

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 158, January 14, 1920 eBook

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Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

The Premier, says a contemporary, has become greatly attached to a white terrier puppy that he brought with him from Colwyn Bay. The report that it has been taught to run after its own tail by Mr. *Lloyd George* himself is probably the work of malice.

* * *

Our heart goes out to the tenant of an experimental wooden house who is advertising for the assistance of the man who successfully held up a post-office in London about a fortnight ago.

* * *

A London carman is said to have summoned his neighbour for calling him an O.B.E. We are sure he could not have meant it.

* * *

"The most hygienic dress for all boys is the Scots kilt," says a correspondent of *The Daily Mail*. "My own boys wear nothing else." We are glad to see that the obsolete Highland Practice of muffling the ears in a cairngorm has been definitely discarded.

* * *

According to a contemporary a new form of road surface material, which is not injurious to fish, has been produced by the South Metropolitan Gas Company. The utilisation of some of the deeper cavities in our highways for the purpose of food production has long been a favourite theme of ours.

* * *

"Having a tooth drawn," says a writer in *Health Hints*, "has its advantages." It certainly tends to keep one's mind off the Coalition.

* * *

Two men have been charged at Sutton with selling water for whisky. People are now asking the exact date when this was first made an offence.

* * *

At the present time a missionary costs twice as much as before the War, says the Rev. W.J. *Fullerton*. Many a cassowary has been complaining bitterly of the high cost of this comestible.

* * *

A new tango will be danced for the first time on January 15th, says *The Daily Express*. For ourselves we shall try to go about our business just as if nothing really serious had happened.

* * *

Asked by the magistrate if her husband had threatened her, a Stratford woman replied, "No; he only said he would kill me." Almost any little thing seems to irritate some people.

* * *

It appears that, after reading various references about his trial in the London papers, the ex-Kaiser was heard to say that if we were not very careful he would wash his hands of the whole business.

* * *

There is a lot of wishy-washy talk about the Bolsheviks, says a Labour paper. Wishy, perhaps, but from what we see of their pictures in the papers, not washy.

* * *

"Supplies of string for letter mail-bags," says *The Post Office Circular*, "will in future be 19 inches in length, instead of 18 inches." It is the ability to think out things like this that has made us the nation we are to-day.

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* * *

Offers are invited in a contemporary for a large quantity of tiger skins. People should first make sure that the rest of the tiger has been properly removed before purchasing.

* * *

The composer of an American ragtime song is to have a statue erected to him in New York. It is hoped that this warning will have the desired effect on any composers in this country who may be tempted to commit a similar error.

* * *

We understand that, after several weeks of careful investigation into details, the special Committee appointed by the Government to deal with Germany's refusal to pay for her sunken fleet at Scapa have now recommended that no receipt should be given until the money is handed over.

* * *

"You will soon be able to get work," said the Kingston magistrate to a man summoned for income-tax. This is the sort of thoughtless remark that tends to embitter the unemployed.

* * *

According to an evening paper, Granny *Lambert*, of Edmonton, proposed to the reporter who visited her on her one-hundred-and-sixth birthday. As, however, she is experiencing some difficulty in obtaining the consent of her parents the affair may possibly fall through.

* * *

Much sympathy is felt for the scrum-half who will be unable to assist his team this month on account of being severely crocked whilst helping his wife at the Winter sales.

* * *

The London policeman who went across to Ireland for his Christmas holiday is still under strict observation by mental experts.

* * *

We hear that the Congo Government have now decided that all Brontosauri must in future carry a red front light and a green rear light when travelling at night-time.

* * *

The War Office is said to be making preparations to abolish the Tank Corps. It appears that the Major-General who recently drove from Whitehall to Tothill Street in one of these vehicles has reported unfavourably upon them, saying that he never got a wink of sleep the whole time.

* * *

A remarkable echo of Armageddon is reported from the Wimbledon district. A subscriber was rung up the other day by "Trunks" and asked if he still wished to say good-bye to himself before leaving for the Somme.

* * *

Thistles do more damage to agriculture than rats, declared the Montgomeryshire Agricultural Executive Committee. Stung by this uncalled-for attack on his national vegetable a Scotchman writes to say that within his knowledge more arable land has been laid waste by leeks than by any other noxious weed.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Professor's Wife*. "SEPTIMUS, *the thaw has burst the pipes.*"]

Professor. "No, no, Marie. As I've had occasion to explain to you every year since I can remember, it's the Frost that bursts the pipes—NOT the thaw."]]

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* * * * *

Fashions for men.

["Who will help the Disposal Board by starting some new fashion that would enable it to get rid of a great consignment of kilts as worn by the London Scottish, the Royal Scots and the Highland Light Infantry?" —Mrs. KELLAWAY on the Disposal Board's "Curiosity Shop."]]

There are who hanker for a touch of colour,
So to relieve their sombre air;
For me, I like my clothes to be much duller
Than what the nigger minstrels wear;
I hold by sable, drab and grey;
I do not wish to be a popinjay.

In vain my poor imagination grapples
With these new lines in fancy shades,
These purple evening coats with yellow lapels,
These vests composed in flowered brocades;
Nor can I think that noisy checks
Would help me to attract the other sex.

With gaudy schemes that rouse my solemn dander
I leave our frivolous youth to flirt;
A riband round my straw—for choice, Leander;
A subtle nuance in my shirt;
For tie, the colours of my school—
These are the limits of my austere rule.

But, when they'd have me swathe the clamorous tartan
In lieu of trousers round my waist,
Then they evoke the spirit of the Spartan
Inherent in my simple taste;
Inexorably I decline
To drape the kilt on any hips of mine.

It may be they will count me over-modest,
Deem me Victorian, dub me prude;
I may have early views, the very oddest,
On what is chaste and what is rude;
Yet am I certain that my leg
Would not look right beneath a filibeg.

I love the Scot as being truly British;
Golf (and the Union) makes us one;
Yet to my nature, which is far from skittish
And lacks his local sense of fun,
There is a something almost foreign
About his strange attachment to the sporran.

So, when a bargain-sale is held of chattels
Surviving from the recent War—
Textiles and woollens, built for use in battles—
And Scotland's there inquiring for
The kilt department, I shall not
Be found competing. She can have the lot.

O.S.

* * * * *

The Domestic problem.

"Well, I've been to see three of them now," she said. "The first is at Shepherd's Bush—"

"What pipes!" I ejaculated. "What music! What wild ecstasy!"

"—four hundred yards from the Central Tube, to be exact; and there's a large roller skating-rink next door. You never rolled, did you? Three sessions daily, the advertisement says."

"I'm afraid I sat oftener than that when I rolled," I confessed. "'Another transport split,' as the evening papers say. I wonder whether Sir *Eric Geddes* is the rink-controller. But tell me a little about the house. I suppose there's a high premium and a deep basement?"

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"There are."

"Next, please."

"The next is at Chiswick; very damp and miles and miles to catch your bus. And there's a basement again."

"You might grow mushrooms in the basement," I said hopefully, "while I hunted my Pimlico on the shore. What about the third?"

"The third is at Hampstead, very high up and very salubrious. The agent says we should be able to overlook the whole of London."

"Impossible," I protested; "you can't ignore a thing like London."

"I don't think he meant that exactly," she explained. "He said that from the top bedroom window on bright days one could catch a glimpse of the dome of St. Paul's."

"That will be rather fine," I agreed. "We can have afternoon receptions in the top bedroom, and print 'To meet the Dean and Chapter' on the card. People love meeting Chapters in real life. What is the rental of this eyrie?"

She told me. It was as high as the site; and, again, there was a dug-out underneath.

"You haven't tried Ponder's End?" I said at last. "I've often seen those words on a bus, and a lot of sad-looking people on the top, pondering, I suppose, the inevitable end."

"Well, which of them are we going to choose? It's the servant problem that's the real trouble, you know. They simply won't cope with a basement nowadays."

"I think you overestimate the help crisis," I said. "There are two things that they really want. The first is to have employers absolutely dependent on them, and the second is a gay life. To take the first. I remember that when I was in digs—"

"Do you mind if I knit?" she asked.

—"when I was in digs it was my landlady's fondest delusion that I could do nothing to help myself. And, of course, I was bound to foster the idea. Every night I used to hide my pipe behind the coal-scuttle or my latchkey in the aspidistra, just for her to find. There was rather a terrible moment once when she came in unexpectedly and caught me losing half-a-crown underneath the hearth-rug; but I pretended to be finding it, and saved the situation. It will be just the same with you. You will go down into the basement and pretend to mistake the flour for the salt, and the cook will love you for ever. It's all done by kindness and incompetence."

"I suppose it is," she said doubtfully.

"And then there's amusements," I went on. "We will have Charles in once or twice a week. No servant who has ever heard Charles trying to sing would prefer a night out at the cinema or the skating-rink. If she does, we'll get a gramophone."

"Not for worlds," she gasped.

"Oh, *you* wouldn't have to listen to it. It would live in the basement, and *Harry Lauder* would help the girl to clean the knives and break the cups, and *George Robey* would make washing the dishes one grand sweet song. The basement would be a fairyland."

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"All this doesn't seem to get us much further," she complained, "in deciding which of those houses we're going to take."

"Oh, doesn't it?" I said, and, sitting down, I wrote a few lines rapidly and handed her the draft for approval. She approved.

And that is why, if you look at *The Times*' "Domestic Situations" column to-morrow, you may see the following announcement:—

House-PARLOURMAID wanted, helpless couple, where gramophone kept; state whether Hampstead, Chiswick or Shepherd's Bush preferred.

EVOE.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Another Turkish concession.*

Turkey (anxious to save the Peace Conference from embarrassment). "EUROPE! WITH ALL THY FAULTS I LOVE THEE STILL. IF THOU INSISTEST, I AM PREPARED TO STAY WITH THEE, BAG AND BAGGAGE."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: "OH, YES, MADAM, BRITANNIA WILL SUIT YOU ADMIRABLY. AND WHAT ABOUT THE GENTLEMAN?"

"OH, HE'S GOING IN HIS DINNER-JACKET, REPRESENTING ONE OF THE SMALLER NATIONS."]

* * * * *

OUR INVINCIBLE NAVY.

ORDEAL BY WATER.

When the innermost recesses of the Admiralty archives yield their secrets to the historian there will be some strange and stirring events to relate. But however diligently the chroniclers may search amongst the accumulated records at Whitehall there will still remain one outstanding performance, one shining example of courage and endurance of which no trace can there be found; for it was never officially known how Reginald McTaggart upheld the honour of the White Ensign in the Gulf of Lyons.

Reginald does not in the ordinary way suffer from excess of modesty; indeed he has been known to hint that on more than one occasion it was primarily due to his efforts

that the world was eventually made safe for democracy; but of this his greatest exploit he will never speak without pressure, and even then but diffidently.

When WILLIAM HOHENZOLLERN first cried “Havoc” and let slip the Prussian Guard, Reginald was among the most unsophisticated of landsmen. He had never in his life so much as heard a bo’sun’s pipe and could scarcely distinguish a battleship from a bathing-machine. But the blood of a maritime ancestry ran hot in his veins, and, being too highly educated to get on in the Army, he placed himself at the disposal of the Senior Service, which embraced him gladly. Henceforth his career was one of unbroken triumph.

Having taken a First in Mechanical Sciences at Cambridge, Reginald was at once detailed off for deck-swabbing on a Portsmouth depot ship; but one day an enterprising Rear-Admiral of the younger school, noting his scientific manner of manipulating a squeegee, had him sent before the Flag Captain, who, on learning his antecedents, recommended the blushing Reginald for the post of batman to the Senior Wireless Officer. Here his talents showed to such advantage that in a little over a year he received a commission as technical officer, and was placed in charge of an experimental Torpedo School, well away from the storms and tempests that vexed his less gifted brothers.

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It were tedious to relate Reginald's adventures during the next two years—how time and again he baffled the cunning devices of the German naval scientists—how he invented a pivotal billiard-table for use on drifters in rough weather and perfected an electro-magnetic contrivance by means of which enemy submarines were inveigled into torpedoing themselves without warning. All this and much else is accessible to the formal historian; besides, Reginald tells people himself. We will hurry on to the grand exploit.

It occurred shortly after he was appointed to a post on the British Naval Mission at Athens. He had left England little more than a month when the Sea Lords became uneasy. Trouble broke out among the torpedoes and there was no one to set matters right. Paragraphs began to appear in the Press. The result was an urgent wireless message to Athens recalling Reginald at once. There was to be no delay.

"Are you prepared to start immediately?" asked the Vice-Admiral, when he had briefly outlined the situation.

Reginald saluted briskly.

"I don't quite know how you'll go," continued the Vice-Admiral. "We haven't an armed ship sailing West for a week. There's a little Greek trading steamer leaving for Marseilles to-morrow morning, but I'm afraid you would find her very inconvenient. Would you care to risk it?"

"I start in the morning, Sir," said Reginald tersely.

The Vice-Admiral seized his hand and wrung it warmly.

When Reginald came down to the harbour and saw the craft on which he had undertaken to embark he was seized with a sudden faintness. Even the toughest seafarer would have thought twice before venturing beyond the breakwater in such an unsavoury derelict; and Reginald, be it remembered, had only once in his life made a sea voyage, and that in the peaceful security of an ironclad. His heart quailed beneath his Commander's uniform.

However, setting his teeth and consoling himself with the thought that she would undoubtedly fall to pieces before they could leave the harbour behind, he went aboard.

The master, an unprepossessing but exceedingly polite child of the AEgean, was overwhelmed at the prospect of carrying a British Naval Commander as passenger. He saluted wildly; he gesticulated; it was too much honour. Would his Excellency the Commander accept the use of his poor state-room—yes? Would he undertake the navigation of this so dangerous voyage—no? Ah, but he would seek his so expert advice in the sudden perilous moment—good. Reginald bowed nervously.

At first all went well. Except for the atmosphere of the state-room, which was richly tinged with a mixed odour of mildewed figs and rotten pomegranates, and the uncomfortable feeling that, unless he trod delicately, the decks would crumble away and deposit him in the bosom of the Mediterranean, Reginald was fairly happy. A ready wit and a dignified bearing combined to cloak his lack of seamanship and kept the skipper in a fit state of humility and awe.

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But in the Gulf of Lyons a breeze sprang up. It was quite a gentle breeze at first, and Reginald found it rather stimulating. Towards evening, however, it freshened, and the ship began to stagger. Reginald became conscious of those disquieting symptoms common to landsmen in such case. Fearful for his reputation he crept below to suffer in solitude.

By midnight it was blowing a gale, and Reginald had lost interest in life. He was thinking mournfully of the vanity of all human desires when a message was brought from the captain. They were about to perish. Would his Excellency the Commander come up to the bridge and save them, please?

It was a painful predicament, and Reginald was justly horrified. Could he venture out and display the weakness of the British Navy in the face of a crew of unwashed Greek matelots? On the other hand, could he skulk in his cabin and allow the Master to doubt his courage and resource? He rose and lurched unsteadily on deck.

The Captain was distinctly excited. Destruction was imminent. He had appealed to the Saints without avail. Would the British Commander come to their assistance? What did his Excellency think of it?

Reginald thought it was perfectly horrible. He had never thought such a ghastly scene possible. The ship appeared on the point of turning turtle and he was soaked to the skin already. Then, realizing that he could not remain on the bridge another minute without internal disaster, he made a supreme effort.

"My dear skipper," he howled at the top of his voice, "you surely don't call this a storm? The merest breeze, I assure you. I really can't be disturbed for such a trifle. If it begins to blow at all during the night let me know and I'll come up and take the matter in hand;" and without waiting for a reply he scrambled down from the bridge and made a dash for the seclusion of the state-room.

Next morning they were rolling in the swell off Marseilles, with the prestige of the British Navy, if possible, higher than ever.

* * * * *

[Illustration: POLICE CONSTABLE (DEMOBILISED OFFICER) MEETS AN OLD FRIEND FROM FRANCE.]

* * * * *

"The Lord Mayor of Dublin has placed a room in the City Hall at the disposal of the Labour party for the reception of reputations."—*Irish Paper*.

A kindly thought. Reputations are so easily lost in Ireland.

* * * * *

JAZZERWOCKY.

(With apologies to LEWIS CARROLL.)

'Twas grillig, and the Jazzlewags
Did glomp and scrimble o'er the board;
All gladsome were their dazzlerags,
And the loud Nigs uproared.

"Beware the Tickle Trot, my son,
The feet that twink, the hands that clug;
Beware the Shimmy Shake and shun
The thrustful Bunny Hug."



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He put his pumpsious shoon on foot,
He bent his knees to slithe and sprawl,
Till, fagged and flausted by disdoot,
He brooded by the wall.

And, as in broody ease he lay,
The Jazzerwock, with shoulders bare,
Came swhiffling through the juggly fray
And grapped him by the hair.

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The prancing maze they reeled and pressed,
Till both his feet ignored the beat
And woggled with the best.

“And hast thou learnt at last to jazz?
Come take my arm, my clomplish boy;”
O hectic day! Cheero! Cheeray!
He chwinckled in his joy.

’Twas grillig, and the Jazzlewags
Did glomp and scrimble o’er the board;
All gladsome were their dazzlerags,
And the loud Nigs uproared.

* * * * *

A PAINFUL SUBJECT.

I do not love dentists. In this antipathy I am not unique, I fancy. One never sees photographs of family dentists standing on mantelpieces heavily framed in silver; and, though *The Forceps* presents a coloured supplement depicting a prominent ivory-hunter with every Christmas number, there is, I am told, no violent demand for it outside the Profession.

This is not to be wondered at. A man who spends his life climbing into people’s mouths and playing “The Anvil Chorus” on their molars with a monkey-wrench, who says, “Now this won’t hurt you in the least,” and then deals one a smart rap on a nerve with a pickaxe—such a man cannot expect to be popular. He must console himself with his fees.

I do not love dentists, I repeat, but I am also not infatuated with toothache. It is not that I am a coward. Far from it. Arterial sclerosis, glycosuria, follicular tonsillitis and, above all, sleeping sickness I can bear with fortitude—that is, I feel sure I could—but

toothache, no! I am not ashamed of it. Every brave man has at least one weakness. Lord ROBERTS'S was cats. Achilles' was tendons. Mine is toothache (Biographers, please note). When my jaw annoys me I try to propitiate it with libations of whisky, brandy, iodine, horse-blister and patent panaceas I buy from sombreroed magicians in the Strand. If these fail I totter round to the dentist, ring the bell and run away. If the maid catches me before I can escape and turns me into the waiting-room I examine the stuffed birds and photographs of Brighton Pier until she has departed, then slither quietly down the banisters, open the street door and gallop. If I am pushed directly into the *abattoir* I shake the dentist warmly by the hand, ask after his wife and children, his grandfather and great-aunt, and tell him I have only dropped in to tune the piano. If that is no good I try to make an appointment for an afternoon this year, next year, some time, never. If that too is useless and he insists on putting me through it there and then, I take every anodyne he's got—cocaine, morphia, chloroform, ether, gas, also a couple of anaesthetists to hold my hand when I go off and kiss me when I come round again.

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One of my chief objections to dentists is that they will never listen to reason; explanations are quite thrown away on them. They only let you talk at all in order to get your face open, and then into it they plunge their powerful antiseptic-tasting hands and you lose something. I never go near a dentist without paying the extreme penalty. (None of those cunning little gold-tipped caps or reinforced concrete suspension-bridges for me. Out it comes. Blood and iron every time). I admit they frequently appease my anguish. Almost invariably among the teeth of which they relieve me at each sitting is included the offending one. But still I maintain my right to have a say in my own afflictions. The doctors let one. I've got a physician who lets me have any disease I fancy (except German measles and Asiatic cholera; for patriotic reasons he won't hear a good word spoken for either of them; says we've got just as good diseases of our own. Damned insularity!).

If I send for this doctor he comes along, sits quietly beside my bed, eating my grapes, while I tell him where the pain isn't. The recital over he hands me a selection of ailments to pick from. I choose one. He tells me what the symptoms are, drinks my invalid port, creeps downstairs and breaks the news to the hushed and awe-stricken family. A chap like that makes suffering a pleasure and is a great comfort in a home like mine, where a sick bed is the only sort you are allowed to lie in after 10 A.M. Without the fellow's ready sympathy I doubt if I should secure any sleep at all. One gets no assistance of that kind from dentists, although they give you more pain in ten seconds than a doctor does in ten years.

No dentist ever sees me home after the slaughter, orders me a diet of chicken breast, *peche Melba* and champagne, or warns my family that I am on no account to be disturbed until lunch. No, they jerk your jaw off its hinges and dump your remains on the doorstep for the L.C.C. rubbish cart to collect.

Another thing: dentists should not be allowed out loose about the streets. They exercise a blighting influence. You are strolling along in the sunshine, head high, chest expanded, telling some wide-eyed young thing what you and HAIG did to LUDENDORFF, when suddenly you meet the dentist. You look at him, he looks at you, and his eyes seem to say, "What ho, my hero! Last week you went to ground under my sofa and couldn't be dislodged until I put the page-boy in to ferret you."

"And what happened then," inquires the wide-eyed young thing, "after you had caught the Hun tank by the tail and ripped it up with a tin-opener?"

"After that," says the eye of the dentist, "you wept, you prayed, you lay on the floor and kicked, you—"

"And did you kill all the crew yourself?" bleats the maiden, "single-handed —every one of them?"

“Oh, I—er,” you stutter—“what I mean to say—that is—Oh, dash it, let’s go and get tea somewhere, what?”

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PATLANDER.

* * * * *

From the *dramatis personae* in a Malta opera-programme:—

“Singers, Old Beans, and Abbes.”

The “old beans” no doubt were drawn from the local garrison.

* * * * *

“The old wooden streets which survived in the more ancient parts of the capital [Petrograd] have, on account of the lack of fuel since the Bolsheviks became all-powerful, been torn down and demobilised.”— *Daily Paper*.

The last word in destructiveness.

* * * * *

“The standing joint committee of the Industrial Women’s Organisations have passed a resolution unanimously endorsing the action of the Consumers’ Council in opposing the decontrol of meat.”—*Daily Graphic*.

The “standing joint” committee would seem to be the very one for the job.

* * * * *

[Illustration: MANNERS AND MODES.

HOW TO APPEAR BEAUTIFUL THOUGH PLAIN:—SURROUND YOURSELF WITH SPECIMENS OF THE LATEST ART.]

* * * * *

DRESS OF THE DAY.

“BATHROOM TOILETTES.

“This season balls and dances, both private and public, are being given in greater numbers than ever.”—*Local Paper*.

* * * * *

“A couple of ciphers, followed by a string of noughts, represents Germany’s debt to France. And it looks as if the noughts are all France will get in the present generation.”—*Evening Paper*.

But it is possible that under pressure Germany might throw in the ciphers as well.

* * * * *

“LOST AND FOUND.

“ADDRESS BY THE LORD ADVOCATE.

“Will the party who took the wrong Umbrella from the Ante-Room, Music Hall, kindly return same in exchange for his own to ——, Music Hall?”
—*Scotch Paper*.

An odd address for the LORD ADVOCATE.

* * * * *

“Wells’ ‘History of the Universe’ describes the slow disappearance of certain species, taking hundreds of thousands of years to do it.”—
Daily Paper.

In an age of hustle it is gratifying to find one eminent author approaching his work with due deliberation.

* * * * *

THE PROFITEER’S ANTHEM.

“The Hymns to be sung will be: (1) ‘All people that on earth do well.’...”—*Rangoon Times*.

* * * * *

From *Surplus*, the official organ of the Disposal Board:—

“PORK AND BEANS.

“16 oz. tins (15 ozs. Beans and Sauce, 1 oz. Pork); 21 oz. tins (20 ozs. Beans and Sauce, 1 oz. Pork).”

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So the question which vexed many billets on the Western Front is now answered.
There was pork in it.

* * * * *

[Illustration: BEHIND THE SCENES IN CINEMA-LAND.

“YOU’RE IN LUCK, MY BOY. THEY’VE IMPORTED A GENUINE MEXICAN BANDIT
FOR YOUR KNIFE-FIGHT SCENE IN ‘BAD HAT, THE HALF-BREED.’”]

* * * * *

MY FIRE.

“Seventy-five per cent. of the world’s accidents arise from gross carelessness!” I thundered at Suzanne, who for the fifteenth time in five years of matrimony had left her umbrella in the ‘bus. Being on a month’s leave, and afraid of losing by neglect the orderly-room touch, I thought fit to practise on her the arts of admonition. Admonishing, I wagged at her the match with which I was in the act of lighting my pipe. Wagging the match, I did not notice the live head drop off on to the khaki slacks which I had donned that afternoon to grace a visit to the War Office. Only when I traced Suzanne’s petrified stare to its target did I discover that a ventilation hole had been created in a vital part of His Majesty’s uniform.

With great presence of mind I put out the conflagration before venturing on an encounter with Suzanne’s eye.

“You were discussing accidents,” she observed sweetly. “What percentage of them did you say was due to gross carelessness?”

I did not bandy words. There was no escaping the fact that they were, as Suzanne reminded me, my sole surviving pair of khaki slacks, and that I should certainly have to get a new pair before returning to the Depot; for these were obviously beyond wear or repair.

“Well, anyhow I’ve three weeks to get them in,” I said as lightly as I could. “My leave isn’t up till the end of the month.”

“Men’s clothes are terribly dear just now,” remarked Suzanne pensively. “And I was going to ask you to give me a new hat. But now I suppose—”

This roused my pride and self-respect.

“Suzanne,” I said, “the world is not coming to an end because I have to buy a pair of slacks. You shall have your new hat to-morrow.”

She clapped her hands in triumph, and a moment's reflection showed me that I had been caught. If it hadn't been for the conflagration she would never have dared to ask for a new hat. Now I came to remember, I had taken her out and bought her one on the first day of my leave.

However, the damage was done (twice over, in fact), and I sat gently brooding over it in silence. Suddenly an inspiring thought struck me. Eagerly I made my way to the writing-table and drew out a long and bulky envelope from the bottom drawer. For some time I sat there carefully mastering its contents.

"What's that funny-looking thing you're reading?" asked my wife at last.

"Oh, nothing important," I answered as casually as I could. "Er—by the way, do you know we're insured?"

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“Considering that I’ve paid the premiums regularly while you were away, I should think I ought to know.”

“Of course I shall put in a claim for the slacks,” I murmured.

“But how can you?” she asked, and wondering looked at me. “I read the policy once, and as far as I remember there’s nothing whatever about khaki slacks in it.”

“Do you know what this policy is?” I exclaimed, brandishing the document impressively. “It’s a Comprehensive Householder’s policy. I don’t know what a Comprehensive Householder is, but I think I must be one.”

“But I’m *sure* it says nothing about slacks,” she objected.

“Comprehensive!” I shouted. “That means all-embracing. This policy embraces my slacks.”

“That sounds almost indelicate.”

“Listen. ‘Whereas the undermentioned, hereinafter called the Accused—the Assured, I mean—has paid blank pounds, shillings and pence Premium or Consideration ... to insure him/her from loss or damage by Lightning, Explosion, Earthquake, Thunderbolts ...’”

“Oo-er,” said Suzanne with a shiver.

“... Aeroplanes, Airships, and/or other Aerial Craft, Storm, Tempest, Subterranean Fire ...”

“Monsoon, Typhoon, Volcano, Avalanche,” put in Suzanne impatiently. “Cut the cataclysms and come to the slacks.”

“I’m just coming to them. ‘... Burglary, Housebreaking, Theft and/or Larceny’—now hold your breath, for we’re getting there—‘Conflagration and/or Fire....’” I paused to let it sink in. “The fact is,” I continued weightily, “we’ve had a Fire.”

“Have we? But I wasn’t dressed for it. I should have worn a mauve *peignoir*, and been carried down to safety by a blond fireman. To have a fire without a fire-engine is like being married at a registry-office. Next time—”

“Nevertheless, we’ve had a Fire, within the meaning of the policy. Now I’m going to write a letter to the Insurance Company.”

And I did so to the following effect:—

"77, *The Supermansions*,
S.W.

"DEAR SIRS,—I regret to inform you that a fire took place at/in the above demesne and/or flat after tea to-day and damaged one (1) pair of khaki slacks/trousers so as to render them unfit for further use. I shall therefore be glad to receive from you the sum of two guineas, the original cost price of the damaged article of apparel.

"Yours, *etc.*"

Next day I took Suzanne out to buy the new hat. This done, we went on to my tailor's to replace the ill-starred slacks. A casual inquiry as to price elicited the statement that it would be four guineas. I cut short a rambling discourse, in which the tailor sought to saddle various remote agencies with the responsibility for the increase, and stamped out of the establishment with the blasphemous vow that I'd get a pair ready-made at the Stores.

That evening I received a reply from the Insurance people:—

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"In all communications please quote Ref. No. 73856/SP/QR.

"SIR,—We note your claim for garments injured by an outbreak of fire at your residence. We await the reports of the Fire Brigade and Salvage Corps, on receipt of which we will again communicate with you. Meanwhile, will you kindly inform us what other damage was done?

"We are, yours, *etc.*"

I at once wrote back to remove their misapprehension:—

"DEAR SIRs,—My fire was not what you would call an outbreak. It was essentially a quiet affair, attended by neither Fire Brigade nor Salvage Corps, but just the family (like being married at a registry-office, don't you think?). My khaki slacks were the only articles injured. As I am now going about without them, you will realise that no time should be lost in settling the claim.

"Yours, *etc.*

"P.S. I nearly forgot—73856/RS/VP. There!"

A day or two later I received a request, pitched in an almost slanderously sceptical tone, for more detailed information. I humoured them, and there ensued a ding-dong correspondence, in which that wretched Ref. No. was bandied backwards and forwards with nauseating reiteration, and of which the following are the salient points:—

They. Kindly state what you estimate the total value of the contents of your residence to be.

Myself (after a searching inquiry into present prices). L1,500.

They (promptly). We beg to point out that you are only insured for a total sum of L750. In accordance with the terms of your policy you are only entitled to recover such proportion of the value of the loss or damage as the total insured bears towards the total value of the contents—*i.e.*, one-half.

Myself. Two guineas is exactly one-half of four guineas, the present cost of slacks. Please see attached affidavit from tailor. (By a masterly stroke I had actually induced the rascal to set out his iniquity in black and white.)

At last, twenty days after the fire, when I had finally screwed myself up to the point of going out to buy a pair of reach-me-downs, I was rewarded by receiving a cheque for two guineas from the Insurance Company, "in full settlement."

By the same post I received a letter from the Adjutant of my Depot informing me that I was not to return at the expiration of my leave, but by War Office instructions (I will spare you the Ref. No.) was to proceed instead to the Crystal Palace for immediate demobilization. (That, by the way, is part of the game of being a volunteer for the Army of Occupation.) It was Suzanne who brought the two letters into their proper correlation.

"You won't have to get a new pair of slacks now," she said.

"Bless my soul, no!" I exclaimed. "Then what ought I to do with this cheque? Send it back?"

"Certainly not," cried Suzanne as she snatched it from my wavering hand. "I've been wanting a new hat for some time."

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[Illustration: ANOTHER COMBINE.

Bystander. “OW YER GOIN’, MATE?”

Gutter Merchant. “FINE! I’VE JUST AMALGAMATED WITH THE BUSINESS NEXT DOOR.”]

* * * * *

“FRENZIED FINANCE.”

“The guardians want more money also. What the Treasury finan-local taxations are *only the be-lical* taxations are *only the beginning* of the demand upon the citizen’s pocket.”—*Evening Paper.*

* * * * *

“JUMPER CHAMPION.

“The reference to a young woman living at Esher, Surrey, who has knitted 50 jumpers since August 20, which her friends claim to be a world’s record for an amateur, has resulted in a challenge.

“‘Jumper,’ who lives at Margate, writes: ‘I find it quite easy to knit in the dark and to read while knitting.’”—*Daily Paper.*

The Margate candidate will get our vote.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE SERVANTS’ BALL.

Groom (somewhat heated). “CARE FOR A BREATHER, MY LADY?”]

* * * * *

MY SALES DAY.

7.0 to 8.30. Rise, breakfast, and make out shopping-list. I put down:—

Waterproof for Henry.
School-frock and boots for the Kid.
Replenish household linen.



9.0. Arrive at large emporium just as the doors open. Ask to be directed to gentleman's mackintoshes. Pause on the way to look at evening wraps marked down from five guineas to 98/11. It seems a sweeping reduction, but I do not require an evening wrap.

9.10 to 10.15. Try on evening wraps. Select a perfectly sweet *Rose du Barri* duvetyn lined *gris fonce*.

10.15. Continuing to head for mackintoshes. The course runs past a job-line in silk hosiery. Remember I ought to get stockings to go with the evening wrap.

10.15 to 11.5. Match stockings.

11.15. Arrive at gentlemen's mackintoshes. Find they are not being reduced in the sale. Observe however that some handsome silk shirts with broad stripes are marked half-price; get three for Henry, also a fancy waistcoat at 6/11-3/4 (was 25/-), only slightly soiled down front.

11.40. Ask for Children's Department. Take wrong turning and arrive at millinery.

11.40 to 1.10. Try on hats. Decide on a ducky little toque and a fascinating river hat (for next summer).

1.10 to 1.30. Still asking for Children's Department. When it is finally given to me I am told that useful school-frocks have all been sold.

1.30 to 6.30. Drift to Shoe Department; secure a pair of pink satin slippers—rather tight, but amazingly cheap. Swept by crowd into "Fancy Goods"; make several purchases. Get taken in a crush to "Evening Accessories"; am persuaded to buy.

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6.35. Leave emporium. It is raining heavily.

7.15. Arrive home wet and exhausted. Have an argument, conducted affably on my side, with Henry, who flatly refuses to wear the half-price striped shirts or pay for the only-slightly-soiled waistcoat. He makes pointed remarks about the bad weather, with cynical reference to mackintoshes. Am struck afresh by the selfishness of men.

7.45. Remember that I have forgotten household linen and Kid's boots, but determine not to let this spoil my good temper.

8.0. Dine alone with Henry. Do my best to show a forgiving spirit in face of his egoism. So to bed, conscious of a day well spent.

* * * * *

OUR DAY OF UNREST.

["The great demand of the moment is something fresh to do on Sunday."
—*Evening Paper*.

At the ample shrine of pleasure
You have worshipped well and long
On this day of so-called leisure,
Yet you feel there's something wrong.

Blase is your air and jaded;
Sabbath hours have lost their zest;
Utter ennui has invaded
Every corner of your chest.

Sport is shorn of all its glamour;
Motoring proves no more a lure;
So you come to me and clamour
For a speedy psychic cure.

Well, my friend, if fresh sensation
Is the object of your search,
And you want a consultation,
My advice is, Go to church.

* * * * *

BOLSHEVISM IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

“Whitley Councils are the latest development in Government offices in Whitehall. What is aimed at is a system of promotion free and uninterrupted from top to bottom.”

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE HEIR PRESUMPTIVE.

Labour. “PERHAPS IT’S A SIZE TOO BIG FOR ME AT PRESENT.”

Coalition. “GLAD YOU FEEL LIKE THAT, AS I HAVEN’T QUITE FINISHED WITH IT.”]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Soulful Party.* “AH, YES, THE WORLD IS ALWAYS SO—WE NEVER STREW FLOWERS ON A MAN’S GRAVE UNTIL AFTER HE IS DEAD.”]

* * * * *

THE CANDOUR OF KEYNES.

(Suggested by the perusal of “*The Economic Consequences of the Peace.*”)

There was a superior young person named KEYNES
Who possessed an extensive equipment of brains,
And, being elected a Fellow of King’s,
He taught Economics and similar things.

On the outbreak of war he at once made his mark
As a “tempy,” but Principal, Treasury Clerk,
And the Permanent Staff and the CHANCELLOR too
Pronounced him a flier and well worth his screw.

So he went to the Conference, not as a mute,
To act as the CHANCELLOR’S chief substitute,
And in this extremely responsible post
He mingled with those who were ruling the roast.

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The Big and redoubtable Three, 'tis confessed,
By his talent and zeal were immensely impressed;
But, conversely, the fact, which is painful, remains
That they failed to impress the redoubtable KEYNES.

So, after five months of progressive disgust,
He shook from his feet the Parisian dust,
Determined to give the chief Delegates beans
And let the plain person behind the Peace scenes.

Though his title is stodgy, yet all must admit
That his pages are seasoned with plenty of wit;
He's alert as a cat-fish; he can't be ignored;
And throughout his recital we never are bored.

For he's not a mere slinger of partisan ink,
But a thinker who gives us profoundly to think;
And his arguments cannot be lightly dismissed
With cries of "Pro-Hun" or of "Pacifist."

And yet there are faults to be found all the same;
For example, I doubt if it's playing the game
For one who is hardly unmuzzled to guy
Representative statesmen who cannot reply.

And while we're amused by his caustic dispraise
Of President WILSON'S Chadbandian ways,
Of the cynical TIGER, laconic and grim,
And our versatile PREMIER, so supple and slim—

Still we feel, as he zealously damns the Allies
For grudging the Germans the means to arise,
That possibly some of the Ultimate Things
May even be hidden from Fellows of King's.

* * * * *

"The —— Male Voice Choir and St. ——'s Brass Band discorded Xmas
music."—*Local Paper*.

We shouldn't wonder.

* * * * *



“Another element in the industrial activity of Japan, which is brought forcibly home to the Westerner, is the obvious pleasure that the Japanese people take in doing the work which is allotted to them. It is no uncommon sight to see men laughing merrily as they drag along their heavy merchandise, or singing as they swing their anvils in a manner almost reminiscent of the historic village blacksmith.”—*Provincial Paper*.

And “children coming home from school” know better than to “look in at the open door.”

* * * * *

[Illustration: “GRANDFATHER, I SIMPLY LOVE YOUR NICE LONG BEARD. PROMISE ME YOU’LL NEVER HAVE IT BOBBED.”]

* * * * *

THE EGOIST.

On Monday morning Hereward Vale left home in an unsettled state of mind. That was putting it mildly. He was thoroughly unhappy. Something was up—he couldn’t tell what—or whether it was his own fault or Mary’s. Anyhow, it didn’t seem to matter whose fault it was. The thing had happened. That was the one overwhelming idea that concerned him. The first shadow had fallen; their record of complete and perfect happiness was broken.

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The road to the station was a long and particularly beautiful one. Hereward had always appreciated every inch of it. But to-day he hated it. He hated the way the yew-trees drooped, the leafless branches of the hazels, the faded, crumpled blackberry, the scattered decaying leaves. It was really a remarkable day for November—clear and frosty, with a bright blue sky and scudding white clouds. A strong north-east wind tested one's vitality. Hereward's was low. He buttoned his collar and hurried on.

Mary had never treated him quite like this before. She had always been tender, sympathetic and understanding with his moods. True, he was trying; but she had known that before she married him. He was an artist, and an artist's work, he argued, depended largely on the state of his emotions. He earned the family bread by the labour of his hands and his hand was the servant of his mind, and his mind a tempest of moods. Mary had applied herself to her task with creditable skill. She could always turn his sullenness to a sort of creative melancholy of which he was rather proud; his restlessness to energy and his discontent to something like constructive thinking. How she achieved the miracle he did not know, nor did he inquire. But he was guided by her as a child by its mother, still constantly rebelling.

But to-day the machinery had broken down. Mary had been cool, pleasant and crisply unemotional at breakfast-time. He had woken up cross and with a headache. He had a muddled feeling and wanted sorting out. But Mary seemed quite unaware of it. She had a preoccupied manner; she went about just too cheerfully, chatting just too pleasantly about trivial things. It was mechanical, Hereward decided, and, anyway, it wasn't at all what he wanted. His monosyllabic responses were accepted as perfectly right and natural, when they were nothing of the sort. She did not get up and pass her hand lovingly and soothingly over his hair and say things appropriate to his state of mind. She went on with her breakfast and looked after him kindly enough, but without solicitude.

For instance, she made no comment on the fact that he had hardly touched his bacon; she merely removed his plate and gave him marmalade and toast as if he had left no bacon at all. She didn't even notice the lines of suffering on his face, the dark circles under his eyes. He cast a glance in the mirror when her back was turned to see if they were obvious. They were. Why wasn't Mary catching his hump? She always did.

When finally he left the house, a little bent, with no spring in his step, Mary didn't accompany him to the door. She didn't exchange with him one of those rapid looks of complete understanding that he had grown so accustomed to and found so sustaining and helpful. She kissed him firmly and coolly, almost casually. Just so she might kiss an aunt.

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The train journey was cold and lonely. Nobody he knew was travelling up to town. He bought a daily paper, but the headlines put him off. They were nearly all about divorce cases. There was one about a man who had lived for three years in the same house with his wife without speaking to her. Such things were possible! He gazed out of the window. The wonderful day had no charm for him. The feeling of autumn only further increased his sense of the loss of youth, of the decay of romance. He nursed and nourished his grievance. He desired that Mary should know what a wreck she had made of his day, possibly of his life.

He was in no mood for work. He went up to his studio in Fitzroy Square and muddled about with pens and ink. He had what he called a good tidy up, and firmly and consistently threw away every relic of sentiment he had foolishly preserved. At one o'clock, through habit and not because he was hungry, he went out and had a lonely lunch at a small restaurant, sitting at a marble-topped table which imparted to him something of its chill. After that he loafed about looking at things till dusk. Dusk was quite unbearable. He fled back to the studio, made up a stupendous fire, lit a pipe and mused.

He decided not to go home that night. He felt hurt and ill-used. He would stay in town and have a thoroughly good time. As the idea struck him he looked round the studio. The corners were dismal and shadowy. Everything not in the immediate circle of the fire looked grey and cheerless. His easel, with a bit of drapery thrown across it, was like a spectre with outstretched arms. It suggested despair. He could think of no one whom he wanted to see. There wasn't a soul he knew whom he would not in this crisis deliberately have avoided.

So he went to the Russian Ballet and was bored. He had been excited about *Cleopatra* the first time he had seen it; he now decided that it was a great mistake to try to repeat emotional experiences.

He left hurriedly before the programme was half over. His feet took him mechanically to Waterloo Station. He looked up a train. The 9.30 was due out; he sprinted and caught it. The carriage he managed to get into was empty and warm. He slept; he slept all the way, and it did him good.

When he arrived at the other end the night was calm and the sky star-spangled. The walk out exhilarated him; his exasperation was over. He ran lightly down the leaf-strewn steps of the old garden and looked in at the window. Mary was seated at the fire. She looked pensive, pretty and a little sad. He whistled and she smiled up. "Hooray!" she said, "I'd nearly given you up." She slipped round and had the door open before he could get out his key and drew him in. She helped him off with his coat and scanned his face with even more than her usual intentness and interest. But she didn't ask him why he was late and he didn't tell her. He thought that could wait.

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Their extemporised supper was a great success, and they sat before the wood fire far into the night.

“What was up this morning?” he finally asked. “You weren’t quite yourself, were you?”

“This morning?” she questioned, puzzled. “Oh, I remember. I woke with a splitting headache. Did you notice it? You nice old thing!”

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Musician (having bumped lady with 'cello).* “OH, I AM SO SORRY.”

Lady. “DON’T MENTION IT. I’M PASSIONATELY FOND OF MUSIC.”]

* * * * *

AT THE PLAY.

“MR. PIM PASSES BY.”

“The year’s at the spring
And day’s at the morn...
God’s in His heaven—
All’s right with the world!”

When *Pippa* “passed,” singing songs like that and preoccupied with the splendid fact of her one day’s holiday, she unconsciously brought about a change for the better in the heart or conscience of all who overheard her. It was not so with the passing of *Mr. Pim*. Prior to his intrusion, there had been nothing to disturb the well-ordered existence of *Geo. Marden, Esq., J.P.*, and his wife (late Mrs. Tellworthy), except that they did not see eye to eye on the small question of his niece’s early engagement to a young artist and on the still smaller question of futuristic curtains. Then came *Mr. Garraway Pim*, a doddering old gentleman, with a thin falsetto voice and a loosish memory, but otherwise harmless. He arrives with an introduction from Australia and casually lets fall a tale of a fellow-passenger with the unusual name of Tellworthy, from which—and other incidental evidence—*Mrs. Marden* gathers that her first husband (an ex-convict) is still alive. Having dropped this thunderbolt he drifts off, leaving tragedy in his wake. End of Act I.

Marden, highly conscientious, takes the orthodox view that his lawless marriage must be nullified. His wife, though horrified at the resurrection of her impossible first husband, permits herself to recognise the humorously ironic side of things. *Mr. Pim*, fortunately located in the immediate neighbourhood, is sent for that he may throw further light on the painful subject of Tellworthy’s revival. He now reports—what he had vaguely imagined himself to have mentioned in the first instance—that Tellworthy had

met his death at Marseilles through swallowing a herring-bone. The Second Act closes with a burst of jubilant hysterics on the part of *Mrs. Marden*.

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But the situation is only partially relieved. True, the old husband is dead all right, but the *Mardens'* marriage is still bigamous; they have been living all this time in what would be regarded in the eyes of Heaven (and, still worse, the county of Bucks) as sin. However, a trifling formality at a registry-office can rectify this and nobody need be any the wiser. This at least is *Marden's* attitude, always free from any suspicion of complexity. But his wife (if that is the word for her), being of a more subtle nature, determines to make profit out of the situation. She points out to him that she is at present the widow Tellworthy and that she must be wooed all over again, and can only be won on her own terms. These include a recognition of the niece's engagement (has not the young artist an equal right with *Marden* to a speedy marriage with the woman of his choice?) and a concession to her taste in futuristic curtains.

[Illustration: A DROPPER OF UNCONSIDERED TRIFLES.

Mr. Pim. Mr. DION BOUCICAULT.

Mrs Marden. Miss IRENE VANBRUGH.]

At this juncture *Mr. Pim* drifts in again to correct an error of memory. The name of the gentleman who succumbed to the herring-bone was not Tellworthy (he must have got that name into his head through hearing it mentioned as that of *Mrs. Marden's* first husband). It was really Polwhistle—either Henry or Ernest Polwhistle; he was not quite sure which. Everything is thus restored to the *status quo ante*, except that *Marden*, in a spasm of generous reaction, feels himself morally bound to abide by the new conditions that his wife had laid down.

Mr. Pim only passes by once more to announce his settled conviction that *Polwhistle's* Christian name was Ernest and not Henry.

It will be seen that the play is original in design; but it is also a true play of character revealed by circumstance. Further—and this is very rare—it owes nothing to the adventitious aid of the costumier. For the author's observation of the unities is extended to include the matter of dress; he allows his people one costume each and no more.

Miss IRENE VANBRUGH played as if every one of her words had been made expressly for her, as, no doubt, they were. I have never seen her so perfect in detail, in the poise of her head, in her least gesture and intonation, in her swift changes of mood; never so quietly mistress of the *finesse* of her art.

As *Marden*, Mr. BEN WEBSTER was a little restless in a part for which he was not constitutionally suited, but played with the greatest courage and sincerity. Mr. DION BOUCICAULT'S study of *Mr. Pim* was extraordinarily effective; and the way in which he made the attenuated pipings of this futile old gentleman carry like the notes of a bell was in itself a remarkable feat.

These three were given great chances, full of colour. But in the part of *Brian Strange*, the boy-lover, by its nature relatively colourless, Mr. LESLIE HOWARD was hardly less good. He never made anything like a mistake of manner. I wish I could say the same of his flapper. But Miss COHAN asserted her good spirits a little too boisterously for the picture.

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I hope I shall not be suspected of partiality towards one of Mr. Punch's young men if I say that this is the best of the good things that Mr. MILNE has given us. As in his unacted play, *The Lucky One*, he gives evidence of a desire, not unfrequent in humourists, to be taken seriously. But he knows by now that brilliant dialogue is what is expected of him, and he thinks, too modestly, that he cannot afford to dispense with it for long at a time. The result is that, after stringing us up to face a tragic situation, he is tempted to let us down with light-hearted cynicisms. He would hate me to suggest that Mr. BERNARD SHAW has infected him, but perhaps he wouldn't mind my hinting at the influence of Sir JAMES BARRIE. Certainly his *Mardens* remind me of the *Darlings* in *Peter Pan*. Just as there we were invited alternately to weep for the bereaved mother's sorrow and roar over the bereaved father's buffooneries, so here, though not so disastrously, our hearts are torn between sympathy for the husband's real troubles and amusement at the wife's flippant attitude towards the common tragedy.

I will not deny the sneaking pleasure which this flippancy gave me at the time, but in the light of calmer reflection I feel that Mr. MILNE would really have pleased himself better if he could have found the courage to keep the play on a serious note all through the interval between *Mr. Pim's* first and second revelations. Apart from the higher question of sincerity he would have gained something, in an artistic sense, by getting a stronger contrast out of the change of situation that followed the announcement of Tellworthy's demise.

In the First Act we seemed to have a little too much of the young couple, but this insistence was perhaps justified by the important part which their affairs subsequently played (along with the *leit-motif* of the futuristic curtains) in the readjustment of the relations between husband and wife.

If I have any flaw to find in a really charming play, I think it was a mistake for *Mrs. Marden* to let *Mr. Pim* into the secret of her past. As with the sweet influences of *Pippa*, so with the devastating havoc wrought by the inexactitudes of *Mr. Pim*, I think he should have been left unconscious of the effect of his passing.

For the rest,

Mr. MILNE'S at his best—
All's right with the play!

O.S.

* * * * *

[Illustration: IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT BROWN HAD NOT FINISHED HIS MASTERPIECE, "THE SURRENDER OF THE GARRISON," BY THE TIME THE WAR CAME TO AN END.]

[Illustration: HOWEVER, IT NEEDED VERY LITTLE ALTERATION TO MAKE IT SALEABLE.]

* * * * *

EUPHONIOUS ALIENS.

(A successful chamber concert has been given by three players, styling themselves "The Modern Trio," and named as under.)

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You may search through all Europe from Nenagh to Nish
For such a delightfully-named coalish
As that of MANNUCCI and MELZAK and KRISH.

In MELZAK we note the Slavonic ambish;
MANNUCCI suggests an Italian dish,
And there's an exotic allurement in KRISH.

Their combined *cantilena's* as soothing as squish;
'Twould have banished the madness of SAUL, son of KISH,
Had he listened to MELZAK, MANNUCCI and KRISH.

Their music, I gather, is wholly delish,
But their names are the thing that I specially wish
To applaud in MANNUCCI and MELZAK and KRISH.

* * * * *

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

"FOR SALE.—Entire household, \$200 cash."—*American Paper*.

* * * * *

ANOTHER CRISIS.

Whether it is due to war-weariness or not the fact remains that the British public view with apparent apathy the new crises which arise day by day to threaten their happiness and maybe to change the whole course of their life.

Only a few mornings ago we read in *The Daily Chronicle* the following momentous statement made by that newspaper's golf correspondent: "I'm told that the thirty-one pennyweight ball is doomed." Doomed! Yet, so far as could be observed in the demeanour of the pleasure-seekers in the Strand on the afternoon of that same day, things might have been exactly as they were the day before.

We learn that the sub-committee investigating this matter of the thirty-one pennyweight ball have consulted both the manufacturers and the professionals. A ray of hope is given by the statement, made on good authority, that "the manufacturers have adopted a very reasonable attitude." The country should be grateful for this. But, on the other hand, "the professionals want full freedom in the selection of balls."

To foster a false optimism at this juncture would be criminal, and it may as well be admitted at once that negotiations are proceeding with difficulty. As we go to press we learn that a protracted meeting, lasting from 2 P.M. until after midnight, has been held.

The leader of the manufacturers, on emerging from the conference hall, was seen to look pale and exhausted. Pushing his way through the pressmen and photographers he said, "Boys, for the moment we are bunkered; we must employ the niblick. No, that is all I can tell you;" and he walked quickly away with his hand to his brow and muttering words seldom heard off the course.

Equally grave, the organising secretary of the professionals was even less communicative, for he spoke in his native tongue, and the Scotsman among the reporters who undertook to translate his remarks was unfortunately unable to make himself understood.

The PRIME MINISTER'S Private Secretary has issued to the Press a statement that Mr. LLOYD GEORGE is keeping in close touch with Walton Heath and the progress of events, but that at present no useful purpose would be served by Government interference.

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The Daily Chronicle correspondent also announces that representatives of American golf are to visit St. Andrews in the Spring to discuss the question. We trust their visit may not be too late. If the problem is one that can be solved by dollars no doubt they will come well-equipped for enforcing American opinion on the British public. We can only hope that international relationships will not be strained by their deliberations; let there be a spirit of toleration and a recognition of the rights of small nations, and all may yet be well.

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WHY THE SPARROW LIVES IN THE TOWN.

In noisy towns, where traffic roars and rushes
And where the grimy streets are dark and narrow,
You never see the robins and the thrushes,
Nor hear their songs. Only the City sparrow
Chirps bravely and as cheerily as they,
Although his home is very far away.

He chirps of lanes, of far-off country places
(This is the sparrows' story that I'm telling);
Long, long ago they lived in sweet wide spaces;
Their homes were in the hedges, gay, green-smelling;
The people, though, came citywards to dwell;
"Then we," the sparrows said, "must go as well.

"Yes, we're the birds to go, for all our brothers
Would lose their songs in cities dark and crowd;
Their hearts would break; but we're not like the others,
We cannot sing, our coats are drab and dowdy;
But we can chirp and chirp and chirp again;
The people shan't forget a country lane."

And so they came, and in all city-weathers
They chirped a note of cheer to exiles weary;
And *still* the sparrows chirp, for their brown feathers
Hide now, as then, brave kindly hearts and cheery,
Of lanes they've never seen nor lived among,
Of country lanes they sing, the same old song.

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"SIR ALBERT'S ELEVATION.—'Up, Stanley, up!'—*Shakespeare* (amended)."
—*Sunday Pictorial*.

Great SCOTT (WALTER)!

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“Very attractive was the interior of the —— Hall, when the Misses
—— entertained a large number of their friends at an enjoyable dance.
Everything was ‘conteur de pose.’”—*Australian Paper*.

It is very clear they weren’t jazzing.

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[Illustration: THE POST-WAR SPORTSMAN MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE
HUNTSMAN.]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By *Mr. Punch’s Staff of Learned Clerks.*)

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The Romance of Madame Tussaud's (ODHAMS) strikes one, in these days of universal reminiscence, almost as a *libre a faire*, certainly as a volume that finds its welcome waiting for it. I suppose there are few unhappy beings for whom the very name of that gifted lady does not revive something of the nursery magic that is never quite forgotten. All of which means that Mr. JOHN T. TUSSAUD, who has written, vivaciously and with obvious pleasure, this history of the famous show, is (I hope) assured beforehand of his sales. It is a fat record, taking the story from the earliest wax profiles made by Dr. CURTIUS for the Parisian aristocracy in the days before the Revolution; through the Terror, when his niece (afterwards Madame TUSSAUD) was employed to model notable heads from the basket of the guillotine, which was itself subsequently to figure amongst the attractions of her collection, and finally bringing the enterprising artist and her models to England and Baker Street, whence a comparatively recent move established them (the foundress in effigy only) in their present palace. I was especially interested to trace the evidence of close attention paid to the show by Mr. Punch, and in particular to learn that the title Chamber of Horrors was first invented by that observer; though the author falls into an obvious chronological inexactitude in ascribing to these pages a cartoon by CRUIKSHANK published "in November of Waterloo year." I have no space for the many queer stories, chiefly of encounters between the quick and the wax, with which the book abounds, nor for more than mention of its admirable photographs, of which I should have liked many more. Altogether it gives an unusual sidelight on the history of two Capitals; and incidentally, if the reading of it puts others in the same resolve as myself, an extra turn-stile will be needed in the Marylebone Road.

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Mr. HARRY TIGHE is something of a problem to me. With the best will in the world to appreciate what looked like unusual promise I can only regard him at present as one who is neglecting the good gifts of heaven in the pursuit apparently of some Jack-o'-lantern idea of popularity. No doubt you recall his first novel, *The Sheep Path*, a sincere and well-observed study of feminine temperament. This was followed by one that (though it had its friends) marked, to my thinking, a lamentable fall from grace. He has now published a third, *Day Dawn* (WESTALL). Here, though popularity of a kind may be its reward, the work is still woefully beneath what should be Mr. TIGHE'S level. Certainly not one of the demands of the circulating libraries is unfulfilled. We have a fair-haired heroine (victim to cocaine), a dark and villainous foreigner, a dashing hero, a middle-aged woman who adores him despite the presence of her husband, himself called throughout *Baron Brinthal*, a style surely more common in pantomimic

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circles than in the drawing-rooms of Mayfair; and the incidents embrace both murder and suicide. Moreover there is “plenty of conversation,” and the intrigue moves sufficiently quickly (if jerkily) to keep one curious about the next page. But having very willingly admitted so much I return to my contention, that for Mr. TIGHE to neglect his sensitive and delicate art for the antics of these tawdry dolls is to betray both himself and the craft of which he may still become a distinguished exponent.

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From the official who is interested in officialdom to the Infantry officer who is interested in tactics, from the mechanical expert who can appreciate the technical details of diagrams to the child who revels in faultless photographs of hair-raising monsters (“I may read it, mother, mayn’t I, when I’ve unsticked my fingers?” was the way I heard it put), everybody, I think, will find plenty to attract him in Sir ALBERT STERN’S finely illustrated *Tanks 1914-1918* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON). Tanks were born at Lincoln, and rightly so, for did not OLIVER CROMWELL’S Ironsides mostly come from this region?—and the main theme of this book is to show how much more formidable an obstacle they found in the files and registries of Whitehall than in the trenches and wire-entanglements of Flanders and France. Parents they had and sponsors innumerable. Practical soldiers and engineers were enthusiastic about them, and the Bosch quaked in his trenches or ran; but even so late as the autumn of 1917, after General FOCH (as he was then) had said, “You must make quantities and quantities; we must fight mechanically,” one stout little company of obscurantists bravely defied the creed of Juggernaut until the irresistible logic of its successes in the field crushed them remorselessly under the “creeping grip.” And that company, of course, according to Sir ALBERT STERN, was the British War Office.

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Let me commend to you *The Mask* (METHUEN) as a craftsmanlike essay in imaginative realism; ruthlessly candid and self-revealing, but free from that tiresome obsession of the ultra-realists that everything that has ever happened is equally important in retrospect. The narrator, *Vanya Gombarov*, a Russian Jew, discourses reflectively and detachedly, as it were from behind a mask, to an English artist friend about his early childhood in his own land and the dismal adventures of the *Gombarov* family in that underworld of exploited and miserable aliens which is one of the root social problems of America. Very poignantly Mr. JOHN CURNOS makes you understand the import of the phrase so constantly on the lips of such victims of their own credulous hopes of El Dorado—“Woe to COLUMBUS!” The portrait of *Vanya*’s stepfather, brilliant, magnanimous, pursued by an AEschylean malignity of destiny, fills much of the foreground and is a quite masterly piece of work.

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One cannot be wrong in assuming this to be essential autobiography; there is a passionate conviction as of things intimately seen and dreadfully suffered. Such material might well have tempted to a mere piling of squalor upon squalor. A fine discretion has given a noble dignity to a record through which shines the unquenchable human spirit. One passage, full of affectionate discernment about London, will cause a flicker of just pride in everyone who is authentic Cockney, whether by birth or adoption. A big book of its kind, I dare assert.

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Star of India (CASSELL) is what Mrs. ALICE PERRIN calls her latest novel, a title so good that I can only wonder why (or perhaps whether) it has not been used before. Inside also I found excellent entertainment. One supposes the author to have been confronted with two main problems with regard to her plot—how to make sufficiently plausible the marriage between a flapper (if you will forgive the odious word) of seventeen and a middle-ageing Anglo-Indian; and, secondly, how to impart any touch of novelty to the inevitable catastrophe that must attend this union. The first she has managed by a very cunning suggestion of the mingled jealousy, curiosity and boredom that drove *Stella* into the arms of her elderly suitor; the second by a variety of devices, to indicate which would be to give away the whole intrigue—one, I may say, whose climax is not nearly so visible from afar as that of most triangle tales. One point only I will reveal: Mrs. PERRIN has had the courage, while vindicating her own common-sense judgment upon such folk, to introduce a second girl, daughter and pupil of one of the spoon-fed idealists who would govern India with the platitudes of ignorance, and not only to make her sympathetic, but to convince me of her attractions, which (especially just now) was not easy work. Decidedly a first-rate yarn.

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We may, I think, take it that the love-story in *The Gunroom* (BLACK) is fiction pure and naively simple, but that the experiences of *John Lynwood*, the hero, in the Navy are given as the actual experiences of Mr. C.L. MORGAN, the author. Let me then at once say that his revelations of the bullying of junior by senior midshipmen go back to a period before the War. These “shakings,” we are asked to believe, were due partly to custom and partly to boredom caused by lack of leave. If Mr. MORGAN is correct both in his facts and surmises it is satisfactory to think that the War must have obliterated the boredom which provoked such excesses, and one need not be a fanatical opponent of physical punishment to hope that such forms of tyranny will never again be tolerated as a matter of custom. I am obliged to conclude that these incidents in *Lynwood’s* career are absolutely true, for certainly nothing less than absolute truth could excuse their appearance in print; but at the same time I must confess that any attack upon our Navy is apt with me to act as an irritant. The more reason that I should honestly admit Mr.

MORGAN'S merits and say that he writes with a nice sense of style, and that his book does not derive its only interest from its revelations.

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[Illustration: OUR LAUNDRIES: THE COLLAR-FINISHER.]

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HUNTING EXTRAORDINARY.

“GOOD SPORT WITH THE HOLDERNESS.

“A stout ox led the field into Bilton village.”—*Provincial Paper*.

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RECHAUFFES FOR CANNIBALS.

“A company, numbering over 80, sat down to dinner, the host and hostess (Mr. and Mrs. ——) proving, as usual, a first-class menu.”—*Local Paper*.