

Punch or the London Charivari, Volume 158, March 24, 1920. eBook

Punch or the London Charivari, Volume 158, March 24, 1920.

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Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

"Nobody knows," says a Berlin message, "how near the *Kapp* counter-revolution came to being a success." A kind word from Commander *Kenworthy*, it is believed, would have made all the difference.

It is reported that Miss *Isobel Elsom*, the cinema star, tried to get knocked down by a taxi-cab for the purposes of a film, but failed. We can only suppose that the driver must have been new to his job.

A vicar has written to the Press complaining indignantly of a London firm's offer to supply sermons at five shillings each. We are not surprised. Five shillings is a lot of money to give for a sermon.

The Llangollen Golf Club has decided to allow Sunday golf. In extenuation it is pointed out that the Welsh for "stymied" does not constitute a breach of the Sabbath, as is the case with the Scots equivalent.

At Caterham a robin has built its nest in a bully beef tin. These are the little things that give the Disposals Board a bad name.

A North of Ireland man who has just died at the age of 107 boasted that he had never had a bath. This should silence the faddists who pretend that they can hardly wait till Saturday night.

The ruins of Whitby Abbey, it is announced, are to be presented by their owner to the nation. On the other hand, the report that Mr. *Lloyd George* intends to present the ruins of the Liberal Party to Manchester City is not confirmed.

The latest information is that the recent German revolution had to be abandoned owing to the weather.

From a weekly paper article we gather that the trousers-crease will be in its accustomed frontal position this year. It is unfortunate that this announcement should have clashed with the attempted restoration of the Monarchy in Berlin.

Hot Cross Buns will probably cost threepence this year. An economical plan is for the householder to make his own hot cross and then get the local confectioner to fit a bun to it.

"There will be no whisky in Scotland in the year 1925," says a Prohibitionist speaker. He did not say whether there will be any Scotsmen.

No arrangement has yet been made for the carrying on of the Food Ministry, though it is said that one food profiteer has offered to buy the place as a memento.

"All the great men are dead," states a London newspaper. This sly dig at Mr. CHURCHILL'S robust health is surely in bad taste.

We are glad to hear that the strap-hanger who was summoned by a fellow-passenger on the Underground Railway for refusing to remove his foot from off the plaintiff's toes has now been acquitted by the jury. It appears that he was able to prove that he was not in a position to do so as his was not the top foot of the heap.

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According to a trade journal the latest fashion in umbrellas is a pigeon's head carved on the handle. This, we understand, is the first step towards a really reliable homing umbrella.

The appearance of a hen blackbird without any trace of feathers on its neck or back is reported by a Worcester ornithologist. The attempt on the part of this bird to follow our present fashions is most interesting.

So much difficulty is being experienced in deciding whose incendiary bullet was the most effective, that it is thought possible that the Government may arrange for the Zeppelin raids to be revived.

A society paper reports that a large number of millionaires are now staying on the Riviera. It is not known where the other shareholders of COATS'S are staying.

In order to influence the exchange a contemporary suggests that we should sell our treasures to America. We understand that a cable to New York asking what they are prepared to pay for Mr. *Ramsay* MACDONALD remains unanswered.

An egg weighing nine-and-a-half ounces has been laid at Bayonne, France. It looks like a walk-over unless *The Spectator* has something up its sleeve.

"One hears the crying of the new-born lambs on all sides," writes a Nature correspondent. On the other hand the unmistakable bubbling note of the mint-sauce will not be heard for another month or so.

Will the A.S.C. private who in 1917 was ordered to take a mule to Sutton Coldfield please note that the animal has been sighted in California still chewing an army tunic, but the badges are missing?

“So many letters are being lost in the post nowadays,” states a daily paper, “that drastic action should be taken in the matter.” We understand that the *postmaster-general* has expressed his willingness to be searched.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Hygienist*. “*Feeling the cold, eh? Aha—look at me. I don’t know what cold is.*”

Normal Individual. “*Then N-naturally you D-don’t feel it.*”]

* * * * *

A vulnerable spot.

“Lady, a word—but oh, beware!
And prithee do not slight it—
If you will have your back so bare,
Someone is sure to bite it.”

* * * * *

“An official of the Coal Controller’s Department said that everything possible would be done to relieve the situation.

‘No stone will be left unturned,’ he said, ‘to ease the position.’”—*Daily Paper*.

This accounts, no doubt, for the stuff in our last half-hundredweight.

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* * * * *

A Junker interlude.

Once more the Militant Mode recurs
With clank of sabre and clink of spurs;
Once more the long grey cloaks adorn
The bellicose backs of the high-well-born;
Once more to the click of martial boots
Junkers exchange their grave salutes,
Taking the pavement, large with side,
Shoulders padded and elbows wide;
And if a civilian dares to mutter
They boost him off and he bites the gutter.

Down by the Brandenburger Thor
Kitchens are worked by cooks of war;
Loyal moustaches cease to sag,
Leaping for joy of the old war-flag;
Drums are beating and bugles blare
And passionate bandsmen rip the air;
Prussia's original ardour rallies
At the sound of *Deutschland ueber alles*,
And warriors slap their fighting pants
To the tune *Heil dir im Siegeskranz*.

Life, in a word, recalls the phase Of the glorious Hohenzollern days. What if a War's
meanwhile occurred And talk of a humbling Peace been heard? Treaties are meant to
be torn in two And wars are made to be fought anew. *Hoch!* for the *Tag*, by land and
main, When the Monarchy comes to its own again.

Surely tho wind of it, faint but sweet,
The Old Man sniffed in his Dutch retreat;
Surely it gave his pulse a jog
As he went for his thirteen thousandth log,
Possibly causing the axe to jam
When he thought of his derelict Potsdam,
Of his orb mislaid and his head's deflation,
And visions arose of a Restoration.
(If not for himself, it might be done
For *little Willie* or WILLIE'S son).

Alas for the chances of child or sire!
The *coup* went phut, for the *Kapp* missed fire.

O.S.

* * * * *

A flat to let.

It was twelve o'clock (noon) and I was sitting over the fire in our squalid lodgings reading the attractive advertisements of country mansions in a weekly journal. I had just decided on a delightful Tudor manor-house with every modern convenience, a nice little park and excellent fishing and shooting, when Betty burst upon me like a whirlwind.

Her face was flushed and a fierce light shone in her usually mild blue eyes. She looked like a Maenad or the incarnation of Victory at a bargain sale.

"Come on," she gasped, seizing me by the arm. "Hurry."

"Good heavens! Is the house on fire? My child! Let me save my child."

"Oh, do come on," cried Betty; "there's not a moment to be lost."

"But how can I come on in slippers?" I demanded. "If I may not save the young Henry Augustus, at any rate let me put on my boots."

Betty's only reply was to drag me from the room, hustle me through the hall, where I dexterously caught my hat from the stand in passing, and thrust me into the street.

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"I've got a flat," she panted. "That is, I've got it if we're quick enough. Hi, taxi!"

"But, my dear," I remonstrated as the taxi-driver, cowed by the look in her eye, drew up to the kerb, "if we take a taxi we shan't have anything left to pay for the flat."

"Victory Mansions, Trebarwith Road. Drive fast!" shouted Betty as she pushed me into the cab.

"Now you've done it," I said bitterly. "Do you know I've only five pounds ten on me at the moment? We shall lose the flat while we're quarrelling with the driver."

"Oh, dear," cried Betty, "can't you see that this is serious? It was a wonderful piece of luck. I was passing the mansions and I happened to look up just as someone was sticking up a notice, 'Flat to Let,' in one of the windows. There was a beast of a man on the other side of the street and he simply leapt across the road. I slipped, or I should have beaten him. As it was he got to the door a yard ahead of me. We looked over the flat together, but of course he was first, and he said he was sure it would suit him, only he must ask his wife. It was awful! I felt as if I must kill him."

"So you followed him out and pushed him down the lift-shaft? My dear brave girl!"

"No, but I heard him say he could be back in half-an-hour. I knew I could do it in twenty-five minutes. Look!" Betty crushed my hand as in a vice. "There he is."

As we took a corner on two wheels I looked out and saw a man running. "Taxi!" he shouted in the hoarse voice of despair. Our driver sat like a graven image and we swept on in triumph.

"Oh!" cried Betty suddenly, "suppose that, after all, somebody else——" She choked on a sob.

"Courage, dear heart," I said. "All is not yet lost."

A moment later we had reached Victory Mansions and made a dash for the flat.

"Are we in time?" asked Betty as the door was opened.

"I think so, Ma'am," said the smiling maid and ushered us into the presence of the outgoing tenant. A tour of the rooms at express speed showed the flat to be a desirable one enough. There were three years to run and the rent was not extortionate—for the times.

"I'll sign the agreement now," said I.

"Half-a-minute," said the out-going tenant as he produced the documents; "I'll get a pen and ink."

The whirr of an electric bell resounded through the flat.

"Quick!" panted Betty. "Your fountain pen." I produced it and wrote my name with a hand trembling with eagerness.

"A gentleman about the flat, Sir," said the maid, and, haggard, pale and exhausted, our defeated rival staggered into the room.

He looked at us with a dumb agony in his eyes, and neither of us two men had the courage to deal the fatal blow. It was Betty who spoke.

"I'm sorry, but we've just taken this flat," she said sweetly, and added with true feminine cruelty, "I saw it first, you know."

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The stranger lost control and crashed badly on the hearth-rug.

"Poor man," said Betty to the late tenant. "Be kind to him for our sakes." Then she led the way to our cab.

"Hotel Splendid!" I said magnificently to the driver.

"Wot," he growled, "not in them slippers?"

"True," I said, with what dignity I could muster, and gave him the address of our lodgings.

"None the less," I said to Betty, "you shall lunch among the profiteers. This is a great day, and it is yours."

* * * * *

The inter-University Sports.

Great interest is being taken in the plucky attempt of Cambridge to beat America, Africa and Europe (with Oxford).

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[Illustration: *What's in A name?*

Mate. "While we ARE DOIN' her up, what about Givin' her A new name? How would 'fusion' do?"

Captain. "'Fusion' or 'confusion'—it's all one to me so long as I'm Skipper."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *First Juvenile Spectator (as the Oxford crew go out to practice).* "THERE Y'ARE, 'ERR—WOT DID I TELL YER? THEY 'AVE GOT ONLY ONE OAR EACH!"

Second ditto. "YOU WAIT TILL THE DAY OF THE RACE!"

* * * * *

THE LAST OF THE WATCH DOGS.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—In all the stirring history of the War I don't know which has been the most moving sight: the War Office trying to get me to be a soldier, or the War Office trying to get me to stop being a soldier.

Before the late Summer of 1914, England had evinced no burning interest in its Henry. It had, in fact, left me to make my own way, contenting itself with cautioning me if I didn't stick to the right side of the road, or to fining me if I exceeded the speed limit. In August of that memorable year it got, you will remember, mixed up in rather a nasty bother. Searching for friends to get it out, it bethought itself of Henry, along with 499,999 others whose names for the moment I do not recall. Between us (with subsequent assistance) we set things to rights, and nothing remained for Old England save to rid itself gracefully of what remained of its few millions of new-found friends. There was, however, no shaking off its bosom pal, Henry. I am one of those loyal characters whose affection, once gained, nothing can undo. No use saying to me: "Well, old man, it's getting late now; you must come and see us again some other day." I am one of the sort who answer: "Don't you worry yourself about that. I'm going to stay and go on seeing you now."

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In the early days of demobilisation there was, I think, a certain novelty and attraction about my attitude to the problem. In contrast to the impatient hordes crowding the entrance of the War Office, ringing the front-door bell violently, tapping on the window-panes and generally disturbing that serene atmosphere of peace which was the great feature of the War in Whitehall, it was refreshing to think of Henry, plugging quietly away elsewhere at his military duties, undeterred by armistices, peaces and things of that kind. I fancy I was well thought of in those days at the War House.

"Say what you like about him," I can hear A.G.4 remarking to M.S.19 (decimal 9 recurring) as they met in the corridor on their way to lunch, "but I find him a patient, well-behaved young fellow."

"Yes," would be the thoughtful answer, "it seems almost a pity we are going to lose him."

Speaking strictly between ourselves, I have never thought much of the Military Secretary branch. What made them think they were going to lose me as easily as all that?

What I said to myself was: "Henry, my lad, thirteen shillings and elevenpence a day is thirteen shillings and elevenpence a day; now isn't it? And war isn't war when there is a peace coming on. Why then throw up a fat income just for the sake of getting into long trousers? You stay where you are till they come and fetch you."

So I just stayed where I was, and I conducted the operation with such ability and tact that Whitehall came to forget all about me. My name went on appearing, with ever-increasing dignity and beauty, in the Army List; but that made no difference. You see, though lots of people write the Army List, no one ever reads it; only from time to time a man will surreptitiously turn up his own name, just to renew his feeling of self-importance, or in an emergency he will look up the name of a friend in order to get the right initials after it and not risk giving that personal offence which may prevent the loan....

But when I say that I stayed where I was I don't mean to suggest that I didn't go on leave in the usual way. Indeed I often came home, in full regimentals, too, partly to impress you and partly to travel first-class at your expense. Fellow-passengers never thought of turning on me and rending me, as being the cause of six-shillings-in-the-pound. They would be extremely polite and make friendly conversation with me, leading up to the point that they had been soldiers themselves once, but had given it up, owing to having been told that the War was finished.

I would be just as polite to them, telling them they might count on me to return to the discomforts and risks of civil life as soon as I could be spared from the front. They had never the intelligence, or daring to ask, "The front of what?"

Now the climax has arrived; I am asked if they must throw me out or will I go quietly? I fancy I have been caught by one of those card-indexes. I suspect some Departmental General of showing off to a friend. "This is my IN basket," I can hear him explaining as he shows his audience his office; "every letter which comes in goes into the IN. That is my OUT basket, and every letter which goes out goes out of the OUT.

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“And then, Sir, we have the Card Index. A complete record of every officer in the Army, permanent or temporary.”

“Are there still temporary officers in the Army?” asks the audience, not being able to think of anything better to ask, and clearly being called upon to ask something.

“Sergeant-Major, turn up ‘Officers, army, temporary, the, in,’ for this gentleman.”

And thus the shameful truth comes out. One card only—mine.

Exit audience wondering what manner of intrepid man this Henry might be.

Originally the W.O. had had a great idea; they caused my regiment softly and silently to vanish away, thinking that I would vanish with it. But I had been too sharp for them. Learning that they were bent on “disembodying” me, and not liking the sound of the word, I had very quietly removed myself from my regiment to the Staff. Thus for a few happy months we see the W.O. rendered inert.

My final defeat was due to a chance remark of my own, made to one of the fifty-nine officers under whose direct command I served. Upon my first arriving on his Staff he had said to me, “Oh, by the way, P.S.C., of course?” Quite affable, frank and to the point; “P.S.C., of course?”

Not knowing the language, I could not make an equally affable answer. I asked him to repeat the question, but to change the code.

“You have Passed Staff College, of course?” he said a little less affably.

I then had the misfortune to answer: “Why, of course, if you mean that tall building on the right as I came up here from the station?”

He then made up his mind that I was not only wanting in essential parts, but was also the sort of person who jested on religious subjects. He never forgot the matter; indeed, when applied to (under “Secret and Confidential” cover) to suggest a means of getting rid of me, he very clearly remembered it. At once every department in the War House got busy; the interest of the Secretary of State was enlisted, and the War Cabinet decided that for permanent purposes my post must necessarily be held by a P.S.C. man. Done in by what was little better, when you come to think of it, than a mere postscript.

Please understand that there was no talk of discharging me; no talk of demobilising me; no talk even of disembodying me. Without any reflection on my conduct and merely upon the grounds that, not being P.S.C., I could not be regarded as quite right in the head, they intimated their intention of vacating my appointment by the simple process of an advertisement in the fashionable columns of *The London Gazette*.

“What happens next?” I asked.

“You will return to regimental duty,” they said.

“But there isn’t any regiment,” I pointed out triumphantly, “therefore there won’t be any duty.”

They didn’t seem to mind that, and for some time I wondered why. Then a thought occurred to me.

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“But here, I say, what about my pay?”

“Ah!” said they unhelpfully....

And that, my dear Charles, is why, if you keep your eye on the journals of (say) the Summer of 1925, you will read in the Stop-press Column an urgent telegram from the W.O.: “On April 1st, 1920, the following relinquishes his appointment

(Remaining, however,
Yours always), HENRY.”

* * * * *

ANOTHER IMPENDING APOLOGY.

“MOTHERS’ UNION.— ... A helpful discussion followed on ‘How to Deal with Unworthy Members.’ There were about 50 present.”—*Parish Magazine*.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Old Lady*. “WILL YOU PLEASE PUT ME DOWN AT THE SAME PLACE AS YOU DID LAST FRIDAY WEEK?”]

* * * * *

THE PRACTICE OF THE CREWS.

(*Ballad after C.S.C.*)

The reporter aired his aquatic lore
(*Popply water in Corney Reach*,)
A thing he had yearly essayed before;
And a rowing jargon obscured his speech.

The coach he coached with a megaphone
(*Crabtree, Craven and Chiswick Eyot*)
Till the crew were prone to emit a groan,
And the Cox said nothing but “Bow, you’re late.”

The Stroke he quickened to thirty-four
(*In the first half-minute struck seventeen*)
Some clocks returned it a trifle more,
Which wasn’t so good as it might have been.

The towpath critic he shook his head
(*Thornycroft's, where they began to row*):
"Hung over the stretcher" was what he said,
And "missed the beginning," and "hands too slow."

The towpath critic, whoever he be
(*A tug and some barges blocked the way*),
For thirty odd years, it seems to me,
Has never found anything else to say.

The towpath critic's remarks are trite
(*Off Ayling's Yard in a stiffish breeze*),
Yet I study religiously morn and night
Whole columns consisting of words like these.

* * * * *

[Illustration: MANNERS AND MODES.

THE COMPANY-PROMOTER'S PROBLEM—HOW TO UTILISE THE BOOM IN
SPRING.]

* * * * *

THE GENIUS OF MR. BRADSHAW.

(*By our Literary Expert.*)

No one will be surprised to hear that the Christian name of Mr. BRADSHAW was George. Indeed, it is difficult to think what other name a man of his calibre could have had. But many people will be surprised to hear that Mr. BRADSHAW is no longer alive. Whatever one thinks of his work one is inclined to think of him as a living personality, working laboriously at some terminus—probably at the Charing Cross Hotel. But it is not so. He died, in fact, in 1853. His first book—or rather the first edition of his book^[1] was published

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in 1839; yet, unlike the author, it still lives. He is, in fact, the supreme example of the posthumous serial writer. I have no information about Mr. DEBRETT and Mr. BURKE, but the style and substance of their work are relatively so flimsy that one is justified, I think, in neglecting them. In any case their public is a limited one. So, of course, is Mr. BRADSHAW'S; but it is better than theirs. Mr. DEBRETT'S book we read idly in an idle hour; when we read Mr. BRADSHAW'S it is because we feel that we simply must; and that perhaps is the surest test of genius.

It is no wonder that in some circles Mr. BRADSHAW holds a position comparable only to the position of HOMER. I once knew an elderly clergyman who knew the whole of Mr. BRADSHAW'S book by heart. He could tell you without hesitation the time of any train from anywhere to anywhere else. He looked forward each month to the new number, as other people look forward to the new numbers of magazines. When it came he skimmed eagerly through its pages and noted with a fierce excitement that they had taken off the 5.30 from Larne Harbour, or that the 7.30 from Galashiels was stopping that month at Shankend. He knew all the connections; he knew all the restaurant trains; and, if you mentioned the 6.15 to Little Buxton, he could tell you offhand whether it was a Saturdays Only or a Saturdays Excepted.

This is the exact truth, and I gathered that he was not unique. It seems that there is a Bradshaw cult; there may even be a Bradshaw club, where they meet at intervals for Bradshaw dinners, after which a paper is read on "Changes I have made, with some Observations on Salisbury." I suppose some of them have first editions, and talk about them very proudly; and they have hot academic discussions on the best way to get from Barnham Junction to Cardiff without going through Bristol. Then they drink the toast of "The Master" and go home in omnibuses. My friend was a schoolmaster and took a small class of boys in Bradshaw; he said they knew as much about it as he did. I call that corrupting the young.

But apart from this little band of admirers I am afraid that the book does suffer from neglect. Who is there, for example, who has read the "Directions" on page 1, where we are actually shown the method of reading tentatively suggested by the author himself? The ordinary reader, coming across a certain kind of thin line, lightly dismisses it as a misprint or a restaurant car on Fridays. If he had read the Preface he would know that it meant a SHUNT. He would know that a SHUNT means that passengers are enabled to continue their journey by changing into the next train. Whether he would know what that means I do not know. The best authorities suppose it to be a poetical way of saying that you have to change—what is called an euphemism.

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No, you must not neglect the Preface; and you must not neglect the Appendix on Hotels. As sometimes happens in works of a philanthropic character, Mr. BRADSHAW'S Appendix has a human charm that is lacking in his treatment of his principal theme, the arrival and departure of trains. To the careful student it reveals also a high degree of organisation among his collaborators, the hotel-managers. It is obvious, for example, that at Bournemouth there must be at least one hotel which has the finest situation on the South coast. Indeed one would expect to find that there was more than one. But no; Bournemouth, exceptionally fortunate in having at once the most select hotel on the South coast, the largest and best-appointed hotel on the South coast and the largest and most up-to-date hotel on the South coast, has positively only one which has the finest position on the South coast. Indeed, there is only one of these in the whole of England, though there are two which have the finest position on the East coast.

How is it, we wonder, that with so much variation on a single theme such artistic restraint is achieved? It is clear, I think, that before they send in their manuscripts the hotel-managers must meet somewhere and agree together the exact terms of their contributions to the book. "The George" agrees that for the coming year "The Crown" shall have the "finest cuisine in England," provided "The George" may have "the most charming situation imaginable," and so on. I should like to be at one of those meetings.

This is the only theory which accounts for the curious phrases we find so frequently in the text:—"Acknowledged to be the finest"; "Admittedly in the best position." Who is it that acknowledges or admits these things? It must be the other managers at these annual meetings. Yes, the restraint of the collaborators is wonderful, and in one point only has it broken down. There are no fewer than seventeen hotels with an Unrivalled Situation, and two of these are at Harrogate. For a small place like the British Isles it seems to me that this is too many.

For the rest, what imagery, what exaltation we find in this Appendix! Dazed with imagined beauty we pass from one splendid haunt to another. One of them has *three* golf-courses of its own; several are *replete* with every comfort (and is not "replete" the perfect epithet?). Here is a seductive one "on the sea-edge," and another whose principal glory is its sanitary certificate. Another stands on the spot where TENNYSON received his inspiration for the *Idylls of the King*, and leaves it at that. In such a spot even "cuisine" is negligible.

On the whole, from a literary point of view, the hydros come out better than the mere hotels. But of course they have unequalled advantages. With such material as Dowsing Radiant Heat, D'Arsonval High Frequency and Fango Mud Treatment almost any writer could be sensational. What is High Frequency, I wonder? It is clear, at any rate, that it would be madness to have a hydro without it.

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Well, I have selected my hotel—on purely literary grounds. Or rather I have selected two. One is the place where they have the Famous Whirlpool Baths. I shall go there at once.

The manager of the other is a great artist; alone among the collaborators he understands simplicity. His contribution occupies a whole page; but there is practically nothing in it, nothing about cuisine or sanitation, or elegance or comfort. Only, in the middle, he writes quite simply THE MOST PERFECT HOTEL IN THE WORLD.

A.P.H.

[Footnote 1: “Bradshaw’s General Railway and Steam Navigation Guide for Great Britain and Ireland.”]

* * * * *

A ZOOLOGICAL CURIOSITY.

“The complaint made was that men came to the district and asked inflated prices for shares, far above the market value, and it was argued that the new exchange would tend to obviate this system of sharks feathering their nests.”—*Lancashire Paper*.

* * * * *

[Illustration: BEHIND THE SCENES IN CINEMA-LAND.

“THAT’S FINE. BUT, AS I HAVEN’T GOT ANY FILMS LEFT, I SUPPOSE THERE’S NO USE STAYING HERE.”]

* * * * *

AN INTER-SERVICE MATCH.

(*With the British Army in France.*)

Frederick entered the Mess with a decided sea-roll, hitched his slacks and berthed himself on the starboard settee.

“Cheerio, my hearties,” said he breezily. “Everybody on the old lugger still luffing along all serene?”

“Why so oppressively nautical?” inquired Percival. “You haven’t been on the leave-boat lately.”

“’Tis true, old messmate. I’m under the influence of my new batman, one ’Enery ’Enson. After a lifetime in the Marines he’s now spending his declining days in the Army, and he’s terribly infectious. I found myself saying, ‘Ay, ay, Sir,’ when the C.O. spoke to me.”

“I think I’ve noticed your ’Enery,” said Percival. “Isn’t he about ten feet high by six broad, tattooed all over like a circulating art gallery, and addicted to chewing quids and swabbing out your hut in his bare feet?”

“My cabin, you mean. And says he’s going ashore when he takes a trip down the village. That’s ’Enery.”

“Incidentally he’s a confirmed bath-lifter,” interjected Binnie. “Yesterday morning my batman prepared me a tub, and while he was fetching me along your hulking pirate boosted out my sponge and towels and installed your lily-white self in it. You were so busy wallowing in my hot water that you never heard my protests on the door. You really must curb his buccaneering instincts, old Tirps.”

“I accept no responsibility for his methods,” said Frederick haughtily; “I merely profit by them. In any case I didn’t *take* your hot water; I simply used it. You should live near the bath-house and get up promptly when you are called, as I do.”

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"Well, I don't mind the British Navy ruling the waves," grumbled Binnie, "but I object to its extending its sphere of influence over my bath-water."

"It jolly well doesn't extend over mine," said Percival with pride. "Frederick's 'Enery doesn't get the better of my Elfred. This morning a queue, consisting of two perfectly good Loots, a really excellent Skipper and a priceless Major were waiting for vacant baths. But was Elfred Fry dismayed? To forestall an answer that might possibly be wrong I may say that he wasn't. He promptly appropriated a cubicle that happened to be unoccupied—"

"Really, my frowsty old Camembert, don't ask us to believe that they had *all* overlooked it," expostulated Frederick.

"Not for worlds would I endeavour to impose on your gentle trusting natures. So far from their overlooking it the bath had been the subject of earnest scrutiny, and they had all regretfully come to the conclusion that it lacked one important attribute of a bath—it wouldn't hold water. The plug was missing."

"And by a singular chance the plug happened to be in the possession of your Elfred?"

"That is my case, me luds," said Percival simply. "If the silent Navy wants to beat my Elfred it's got to rise very early in the morning."

"We shall see," said Frederick darkly. "I'm going to tell this tale to the Marines."

That evening the troops had organised a stupendous boxing tournament in the Recreation Hut. Binnie by invitation combined the offices of referee, M.C. and timekeeper, and Frederick and Percival at the ring-side unanimously disagreed with his verdicts.

"Most appalling decision," said Percival in a loud whisper. "The referee has obviously been got at."

"Sh!" replied Frederick. "He hasn't been told it's a boxing contest. He thinks it's a clog-dancing competition and is giving the points for footwork."

Unfortunately the M.C. did not hear. He was speaking himself.

"The next bout should conclude our programme," he said, "but I am asked to announce that Private Henson challenges Private Fry to box six two-minute rounds, backing himself for five francs against a small article of no intrinsic value."

Enthusiastic applause greeted the announcement. A disturbance in the rear of the hut indicated that Elfred was heading for cover.

"E 's twice my size," he wailed as strong hands hauled him back.

"The challenger admits that he holds a slight advantage in weight," continued the M.C., "but considers that is counterbalanced by his advanced years."

"This is *your* fiendish work," hissed Percival to Frederick.

"Not a bit of it, old sportsman," replied Frederick cheerfully. "The patent rights are held by 'Enery. I merely mentioned to him that Elfred possessed a desirable bath-plug that it might be useful to acquire."

Percival left his seat to confer with the shrinking Elfred.

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“E can ‘ave the old bath-plug an’ welcome, Sir, as far as I’m concerned,” said the latter.

“Tut, tut!” said Percival. “You must make a fight for it. The honour of the Army is at stake.”

“I ain’t all that set on the honour of the Army,” said Elfred. “But ‘im being the challenger, shouldn’t I be justified in putting the plug in one of my gloves?”

“The rules don’t provide for such a contingency. Hurry up now and get stripped, and I’ll give you twenty francs if you win.”

Both combatants were warmly received. ‘Enery’s decorative tattooing was much admired, and Elfred was urgently requested not to spoil the pictures. By desire of the referee the stakes were handed to him—Frederick producing the five francs for ‘Enery—and the battle commenced.

It was early evident that the Navy intended shock tactics, while the Army favoured a system of elastic defence. A salvo of short-arm jabs by ‘Enery was answered by long-range sniping on the part of Elfred, no direct hits being recorded. Towards the end of the round ‘Enery attempted to approach under cover of a smoke screen, but action was broken off at the sound of the gong.

The second round opened sensationally. Elfred, on the advice of his seconds, was “making use of the ring” when he accidentally collided with his opponent coming in the reverse direction and gave him a violent thump without return. There seemed every prospect of trouble, but clever footwork prevented the incident developing into a *fracas*. Round two concluded with Elfred leading handsomely by one point to nothing.

“Two to one on Elfred,” said Percival excitedly.

“Take you—in bath plugs,” answered Frederick, carefully entering the bet.

‘Enery equalised in the third round, Elfred having incautiously wandered into the track of a stray upper-cut and bounced off. More footwork followed, Elfred winning by about two yards. Both were breathing heavily when time was called, and ‘Enery was complaining about his bronchitis.

Skirmishing tactics in the fourth round resulted in Elfred having a narrow escape from being torpedoed beneath the belt, and during several subsequent clinches he was requested to stop studying the pictures and get on with the business.

The fifth and sixth rounds were marked by the departure of most of the spectators, and in the end a draw was the only possible verdict.

“But what about the plug, old scout?” asked Percival, as they wandered back to their quarters.

“As referee,” answered Binnie, “I gave a draw; as Battalion Boxing Board of Control I order the match to be re-fought in six months’ time, to give the men a chance to get into condition; and meanwhile as stakeholder I continue to hold the five francs and the bath-plug.”

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Profiteer (to M.F.H.)*. “LOOK ’ERE!—THIS IS THE THIRD TIME I’VE BEEN OUT WITH YOUR CROWD, AN’ Y’ ’AVEN’T CAUGHT A FOX. BEST THING *YOU* CAN DO IS TO GIMME BACK ME ‘SUB’ AN’ SELL YER BLOOMIN’ DOGS!”]

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[ILLUSTRATION: *BLUSTERIOUS PERSON (WHO HAS FORCED A CIGAR ON UNWILLING CLUB ACQUAINTANCE)*, "THERE MY BOY—YOU DON'T OFTEN SMOKE A THING LIKE THAT! THAT'S SOMETHING LIKE A CIGAR, EH?"

The Victim. "YES—SOMETHING. WHAT IS IT?"]

* * * * *

THE TRUE SONG-STUFF.

[A writer in an evening paper describes a certain song as being sung, "sometimes with a lump in the throat and a tear in the eye," all over England.]

If you wish to succeed as a writer
Of songs that undoubtedly count,
By making the atmosphere brighter,
The moral barometer mount,
Then be it your aim and endeavour to try
For the lump in the throat and the tear in the eye.

SCRIABINE and STRAVINSKY may flatter
The ears of the brainy *elite*,
But the musical numbers that matter
Express what is simple and sweet;
You may easily miss, by aspiring too high,
Both the lump in the throat and the tear in the eye.

Though cynics conspire to repress it,
To sentiment, "heavenly link"
(As the Bard of Savoy would address it),
With joy "I eternally drink;"
For it gives us the key, which no science can buy,
To the lump in the throat and the tear in the eye.

But, if you are anti-Victorian
And, scorning the coo of the dove,
Hold the roar of the primitive Saurian
The final expression of love,
You may have, if you choose, an alternative shy
At a tear in the throat and a lump in the eye.

* * * * *

“For 70 years Regent Street has basked in sunshine, and now it is to be cast into shadow again. It will be like a gloomy canon between dour stone walls.”—*Daily Chronicle*.

We have heard of a gloomy Dean, whose habitat answers to the description given. Can this be his understudy?

* * * * *

“The ‘brasses’ worn by the modern cart-horse are a direct survival of the amulets which bedecked the horses of the time of Julius Caesar. They are worn on the farthingale as charms against the Evil Eye.”—*Daily Paper*.

You should see our Clydesdale in her crinoline.

* * * * *

[Illustration: AN UNPOPULAR REVIVAL.

FRITZ. “THIS IS NO GOOD TO ME NOW. YOU WANT A SWELLED HEAD FOR THIS SORT OF THING.”]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, March 15th. The great Food-prices debate hardly justified its preliminary advertisement. Mr. MCCURDY took sure ground when he argued that high prices were mainly due to world-shortage; and, though he entered more disputable territory when he declared that the Profiteering Act was not primarily intended to punish profiteers, Mr. ASQUITH did not seriously attempt to dislodge him. Indeed, the EX-PREMIER’S speech was mainly composed of truisms, his only excursion into the speculative being an assertion—with which not all economists will agree—that inflation of currency is a consequence and not a cause of high prices.

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An ex-Food Controller, Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS, defended the Government against charges of extravagance, and ventured to remind Labour—as THOMAS DRUMMOND reminded Irish landlords—that it had duties as well as rights.

Early in the evening the PRIME MINISTER, who had sat through many speeches in readiness for the threatened attack, folded his notes and silently stole away.

On the adjournment General PAGE CROFT accused the Ministry of Munitions of unfair treatment to one of its employees. The peroration to Mr. KELLAWAY'S spirited defence deserves quotation: "The decision taken by the Ministry is a decision that will stand." That's the stuff to give 'em.

Tuesday, March 16th.—"The LORD CHANCELLOR was so unusually apologetic in his exposition of the War Emergency Laws (Continuance) Bill that none of the Peers had the heart seriously to oppose him. Lord SALISBURY took note of the Government's admission that they were anxious to say Good-bye to D.O.R.A. and only complained that the farewell ceremony was so long-drawn-out. Lord BUCKMASTER failed to understand why D.O.R.A. should have a longer life in Ireland than in England, and was so carried away by his own eloquence as to declare that all the crimes attributed to the Sinn Feiners had been due "to misguided attempts to enforce special legislation against a misunderstood and a gallant people." Lord BIRKENHEAD replied that there was at least a plausible case for the contention that the boot was on the other leg.

[Illustration: "CONTROLLERS" CONTROLLED.]

MR CLYNES. MR. MCCURDY. MR. G. ROBERTS.]

It is unusual to find Members of the House of Commons objecting to their speeches being reported, but apparently some of them do—when the reporters are police constables. The HOME SECRETARY thought it quite possible that if Members attended certain meetings the official stenographers might think it worth while to take down their utterances but I gathered that he was not prepared to give any guarantee on the subject, and that Colonel WEDGWOOD and Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY must not count too confidently on having a further road to fame opened to them.

[Illustration: THE CORNUCOPIA, OR HORNE OF PLENTY. SIR ROBERT HORNE.]

Mr. BONAR LAW read a telegram from Lord KILMARNOCK regarding the situation in Berlin. As it was already a day old, was admittedly based on a *communique* from *Wolff's Bureau*, "censored" by Mr. TREBITSCH LINCOLN (late Liberal Member for Darlington), and had in the meantime been officially contradicted by the old Government, it did not add much to our knowledge.

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Time was when it was usual to move to reduce a Vote by a hundred pounds if you wanted to defeat the Government. But such paltry figures are no good in these spacious days. Sir DONALD MACLEANS'S proposed reduction in the Vote on Account for the Civil Services was the much more mouth-filling morsel of one hundred million pounds. Mr. CHAMBERLAIN considered it very handsome of the Opposition, on the eve, he understood, of coming into office, thus to cut off its own supplies. Nevertheless he declined to accept the generous offer. Our finances would be all right if the House would back the Government by practising economy as well as preaching it. As it was, he thought the worst was over, for—strange and agreeable phenomenon—the floating debt was sinking.

After this it was, perhaps, not very complimentary of Mr. J.W. WILSON to urge the Government to put forth their best speakers. The PRIME MINISTER was still coy, but Sir ROBERT HORNE, in virtue of his new office as President of the Board of Trade, stepped nimbly into the breach, and made a speech so cheerful both in substance and delivery as to justify the hope that in him the Government have found the HORNE of Plenty.

Wednesday, March 17th.—Seventeen years ago Lord BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH, as a hard-shell Free Trader, sacrificed office sooner than bow the knee to the new gods of Birmingham. This afternoon he brought in a Bill (to safeguard “key industries” and counteract “dumping”) which would have gladdened the heart of Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN. Some of the other Free Trade Peers were still unrepentant. Lord BEAUCHAMP, for example, declaring that shipping was our real “quay-industry” and needed no protection, announced his intention of moving the rejection of the Bill; and Lord CREWE, although one of the authors of the Paris resolutions, on which the measure was ostensibly based, thought that it went far beyond present necessities. The only dumps with which Germany was likely to be associated for some time to come were doleful, not aggressive.

The Report of the Supplementary Estimates furnished the Commons with abundant points for criticism. In protesting against an increase in the remuneration of the Law Officers, Mr. HOGGE revealed a hitherto unsuspected admiration for the PRIME MINISTER, whose services, he considered, were most inadequately rewarded with five thousand pounds a year and no pension. If anyone deserved an increase of salary it was he.

Mr. TYSON-WILSON had the temerity to complain that the Government were not finding work for all the disabled ex-Service men whom they trained in the technical schools, and laid himself open to a damaging “*tu quoque*” from Sir ROBERT HORNE, who pointed out that this lack of employment was largely due to the trade unions, which refused to admit these men as “improvers.”



In introducing the Naval Estimates for eighty odd millions Mr. LONG was almost apologetic for not having made them larger. The *personnel* has been drastically reduced, and parents are actually being offered a premium of three hundred pounds to remove their sons from Osborne. On the other hand promotion from the lower deck was to be encouraged, and in future every youngster entering the Navy would metaphorically carry a broad-pennant in his ditty-box.

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Thursday, March 18th.—A proposal to erect a military monument on a hill near Jerusalem was adversely criticised by Lord TREOWEN. Lord SOUTHBOROUGH, as a recent visitor to the Holy City, thought that the Government would be better advised to demolish some of the recent buildings, including the ex-Kaiser's ridiculous clock-tower, which had not even the negative merit of telling the time.

In consequence of his rather exhausting seance with the Liberal Party the PRIME MINISTER was looking a little jaded. But he perked up wonderfully when Mr. WILL THORNE, *a propos* of a story that the Russian Soviet Government had introduced martial law into the workshops, asked whether he did not think that all able-bodied people ought to be compelled to work. There was the old twinkle in his eyes as he replied that it would be very interesting to know if that was the view of the trade unions. From recent information I gather that the bricklayers, at any rate, would not subscribe to it.

Upon the further consideration of the Navy Estimates General SEELY urged the re-establishment of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Mr. LONG said the Admiralty were most anxious for it. Mr. ASQUITH also approved, but from his ten years' experience as its President entered a *caveat* against expecting the Committee to take upon itself executive functions. "Had it done so," he observed, "there would have been collisions, cross-purposes, waste of application, and in many cases something approaching to administrative confusion." Which things of course never occurred under his *regime* of—shall I say?—expectant watchfulness.

The rest of the debate was chiefly remarkable for Lady ASTOR'S bold declaration, "The sea belongs to England, and it could not be in better hands." Coming from a country-woman of Mr. DANIELS it was doubly exhilarating.

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[Illustration: *Captain*. "ERE LET'S PACK UP NOW; IT'S GETTING LATE. BESIDES, THE KID WANTS HIS SHIRT BACK."]

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"DIRECT ACTION" AT PUTNEY.

"When the Light Blues went out a second time R.C. Barrett, of the winning trial eight crew, was at strike,—*Daily Paper*.

* * * * *

NEMESIS.



Kindly the dentist was, for he
Had obviously sought
To keep his waiting victims free
From apprehensive thought,
Providing for those souls in fear
The Comic Press of yesteryear.

I read those jests of days ago,
Those jibes at folly flown,
And wondered should I light upon
Some trifle of my own,
A par well pointed in its time
Or fragment of reputed rhyme.

Could I retrieve some sparkling fytte
Bedecked with *jeux de mots*,
I fancied that the sight of it
Might soothe my present woe,
Reminding me how once I had
Been quite a jocund kind of lad.

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Lo, what a foolish hope was this!
I realised too soon
The special form of Nemesis
That waits on the buffoon:
*The joke I found concerned the gloom
Inside a dentist's waiting-room.*

* * * * *

[Illustration: "HE HADN'T BEEN DEAD A WEEK WHEN THEY STARTED
QUARRELLING OVER HIS ESTATE."

"DID HE LEAVE MUCH?" "NO—ONLY THREE GALLONS."]

* * * * *

THE LATEST PARTY.

(Being the Diary of a well-intentioned Voter.)

Monday. Important article in my morning paper on the serious political outlook. Recommends the formation of a new party to carry out progressive reforms and combat the forces of Revolution and Anarchy. Sounds excellent. The new party is to be called the People's Party. I decide to join it.

Tuesday.—By a fortunate mistake my newsagent placed wrong paper on my step to-day. Find I was being misled by the sheet I usually take. A new party to carry out progressive reforms and combat the forces of Revolution and Anarchy has already been formed. It is called the National Party. I decide to join it.

Wednesday.—Attended public meeting advertised as being in support of the new party. Expected to hear all about the programme of the National Party. Instead was urged to join the Modern Party, to carry out progressive reforms and combat the forces of Revolution and Anarchy. Signed card before leaving the hall pledging my support.

Thursday.—Dined with Brooks, who takes very grave view of the state of the country. Said what we really want is a new party. Went on to outline some urgent progressive reforms and mentioned one or two necessary steps for combating the forces of Revolution and Anarchy. Suggested that he and I should try to start a local branch of the Britannic Party. Seemed so enthusiastic that I hadn't the heart to refuse him.

Friday.—Johnson called at the office during my busiest hour. Wanted to enrol me as a member of a new party, to be known as the Efficiency Party. No time to go into it properly, so agreed, to get rid of him. Anyhow, the object's a good one. It was

something about progressive reforms and combating the forces of Revolution and Anarchy.

Saturday.—Heard at the Club that if the Coalition is not better supported in their attempts to carry out progressive reforms and combat the forces of Revolution and Anarchy, they will form themselves into a new party and go to the country. Locally we are to have, in addition to the retiring Coalitionist, a Free Liberal candidate, a Labour Party candidate, a couple of Independent candidates, a People's Party candidate, a National Party candidate, a Modern Party candidate, a Britannic Party candidate, and an Efficiency Party candidate. Afraid this would make my position extremely complicated. Decide to give undivided support to the Coalition in the hope of averting a General Election.

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AT THE PLAY.

“THE TRUTH ABOUT THE RUSSIAN DANCERS.”

With that uncanny tuition of his Sir JAMES BARRIE has, of course, hit on the precise truth. Russian dancers are not born but made—by the *Maestro*, which I take it is (broadly speaking) Italian for Producer and Presenter.

When *Karissima* goes on a visit to the stately home of the *Veres* the peace of that ancient haunt of the conventionally correct is queerly broken. Young *Lord Vere* loses his heart. However, that might just as easily or more easily have happened if the Gaiety had been invited. But a dreadful change comes to *Uncle Bill*—he buys his clothes ready-made (at *La boutique fantasque*, for a guess, or possibly Mr. MALLABY-DEELEY’S), grows dundrearies and goes hopelessly off his game at golf.

Karissima, poor dear, can’t walk or talk or putt, for that matter, except with her toes. *Bill* calls this last cheating, but young *Vere* thinks it simply adorable—as do we all. *Lady Vere*, his mother, can’t get used to being kissed by *Karissima*, who *will* stand upon her lightly with one foot, oddly waving the other meanwhile in the air. Besides it takes too long and *is* rather too demonstrative. And couldn’t *Karissima* dear just try to walk with her soles really flat on the ground in the solid English county way? Certainly. *Karissima* will try, to please Madame, and with painful effort achieves a half-dozen clumsy steps till unconquerable habit and Mr. ARNOLD BAX’S allusively witty music lift her on tiptoe again. And really she is such a darling that the once reluctant dowager finally consents to the marriage; wedding bells forthwith (within); a white-haired clergyman, surprised at nothing, as becomes the very best type of padre, appears; follow *corps de ballet* bridesmaids; and *Bill* gives her away.

Karissima, says *Vere* to *Maestro* later in the evening, is depressed. Because she hasn’t a child. They both tremendously want a child. *Maestro*, silently showing his watch-dial, would seem to wish to suggest that they were unreasonably impatient. *Karissima* also pleads. Well, he will see what he can do. But there’s an awful penalty. For a new Russian dancer cannot be made unless another surrenders life. Anyway he fetches his black bag. And *Karissima* dances down the main staircase with her babe, who grows apace and is shortly seen prancing in the garden (on his toes—“Thank Heaven!” says the *Maestro*).

And *Karissima* dies and is brought in on her bier, and dances (she *would*!) her own funeral service. *Maestro*’s heart is touched; he lies down in her stead, and she, dancing on a carpet of thistle-down shot with stars (I think), and her lord (I am sure), perpetually exclaiming, “How perfectly topping!”—both achieve an enviable immortality.

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Madame KARSAVINA is exquisite; she is well supported by Mr. C.M. LOWNE (*Hon. Bill*), Mr. HERMAN DE LANGE (*Maestro*), Miss G. STERROLL (*Dowager*), and Mr. BASIL FOSTER (*Lord Vere*). And I thought I detected Mr. DU MAURIER'S appreciation of the bizarre in his production. But the triumph is the triumph of the whimsical author. I don't think he has ever done anything better; more ambitious things, yes, but nothing so free from flaw.

Isn't it more than possible that just three-score years ago, on a May day (see *Who's Who*), some Maestro of Fantasy slipped into a little house in Kirriemuir, N.B., with a black bag? Wouldn't that explain the otherwise inexplicable, the unwearied resourcefulness, the unabashed playfulness of this impenitent youth?

T.

* * * * *

DRAM.BAC.

A suggestion has been put forward, with the support of the British Drama League and others, for the establishment at our universities of a "Faculty of the Theatre and Dramatic Degree." Heartily applauding the proposal, we append a typical examination paper for the final school:—

- (1) Sketch briefly the progress of amateur acting in this country, from the impersonation of a Danish minstrel by ALFRED THE GREAT, to the Victory Varieties Matinee arranged by Lady Eve Tatlery.
- (2) Arrange, in order of probability, the first fifty authors of SHAKSPEARE.
- (3) "The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton." Estimate the rival claims of the Windsor Strollers.
- (4) Indicate your make-up for ROMULUS, HENRY THE EIGHTH, ABRAHAM LINCOLN.
- (5) What is a point, and how made? A "straight" line lies evenly between any good points; give instances.
- (6) Under what dramatic conditions can a part be greater than the whole? Cite the authority of any two actor-managers for this theory.
- (7) Explain, with diagrams, (a) The Eternal Triangle; (b) Squaring the Upper Circle.
- (8) Illustrate the axiom that the length of a run varies with the breadth of the dialogue.

(9) What proportion of the music-hall comedians of Great Britain is supplied by (a) Lancashire; (b) Scotland?

(10) Which European drama requires most doors for its honeymoon farces?

(11) "What Manchester thinks to-day England will think next Sunday evening." Analyse this statement in its bearing upon the play-producing societies.

(12) "Let who will make a nation's laws so that I make its songs." Discuss the ethical and sociological significance of this with regard to (a) "Where do flies go in the winter-time?" (b) "I *do* like-an egg with my tea."

In the *viva-voce* portion of the examination, candidates for Honours will be required to satisfy the examiners (to the point of actual tears) by their recital of selected passages from prepared books. They may offer any two of the following: "Buckingham's Farewell;" "The Signalman's Daughter;" "The Death of Little Nell" (*with voices*).

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For candidates not seeking Honours a passable imitation of Mr. GEORGE ROBEY will entitle to one group.

A.E.

* * * * *

TWO VIEWS.

There was a high priest of illusion
Who rose by his leader's extrusion;
 By way of amends
 He invites his old friends
To extinguish their prospects by Fusion.

There was a great foe of delusion,
Who came to the honest conclusion
 That Socialist Labour
 Plays beggar-my-neighbour
And sought to defeat it by Fusion.

* * * * *

A LEAP-YEAR RECORD.

"CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY SPORTS.—H.M. Abrahams winning the long jump with a distance of 22yds. to his credit."—*Picture Paper*.

* * * * *

"THE PREMIER AND HIS FUTURE.

WHITHER GOETH THOU?"—*Headings in Daily Paper*.

Answer adjudged correct: "I knowest not."

* * * * *

"Wanted, a Horse for its keep. Excellent cuisine."—*The Times of Ceylon*.

A la cart, we presume.

* * * * *



“A roof garden for cats is included in the scheme for the extension of the premises of Our Dumb Friends’ League.”—*Evening Paper*.

We have heard the nocturnal cat on the tiles called many names, but never a “dumb friend.”

* * * * *

“The Police announce that dogs without dollars found wandering after 10 p.m. are liable to be destroyed.”—*Hong Kong Paper*.

We understand, however, that in China dogs are almost invariably provided with taels.

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[Illustration: TRIALS OF THE FISH-TRADE.

“CLOTHES, MY DEAR! DON’T MENTION CLOTHES. YOU OUGHT TO BE IN THE FISH LINE, WHY, I RUNS THROUGH A SET O’ FURS IN ABOUT A MONTH!”

* * * * *

A NOTE TO NATURE,

accounting for my previous silence in an unusually temperate March and also presenting an ultimatum.

Ye great brown hares, grown madder through the Spring!
Ye birds that utilise your tiny throttles
To make the archways of the forest ring
Or go about your easy house-hunting!
Ye toads! ye axolotls!

Ye happy blighters all, that squeal and squat
And fly and browse where’er the mood entices,
Noting in every hedge or woodland grot
The swelling surge of sap, but noting not
The rise in current prices!

But chiefly you, ye birds, whose jocund note
(Linnets and larks and jays and red-billed ousels)
Oft in those happier springtides now remote
Caused me to catch the lyre and clear my throat
After some coy refusals!

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Ay, and would cause me now—I have such bliss
Seeing the star-set vale, the pearls, the agates
Sown on the wintry boughs by Flora's kiss—
Only the trouble in my case is this,
I do not feed on maggots.

Could I but share your diet cheap and rude,
Your simple ways in trees and copses lurking;
But no, I need a pipe and lots of food,
A comfortable chair on which to brood—
Silence! the bard is working.

Could I but know that freedom from all care
That comes, I say, from gratis sets of suitings
And homes that need not premium nor repair
Except with sticks and mud and moss and hair,
My! there would be some flutings.

So and so only would the ivory rod
Stir the wild strings once more to exaltation;
So and so only the impetuous god
Pound in my bosom and produce that odd
Tum-tiddly-um sensation.

And often as I heard the throstles vamp,
Pouring their liquid notes like golden syrup,
Out would I go and round the garden tramp,
Wearing goloshes if the day were damp,
And imitate their chirrup.

Or, bowling peacefully upon my bike,
Well breakfasted, by no distractions flustered,
Pause near a leafy copse or brambled dyke,
And answer song for song the black-backed shrike,
The curlew and the bustard.

But now—ah, why prolong the dreadful strain?—
Limply my hand the unstrung harp relaxes;
The dear old days will not come back again
Whatever Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN
Does with the nation's taxes.

Lambs, buds, leap up; the lark to heaven climbs;
Bread does the same; the price of baccy's brutal;

And save (I do not note it in *The Times*)
They make exemptions for evolving rhymes,
Dashed if I mean to tootle!

EVOE.

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[Illustration: *Sportsman (just emerged from the brook)*. “FOUR IN, DID YOU SAY?
DASH IT ALL—JUST MY LUCK. GOT MY GLASSES ALL MUD AND CAN’T SEE
THER FUN.”]

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THE METHODS OF GENIUS.

(BY OUR SPECIAL LITERARY PARASITE.)

The public already know something of the painful difficulties under which novelists labour at the present moment owing to the paper shortage and the enhanced cost of book production. But “the economic consequences of the Peace” by no means exhaust the handicaps of the conscientious and sensitive novelist. We are glad therefore to note the efforts of *The Daily Graphic* to enlist the sympathy of the public on behalf of this sorely tried and meritorious class. Our contemporary tells us, for example, of one momentous writer who was reduced to dictating blindfold “because the facial peculiarities of first one and then another amanuensis” upset her equanimity. Then

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there is the tragic story of Mr. R.L. HITCHENS, who, being engaged to write an article against time, sent out for a stenographer, who on arrival proved to be a man with a large black beard of so sinister an aspect that Mr. HICHINS was forced to dismiss him and write the article in his own hand. Yet Mr. HICHENS is not easily put off, for we learn that he finds he works best in big hotels and not, as we might have guessed, in the sequestered tranquillity of a minaret.

To some writers solitude is the true school of genius. Yet Sir LEWIS MORRIS found some of his happiest thoughts come to him while travelling in the underground, while Mr. W.B. YEATS records a similar experience as the result of a journey on the top of a tram-car. Your advanced modernists, with MARINETTI at their head, find their best stimulus to creative effort in the clang and clatter of machinery. *per contra*, to return to *The Daily Graphic*, Mrs. C.N. WILLIAMSON must have pretty things to look at “in business hours.” But the happiest of all our authors is Madame ALBANESI, who “finds her brain-spur in a blank sheet of paper, and not the ghost of an idea what she is going to write about.” Less fortunate writers labour assiduously only to leave the minds of their readers a blank, without the ghost of an idea of what the author has been writing about.

It is a pity that Mr. W.L. GEORGE, in his interesting survey of modern writers of fiction in the *English Review*, has told us nothing about the methods of the “Neo-Victorians” and “Semi-Victorians,” the “Edwardians” and “belated Edwardians,” and the “Georgians” and “Neo-Georgians.” With all these classes he deals faithfully. But his criticism is purely literary. He fails to tell us the things that every reader wants to know. It is all very well to say that the neo-Georgians “paint in ink,” but he ought to have mentioned whether it is green or red. Does Miss DOROTHY RICHARDSON dictate to the sound of trumpets, garbed in crimson trouserloons? Does Mr. ARNOLD BENNETT cantillate his “copy” into the horn of a graphophone or use a motor-stylus? Does Mr. SIEGRIED SASSOON beat his breast with one hand while he plays the loud bassoon with the other? Does Mr. ALEC WAUGH use sermon-paper or foolscap? Does Mr. ALDOUS HUXLEY keep a tame gorilla? These are the really illuminating details that we hunger for. Without them it is impossible to appreciate the artistry of our young Masters. Mr. W.L. GEORGE has given us a glimpse of the working of their brains; let him now reveal to us the secrets of their workshops.

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[Illustration: “THERE’S THAT DASHED BULL OF YOURS IN MY FIELD AGAIN! ONE OF THSES DAYS I’LL—I’LL—WRING ITS CONFOUNDED NECK!”

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

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After the Day: Germany Unconquered and Unrepentant (JENKINS) is the kind of thesis-book which it is wise to read in a deliberately incredulous mood. Mr. HAYDEN TALBOT is an American newspaper man of immense resourcefulness but, I should judge, of a not conspicuously judicial habit of mind. That, perhaps, is hardly a newspaper man's business. He is after copy, and certainly there's good enough copy in his interviews with Count BERNSTORFF and Dr. RATHENAU, and one must admire his feat of getting out of these and seven other German publicists, including MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, the draft of a manifesto to the people of America, composed in the hope, vain as it happened, that the KAISER would break his long silence and sign it. It is the author's theory that it is the inner camarilla, working for a speedy restoration of the monarchy, that is responsible for the certainly uncharacteristic reticence of Amerongen. Mr. TALBOT also interviewed HINDENBERG, whom he found a "broken-down, inconsequential, garrulous example of senility" LUDENDORFF, who was very stiff and proud and rude; and the *fiancee* of the man who sank the *Lusitania*. His general idea of Germany is summed up in the remark of Mr. MANDELBAUM, of New York: "All this talk about Fritz being down and out is all bunk!" Germany is full of energy and hate; she will soon be a monarchy again; will undersell the world; is assiduously preparing for air supremacy as the way to *revanche*. I take it that this is not so much a book as a *rechauffe* of newspaper articles, which alone will account for its formlessness and frequent changes of plane. Mr. TALBOT, confessing to a total ignorance of the German tongue, seems quite unconscious that this imposes certain limitations on his capacity to make an adequate survey of a difficult problem.

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I may confess at once that I finished the first chapter of *The Woman of the Picture* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) in a mood of slight derision, induced by Mr. G.F. TURNER'S allowing one hero to say of the other that he had "the interminable limbs" of an aristocrat. To the end of the book indeed I was uncertain whether such occasional lapses were meant to illumine the character of the supposed speaker or were unintentional. But again to quote, this time a phrase in which Mr. TURNER clearly shares my own delight, "before we were through with the affair" such details had ceased to be of moment. The plain fact is that *The Woman of the Picture* is the most breathless, irresistible piece of convincing impossibility you have read for ages. I decline to struggle with any transcription of the plot. On the wrapper you will observe the woman stepping bodily out of the picture, like the ancestors in the whisky advertisement; this, however, is a symbolic rather than an actual presentment. But there is plenty without it: a rightful heir, mountain castles amid the eternal snows, a villain (with sorceries),

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half-a-dozen attempted murders and the most hair-lifting duel imaginable. Soberly considered the whole business is a riot of delirium, belonging flagrantly to that realm where all the world's a screen, and all the men and women merely movies. But the unexpected charm of the book is that with the possible exceptions noticed above) it is told with a touch of distinction, even of subtlety, that invests its wildest audacities with an atmosphere of fantastic truth. In short, if Mr. G.F. TURNER has done nothing else he has at least enabled the fastidious to enjoy the thrills of a shocker while retaining their self-respect.

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In the first of the three stories, each about a hundred pages in length, which make up *Gold and Iron* (HEINEMANN), it is hard to escape the conviction that Mr. JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER between the lines, "So you thought that CONRAD was the only JOSEPH who could throw a man and woman together on a mysterious coast in the most strangely romantic circumstances, and provide a thoroughly groolly scrap into the bargain. Well, here's another little *Victory* for you." He seems definitely to challenge that air of the extraordinary and the inevitable combined which Mr. CONRAD so subtly conveys. It is a big effort, and I don't feel that the author quite brings it off, yet I cannot think of anyone but Mr. CONRAD who would have come nearer to doing so, and the fight in the dark in this story is one that even after the War will make a reader catch his breath for half-a-dozen pages at least. In the second and third stories, which actually deal with gold and iron (the first of the three is called "Wild Oranges," though perhaps "Blood Oranges" would have been a better title), the writer returns to a happier *metier*, and deals with an America remarkably interesting and wholly novel to me, an America where foundries and railways are in their infancy and crinolines are worn. Saloons, bowie knives and bags of gold-dust are all too familiar to us, but who, on this side of the Atlantic at any rate, ever remembers the quiet towns with Victorian manners to which the diggers belonged and returned? Both "Tubal Cain" and "The Dark Fleece" are excellent yarns and wonderful pieces of pictorial reconstruction as well.

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After reading *The Searchers* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), I seriously think of myself joining His Britannic Majesty's Secret Service. All the fun and firearms, and ever, at the conclusion, a startling surprise for your friends and admirers, among whom you stand cool, calm and collected. *Anthony Keene-Leslie* did not deceive me when, upon his first introduction as a secret servant, he modestly disclaimed the thrills and excitements commonly attributed to his trade. I knew that many pages would not be turned before he would land us in the middle of some crimson intrigue; mysterious strangers, disguises, cryptic and invaluable

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manuscripts, urgent telegrams, codes, Italian hidden hands, Scotland Yard, pseudo-taxicabs, clues and things. But let others beware of Mr. JOHN FOSTER, a most ingenious manipulator of the old stock-in-trade and possessing a rare sense of humour. For the reader to pit his wits against the author's is, in this instance, to be completely "had" and to become under the necessity (about page 265) of taking off his hat, not only to the secret servant but to a mere minion of the "Yard" also. Two minor points emerge from a close study of the book. The first is that the author is undoubtedly a barrister himself; if I am wrong on this point I finally withdraw my threat to join the Service. The second point is that he knows his Scotland even as well as he loves it. In the result you have two merits, which together amply discount the element of cheap sensationalism: one merit is the logical development of the story, and the other is its beautiful setting. I don't know whether it is due to the Scottish climate or to the legal atmosphere that the author omits all reference to the feminine sex or affairs of the heart; but anyhow it seemed right and meet that women should be left at home when men were engaged upon such violent and dastardly business.

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From certain internal evidences, mainly orthographical, I am led to suppose *The Branding Iron* (CONSTABLE) to be of Transatlantic origin. This, no doubt, explains my unfamiliarity with the name of Miss KATHARINE NEWLIN BURT, also certain minor points, notably the fact that the story, though by no means badly told, suffers from what I can only call a plethora of plot. As I followed the developments of its intrigue and tracked the heroine from untutored savage, wife of the wild Westerner whose excusable suspicions caused him to brand her as private property, to the moment of her triumph as the bejewelled idol of theatrical New York, the conviction grew upon me that here was a tale surely predestined to be the screen that covers a multitude of melodramatics. Presently indeed the suggestion became so insistent that I went further and began to wonder whether I was not in fact reading a "story-form" of some already triumphant film. Certainly the resemblance is almost too pronounced to be fortuitous; from the sensational branding scene, through cowboy stunts, to the up-town playhouse, where a repentant and wife-seeking hero recognises his mark upon the shoulder of the leading lady—and so to reconciliation, slow fade-out, and the announcement of Next Week's Pictures. But though it is impossible not to suspect Miss BURT of having an eye to what poetic journalism calls the Shadow Stage, this is by no means to belittle her mastery of the colder medium of print; and I hasten to acknowledge that, upon me at least, *The Branding Iron* has left a distinct though possibly fleeting impression of good entertainment.

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[Illustration: THE RELUCTANT PEGASUS.

A YOUNG SPRING POET HAS TROUBLE WITH HIS MOUNT.]

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CANE OR BIRCH?

“House Porter wanted, to live in or out, able to manage beating apparatus.—Apply, Stating wages required, to Headmaster, ----- school.”--*Local Paper*.

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“The total cost of the British delegation to the Peace Conference at Paris from December, 1918, to 31st September was L503,368.”—*Liverpool Paper*.

But it is only fair to say that in the last month they seem to have put in a bit of overtime.