us a little out of place in a commercial transaction.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *John*. “BUT WHY MUSTN’T WE HAVE NEW BREAD ANY MORE?”

Joan. “WHY, DON’T YOU SEE, SILLY? IF WE EAT YESTERDAY’S AND SAVE UP TO-DAY’S THERE’LL ALWAYS BE SOME FOR TO-MORROW. THEN THE GERMANS CAN’T STARVE US.”]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

In these days, when everybody has his reminiscences, there should still be a welcome for so genial a volume as *A Soldier's Memories* (JENKINS), into which Major-General Sir GEORGE YOUNGHUSBAND has gathered his "Recollections of People, Places and Things." The title truly indicates the character of the contents, which are exactly what you would expect from a plain blunt man, who loves his friends, and equally loves a good story about them, at his own or their expense, impartially. The anecdotes in the book are legion, and the actors in them range from troopers to generals, and beyond. KING EDWARD, their present Majesties, Sir DOUGLAS HAIG ("a nice-looking clean little boy in an Eton jacket and collar") all figure in the author's pictures of the past, which include also a highly characteristic study of WILLIAM THE FRIGHTFUL, congratulating the "citizens of Salisbury," represented by a handful of curious urchins, upon their "beautiful and ancient cathedral." (One can fancy the unspoken addition in the Imperial mind, "And what a target for Bertha!") Many of Sir GEORGE'S pages are devoted to stories of the Boer campaign, that old unhappy far-off thing that seems somehow, as one looks back to-day, further off than Waterloo. In fine, a book that all Service folk, and many besides them, will find a treasure-house of good stories, of exactly the kind that should be certain of their appeal now, when we are all, or like to think ourselves, soldiers in the greatest of England's wars, and inheritors of the traditions here shown in the making.

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* * * * *

A short hour's reading and you will have laid down, with a sigh for its brevity, a little book that is a very model of artistry. It is by Mr. E.V. LUCAS, and *Outposts of Mercy* is its happy name. But I am not to seek reflected glory by the praising of a colleague; simply for the sake of the cause that he pleads I wish to commend this fascinating account of the author's visit, in the company of Lord MONSON, Chief Commissioner, to the stations of the British Red Cross on the Carso, at Gorizia and among the Carnic and Julian Alps. Resisting sternly the temptation to embroider his theme with the distractions of scene and circumstance (of course he had to tell us of that dinner at the mess of an Alpine regiment where he met the man who had discovered the "Venus of Cyrene"), he keeps as closely as may be to his main subject, but cannot escape from infusing it with his own sense of colour and romance and the unconscious appeal of his personality. One may envy him his rare experience, yet fully share his pride in the fearless devotion of the men and women of our race (one can imagine it of no other) in these perilous and lonely outposts of mercy. A little paper book, illustrated with little photographs, and costing just a shilling. The author and his publishers (METHUEN) are devoting the profits to the British Red Cross; so you who buy and read it—and I don't see how anybody can refuse—may extract a claim to virtue from an hour of pure delight.

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A quiet style, keen powers of observation, and a delightful assumption of his own unimportance combine to make Mr. FREDERICK PALMER'S *With the New Army on the Somme* (MURRAY) a book that will be read long after the Hun has returned to the place from which he came. "Those whose business it was to observe, the six correspondents ... went and came always with a sense of incapacity and sometimes with a feeling that writing was a worthless business when others were fighting." There we have his apology for doing what obviously seemed to him a second-best thing; but much as I like his modesty I can assure him that no finer tribute has yet been paid to our new army. Mr. PALMER was the accredited American correspondent at the British Front, and though the days are happily passed when he was a neutral in name his position as an impartial spectator gives him an advantage denied to the most veracious of our own correspondents. Our French Allies too may be congratulated, by themselves as well as by us, on being observed by eyes so shrewd and friendly. "No two French soldiers seem quite alike on the march or when moving about a village on leave. Each seems three beings—one a Frenchman, one a soldier, a third himself." Anyone who has been in the war-zone and seen a French regiment resting cannot fail to be struck by the acuteness of this remark; indeed it provides the key to what, for an ordinary British mind, is a puzzle. It is one of Mr. PALMER'S many virtues that, although his main business was to watch the soldiers and the fighting, he never forgets the man inside the uniform. This gives to his historical record the added interest of a study in psychology.

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The Unspeakable Perk (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) and his attendant puppets are, to put it kindly, selected from the stock characters of Lesser American Fiction. There is the “radiant” heroine from Squeedunkville, Wis. (or Mass.); the tame Poppa with the simoleons, the hero heavily disguised as a worm, and a worm or so to do the real heavy worming when the hero’s turn comes to pull off the grand-stand play (this doesn’t sound like English but it is really the standard “line of talk” in Lesser American Fiction). And last but not least there is the “fiery” Southerner. In real life Southerners are melancholy men with a tendency to *embonpoint* and clawhammer coats of ante-bellum design. But in Lesser American Fiction they are for some undiscovered reason always “fiery.” To the fiery one the heroine “unconsciously turns” when the apparent earmarks of the hero’s wormhood are dramatically revealed, and of course she hands him what she would probably describe as the “sister” stuff when the gentleman emerges in his natural colours. That is what makes the story-book Southerner so fiery. Place these complex characters in an imaginary Carribean Republic, a sort of transpontine Ruritania; add a revolution fostered by the serpentine diplomats of a European power; let the American eagle issue a few screams, and there you have the environment in which *The Unspeakable Perk* lives and moves and has his unreal being. The keynote of SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS’ story is what the *Perk* person would describe as a want of “pep.” Even the villains turn out to be comparative gentlemen in the end, the dirty work being conveniently fastened upon some “person or persons unknown.” The yarn is well enough to wile away an hour; but in these days of burning realities fiction has lost its bite unless it too is informed with the spirit of reality.

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I have to warn you that the early chapters of *The Moulding Loft* (METHUEN) are liable to plunge you into some mental agitation, due to the author’s deliberately baffling method of starting her plot. The hero, for example, is introduced to us abed, and semi-delirious, waited upon by a pale and sinister young female whom he detests. He appears to be in a house strange to him, which contains also an unpleasant old woman and a queer little boy whose behaviour is wrop in mystery. Slowly, perhaps somewhat too slowly, it is revealed that the hero has been knocked silly by a large stone dropped upon his unoffending head by the small boy. But why? And why does the child protest his innocence with such apparent good faith? These problems I must leave MARGARET WESTRUP (Mrs. W. STACEY) to resolve in her own unhurried way. Of course before long the “little aversion” between hero and heroine gives place to an emotion more appropriate. But there remains an obstacle to their union, one concerned (also, of course) with the detestable grandmother

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and the mysterious small boy. Shall I give you one clue? Somebody is mad; nor is it (as you may at one time have been tempted to suppose) either the author or reader. More than this wild horses should not extort from me. But I confess to a rewarding thrill and a very grateful relief when the mystery was finally cleared up. A good and interesting book, both for its plot and for some very agreeable Cornish scenes, which would have been even more welcome had the delectable Duchy not already engaged the pens of our novelists more than enough.

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Mrs. "J.E. BUCKROSE" is one of those writers whose work can always be depended upon. A pinch of pathos, a *soupcón* of sentiment, a spice of humour—there you have the recipe, and a very palatable mixture it makes. The common element that pervades the dozen stories which compose *War-Time in Our Street* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), all in the author's best manner, is the staunch devotion to duty displayed by her heroines under stress of war. Pangs of hunger are endured nobly, hard-hearted folk are softened, lonely women fight and win the battle against depression. If these pictures of life behind the windows of our village streets are too *couleur de BUCKROSE* to be quite true, there is nevertheless a real quality in them. They are not for the cynic, but for readers who can appreciate simple tales of simple people, told without affectation.

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[Illustration: *The Airman*. "I SAY, HAVE YOU SEEN A CIGARETTE-HOLDER ANYWHERE ABOUT? I DROPPED MINE YESTERDAY WHEN I WAS FLYING OVER THIS PLACE."]

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"To shoot well at fixed targets, after the range has been exactly registered, as in trench warfare, is one thing, but front and pick up distances smartly, is quite to trot into action, unlimber and form action another, and this is where many phophets anticipated our new Army would be found wanting, but prophecy is becoming a profitless business in this war."—*Bath Herald*.

Well, why not try proof-reading as a change?

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"The Rector nominated Mr. C. Yells as his warden. Captain Noyes was appointed sidesman."—*Provincial Paper*.

Otherwise the proceedings seem to have gone off quietly.