

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, June 6, 1917 eBook

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, June 6, 1917

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 152, June 6, 1917 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	4
Page 1.....	5
Page 2.....	7
Page 3.....	9
Page 4.....	11
Page 5.....	13
Page 6.....	15
Page 7.....	16
Page 8.....	17
Page 9.....	19
Page 10.....	21
Page 11.....	23
Page 12.....	25
Page 13.....	27
Page 14.....	29
Page 15.....	31
Page 16.....	32
Page 17.....	34
Page 18.....	36
Page 19.....	38
Page 20.....	40
Page 21.....	42
Page 22.....	44

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	
Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
Title: Punch, or the London	1
Charivari, Vol. 152, June 6, 1917	
PUNCH, OR THE LONDON	1
CHARIVARI.	
JUNE 6, 1917.	1
LITTLE WILLIE'S OPINION OF	3
FATHER.	
CHAPTER I.	8
CHAPTER II.	9

Page 1

Title: **Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 152, June 6, 1917**

Author: Various

Release Date: April 19, 2005 [EBook #15657]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

*** *Start of this project gutenberg EBOOK Punch, or the London* ***

Produced by Jonathan Ingram, Jared Ryan Buck and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team.

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

Vol. 152.

JUNE 6, 1917.

CHARIVARIA.

It is rumoured that the Press campaign against young men of military age engaged in Government offices is causing some of them many sleepless days.

A correspondent writes to an evening paper to say that by his thermometer the recent heat was a record for the year. We suppose it is due to the example of the Censor in the matter of the Folkestone raid that nobody appears to be able to keep a secret.

"A movement is on foot," says a contemporary, "to present the Italian nation with a monument to SHAKSPEARE, to be erected in Rome." The alternative of despatching Mr. *George Bernard Shaw* to become a naturalized Italian does not appear to have been so well received.

Lord COWDRAY recently presided at a lecture on “Flying after the War.” Most people will be content to wait till it comes by again.

Mr. *Kennedy Jones* has declared that beer is a food. This should have a salutary effect on those who have hitherto mistakenly regarded it as a pigment.

An artist has been arrested under the Defence of the Realm Act for sketching on the East Coast without permission. It is dangerous in these times to be caught mapping.

A contemporary complains that German officers at a South of England Prisoners' Camp are being driven to the dentist in motor cars. We also hold the opinion that these reprisals do more harm than good.

A controversy has recently been raging on the question of whether trousers will survive the War. The better opinion seems to be that a few exceptionally stout pairs at present in their infancy may be still extant when peace is actually declared.

The sudden and dramatic conclusion of the *Romney* case was a great disappointment to many theatrical experts. They had predicted that it would run for at least as short a period as most of the other recent West-End revues.

The want of co-ordination between our Ministries becomes daily more marked. It is an offence to keep a stray dog more than three days, but, on the other hand, a sausage roll may be kept any length of time provided it is sealed up at both ends.

Page 2

The report comes from a German source that the resignation of Count *tisza* was procured by Marshal *Von Hindenburg*. It is a curious commentary on the fickleness of the multitude that the *Kaiser* isn't even mentioned as having taken a hand in the matter.

A branch of the Pan-German League has decided that Germany must not conclude peace until the whole of the British Empire is annexed by the *Kaiser*. It is the sincere hope of the *all-highest* that the British Empire will understand that in this matter his hand has been forced.

Dealing with the United States Navy, an American journalist says that every recruit must learn to stand squarely on his own feet. The attention of Mr. *Charles Chaplin* has already been drawn to this passage.

Sir *Herbert tree* has arrived in England, and, according to *The New York Telegraph*, Mr. *Charles Chaplin* is now demanding a higher price for his work.

A strange case is reported from Northumberland, where a man who was taken ill last week admitted that he had not been eating rhubarb tops.

With reference to the complaint of an allotment-holder that cats cause more damage than the pea weevil, a correspondent sends the following hint as to the treatment of cats on the allotment: "These should be sprayed with a good shot-gun and planted out in soft soil."

Leading provision-merchants state that there will soon be cheese-queues outside the grocers' shops. One enterprising firm of multiple shop grocers is said to have already engaged a troupe of performing cheeses to keep the customers amused during the long wait.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *The fatal Lure.*]

* * * * *

New Combination Head-gear for Troops.

“Service dress caps in wear and those in stock will be used up and worn side by side with the soft caps.”—*Army Council Instruction No. 824.*

* * * * *

“To a school in Battersea to-day the High Commissioner for New Zealand presented an Australian flag sent by the school-children of Dunedin.”—*Evening News.*

The children of Dunedin seem to have accepted in a very excellent spirit the annexation of New Zealand by Australia, of which this is the first news to reach us.

* * * * *

“The Germans were absolutely dismayed at the promptness of President Wilson’s rupture of relations. Then followed an amazing attempt to brow-beat Mr. Gerard into singing a revised version of the Prusso-American Treaty of 1799.”—*Planters’ and Commercial Gazette (Mauritius).*

Happily Mr. *Gerard* refused to oblige.

Page 3

* * * * *

“The annual report of the Kneckenmueller Lunatic Asylum at Stettin states that a number of lunatics have been called up for military service at the front, adding: ‘The asylums are proud that their inmates are allowed to serve the Fatherland.’ It appears, however, that the results are not always satisfactory.”—*The Times*.

We have heard of no complaints on our side.

* * * * *

“Meat, particularly mutton, is (says ‘The Times’) likely to remain dead this week-end.”

Lancashire Daily Post.

But if the hot weather continues—

* * * * *

LITTLE WILLIE’S OPINION OF FATHER.

[“How long the conflict may last lies in God’s hand; it is not our business to ask questions about it.... It is not the Prussian way to praise oneself.... It is now a matter of holding out, however long it lasts.”—*Extract from Speech by the KAISER, delivered near Arras.*]

I fear that Father’s lost his nerve.
As I peruse his last oration
I seem to miss the good old *verve*,
The tone of lofty exaltation,
The swelling note of triumph (*Sieg*)
That often carried half a league.

The drum on whose resounding hide
He brought to bear such weight and gristle
Has now been scrapped and laid aside
In favour of the penny whistle,
On which he plays so very small
You hardly hear the thing at all.

No more we mark the clarion shout—
“Go where the winds of victory whirl you!”
His eagle organ, petering out,



Whines like a sick and muted curlew;
A plaintive dirge supplants the paeon
That used to rock the empyrean.

Poor Father must have changed a lot.
He had a habit (now he's shed it)
Of patronising "*Unser Gott*,"
And going shares in all the credit;
To-day he wears a humbler air,
And leaves to Heaven the whole affair.

He's modified his sanguine view
About the foes he meant to batter;
He talks no more of barging through;
He frankly owns it's just a matter
Of hanging on and sitting tight,
Possibly through the *Ewigkeit*.

"I never speak in boastful vein;
No Prussian does," he tells the Army.
It really looks as if his brain
Is going "gugga," which is barmy;
He's done some talking through his hat,
But never quite such tosh as that.

How to correct the sad decline
Which takes this form of futile prattle?
That pious feat might yet be mine
If I could only win a battle;
Cases are known of mental crocks
Restored by sharp and staggering shocks.

O.S.

* * * * *

HOT WEATHER CORRESPONDENCE.

Page 4

(In the manner of various contemporaries.)

ANIMAL LABOUR.

Corelli Parade, Stratford-on-Avon.

DEAR SIR,—I seem to have read somewhere of the extreme sagacity and intelligence shown by the baboons of South Africa, some of whom, as well as I remember, are employed as porters and, I think, station-masters on the railways in the interior of Cape Colony. My gardener and coachman having both been called up, it has occurred to me that I might find efficient substitutes for them in these excellent animals.

Perhaps you or some of your readers would kindly inform me what it would cost to import two trustworthy baboons, also what would be a fair wage to give them; whether they would come under the provisions of the National Insurance Act, and whether they are vegetarians or carnivorous? Any other information bearing on their tastes and habits would be gratefully received by

Yours faithfully, (MRS.) AMANDA BLEEK.

[You should communicate with the Director of the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park. We believe that baboons can be booked at special rates. Possibly they might be allowed to work their passage over as stokers? As regards wages, payment in kind is generally preferred to money. The baboon is a vegetarian but no bigot, and will eat mutton chops without protest. The great American nature historian, WARD, tells us that we should not give the elephant tobacco, but lays no embargo on its being offered to baboons. They are addicted to spirituous liquors, and on the whole it is best to get them to take the pledge. A valued correspondent of ours, Canon Phibbs, once had a tame gorilla which invariably accompanied Mrs. Phibbs at Penny Readings; but this interesting animal died suddenly from a surfeit of mushrooms, and Canon Phibbs has also joined the majority.—ED. *Daily Swallow*.]

* * * * *

POODLES ON THE LAND.

Kimono Cottage, Camberley.

DEAR SIR,—Poodles have from time immemorial been employed to hunt for and dig out truffles in France. May I suggest to all owners of dogs of this highly intelligent breed that they should use them (1) for digging in gardens and allotments; (2) in place of caddies on golf links? May I add that poodles ought not to be shaved with a safety-razor, but should be trimmed by a topiary expert?

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully, MAISIE MIMRAM.

[We are most grateful to our correspondent for her information and the humane suggestion with which it is coupled. Truffle-hunting is indeed a noble sport.—ED. *Daily Scoop*.]

* * * * *

“KILL THAT FLY.” *Limejuice Villa, Leighton Buzzard*.

DEAR SIR,—As a dead set is being made against dogs by some uncompromising food economists, may I point out on behalf of our four-footed friends what admirable service they render the community by the destruction of flies? My Irish terrier, Patsy, spends half his time catching blue-bottles—indeed, my husband, who is of a mathematical turn, estimates that he accounts for several hundreds every day. Faithfully yours, VERAX.

Page 5

[Patsy has indeed deserved well of the commonwealth. Some official recognition is clearly called for, preferably a special collar—unstarched, of course—recording his services.—ED. *Weekly Simpleton*]

* * * * *

HOW TO PROVIDE FOR POMS.
Mazawattee Mansions, Matlock.

DEAR SIR,—I have had since 1912 a Pomeranian dog of good pedigree. Wishing to give him a chance, I changed his name from Fritz to Jock, but he refuses to answer to the new title. As it is impossible to deport him to his native land, I think of presenting him to a German Prisoners' Camp in the neighbourhood, but before doing so should be glad of your advice. Yours anxiously, PUZZLED.

[The problem is a difficult one, but we see no reason for vetoing our correspondent's generous proposal. The position of neutral dogs is also puzzling. Only the other day we heard of a Great Dane who could not be taught to "die for the King"—doubtless on conscientious grounds. The feelings of the mites in a Dutch cheese, again, ought to be considered.—ED. *Conscience*.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: PLAYING SMALLER.

THE KAISER MAKES A CHANGE OF INSTRUMENT.]

* * * * *

THE MUD LARKS.

When we have finished slaying for the day, have stropped our gory sabres, hung our horses up to dry and are sitting about after mess, girths slackened and pipes aglow, it is a favourite pastime of ours to discuss what we are going to do after the War.

William, our mess president and transport officer, says frankly, "Nothing." Three years' continuous struggle to keep the mess going in whiskey and soda and the officers' kit down to two hundred and fifty pounds per officer has made an old man of him, once so full of bright quips and conundrums. The moment HINDENBURG chucks up the sponge off goes William to Chelsea Hospital, there to spend the autumn of his days pitching the yarn and displaying his honourable scars gained in many a bloody battle in the mule lines.

So much for William. The Skipper, who is as sensitive to climate as a lily of the hot-house, prattles lovingly during the summer months of selling ice-creams to the Eskimos,

and during the winter months of peddling roast chestnuts in Timbuctoo. MacTavish and the Babe propose, under the euphonious *noms de commerce* of Vavaseur and Montmorency, to open pawn-shops among ex-munition-workers, and thereby accumulate old masters, grand pianos and diamond tiaras to export to the United States. For myself I have another plan.

There is a certain historic wood up north through which bullets whine, shells rumble and no bird sings. After the War I am going to float a company, purchase that wood and turn it into a pleasure-resort for the accommodation of tourists.

There will be an entrance fee of ten francs, and everything else will be extra.

Page 6

Tea in the dug-out—ten francs. Trips through trenches, accompanied by trained guides reciting selected passages from the outpourings of our special correspondents—ten francs. At night grand S.O.S. rocket and Very light display—ten francs. While for a further twenty francs the tourist will be allowed to pick up as many souvenirs in the way of rolls of barbed wire, dud bombs and blind crumps as he can stagger away with. By this means the country will be cleared of its explosive matter and I shall be able to spend my declining years in Park Lane, or, anyway, Tooting.

Our Albert Edward has not been making any plans as to his future lately, but just now it looks very much as if his future will be spent in gaol. It happened this way. He had been up forward doing some O. Pipping. While he was there he made friends with a battery and persuaded the poor fools into doing some shooting under his direction. He says it is great fun sitting up in your O. Pip, a pipe in your teeth, a telescope clapped to your blind eye, removing any parts of the landscape that you take a dislike to.

"I don't care for that tree at A 29.b.5.8"," you say to the telephone. "It's altogether too crooked (or too straight). Off with its head!" and, hey presto! the offending herb is not. Or, "That hill at C 39.d.7.4" is quite absurd; it's ridiculously lop-sided. I think we'll have a valley there instead." And lo! the absurd excrescence goes west in a puff of smoke.

Our Albert Edward spent a most enjoyable week altering the geography of Europe to suit his taste. Then one morning he made a trifling error of about thirty degrees and some few thousand yards and removed the wrong village.

"One village looks very much like another, and what are a few thousand yards this way or that in a war of world-wide dimensions? Gentlemen, let us not be trivial," said our Albert Edward to the red-hatted people who came weeping to his O. Pip. Nevertheless some unpleasantness resulted, and our Albert Edward came home to shelter in the bosom of us, his family.

The unpleasantness spread, for twenty-four hours later came a chit for our Albert Edward, saying if he had nothing better to do would he drop in and swoop yarns with the General at noon that day? Our Albert Edward made his will, pulled on his parade boots, drank half a bottle of brandy neat, kissed us farewell and rode off to his doom. As he passed the borders of the camp The O'Murphy uncorked himself from a drain, and, seeing his boon-companion faring forth a-horse, abandoned the rat-strafe and trotted after him.

A word or two explaining The O'Murphy. Two years ago we were camped at one end of a certain damp dark gully up north. Thither came a party of big marines and a small Irish terrier, bringing with them a long naval gun, which they covered with a *camouflage* of sackcloth and ashes and let off at intervals. Whenever the long gun was about to fire the small dog went mad, bounced about behind

Page 7

the gun-trail like an indiarubber ball, in an ecstasy of expectation. When the great gun boomed he shrieked with joy and shot away up the gully looking for the rabbit. The poor little dog's hunt up and down the gully for the rabbit that never had been was one of the most pathetic sights I ever saw. That so many big men with such an enormous gun should miss the rabbit every time was gradually killing him with disgust and exasperation.

Meeting my groom one evening I spoke of the matter to him, casually mentioning that there was a small countryman of ours close at hand breaking his heart because there never was any rabbit. I clearly explained to my groom that I was suggesting nothing, dropping no hints, but I thought it a pity such a sportsman should waste his talents with those sea-soldiers when there were outfits like ours about, offering all kinds of opportunities to one of the right sort. I again repeated that I was making no suggestions and passed on to some other subject.

Imagine my astonishment when, on making our customary bi-weekly trek next day, I discovered the small terrier secured to our tool-limber by a piece of baling-wire, evidently enjoying the trip and abusing the limber-mules as if he had known them all his life. Since he had insisted on coming with us there was nothing further to be said, so we christened him "The O'Murphy," attached him to the strength for rations and discipline, and for two years he has shared our joys and sorrows, our billets and bully-beef, up and down the land of Somewheres.

But it was with our Albert Edward he got particularly chummy. They had the same dislike of felines and the same taste in biscuits. Thus when Albert Edward rode by, ears drooping, tail tucked in (so to speak), *en route* to the shambles, The O'Murphy saw clearly that here was the time to prove his friendship, and trotted along behind. On arriving at H.Q. the comrades shook paws and licked each other good-bye. Then Albert Edward stumbled within and The O'Murphy hung about outside saucing the brass-collared Staff dogs and waiting to gather up what fragments remained of his chum's body after the General had done with it. His interview with the General our Albert Edward prefers not to describe; it was too painful, too humiliating, he says. That a man of the General's high position, advanced age and venerable appearance could lose his self-control to such a degree was a terrible revelation to Albert Edward. "Let us draw a veil over that episode," he said.

But what happened later on he did consent to tell us. When the General had burst all his blood vessels, and Albert Edward was congratulating himself that the worst was over, the old man suddenly grabbed a Manual of Military Law off his desk, hurled it into a corner and dived under a table, whence issued scuffling sounds, grunts and squeals. "See that?" came the voice of the General from under the table. "Of all confounded impudence!—did you see that?"

Page 8

Albert Edward made noises in the negative. "A rat, by golly!" boomed the venerable warrior, "big as a calf, came out of his hole and stood staring at me. Damn his impudence! I cut off his retreat with the manual and he's somewhere about here now. Flank him, will you?"

As Albert Edward moved to a flank there came sounds of another violent scuffle under the table, followed by a glad whoop from the General, who emerged rumped but triumphant.

"Up-ended the waste-paper basket on him," he panted, dusting his knees with a handkerchief. "And now, me lad, what now, eh?"

"Fetch a dog, Sir," answered Albert Edward, mindful of his friend The O'Murphy. The General sneered, "Dog be blowed! What's the matter with the old-fashioned cat? I've got a plain tabby with me that has written standard works on ratting." He lifted up his voice and bawled to his orderly to bring one Pussums. "Had the old tabby for years, me lad," he continued; "brought it from home—carry it round with me everywhere; and I don't have any rat troubles. Orderly!

"Fellers come out here with St. Bernard dogs, shot-guns, poison, bear-traps and fishing-nets and never get a wink of sleep for the rats, while one common cat like my old Pussums would—Oh, where is that confounded feller?"

He strode to the door and flung it open, admitting, not an orderly but The O'Murphy, who nodded pleasantly to him and trotted across the room, tail twinkling, love-light shining in his eyes, and deposited at Albert Edward's feet his offering, a large dead tabby cat.

Albert Edward remembers no more. He had swooned.

PATLANDER.

* * * * *

[Illustration: FORCE OF HABIT.

Farmer. "IF YOU'VE FINISHED PLOUGHIN' THIS 'ERE FIELD WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' SCRATCHIN' ABOUT WITH THAT STICK?"

C3 War-worker (formerly humorous artist). "OH, JUST SIGNING MY NAME."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Tommy (reporting himself to Sergeant after search for lost bayonet).* "AH'VE FOUND ME BAGGINET." *Sergeant.* "WHERE WAS IT?" *Tommy.* "ON THE TOP O' MA GOON."]

* * * * *

NOT WISELY BUT TOO WELL.

CHAPTER I.

"I wish you would speak to Cook yourself about it," said my wife rather nervously. "The whole thing depends upon her, and everyone says the chief difficulty is to get one's servants into line."

"It seems hardly my department," said I.

"No," my wife admitted, "but I believe it would *impress* her. She is not in the least impressed by me."

Page 9

I saw at once I should have to do it; you can't run away from a thing like that without impairing your position as the head of the house. But I dreaded it. I have always been afraid of her, and I knew that if she began to argue I should be expected to take what my wife calls a firm line, and that is always most uncomfortable. I wanted to have her up to my study, so that I should have the moral support of encyclopaedias and things that she doesn't understand; but my wife was convinced that I ought to mark the importance of the occasion by presenting myself in the kitchen. I hadn't been down that stair for months and months. All this happened weeks ago, when the DEVONPORT rations were proposed....

I took my stand with my back to the fire, conscious of a listening kitchen-maid behind the scullery door, and after asking if the range continued to give satisfaction I opened on the general question of submarines. But Cook had the better of me there. I had forgotten that she has a son on a submarine. I spoke of the serious position of the country, and Cook cheerfully assented. (For her part she often said to Jane that we were goin' 'eadlong into trouble.) I spoke, in general terms, of economy, and found we were in complete agreement. ("Only last night I says to Jane, 'Waste not, want not' must be our motter.") Then I announced the amount of the DEVONPORT rations and repeated them twice most impressively. Cook appeared to be going through a number of swift professional calculations. ("Six times four is twenty-four, and six times two-and-three-quarters is—m—m—m—m—carry one—is sixteen and a-half, but syrup might do for the batter.") Well, Sir, she would try. She would keep a book, "and every hounce that came into this house—be it rabbit or be it liver—shall be put down."

I was so pleased with her attitude that I allowed myself to be carried away rather, and we agreed before the conference ended that we would try to improve upon Lord DEVONPORT if it was possible. Cook, as I left her, impressed me as an heroic figure, facing a grim future with a high heart.

"You did it beautifully, dear," said my wife as I came out. She also had been listening behind the other door.

CHAPTER II.

Weeks passed. My only desire was to dismiss the whole question from my mind. Like LLOYD GEORGE in the House of Commons I had appeared and made my statement, and I was content to leave the whole matter to my wife. I do not mean to say that I did not observe sundry innovations in the food supply. Funny-looking scones came up that tasted rather of pea-soup; some of the meat dishes had a sort of padded-out aspect, and it was difficult to get quite away from oat-meal. But I had no cause to complain. It is only in the last ten days that the situation has become grave. Barer and barer is the board. I have even had to make suggestions. I proposed that bacon, for instance, might be allowed to reappear on Sundays. Very well, said my wife patiently, she would

see what she could do. I wondered if buttered toast had been finally banished for the Duration. She hoped not. But I gave up that policy, for I found that whenever I recovered some such fugitive from our table something else was certain to disappear.

Page 10

My eyes were opened to it at last. I saw that the establishment was going rapidly downhill. And I could get no real satisfaction from my wife. She would make vague promises of reform; she would undertake to do her best; and she would begin to talk brightly about something else.

And then I wanted to ask the Harrisons to lunch. That brought on the crisis, for I formulated a minimum demand of a leg of mutton or a pair of fowls.

"I don't see how it's possible, dear," said my wife. "I *am* so sorry."

"You are keeping something back from me," said I. "Tell me, whose is the 'Hidden Hand' that is running this blockade?"

"It's Cook."

"Oh, Cook."

"Yes, ever since you gave her that awful slanging about patriotism she has been grinding me down more and more. She's always plotting and scheming and telling me that she must keep the book down for the good of the country. I can see that Jane isn't getting sufficient nourishment. If I were to propose a pair of fowls for lunch I know that she would say it was her duty to remind me that we were a beleaguered city. And yet I don't want to discourage her...."

"That's very awkward," said I. "What in the world are we to do about the Harrisons?"

"I know," said my wife suddenly. "Ask them on Saturday. Cook's going to Plymouth for the week-end to see her son."

"Oh, good," said I. "And we *will* have a blow-out."

"And we won't put it down in the book."

"No, not a hounce of it."

So that is what we are going to do about the Harrisons. But it doesn't touch the larger question. Our problem, you will see, is very different from that of other people, and my wife smiles a pale wan smile when she hears her friends endlessly discussing ways and means of keeping within Lord DEVONPORT'S rations. What we want is to discover a means of getting back to that lavish and generous standard of living.

BIS.

* * * * *

CHARADE OF THE RELUCTANT ECONOMIST.

Unconscious that the times are strange,
Enthroned in cushioned ease and quiet,
My *first* foresees not any change
In his luxurious canine diet.

While I, his master and his lord,
A hearty breakfast-eater reckoned,
No longer at my frugal board
Enjoy the pleasures of my *second*.

Controllers!—I detest the tribe;
Freedom I hold in deep devotion;
Why should they want to circumscribe
My powers of rapid locomotion?

My *whole* I can no longer buy,
'Tis useless to attempt to beg it;
And whether it be wet or dry
Three times in four I have to leg it.

* * * * *

“In the Commons this afternoon Mrs. Macpherson said recent fighting in Southern Palestine had resulted in the capture of a Turkish advanced position.”—*Nottingham Evening Post*.

Page 11

The lady seems, without waiting for the Franchise Bill, to have captured an advanced position herself.

* * * * *

“Good Bed room and sitting room, bath, h. and c., in lovely secluded garden, Hants.”

Very proper. Baths should always be taken in seclusion.

* * * * *

“Deland is a church-going community, with Baptist, Presbyterian, two Methodists, Christian, Episcopalian and Roman Catholic Churches.”—*American Paper*.

We are so glad the Christians were not forgotten.

* * * * *

[Illustration: IT’S THE SAME MAN.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: SIDELIGHTS ON THE GREAT FOOD PROBLEM.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL ASCERTAINING WHETHER FOOD GIVEN TO FOWLS IS
FIT FOR
HUMAN CONSUMPTION.]

* * * * *

VICARIOUS REPRISALS.

I never countenanced the Hun in any sort of way—
He always does what isn’t done and won’t learn how to play—
But never have I felt estranged quite as I do to-day.

Till now I’ve strafed him like the rest, as natural and right,
But now my spirit is obsessed by bitter private spite;
And if he wants to know the cause—no mail came up to-night.

The sun must plod his weary course, the long night wax and wane,
To-day’s strong rumours lose their force for others as insane,
The ration cart crawl up once more before we hope again.



Who is to blame what man can guess? I do not want to know,
The U-Boats or the Q.M.S., the Censor or the snow—
It cannot modify the fact that warps my nature so.

Although I may not vent my spleen upon the stricken Mess,
Where fancies of what might have been add gall to bitterness,
I mean to cause *some* sentient thing confusion and distress.

And who so handy as the Hun? I know what I will do,
I will prevent to-morrow's sun with avid zeal and new,
Betaking me to some O. Pip that gives a charming view;

Each Teuton nose that dares to lift above the tunnelled ground
Shall be saluted with its swift and dedicated round,
Till all the burrows of the Bosch with panic shall resound.

And by this wrath it shall be known when there is like delay,
Till far beyond my trembling zone pale Hun to Hun shall say,
"It's no use crying *Kamerad*—he's had no mail to-day!"

* * * * *

UNCHAINED.

"FIGHTING IN PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA.

The gorgonzola column also fought a vigorous action, inflicting
great losses on the rebels."—*Evening Chronicle*.

* * * * *

"The standard ship now being built in British shipyards to make good the loss of
tonnage due to submarine warfare, is of about 8,000 tons, and all the ships already laid
down are of identical pattern.

Eight thousand tons seems to have been hit upon as a middle size
between 6,000 and 10,000 tons."—*Pearson's Weekly*.

Page 12

A very good hit too.

* * * * *

From an Indian cinema advertisement:—

“‘The Marble Heart’ from ‘King Baggot’: A splendid drama dealing with the loves of a young sculptor whose daydreams partake of an astral separation from his own self, and carry him to the scenes of the times in which his 3 statues were living persons. We are introduced to old Greece, and meet Diagones; Georges; Philideas and live over again the old times.”—*Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore)*.

But with a lot of nice new friends.

* * * * *

[Illustration: AGAINST TYRANNY.

RUSSIA (*drawing her sword again in the common cause*). “IF I CAN’T KEEP FAITH WITH THE FRIENDS OF FREEDOM, HOW AM I FIT TO BE FREE?”]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Short*. “WE MUST WAIT TILL THE BOYS COME MARCHING HOME, AND THEN THE PROFITS ’LL GO UP.”

Codlin. “OH, WILL THEY? MEBBE THAT BOMBIN’ ’LL HAVE MADE ’EM PRETTY TIDY SHOTS.”]

* * * * *

WHO SHALL DECIDE?

(*An echo of the Romney cause celebre.*)

In view of the attacks on their honourable calling by Sir THOMAS JACKSON and others, in *The Times* and elsewhere, the Art critics of London called a public meeting to consolidate their position. The Chair was taken by Sir WILLIAM RICHMOND, who was supported by Mr. HUMPHRY WARD, Mr. A.S. TEMPLE, and numerous other gentlemen who know a Romney when they see it, or who earn an honest livelihood by distributing adjectives, good or bad, among painters.

Sir WILLIAM RICHMOND, referring to a recent lawsuit, said that it was monstrous that careful conclusions based upon a long life of study should be upset by the production of a pencil sketch, and he called for the removal of Mr. Justice DARLING from the Bench.

Art criticism was not a mere matter of caprice, as people were now pretending, but an exact science. If a qualified man, not only a theorist but a practical craftsman, after years of preparation, stated that a picture was by such and such a painter, it was by him. The mere fact that someone named OZIAS HUMPHRY had made a small sketch resembling a large oil painting proved nothing. (Loud cheers.) The speaker said that he was glad to hear those sounds. But he would go further. The conclusion of the recent case was described as dramatic. He had a far more dramatic possibility up his sleeve. Suppose it should be discovered—as it might be, nothing being impossible—suppose it should be discovered that ROMNEY chose to paint some of his pictures under the pseudonym of OZIAS HUMPHRY. What then? (Terrific sensation.) They had all heard of the SHAKSPEARE-BACON controversy. The ROMNEY-HUMPHRY controversy might be destined to eclipse that. (Profound excitement.) He, the speaker, personally was not prepared to let the matter rest where it did. His honour as an Art critic was at stake.

Page 13

An even greater sensation was caused at this juncture by a rush of cold air in the hall, followed by the appearance of a ghostly shape, which announced itself to be the shade of OZIAS HUMPHRY himself. If anyone doubted his identity or suggested that he did not paint his own pictures he should take very prompt action indeed. The art of haunting was by no means extinct. (Here the Chairman hurriedly left the room.) The shade, continuing, caused some consternation by stating that the picture which had led to litigation the other day was by no means the only supposed Romney that he had painted. He could name several in collections within a mile or two of the spot where he was then standing. (At this point Mr. HUMPHRY WARD swooned and was carried out by Mr. ROBERTS.)

Mr. A.S. TEMPLE remarked that no doubt the shade of OZIAS HUMPHRY attended that meeting in all good faith, but for his part he thought that he would have shown better taste had he kept away. In fact everyone would be happier if OZIAS HUMPHRY had never existed. It was not Art critics that should be pitched into, but painters whose styles resembled each other. They were the real nuisance. It was the duty of artists to be distinctive, and it was the duty of Art critics to keep them so. No doubt, as SHAKSPEARE knew, there was a certain humour to be extracted from men who were exactly alike, such as the two *Dromios*, but when painters painted alike there was no fun in it at all.

Mr. JOHN SMITH testified to the fact that he had no interest in a picture unless he knew who painted it; and even then he was not interested unless the name of the painter was a familiar one. If Art critics provided these names, it was obviously desirable that their services should be retained; but it was confusing if the Art critics disagreed among themselves. All he asked was that when they thus disagreed they should all equally fix on well-known names, even though they were different ones. Names such as REYNOLDS, GAINSBOROUGH, LEADER and GOETZE were well known and inspired confidence. Strange names merely irritated. In visiting the Royal Academy, for example, he personally always bought a catalogue and confined his attention to the pictures of the more famous artists. In this way he ensured a pleasant afternoon. If there was still any doubt as to the merit of a picture, he inquired the price and was guided by the size of that.

Sir FREDERICK WEDMORE said that to decry the value of Art criticism was absurd. It was only through the efforts of their literary henchmen that some painters could be known at all. The better the picture the more words ought to be written about it, at so much a word. It was impossible to over-estimate the importance of fitting every brush-mark with the adequate epithet. He himself had devoted a long life to this task and he intended to continue doing so. (Loud cheers.)

The Editors of the *Sketch* and *Tatler*, speaking in unison, said that not only was there too much talk about pictures, but there were far too many pictures. Artists ought not to be encouraged in the way they are. The world was never so happy as in the interval

between the loss of the “Monna Lisa” and its recovery. We should apply our enthusiasm to the stage—to actors and, above all, to actresses.

Page 14

The Editors of *The Daily Mirror* and *The Daily Sketch*, also speaking in unison, said they agreed to a large extent with the last speakers. It would not really matter if every painting disappeared, so long as the camera remained. One living photographer was better than a thousand dead Masters.

Sir CLAUDE PHILLIPS asked how the Masters would ever have been called Masters had it not been for the critics. Painters merely painted and left it there; it was the critics who decided whether or not they should be immortal, and whether their pictures should be worth tens or thousands.

Mr. MARION SPIELMANN said that no one would deny that the contemplation of pictures, even those of Saints or Holy Families, had given enormous pleasure. But why? Not because the crowds that flocked to the galleries really cared for them, but because gifted writers had for centuries been setting up hypnotic suggestions that in this way was pleasure to be obtained. He had often seen men and women standing before a canvas of REMBRANDT, hating the grubby muddle of it in their hearts, but adoring it in their heads—all because some well-known critic had told them to. Their pleasure, however, was real, and therefore it should, in a world of sadness, be encouraged, and consequently Art critics should be encouraged.

Mr. ROGER FRY here rose to point out that the test of a picture is not the pleasure which it imparts, as the last speaker seemed to think, but the pain. The sooner the public got that fact into its thick head the better would it be for those artists who were not so clay-souled as to allow stuffy conventions to interfere with the development of their personality.

Mr. D.W. GRIFFITH said that he had never heard so much talk about pictures, with so little reference to himself. It was he who invented “The Birth of a Nation” and “Intolerance,” and he was the Picture King, and as such he wished to tell them that the best Art critic in the world couldn’t hold a candle to a very ordinary Press agent. (Uproar, during which the meeting broke up.)

* * * * *

[Illustration: *The “Nut” of the Regiment (reading Army order re dress)*. “BY JOVE, MAJOR, THIS IS SERIOUS! SHIRTS, COLLARS AND TIES HAVE GOT TO BE THE SAME COLOUR AS UNIFORM. IT JOLLY WELL MEANS THAT WE’LL HAVE TO GET A NEW UNIFORM EVERY TIME WE HAVE A COLLAR WASHED.”]

* * * * *

MEDITATIONS OF MARCUS O’REILLY.

THE GREAT DOG FIGHT.

Next to the beauty of its girls my little Western home is noted for two things—the ferocity of its dogs and its bountiful provision for assuaging an attack of thirst. For the latter there are fifteen houses, ten of which have licences and the rest back-doors. We are by birth a temperate people, but there is much salt in the air.

Our dogs are very like ourselves, as peaceable and well-conducted as can be, except when some rascal takes up their challenge and makes faces at them or trails a tail of too much pretension and too suddenly in their neighbourhood. Then the fur is apt to fly.

Page 15

"What a degrading spectacle a dog-fight is!" Moriarty, who takes up the collection in church and has thus a semi-ecclesiastical status in life, which shows itself in his speech, said this to me only last evening. There were about a hundred of us trying to hide this degrading spectacle from the police and other innocent people, and Moriarty had just lost three-and-sixpence on Casey's dog. "A degrading spectacle indeed," said I. "If Casey's dog had held out two minutes longer he had the other dog beat. I am disappointed in Casey's dog." It was degrading, and I am glad I had only half-a-crown on it. So I paid up to our collector of rates and taxes and came home.

This little incident made me think of Billy O'Brien, our next-door neighbour. Billy had one passion in life, and that was the rearing of a dog that could whip any combination in the vicinity.

Billy said life wasn't worth living if he could not walk in the streets without some neighbour's dog beating his. Billy had failed hitherto, and this is not surprising to one who knows the dogs of Ballybun. They are Irish terriers to a dog, and all of them living instances of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. The air of Ballybun is bad for a dog with a weak chest who thinks he has a strong one. Billy experimented with many breeds and had many glimpses of success, but a Ballybun dog always put an end to his experiments.

Last year Billy thought he had achieved his aim at last. When he returned from the sea-side he brought with him a powerful dog of unknown breed and of the most colossal ugliness. He confided to me that he would not let him out on the street until his education was complete, "and then," said he, "there will be only one dog in the Ballybun census." I had my doubts, as I know the local dog, which would have the hide off an elephant if it barked. But Billy O'Brien is a stranger, or as we say "transplanter" in our part of Ireland, his grandfather being the first of his branch to transplant himself here, and he did not then know much about the higher education of dog, though he is an admirable inspector of schools.

But he thought he did, and he had an educational theory which was all his own. He claimed that a dog is what he eats, and he simply spent pounds on that dog's education. In a month or two Elixir, which was the dog's name, could swallow curries without winking which would bring tears to the eyes of an Oriental Potentate, and he would howl if he was given water without Worcester Sauce.

O'Brien's theory may have been right, or else it was only his dog's liver that was wrong, for very soon Elixir would keep us up half the night shouting offensive epithets across our wall at Mulligan's dog, who hurled them back at him. Mulligan, who is a light sleeper, was much annoyed, and wrote O'Brien eight pages about it. He mentioned that he was a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and that it

Page 16

was positive cruelty to keep these two animals separated a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. He said that his conscientious objections to betting were well known and life-long, but that even they would not stand in the way of his wife's putting a fiver on their dog Stanislaus. He added a few remarks about O'Brien's grandfather, the "transplanter"; but what annoyed the owner of Elixir most was Mulligan's remark that he had not seen the dog, but heard it was some new kind of German pug.

Billy came in with the libelled animal at his heels to show me Mulligan's letter and discuss his wrongs, before he went round to talk dog with the writer. His shortest way to Mulligan's was through my back-yard. Elixir, without anybody's permission, at once started to break his way through in order to tell Mulligan's dog to his face what he thought of him. He had hardly set a paw in it when an infuriated ball of fur lit somewhere out of space on to his back, cursing and spitting and tearing the hair out in slathers. This new enemy was my wife's tortoise-shell kitten Emmeline, whose existence I had for the moment forgotten, but who owns that backyard and whose permission had not been asked.

What was left of Elixir let a yell out of it like a foghorn and bolted. It returned twenty-four hours later with its tail between its legs, a convinced pacifist. The disgusted O'Brien at once changed its name to Bertrand Russell, after some philosopher who palliates German methods of warfare, and gave it to a tinker.

O'Brien has abandoned theories about dogs and is now trying to encourage hygiene in our midst, and Mulligan is sleeping better than ever.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Diner (choking)*. "QUICK! WATER! CRUMB IN ME THROAT." *War Waiter*. "AH, SIR, IF ONLY THE WELL-TO-DO WOULD LEAVE BREAD FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE."]

* * * * *

AN UNUSUAL RECOMMENDATION.

"Governess (Nursery), L40, seasick, one pupil, usual subjects, about 30."—*Melbourne Argus*.

* * * * *

From a Cadets' examination:

"Q. What is a Roster?

A. A Roster is a soldier who frequently gets drunk or rowdy. Not what could be called a steady man.”

* * * * *

From a Publishers’ advertisement:—

Wild Foods of Great Britain: Where to Find them and How to Cook them. 46 figs. Post free 1s. 9d.”

The figs alone are worth the money.

* * * * *

“Leytonstone’s best effort was by a wounded soldier, who at great risk of pneumonia gallantly rescued a number of women from a tramcar that couldn’t swim.”—*Daily Sketch*.

The attention of the L.C.C. is respectfully called to this deficiency on the part of its vehicle.

Page 17

* * * * *

“A vessel of 30,000 tons may be sunk, but on the percentage table, such as the Admiralty serves up to us, she occupies the same relative position as a one-ton yawl returning with a load of kippers.”—*Mr. E. Ashmead-Bartlett in “The Sunday Times.”*

Inquiries as to the locality of the kipper fishing-grounds should be addressed to our contemporary. We ourselves hear that it is in the neighbourhood of the fried whittings.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Anxious voice (from motor-launch).* “I SAY, CAN YOU TELL ME EXACTLY WHERE I AM?”

Commander of destroyer. “YES, DEAR OLD THING. YOU’RE IN THE NORTH SEA.”]

* * * * *

TO SMITH IN MESOPOTAMY.

Master of Arts, how is it with you now?
Our spires stand up against the saffron dawn
And Isis breaks in silver at the prow
Of many a skiff, and by each dewy lawn
Purple and gold the tall flag-lilies stand;
And SHELLEY sleeps above his empty tomb
Hard by the staircase where you had your room,
And all the scented lilacs are in bloom,
But you are far from this our fairy-land.

Your heavy wheel disturbs the ancient dust
Of empires dead ere Oxford saw the light.
Those flies that form a halo round your crust
And crawl into your sleeping-bag at night—
Their grandsires drank the blood of NADIR SHAH,
And tapped the sacred veins of SULEYMAN;
There flashed dread TIMOUR’S whistling yataghan,
And soothed the tiger ear of GENGHIZ KHAN
The cream of Tartary’s battle-drunk “Heiyah!”

And yonder, mid the colour and the cries
Of mosque and minaret and thronged bazaars
And fringed palm-trees dark against the skies
HARUN AL RASCHID walked beneath the stars
And heard the million tongues of old Baghdad,



Till out of Basrah, as the dawn took wing,
Came up the laden camels, string on string;
But now there is not left them anything
Of all the wealth and wisdom that they had.

Somehow I cannot see you, lean and browned,
Chasing the swart Osmanli through the scrub
Or hauling railroad ties and "steel mild round"
Sunk in the sands of Irak to the hub,
Heaping coarse oaths on Mesopotamy;
But rather strewn in gentlemanly ease
In some cool *serdab* or beneath the trees
That fringe the river-bank you hug your knees
And watch the garish East go chattering by.

And at your side some wise old priest reclines
And weaves a tale of dead and glorious days
When MAMUN reigned; expounds the heavenly signs
Whose movements fix the span of mortal days;
Touches on Afreets and the ways of Djinns;
Through his embroidered tale real heroes pass,
RUSTUM the bold and BAHRAM the wild ass,
Who never dreamed of using poisoned gas
Or spread barbed wire before the foeman's shins.

Page 18

I think I hear you saying, "Not so much
Of waving palm-trees and the flight of years;
It's evident that you are out of touch
With war as managed by the Engineers.
Hot blasts of *sherki* are our daily treat,
And toasted sandhills full of Johnny Turk
And almost anything that looks like work,
And thirst and flies and marches that would irk
A cast-iron soldier with asbestos feet."

Know, then, the thought was fathered by the wish
We oldsters feel, that you and everyone
Who through the heat and flies conspire to dish
The "*Drang nach Osten*" of the beastly Hun
Shall win their strenuous virtue's modest wage.
And if at Nishapur and Babylon
The cup runs dry, we'll fill it later on,
And here where Cherwell soothes the fretful don
In flowing sherbet pledge our easeful sage.

ALGOL.

* * * * *

APPROPRIATOR OF TUBERS.

At a time when not a potato was to be found in all Kensington, the Food Controller decided to form the Potato Appropriations Department. I was put at its head and received my orders direct from that supreme official.

Up to the moment of being called upon to take up this important post I was a Captain on the Staff of an Artillery Headquarters, and my ignorance of the finer points of the potato was profound. It was therefore with some trepidation that I proceeded to hold a lengthy consultation with the Controller on the subject of the organisation and general duties of my department. My official title, I was told, was Appropriator of Tubers. I was further informed that, until the department got into the swing of routine, it had better work under the direct supervision of the Food Controller. I agreed.

I was then taken into the Controller's confidence with regard to a certain matter, and it was suggested that I should see to it.

I demurred on the ground that I did not yet feel myself a sufficient authority on the potato to carry out this particular duty; but the Controller overcame my objection by

sending for a Mrs. Marrow, an expert on the Potato Utilisation Board. She appeared, a plump middle-aged lady, attired appropriately in a costume of workmanlike simplicity.

Thus reinforced, I ordered the car and drove to Whitechapel. At the end of a street, whose gutters were full of vegetable garbage I stopped, and, descending, beckoned imperiously to an adjacent policeman.

“On duty for the Food Controller, constable,” I said. “Take me to the nearest greengrocer, please.”

He saluted respectfully and led the way to where a long queue, armed with a varied assortment of baskets and bags, waited impatiently and clamoured. A hush fell on our approach. Two more policemen who now appeared on the scene constituted themselves my retinue. Through a lane opened in the throng I made a stately entrance, Mrs. Marrow and the police bringing up the rear. I was confronted by a large flabby individual, who grasped a cabbage in one hand and a number of mangel-wurzels in the other.

Page 19

"Good morning, Sir," I remarked courteously but firmly. "You are the proprietor of this shop, I presume?"

His reply left no room for doubt.

"I am the A.T.," I said impressively, indicating the red brassard of office presented to me by the Food Controller. "In case you do not know what that means, I am the Appropriator of Tubers. A tuber, Sir, is a potato. Now it has been brought to the notice of my chief, the Food Controller, that certain vendors of vegetables are seeking to defraud the public by selling as potatoes a totally different kind of vegetable disguised with colouring matter and rubbed with earth."

I paused to allow this weighty announcement to sink in. My audience gaped. I continued—

"Acting on orders received from the Controller I am making a series of surprise inspections with a view to discovering the guilty parties, who will be proceeded against under section A, subsection 2, paragraph 1,769 of Part III. of King's Reg's.—I mean, the Defence of the Realm Act. I particularly wish you to understand," I went on ruthlessly, nipping an indignant protest in the bud, "that I do not for a moment allege, suggest or insinuate that you specifically are one of these potato-swindlers; nevertheless I have my duty to do, and I must ask you here and now to lay out your entire stock for inspection."

The flabby individual wiped his forehead and signed to a trembling assistant.

"Get 'em art," he said. "Fer Gawd's sake, get 'em art!"

Six bushel baskets of the precious vegetables were brought and laid in a row at my feet.

"Perhaps, Madam," I said, turning to Mrs. Marrow, "you will be so kind as to inspect these—ah, tubers. Mrs. Marrow," I explained to the greengrocer, "the famous tuber expert."

In silence Mrs. Marrow began to overhaul the contents of the baskets, every now and then picking out a particularly choice specimen, which she added to an accumulating pile on the floor.

"Aha! Suspects!" I exclaimed grimly. "I shall take all these to the laboratory at the Food Controller's Headquarters, where Mrs. Marrow will submit each tuber to a meticulous test in order to satisfy herself as to its *bona fides*. You will be gratified to hear that, should your potatoes prove to be all they seem, the Controller will issue you a blue card, registering you as a certified vendor of Government-tested potatoes. This you may place in your window for the information of your customers. If the test proves unsatisfactory"—I paused. In the deathly silence the heavy breathing of Mrs. Marrow was distinctly audible—"you will hear further," I concluded. "Weigh these suspects."

They turned the scale at eighteen pounds.

“Since in any case the potatoes will be rendered unfit for consumption by the rigorous process through which they will be passed, I am empowered by the Food Controller to compensate you in advance, at a rate not exceeding sevenpence per pound, out of the special appropriation funds, this sum to be returned in the event of the test proving unsatisfactory.”

Page 20

So saying I handed him ten-and-sixpence. The basket was carried out to the car by one of the guardians of law and order. Then I headed for Kensington.

The Food Controller met us breathlessly at the door.

“Oh, what darlings!” she exclaimed. “Do you think they will last out the master’s leave?”

“They’ve jolly well got to,” declared the master promptly. “There are limits, Elsie, to the elasticity of conscience. Besides, my ability to maintain a flow of official phraseology is exhausted.”

The Food Controller kissed me very sweetly. It was cheap at ten-and-sixpence.

* * * * *

TURKISH MUSIC.

[According to “a distinguished neutral” there is a great demand in Constantinople just now for pianos.]

Of all occasions to unfaithful scoffers
Given by Turkey in this year of grace,
The unexpected homage that she offers
To the piano holds the foremost place.

For Turkish music, *vide* GROVE and others,
Meant in the past the cymbals and big drum,
And piccolo, a group which wholly smothers
All other instruments and strikes them dumb.

Compared with this barbaric combination
The tinkling of the keys, so soft and clear,
Is lacking in explosive concentration,
And yet there’s more in them than meets the ear.

At least, one reason for this revolution
Is plain; the keyboard, though its tones are cold,
Viewed as a means of rapid “execution”
Endears itself to Turks both Young and Old.

* * * * *

“M. Bratiano, Rumanian Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, has returned to Bukarest from Petrograd.”—*The Times*.

The force of habit, we presume. How surprised the German Governor must have been to see him.

* * * * *

[Illustration: AT THE EXHIBITION OF THE “FORERUNNERS’ SOCIETY.”

Artist. “I RATHER LIKE THAT.” *Super-Critic.* “BAH! PRETTY-PRETTY! CHOCOLATE BOX!”]

* * * * *

HEXAMETERS.

I have been examining a book by the POET LAUREATE, in which that learned and painstaking man puts forward for general acceptance a new theory and a new practice of metre in English poetry. It seems that our verse is accentual, whereas it ought to be quantitative—or it may be the other way about; my brain is in such a whirl with it all that I can’t be certain which is right, but I am sure that one of them is, and so I leave you to take your choice. Failing that, you can buy Dr. BRIDGES’ book, which is entitled *Ibant Obscuri* (Oxford University Press), and thus expresses my inmost convictions about our great official poet and his followers. We are henceforth to write hexameters in English on an entirely new plan, of which the result is that they lose all likeness to any hexameters previously encountered on the slopes of Parnassus or anywhere else and become something so blind and staggering and dreadfully amorphous that the whole mind of the reader rises up in revolt against them.

Page 21

That, at any rate, is my condition at this moment after going through a course of them. I notice that the reviewers have been a little shy of these hexametric efforts. They have mostly described them as “interesting experiments” and have applauded Dr. BRIDGES for his adventurous industry and his careful scholarship, and thereafter they have skirmished on the outskirts and have shown a disinclination to come to grips with the LAUREATE on the main question whether these hexameters are a success or a failure. Now I have no hesitation whatever in admitting my metrical ignorance and at the same time in denouncing as a fiasco the experiment of Dr. BRIDGES. I have spent some time in struggling with his hexameters; I have attempted to track his dactyls to their lair; I have followed up what I took to be his spondees, and I am thankful to say that I have managed to survive.

Let me now give some examples, not composed, it is true, by the LAUREATE, but by myself. This is not an unfair proceeding, for it will serve to show the effect of *Ibant Obscuri* on a mind not too obtuse. I promise that the rules shall be observed. There shall be six feet in each line, dactyls or spondees, and the fifth foot shall be a dactyl and the sixth a spondee or a trochee. Are you ready? Go!

Apollo now came forth his course through the sky to fulfil;
In other words it was morning and most people got out of bed;
And fathers of families munched and grumbled at their breakfasts,
Denouncing their bacon and not to be mollified with their
Coffee or tea, as the case might be, and the housewives reproved them,
Saying 'twas impossible to control them with such an example.

Beyond the above I cannot go, but I must add that the lines are of the most perfect metrical lucidity and the purest melody when compared with some written by the LAUREATE in *Ibant Obscuri*.

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

Mr. H.G. WELLS also among the New Theologians is not an entirely unexpected event. We have all had intimation in his later writings of the coming of some such thesis as *God, The Invisible King* (CASSELL). I can see the deans making mincemeat of the rash author. All's well if they'll eat some of the meat. And they may. At least this is no super-subtle modernist divine dealing out old coins surreptitiously stamped with a new image and superscription, but a plain blunt heretic who knows his mind (or, rather, mood). But it is a reverent, indeed, I dare to say, a noble book. The sanely and securely orthodox may read it with profit if with shock. It should brace their faith, and will rob them of nothing but a too-ready doubt that so forthright a house-breaker may be

a builder in his own way. There is indeed more faith in these honest denials than in half the assents of the conformists. Just because it is not a subtle

Page 22

book it should not be “dangerous.” It is romantic, rather; inspired, you might loosely say. The *Index Expurgatorius* will of course list it when they learn of it; but foolishly, because while the philosophy, the cosmology, the metaphysics may be advanced (so advanced as to be called hasty and apt to run into the theological barrages), the religion, the mysticism, the “conviction of sin,” the vision of the invisibles, the perception of the imponderables, are positive, vivid, sincere, passionate in phrasing and in intention. Sincere as Mr. WELLS is always sincere; sincere rather than stable, patient, learned and so forth. I rather wonder that he insists so much on his *finite* God. The postulate hardly touches his real thesis. And I find it easier to believe that there may be some things behind “this round world” that Mr. WELLS cannot fully understand because he (the author) is finite—and busy—than accept what seems a contradiction in terms to no particular end.

* * * * *

The author of *Grand Chain* (NISBET) is profoundly aware that man is not the master of his fate (though he may be the captain of his soul, which is quite a different matter), and that the claim so universally put forward, that the leopard can change his spots, is simply an excuse for criticising the superficial pigmentation of other leopards. *Dermod Randall*, Miss G.B. STERN’S hero, is certainly not the master of his fate, which is inexorably moulded by the belief of his relatives, ascendant and descendant, that he must inherit the vices of his father, a particularly pard-like specimen, and may be expected at any minute to come out in spots himself. As a matter of fact his only failings were a young heart and a sense of humour; but, as these qualities were as out of place in the *Randall* family as a hornpipe at a funeral, *Dermod* lives under a perpetual cloud of unmerited suspicion. How he is compressed into a life groove, of which an ineffably turgid respectability provides the chronic atmosphere, is the theme of *Grand Chain*. And because the author possesses a wonderfully delicate gift of satire and a power of character delineation that never gets out of hand, she has written a novel deserving of more praise than the usual reviewer, all too timid of superlatives, may venture to give. Comparisons in criticism are dangerous, but Miss STERN’S philosophy strongly calls to mind BUTLER’S *The Way of All Flesh*. At least there is the same mordant and rather hopeless analysis of the power for evil in a too complicated world of impeccable people with no sense of humour. And in *Dermod*’s case the effect is heightened by the feeling that if he had really been the irresponsible creature he was suspected of being he would have come much nearer to controlling his own destinies. He sowed a decent regard for his obligations, and reaped a perfect whirlwind of well-to-do respectability. *Grand Chain* is a really remarkable novel, and no discriminating reader will overlook it.

Page 23

* * * * *

Was it not Mr. ALBERT CHEVALIER who used to sing some hortatory lyrics upon the inadvisability of introducing your donah to a pal? Something of this sort, *mutatis mutandis* in the matter of sex, might stand as the moral of *That Red-headed Girl*(JENKINS). Because no sooner had *Julia*, the heroine, got herself engaged to *Dick* than the arrival of auburn-tressed *Sheila* so dazzled the youth that in less time than it takes to write he had called the engagement off and prepared to marry the new-comer. However, to square matters, *Sheila* now jilted him; whereupon he fled back to *Julia* (meanwhile, though he knew it not, legatee of twelve thousand a year) and promptly married her. Which was entirely satisfactory, save from the view-point of Miss LOUISE HEILGERS, who was left with her hero and heroine united and the whole affair at an end before she had passed Chapter XII. Here however intervened a very touching instance of filial piety. Springing to the rescue of her author, and with no other possible motive or excuse than that of helping Miss HEILGERS towards a publishable six-bobs-worth, the resourceful *Julia* determined to think that *Dick* had married her for the money of whose existence he was palpably unaware. He, on his part, not to be outdone, played up to the situation thus created with a lunatic behaviour that gave it the support it wanted. I need not, of course, insult your intelligence with any indication of the end. A happy, flagrantly artificial little comedy of manners, as exhibited by the characters in polite pre-war fiction, and nowhere else.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Resigned Patriot*. "DO WE DRAW FOR THIS, MY DEAR?"]

* * * * *

INTENSIVE WARFARE IN PALESTINE.

"On a front of fourteen yards, this position extends by a series of redoubts and trenches eleven miles south-east of Gaza."—*Isle of Man Times*.

* * * * *

"Lord Devonport ... hoped their Lordships would realise that the stable necessities of life had been brought under Government control."—*Belfast News-Letter*.

They do realise it. You should hear their language about oats.