

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 158, January 28th, 1920 eBook

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Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

Now that petrol is being increased by eightpence a gallon, pedestrians will shortly have to be content to be knocked down by horsed vehicles or hand trucks.

* * *

Moleskins, says a news item, are now worth eighteen-pence each. It is only fair to add that the moles do not admit the accuracy of these figures.

* * *

Three hundred pounds is the price asked by an advertiser in *The Times* for a motor-coat lined with Persian lamb. It is still possible to get a waistcoat lined with English lamb (or even good capon) for a mere fraction of that sum.

* * *

Charged with impersonation at a municipal election a defendant told the Carlisle Bench that it was only a frolic. The Bench, entering into the spirit of the thing, told the man to go and have a good frisk in the second division.

* * *

"Steamers carrying coal from Dover to Calais," says a news item, "are bringing back champagne." It is characteristic of the period that we should thus exchange the luxuries of life for its necessities.

* * *

Charged at Willesden with travelling without a ticket a Walworth girl was stated to have a mania for travelling on the Tube. The Court missionary thought that a position could probably be obtained for her as scrum-half at a West End bargain-counter.

* * *

A correspondent writes to a London paper to say that he heard a lark in full song on Sunday. We can only suppose that the misguided bird did not know it was Sunday.

* * *

A medical man refers to the case of a woman who has no sense of time, proportion or numbers. There should be a great chance for her as a telephone operator.

* * *

“Owing to its weed-choked condition,” says *The Evening News*, “the Thames is going to ruin.” Unless something is done at once it is feared that this famous river may have to be abolished.

* * *

As the supply of foodstuffs will probably be normal in August next, the Food Ministry will cease to exist, its business being finished. This seems a pretty poor excuse for a Government Department to give for closing down.

* * *

“Music is not heard by the ear alone,” says M. *Jacques DALCROZE*. Experience proves that when the piano is going next door it is heard by the whole of the neighbour at once.

* * *

A weekly paper points out that there are at least thirty thousand unemployed persons in this country. This of course is very serious. After all you cannot have strikes unless the people are in work.

* * *

It appears that the dog (since destroyed) which was found wandering outside No. 10, Downing Street, had never tasted Prime Minister.

* * *

It is reported that when Sir *David Burnett* put up Drury Lane Theatre for sale under the hammer the other day one gentleman offered to buy it on condition that the vendor papered the principal room and put a bath in.

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* * *

A Bolton labourer who picked up twenty-five one-pound Treasury notes and restored them to the proper owner was rewarded with a shilling. It is only fair to say that the lady also said, "Thank you."

* * *

Asked what he would give towards a testimonial fund for a local hero one hardy Scot is reported to have said that he would give three cheers.

* * *

We learn on good authority that should a General Election take place during one of Mr. *Lloyd George's* visits to Paris *The Daily Mail* will undertake to keep him informed regarding the results by means of its Continental edition.

* * *

A sad story reaches us from South-West London. It appears that a girl of twenty attempted suicide because she realised she was too old to write either a popular novel or a book of poems.

* * *

The Guards, it is stated, are to revert to the pre-war scarlet tunic and busby. Pre-war head-pieces, it may be added, are now worn exclusively at the War Office.

* * *

At the Independent Labour Party's Victory dance it was stipulated that "evening dress and shirt sleeves are barred." This challenge to the upper classes (with whom shirt-sleeves are of course *de rigueur*) is not without its significance.

* * *

As much alarm was caused by the announcement in these columns last week that the collapse of a wooden house was caused by a sparrow stepping on it, we feel we ought to mention that, owing to a sudden gust of wind, the bird in question leaned to one side, and it was simply this movement which caused the house to overbalance.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *The wave of crime.*



Gent. "What made you put your hand into my pocket?"

Doubtful Character. "Just absent-mindedness. I once 'ad A pair of pants exactly like those you're wearing."]

* * * * *

"The eternal combustion engine has become recognised the world over as a factor in modern civilisation."—Provincial Paper.

But surely it is many years since Lord *Westbury* in the *Gorham* case was said to have "dismissed h—— with costs?"

* * * * *

The sweet influences of trade.

Page 3

[The revival, in certain quarters, of commercial relations with Germany has already begun to blunt the memory of the War. And now the proposal to open up trade with the Co-operative Societies in Russia, to the obvious benefit of the Bolshevists, who practically control the whole country, looks like an attempt to bring about indirectly a peace which we cannot in decency negotiate through the ordinary channels of diplomacy.]

They are coming, the carpet-baggers, their voices are heard in the land,
Guttural Teuton organs, but very polite and bland;
And our arms are stretched for their welcome; we've buried the past like
a dud;
For blood may be thicker than water, but Trade is thicker than blood.

The Winter of war is over, and lo! with the dawn of Spring
They come, and we greet them coming, like swallows that homeward swing,
Fair as the violet's waking, swift as the snows in flood,
For blood may be thicker than water, but Trade is thicker than blood.

Likewise with Soviet Russia—we've done with the need to fight;
There are gentler methods (and cheaper) of putting the whole thing right;
The palms of the dealers are plying the soap's invisible sud,
For blood may be thicker than water, but Trade is thicker than blood.

Of Peace there can be no parley with LENIN'S *regime*, as such,
But Business can easily tackle what Honour declines to touch,
Making the sewage to blossom, sampling the septic mud,
For blood may be thicker than water, but Trade is thicker than blood.

Thus may our merchant princes modestly play their part,
Speeding the silent process of soldering heart to heart,
Just as the forces of Nature silently swell the bud,
For blood may be thicker than water, but Trade is thicker than blood.

So in the hands of the Bolshie our hands shall at last be laid;
Deep unto deep is calling to lift the long blockade;
"No truck," we had sworn, "with murder;" but God will forget that oath,
For blood is thicker than water, but Trade is thicker than both.

O.S.

* * * * *

With the auxiliary patrol.

An honourable record.

Many years ago, in the reign of good *Queen Victoria*, a little ship sailed out of Grimsby Docks in all the proud bravery of new paint and snow-white decks, and passed the Newsand bound for the Dogger Bank. They had christened her the *King George*, and, though her feminine susceptibilities were perhaps a trifle piqued at this affront to her sex, it was a right royal name, and her brand-new boilers swelled with loyal fervour. She was a steam trawler—at that time one of the smartest steam trawlers afloat, and she knew it; she held her headlights very high indeed, you may be sure.

Page 4

Time passed, and the winds and waters of the North Sea dealt all too rudely with the fair freshness of her exterior; she grew worn and weather-stained, and it was apparent even to the casual eye of a landsman that she had left her girlhood behind her out on the Nor'-East Rough. Some of the younger trawlers would jeeringly refer to her behind her back as "Auntie," and affected to regard her as an antediluvian old dowager, which of course was mainly due to jealousy. But she still pegged away at her work, bringing in from the Dogger week by week her cargoes of fish, regardless alike of the ravages of time and the jibes of her upstart rivals. As long as her owners were satisfied she was happy, for she cherished first and last a sense of duty, as all good ships do.

And then suddenly came the War, infesting the seas with unaccustomed and nerve-racking dangers. I must apologise for mentioning this, as everybody knows that we ought now to forget about the War as quickly as possible and get on with more important matters, but at the time it had a certain effect upon us all, not excluding the *King George*. Scorning the menaces that lurked about her path she carried on the pursuit of the cod and haddock in her old undemonstrative fashion, for she was a British ship from stem to stern and conscious of the tradition behind her.

Then one day they hauled her up in dock, gave her a six-pounder astern, fitted her with wireless and sent her out to take care of her unarmed sisters on the fishing-grounds. She flew the White Ensign.

These were the proudest days of her life: she was helping to keep the seas. It is true the big ships of the Fleet might laugh at her in a good-natured way and pass uncomplimentary remarks about her personal appearance, but they had to acknowledge her seamanship and her pluck. She could buffet her way through weather that no destroyer dare face, and mines had no terrors for her, for even if she were to bump a tin-fish it only meant one old trawler the less, and the Navy could afford it.

It was during these days, too, that she became known, though not by name, to readers of *Punch*, for her adventures and those of her crew were often chronicled in his tales of the "Auxiliary Patrol." And when she had seen the War through she said Good-bye to his pages and made ready to return again to the ways of peace. She was quite satisfied; she never thought of giving up her job, though she was now a very old ship, and it would have been no shame to her. She just took a fresh coat of paint and steamed away to the Dogger Bank once more.

* * * * *

The other day a small paragraph appeared in some of the newspapers that were not too busy discussing the possibilities of another railway strike: "The Grimsby trawler *King George*," it said, "is reported long over-due from the fishing-grounds, and the owners say that there is no hope of her return." No one would notice this, because the first

round of the English Cup was to be played that week, and besides it was not as though it were a battleship or a big liner that had gone down. It was just the old *King George*.

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And that, I suppose, is the end of her, except that she may continue to be remembered by one or two who served aboard her in the days of the Auxiliary Patrol—remembered as a gallant little ship that served her country in its hour of need, and did not hold that hour the limit of her service. Well played, *King George*!

* * * * *

“THE DRINKWATER TRAGEDY.”—*Heading in “New York Times.”*

This comes from dry America, but it is not the wail of a “Wet”; merely the heading of an article on *Abraham Lincoln*.

* * * * *

“Wales has its Ulster just as Ireland had, and it was a question whether Wales was going to be conquered by the industrial area of Cardiff and the district, or whether the industrial area was going to conquer Wales.”—*Western Mail*.

We shall put our money on “the industrial area.”

* * * * *

[Illustration: A POPULAR REAPPEARANCE.

MR. ASQUITH (*the Veteran Scots Impersonator*) sings:—

“I LOVE A LASSIE,
ANITHER LOWLAN’ LASSIE.”]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Officer*. “WELL, PETERS, HOW DID YOU GET ON?”

Steward (who has asked for special leave). “NOTHIN’ DOIN’, SIR. THE SKIPPER ’E SEZ TO ME, ’E SEZ, ’IT’LL COST THE COUNTRY FOUR-AN’-SEVENPENCE TO SEND YOU ’OME, AN’ AS THE NAVY ’AS GOT TO ECONOMISE YOU’LL DO TO BEGIN ON,’ ’E SEZ.”]

* * * * *

A LIMPET OF WAR.

(*With the British Army in France.*)

The day on which that fine old crusted warrior, Major Slingswivel, quits the hospitable confines of Nullepart Camp will be the signal that the British Army in France has

completed its work, even to the labelling and despatching of the last bundle of assorted howitzers. A British army in France without Major Slingswivel would be unthinkable. It is confidently asserted that Nullepart Camp was built round him when he landed in '14, and that he has only emerged from it on annual visits to his tailor for the purpose of affixing an additional chevron and having another inch let into his tunic. Latest reports state that he is still going strong, and indenting for ice-cream freezers in anticipation of a hot summer.

But for an unforgivable error of tact I might have stood by the old brontosaurus to the bitter end. One evening he and I were listening to a concert given by the "Fluffy Furbelows" in the camp Nissen Coliseum, and a Miss Gwennie Gwillis was expressing an ardent desire to get back to Alabama and dear ole Mammy and Dad, not to speak of the rooster and the lil melon-patch way down by the swamp. The prospect as painted by her was so alluring that by the end of the first verse all the troops were infected with trans-Atlantic yearnings and voiced them in a manner that would have made an emigration agent rub his hands and start chartering transport right away. She had an enticing twinkle which lighted on the Major a few times, so that I wasn't surprised when the second chorus found him roaring out that he too was going to take a long lease of a shack down Alabama way.

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"Gad—she's immense! We must invite her to tea to-morrow," he said to me in a whisper that shook the Nissen hut to its foundations. Slingswivel was no vocal lightweight. Those people in Thanet and Kent who used to write to the papers saying they could hear the guns in the Vimy Ridge and Messines offensives were wrong. What they really heard was Major Slingswivel at Nullepart expostulating with his partner for declaring clubs on a no-trump hand.

"Very well," I answered sulkily. It wasn't the first time the Major had been captivated by ladies with Southern syncopated tastes, and I knew I should be expected to complete the party with the other lady member of the troupe, Miss Dulcie Demiton, and listen to the old boy making very small talk in a very large voice. I could see myself balancing a teacup and trying to get in a word here and there through the barrage.

Still, there was no getting out of it, and next afternoon found our quartette nibbling *petits gateaux* in the only *patisserie* in the village. The Major was in fine fettle as the war-worn old veteran, and Gwennie and Dulcie spurred him on with open and undisguised admiration.

"Now I'm in France," gushed Gwennie, "I want to see *everything*—where the trenches were and where you fought your terrible battles."

"Delighted to show you," said Slingswivel, bursting with pride at being taken for a combatant officer. "How about to-morrow?"

"Just lovely," cooed Gwennie. "We're showing at Petiteville in the evening, but we shan't be starting before lunch."

"That gives us all morning," said the Major enthusiastically. "Miss Gwennie, Miss Dulcie, Spenlow, we will parade to-morrow at 9.30."

I couldn't understand it. Naturally Gwennie, with her mind constantly set on Alabama, couldn't be expected to be up in war geography, but the Major knew jolly well that all the battles within reasonable distance of Nullepart had been fought out with chits and indents. I put it to him that it wasn't likely country for war thrills.

"Leave it to me," he said confidently.

So I left it, and when we paraded next morning where do you think the wily old bird led us? Why, to the old training ground on the edge of the camp, where the R.E.'s used to lay out beautifully revetted geometrical trenches as models of what we were supposed to imitate in the front line between hates. Having been neglected since the Armistice they had caved in a bit and sagged round the corners till they were a very passable imitation of the crump-battered thing.

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Old Slingswivel so arranged the itinerary that the girls didn't perceive that the sector was bounded on one side by Pere Popeau's turnip field and on the other by a duck-pond, and he showed a tactical knowledge of the value of cover in getting us into a trench out of view of certain stakes and pickets that were obviously used by Mere Popeau as a drying-ground. To divert attention he gave a vivid demonstration of bombing along a C.T. with clods of earth, with myself as bayonet-man nipping round traverses and mortally puncturing sand-bags with a walking-stick. It must have been a pretty nervy business for the Major, for any minute we might have come across a notice-board about the hours of working parties knocking off for dinner that would have given the whole show away. But he displayed fine qualities of leadership and presence of mind at critical moments, notably when Gwennie showed a disposition to explore a particular dug-out.

"I shouldn't advise you to go in there, Miss Gwennie," he said gravely.

"Why?" asked Gwennie apprehensively.

"Not a pleasant sight for a lady," said the Major gruffly. "It upset *me* one day when I looked in."

This was probable enough, for the Mess steward used it as a store for empty bottles.

Gwennie shuddered and passed on.

The Major mopped his forehead with relief and set the ladies souveniring among old water-tin stoppers, which he alleged to be the plugs of hand-grenades.

Taking it all round, it was a successful morning's show, which did credit to the producer, and it was only spoiled when, so to speak, the curtain rolled down amidst thunders of applause.

"We don't realize what we owe to gallant soldiers like you," said Gwennie admiringly.

The Major waved a fat deprecating hand.

"And Captain Spenlow has just been telling me," continued Gwennie, "that you occupied this sector all through the War and that you hung on right to the very last, *notwithstanding incredible efforts to dislodge you.*"

At this crude statement of the naked facts Slingswivel's face went a deeper shade of purple, and you can appreciate why I put in an urgent application for immediate release, on compassionate grounds, and why the Major gladly endorsed it.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *The New Minister*. “BOY, DO YE NO KEN IT’S THE SAWBATH?”

Boy. “OH AY, FINE. BUT THIS IS WORK O’ NECESSITY.”

Minister. “AN’ HOO IS THAT?”

Boy. “THE MEENISTER’S COMIN’ TAE DINNER AN’ WE’VE NAETHIN’ TAE GIE ’IM.”]

* * * * *

“WAR CRIMINALS.

THE THREE PREMIERS MEET ALONE TO-DAY.”—*Evening Paper*.

We suspect Mr. KEYNES’ hand in these headlines.

* * * * *

“Information wanted as to whereabouts of Mrs. J.O. Plonk (Blonk) wife of J.O. Plonk (Clonk).”—*Advt. in Chinese Paper*.

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This should go very well with a banjo accompaniment.

* * * * *

THE TRAGEDY OF AN AUTHOR'S WIFE.

"I won't stand it any longer," said Janet intensely, meeting me in the hall. "Take off your umbrella and listen to me."

"It's off," I replied faintly, perceiving that something was all my fault. "Can't you hear it singing 'Niagara' in the porch?"

I dropped the shopping on the floor and sat down to watch Janet walking up and down the room.

"I want," she continued in the tone of one who has had nobody to be indignant with all day, "a divorce."

"Who for?" I inquired. "Really, darling, we can't afford any more presents this—"

"Me," she interrupted, frowning.

"Couldn't you have it for your birthday?" I suggested. "I may have some more money by then. Besides, I gave you—"

"No, I could not," replied Janet in a voice like the end of the world; "I want it now. I will not wear myself out trying to live up to an impossible ideal, and lose all my friends because they can't help comparing me with it. And it isn't even as if it were my own ideal. I never know what I've got to be like from one week to another. And what do I get for my struggles? Not even recognition, much less gratitude."

"Janet," I said kindly, "I don't know *what* you're talking about. Who are these people who keep idealising you? I will not have you annoyed in this way. Send them to me and I'll put a little solid realism into their heads. I'll tell them what you really are, and that'll settle their unfortunate illusions. Dear old girl, don't worry so.... I'll soon put it right."

Janet looked at me piercingly.

"It's this," she said; "I keep having people to call on me."

"I know," I answered, shuddering; "but I can't help it, can I? You shouldn't be so attractive."

"Dear Willyum," she replied, "that's just the point; you *can* help it."

“Stop calling me names and I’ll see what can be done.”

“But it’s part of my ‘whimsical wit’ to call you Willyum,” she said grimly. “I understand that I am like that. People realise this when they read your articles, and immediately call to see if I’m true. I’ve read through nearly all your stories to-day, in between the visitors, and—and—”

I gripped her hand in silence.

“I’m losing all my friends,” she mourned, touched by my sympathy, “even those who used to like me long ago. Girls who knew me at school say to themselves, ‘Fancy poor old Janet being like that all the time, and we never knew!’ and they rush down to see me again. They sit hopefully round me as long as they can bear it; then, after the breakdown, they go away indignant and never think kindly of me again.”

She gloomed.

“And all the cousins and nice young men who used to think I was quite jolly have suddenly noticed how much jollier I might be if only I could say the things they say you say I say....”

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"Hush, hush," I whispered; "have an aspirin."

"But it's quite *true*," she cried hopelessly. "And She's just what I ought to be. She says everything just in the right place. When I compare myself with Her, I know I'm not a bit the kind of person you admire, and—and it's no good pretending any longer. I'm not jealous, only—sort of misrubble."

She rose with a pale smile and, hushing my protestations, arrived at her conclusion.

"We must part," she said, throwing her cigarette into the fire and walking to the window; "I can't help it. I suppose I'm not good enough for you. You must be free to marry Her when we find Her. I too," she sighed, "must be free...."

"I now call upon myself to speak," I remarked, rising hurriedly. "Janet," I continued, arriving at her side, "keep perfectly still and do not attempt to breathe, because you will not be able to, and look as pleasant as you can while I tell you truthfully what I think you are really like."

(I have been compelled to delete this passage on the ground that even if people believed me it would only attract more callers.)

"All right," she continued, unruffling her hair; "but if I do you must promise to leave off writing stories about me. Will you?"

"But, darling," I objected, "consider the bread-and-jam."

She was silent.

"Well, then," she said at last, "you must only write careful ones that I can live up to."

"I'll try," I agreed remorsefully; "I'll go and do one now—all about this. And you can censor it." I left the room jauntily.

Janet's voice, suddenly repentant, followed me.

"No," she called, "that won't do either. Because if it's a true one you won't sell it."

"But if it isn't," I called back, "and I do, we can put the money in the Divorce Fund."

* * * * *

THE SORROWS OF A SUPER-PROFITEER.

[Bradford wool-spinners are stated to be unable to escape from the deluge of wealth that pours upon them or avoid making profits of three thousand two hundred per cent.]

And so you thought we simply steered
Great motor-cars to champagne dinners
And bought tiaras and were cheered
By hopes of breeding Epsom winners;
Eh, lad, you little knew the weird
Dreed by the Yorkshire spinners.

How hollow are those marble halls,
The place I built and deemed a show-thing,
Its terraces, its waterfalls—
Once more I hear that sound of loathing,
The bell rings and a stranger calls
To speak of underclothing.

They've bashed my offices to wrecks,
They've broke their way beyond the warders,
And now my country seat they vex,
They trample my herbaceous borders;
They chase me up and down with cheques,
They flummox me with orders.

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They bolt me to the billiard-room,
Where chaps are playing five-bob snooker;
They see me dodging from the doom,
They heed no threats and no rebuker;
“We’ve got thee now,” they say, “ba goom!”
And pelt me with their lucre.

Vainly I put the prices up
To stem that flowing tide of riches;
The horror haunts me as I sup;
The unknown guest arrives and pitches
His ultimatum in my cup:—
“The people must have breeches.”

I shall not see the skylark soar
Nor hear the cuckoo nor the linnet,
When Springtime comes, above the roar
Of folk a-hollering each minute
For yarn at thirty-two times more
Than what I spent to spin it.

Eh me, I cannot help but pine
For days departed now and olden,
When I could drink of common wine,
To powdered flunkeys un beholden;
Do peas taste better when we dine
Because the knife is golden?

Often I wish I might repair
To haunts that once I used to enter,
Like “The Old Fleece” up yonder there,
Of which I was a great frequenter,
Not yet a brass-bound millionaire,
But just a cent-per-center.

EVOE.

* * * * *

“Over 30,000 people paid L2,019 to see the cup tie at Valley Parade.”—
Provincial Paper.

The new rich!

* * * * *

[Illustration: MANNERS AND MODES.

HERO-WORSHIP: DISTRACTIONS OF THE FILM WORLD.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Female (to ignorant party)*. “‘E’S DRESSED AS ONE O’ THEM BRONCHIAL BUSTERS TO ATTRACT ATTENTION TO ‘IS CORF CURE.”]

* * * * *

THE JUMBLE SALE.

Aunt Angela coughed. “By the way, Etta was here this afternoon.”

Edward’s eye met mine. The result of Etta’s last call was that Edward spent a vivid afternoon got up as Father Christmas in a red dressing-gown and cotton-wool whiskers, which caught fire and singed his home-grown articles, small boys at the same time pinching his legs to see if he was real, while I put in some sultry hours under a hearthrug playing the benevolent polar-bear to a crowd of small girls who hunted me with fire-irons.

“What is it this time?” I asked.

“A jumble sale,” said Aunt Angela.

“What’s that?”

“A scheme by which the bucolic English exchange garbage,” Edward explained.

“Oh, well, that has nothing to do with us, thank goodness.”

He returned to his book, a romance entitled *Gertie, or Should She Have Done It?* Edward, I should explain, is a philosopher by trade, but he beguiles his hours of ease with works of fiction borrowed from the cook.

Aunt Angela was of a different opinion. “Oh, yes, it has: both of you are gradually filling the house up with accumulated rubbish. If you don’t surrender most of it for Etta’s sale there’ll be a raid.”

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My eye met Edward's. We walked out into the hall.

"We'll have to give Angela something or she'll tidy us," he groaned.

"These orderly people are a curse," I protested. "They have no consideration for others. Look at me; I am naturally disorderly, but I don't run round and untidy people's houses for them."

Edward nodded. "I know; I know it's all wrong, of course; we should make a stand. Still, if we can buy Angela off, I think ... you understand?..." And he ambled off to his muck-room.

If anybody in this neighbourhood has anything that is both an eyesore and an encumbrance they bestow it on Edward for his muck-room, where he stores it against an impossible contingency. I trotted upstairs to my bedroom and routed about among my *Lares et Penates*. I have many articles which, though of no intrinsic value, are bound to me by strong ties of sentiment; little old bits of things—you know how it is. After twenty minutes' heart-and-drawer-searching I decided to sacrifice a policeman's helmet and a sock, the upper of which had outlasted the toe and heel. I bore these downstairs and laid them at Aunt Angela's feet.

"What's this?" said she, stirring the helmet disdainfully with her toe.

"Relic of the Great War. The Crown Prince used to wear it in wet weather to keep the crown dry."

Aunt Angela sniffed and picked up the sock with the fire-tongs. "And this?"

"A sock, of course," I explained. "An emergency sock of my own invention. It has three exits, you will observe, very handy in case of fire."

"Hump!" said Aunt Angela.

Edward returned bearing his offerings, a gent's rimless boater, a doorknob, six inches of lead-piping and half a bottle of cod-liver oil.

"Hump!" said Aunt Angela.

No more was said of it that night. Aunt Angela resumed her sewing, Edward his *Gertie*, I my slumb—, my meditations. Nor indeed was the jumble sale again mentioned, a fact which in itself should have aroused my suspicions; but I am like that, innocent as a sucking-dove. I had put the matter out of my mind altogether until yesterday evening, when, hearing the sound of laboured breathing and the frantic clanking of a bicycle pump proceeding from the shed, I went thither to investigate, and was nearly capsized by Edward charging out.

“It’s gone,” he cried—“gone!” and pawed wildly for his stirrup.

“What has?” I inquired.

““The Limit,”” he wailed. “She’s picked ... lock ... muck-room with a hairpin, sent ... Limit ... jumble sale!”

He sprang aboard his cycle and disappeared down the high road to St. Gwithian, pedalling like a squirrel on a treadmill, the tails of his new mackintosh spread like wings on the breeze. So Aunt Angela with serpentine guile had deferred her raid until the last moment and then bagged “The Limit,” the pride of the muck-room.

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"The Limit," I should tell you, is (or was) a waterproof. It is a faithful record of Edward's artistic activities during the last thirty years, being decorated all down the front with smears of red, white and green paint. Here and there it has been repaired with puncture patches and strips of surgical plaster, but more often it has not. As Edward is incapable of replacing a button and Aunt Angela refuses to touch the "Limit," he knots himself into it with odds and ends of string and has to be liberated by his ally, the cook, with a kitchen knife. Edward calls it his "garden coat," and swears he only wears it on dirty jobs, to save his new mackintosh, but nevertheless he is sincerely attached to the rag, and once attempted to travel to London to a Royal Society beano in it, and was only frustrated in the nick of time.

So the oft-threatened "Limit" had been reached at last. I laughed heartily for a moment, then a sudden cold dread gripped me, and I raced upstairs and tore open my wardrobe. Gregory, the glory of Gopherville, had gone too!

A word as to Gregory. If you look at a map of Montana and follow a line due North through from Fort Custer you will not find Gopherville, because a cyclone removed it some eight years ago. Nine years ago, however, Gregory and I first met in the "Bon Ton Parisian Clothing Store," in the main (and only) street of Gopherville, and I secured him for ten dollars cash. He is a mauve satin waistcoat, embroidered with a chaste design of anchors and forget-me-nots, subtly suggesting perennial fidelity. The combination of Gregory and me proved irresistible at all Gopherville's social events.

Wishing to create a favourable atmosphere, I wore Gregory at my first party in England. I learn that Aunt Angela disclaimed all knowledge of me during that evening.

Subsequently she made several determined attempts to present Gregory to the gardener, the butcher's boy and to an itinerant musician as an overcoat for his simian colleague. Had I foiled her in all of these to be beaten in the end? No, not without a struggle. I scampered downstairs again and, wresting Harriet's bicycle from its owner's hands (Harriet is the housemaid and it was her night out), was soon pedalling furiously after Edward.

The jumble sale was being held in the schools and all St. Gwithian was there, fighting tooth and nail over the bargains. A jumble sale is to *rus* what remnant sales are to *urbs*. I battled my way round to each table in turn, but nowhere could I find my poor dear old Gregory. Then I saw Etta, the presiding genius, and butted my way towards her.

"Look here," I gasped—"have you by any chance seen—?" I gave her a full description of the lost one.

Etta nodded. "Sort of illuminated horse-blanket? Oh, yes, I should say I have."

“Tell me,” I panted—“tell me, is it sold yet? Who bought it? Where is—?”

“It’s not sold *yet*,” said Etta calmly. “There was such rivalry over it that it’s going to be raffled. Tickets half-a-crown each. Like one?”

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"But it's *mine*!" I protested.

"On the contrary, it's *mine*; Angela gave it to me. If you care to buy all the tickets—?"

"How much?" I growled.

"Four pounds."

"But—but that's twice as much as I paid for it originally!"

"I know," said Etta sweetly, "but prices have risen terribly owing to the War."

* * * * *

I found Edward outside leaning on his jaded velocipede. He was wearing the "Limit."

"Hello," said he, "got what you wanted?"

"Yes," said I, "and so, I observe, did you. How much did *you* have to pay?"

"Nothing," said he triumphantly; "Etta took my new mackintosh in exchange," he chuckled. "I think we rather scored off Angela this time, don't you?"

"Yes," said I—"ye-es."

PATLANDER.

* * * * *

[Illustration: PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN IN PROCESS OF DECIDING THAT THE HIRE OF A CAR TO TAKE HIM TO HIS FANCY-DRESS REVEL WOULD HAVE BEEN WELL WORTH THE EXPENSE.]

* * * * *

From an invitation to a subscription-ball:—

"Hoping that you will endeavour to make this, our first dance, a bumping success...."

As the Latin gentleman might have said, *Nemo repente fuit Terpsichore*.

* * * * *

"Two pigs off their feet had hard work to get to food trough, but K—— Pig Powders soon put them right."—Local Paper.

Set them on their feet again, we conclude.

* * * * *

“Respectable reserved lady (25), of ability, wishes to meet respectable keen Business Gentleman, honourable and reserved.”—*Advt. in Irish Paper.*

Obviously reserved for one another.

* * * * *

“A big re-union of all returned men and their dependents is to be held at the Board of Trade building on New Year’s day.... A year ago the affair was a hug success and the ladies hope for an even better record this year.”—*Manitoba Free Press.*

Manitoba is so embracing.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Small Boy (indicating highly-powdered lady).* “MUMMY, MAY I WRITE ‘DUST’ ON THAT LADY’S BACK?”]

* * * * *

TO MY BUTTER RATION

(*On hearing that the stuff is shortly to be decontrolled*).

Thou whom, when Saturday’s expiring sun
Informs me that another day is done
And summons fire from the reflecting pane
Of Griggs and Sons, where groceries obtain,
I seek, not lightly nor in careless haste
As men buy bloaters or anchovy paste,
Who fling the cash down with abstracted

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air,

Crying, "Two tins, please," or "I'll take the pair,"
But reverently and with concentrated gaze
Lest Griggs's varlet (drat his casual ways!),
Intrigued with passing friend or canine strife,
Leave half of thee adhering to the knife—
My butter ration! If symbolic breath
Can be presumed in one so close to death,
It is decreed that thou, my heart's desire,
Who scarcely art, must finally expire;
Yea, they who hold thy fortunes in their hands,
Base-truckling to the profiteer's commands,
No more to my slim revenues will temper
The cost of thee, but with a harsh "*Sic semper
Pauperibus*" fling thee, heedless of my prayers,
Into the fatted laps of war-time millionaires.

No more when Phoebus bids the day be born
And savoury odours greet the Sabbath morn,
Calling to Jane to bring the bacon in,
Shall I bespread thee, marvellously thin,
But ah! how toothsome! while my offspring barge
Into the cheap but uninspiring marge,
While James, our youngest (spoilt), proceeds to cram
His ample crop with plum and rhubarb jam.
No more when twilight fades from tower and tree
Shall I conceal what still remains of thee
Lest that the housemaid or, perchance, the cat
Should mischief thee, imponderable pat.
Ah, mine no more! for lo! 'tis noised around
How thou wilt soon cost seven bob a pound.
As well demand thy weight in radium
As probe my 'poverished poke for such a sum.
Wherefore, farewell! No more, alas! thou'lt oil
These joints that creak with unrewarded toil;
No more thy heartsick votary's midmost riff
Wilt lubricate, and, oh! (as WORDSWORTH says) the diff!

ALGOL.

* * * * *

“PUNCH” ON THE SCREEN.

Mr. Punch begs to inform the Public that he has prepared for their entertainment twelve sets of Lantern Slides reproducing his most famous Cartoons and Pictures (five of the sets deal with the Great War), and that they may be hired, along with explanatory Lectures, and, if desired, a Lantern and Operator, on application to Messrs. E.G. WOOD, 2, Queen Street, Cheapside, E.C., to whom all inquiries as to terms should be addressed.

* * * * *

“When he endeavoured to put the man out the Alderman was chucked under the paw. He drove straight to the barracks, informed the police of what had occurred, and having met his assailant on the road near by, he was placed under arrest.”—*Irish Paper*.

The Alderman seems to have had a rough time all through.

* * * * *

[Illustration: ROUGE GAGNE—

MAIS LA SEANCE N'EST PAS ENCORE TERMINEE.]

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[Illustration: *Newly-crowned Cotton King (with the plovers' eggs)*. “ERE, MY LAD, TAKE THESE DARN THINGS AWAY. THEY'RE 'ARD-BOILED AND ABSOLUTELY STONE-COLD.”]

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* * * * *

THE MOO-COW.

I was getting so tired of the syncopated life of town (and it didn't fit in with my present literary work) that I bribed my old pal Hobson to exchange residences with me for six months, with option; so now he has my flat in town, complete with Underground Railway and street noises (to say nothing of jazz music wherever he goes), and I have his country cottage, old-fashioned and clean, and a perfectly heavenly silence to listen to. Still, there *are* noises, and their comparative infrequency makes them the more noticeable. There is, for instance, a cow that bothers me more than a little. It has chosen, or there has been chosen, for its day nursery a field adjoining my (really Hobson's) garden. It has selected a spot by the hedge, almost under the study window, as a fit and proper place for its daily round of mooing.

Possibly this was at Hobson's request. Perhaps he likes the sound of mooing, or, conceivably, the cow doesn't like Hobson, and moos to annoy him. But surely it cannot mistake me for him. We are not at all alike. He is short and dark; I am tall and fair. This has given rise to a question in my mind: Can cows distinguish between human beings?

Anyway the cow worries me with its continual fog-horn, and I thought I would write to the owner (a small local dairy-farmer) to see if he could manage to find another field in which to batten this cow, where it could moo till it broke its silly tonsils for all I should care; so I indited this to him:—

MY DEAR SIR,—You have in your entourage a cow that is causing me some annoyance. It is one of those red-and-white cows (an Angora or Pomeranian perhaps; I don't know the names of the different breeds, being a town mouse), and it has horns of which one is worn at an angle of fifteen or twenty degrees higher than the other. This may help you to identify it. It possesses, moreover, a moo which is a blend between a ship's siren and a taxicab's honk syringe. If you haven't heard either of these instruments you may take my word for them. Further, I think it may really assist you if I describe its tail. The last two feet of it have become unravelled, and the upper part is red, with a white patch where the tail is fastened on to the body.

It is only the moo part of the cow that is annoying me; I like the rest of it. I am engaged in writing a book on the Dynamic Force of Modern Art, and a solo on the Moo does not blend well with such labour as mine.

There are hens here at Hillcroft. This remark may seem irrelevant, but not if you read on. Every time one of these hens brings five-pence-halfpenny worth of egg into the world it makes a noise commensurate with this feat. But I contend that even if your cow laid an egg every time it moos (which it doesn't, so far as my survey reveals) its idiotic

bellowing would still be out of all proportion to the achievement. Even milk at a shilling a quart scarcely justifies such assertiveness.

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My friend Mr. Hobson may, of course, have offended the animal in question, but even so I cannot see why I should have to put up with its horrible revenge; which brings me to the real and ultimate reason for troubling you, and that is, to ask you if you will be so good as to tell the cow to desist, and, in case of its refusal, to remove it to other quarters. If the annoyance continues I cannot answer for the consequences.

Thanking you in anticipation,
I am, Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR K. WILKINSON.

The reply ran:—

DEER SIR,—i am not a scollard and can't understand more'n 'alf your letter if you don't lik my cow why not go back were you cum from i dunno what you mean by consequences but if you lay 'ands on my cow i'll 'ave the lor of you.

Yours obedient HENRY GIBBS.

I felt that I hadn't got off very well with Henry, and thought I would try again, so wrote:—

DEAR MR. GIBBS,—Thank you so much for your too delightful letter. I am afraid you somewhat misapprehended the purport of mine. I freely admit your right to turn all manner of beasts into your demesne; equally do I concede to them the right to play upon such instruments as Nature has handed out to them; but I also claim the right to be allowed to carry on my work undisturbed. The consequences would be to me, not to the cow, unless laryngitis supervenes. I love cows, and I greatly admire this particular cow, but not its moo; that is all.

Is it, do you suppose, uttering some Jeremiad or prophecy? Can it, for example, be foretelling the doom of the middle classes? Or is it possible that our noisy friend is uttering a protest against some injurious treatment received from its master?

I have discovered that our daily supply of milk is supplied by your herd, and on inquiry I find that our cook is not at all confident that a quart of the same as delivered to us would satisfy the requirements of the Imperial standard of measurement.

If the animal's fog-horn continues I shall take it as an indignant protest against a slight that has been cast on its fertility, and shall seriously think of calling in the Food-Inspector to examine you in the table of liquid measure.

Delightful weather we have been experiencing, have we not?

Believe me as ever, dear Mr. Gibbs,
Yours most sincerely,
ARTHUR K. WILKINSON.

I do not know how much my correspondent understood of this letter, but, as the moo-cow was shortly afterwards relegated to fresh pastures, and as we are getting decidedly better measure for our milk money, I gather that he had enough intelligence for my purposes.

The threat which I thus put at a venture may be recommended to anyone suffering from the moo nuisance.

* * * * *

[Illustration: USES OF A TUBE NUISANCE.]

* * * * *

“The serious loss to D’Annunzio recently of 300,000 lire, through the disappearance of his cashier, has had a happy sequel. The airman-poet has received a like amount from a rich Milanese lady. The donor remains incognito.”—*Evening Standard*.

It was very clever of the lady to disguise herself as an unknown man.

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* * * * *

THE NEW SUBTRACTION.

(By a middle-class Martyr.)

EUCLID is gone, dethroned,
By dominies disowned,
And modern physicists, Judaeo-Teuton,
Finding strange kinks in space,
Swerves in light's arrowy race,
Make havoc of the theories of NEWTON.

Yet, mid this general wreck,
These blows dealt in the neck
Of authors of established reputation,
Four methods unassailed
Endured and never failed
To guide our arithmetic calculations.

But now at last new rules
Are used in "Council Schools"
In consequence of Governmental action;
And newspapers abound
In praise of the profound
Importance of the so-called "New Subtraction."

New, maybe, but too well
I know its influence fell;
The "new subtraction" (which I suffer under)
From what I earn or save
By toiling like a slave
Is just a euphemistic name for plunder.

* * * * *

"At Richmond a discharged soldier was charged with stealing a pillow, valued at 7/6, the property of the Government.... The prisoner, who had a clean sheet, was fined 40/-."—*Local Paper*.

We can understand his wanting a fresh pillow to go with his clean sheet.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Golf Enthusiast* (*urging the merits of the game*). “—AND, BESIDES, IT’S SO GOOD FOR YOU.”

Unbeliever. “SO IS COD-LIVER OIL.”]

* * * * *

GOLDEN GEESE.

The London University Correspondent of *The Observer* has been deploring the fact that a number of professors and lecturers have lately resigned their poorly-paid academic positions in order to take up commercial and industrial posts at much higher salaries. Among the instances he cites is that of a Professor of Chemistry at King’s College, who has been appointed Director of Research to the British Cotton Industry Research Association.

The movement, which the writer denounces as bearing “too obvious an analogy to the killing of the golden goose,” is not however confined to London University. From the great seats of learning all over the country the same complaint is heard. We learn, for instance, that Mr. Angus McToddie, until recently Professor of Physics at the John Walker University, N.B., has vacated that post on his appointment as Experimental Adviser to the British Constitutional Whisky Manufacturers’ Association.

Past and present *alumni* of Tonypandy will learn with regret that the University is to lose the services of its Professor of Live Languages, Mr. O. Evans, who is about to assume the responsible and highly-remunerated position of Director of Research to the Billingsgate Fishporters’ Self-Help Society.

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The Egregius Professor of Ancient History at Giggleswick University will shortly take up his duties as Editor of *Chestnuts*, the new comic weekly.

Professor Ernest Grubb, who for many years has adorned the Chair of Entomology at Durdleham, is about to enter the dramatic sphere as stage-manager to a well-known troupe of performing insects.

Another recruit to Stage enterprise is Professor Seymour Legge, who has been appointed Chief Investigator to the Beauty Chorus Providers' Corporation. Mr. Legge was formerly Professor of Comparative Anatomy at Ballycorp.

* * * * *

SATURDAYS.

Now has the soljer handed in his pack,
And "Peace on earth, goodwill to all" been sung;
I've got a pension and my ole job back—
Me, with my right leg gawn and half a lung;
But, Lord! I'd give my bit o' buckshee pay
And my gratuity in honest Brads
To go down to the field nex' Saturday
And have a game o' football with the lads.

It's Saturdays as does it. In the week
It's not too bad; there's cinemas and things;
But I gets up against it, so to speak,
When half-day-off comes round again and brings
The smell o' mud an' grass an' sweating men
Back to my mind—there's no denying it;
There ain't much comfort tellin' myself then,
"Thank Gawd, I went *toot sweet* an' did my bit!"

Oh, yes, I knows I'm lucky, more or less;
There's some pore blokes back there who played the game
Until they heard the whistle go, I guess,
For Time an' Time eternal. All the same
It makes me proper down at heart and sick
To see the lads go laughing off to play;
I'd sell my bloomin' soul to have a kick—
But what's the good of talkin', anyway?

* * * * *

“If we were suddenly to be deprived of the fast underground train, and presented with a sparse service of steam trains in sulphurous tunnels, the result on our tempers and the rate of our travelling would be— well, electric!”—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

We have tried to think of a less appropriate word than “electric,” but have failed miserably.

* * * * *

THE RIDING LESSON.

Phillida arrived up to time with her suit-case, a riding-crop and a large copy of D’AULNOY’S *Fairy Tales*. She was not very communicative as we drove out, and I sought to draw her. You never, by the way, talk down to Phillida. Personally, I don’t believe in talking down to any child; but to employ this method with Phillida is to court disaster.

“Pleasant journey?” I inquired casually, flicking Rex’s ear.

“M,” responded Phillida in the manner of a child sucking sweets. Phillida was not sucking sweets, and I accepted my snub. We drove on for a bit in silence. Phillida removed her hat, and her bobbed hair went all round her head like a brown busby. I looked round and was embarrassed to find the straight grey eyes fixed on my face, the expression in them almost rapturous.

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"Jolly country, isn't it?" I essayed hurriedly, with a comprehensive wave of my whip.

The preoccupied "M" was repeated with even less emphasis.

Another protracted silence. I decided not to interfere with the course of nature as manifested in one small grey-eyed maiden of eight. Presently there burst from her ecstatically, "Uncle Dick, is this the one I'm going to ride?" So that was it. From that moment we got on splendidly. We discussed, agreed and disagreed over breeds, paces, sizes. I told her the horse she would ride would be twice the size of Rex, and she nearly fell out of the trap when I said we might go together that very afternoon.

"I've not learned to gallop," she remarked with some reluctance; "but of course you could teach me."

I had only heard the vaguest rumours of her riding experience, and she was very mysterious about it herself. However, when she came downstairs at the appointed time, in her brown velvet jockey-cap, top-boots, breeches and gloves complete, she looked so determined and efficient I felt reassured.

I had to make holes in the stirrup leathers eleven inches higher than the top one of all before she could touch the irons; but she settled into the saddle with great firmness and we were off without any fuss. Once on a horse, she had no difficulty in maintaining a perfect continuity of speech, and I soon felt relieved of all anxiety about her safety. If she was not an old and practised hand, she had nerve and balance, and I did not think fit to produce the leading rein which I had smuggled into my pocket.

We trotted a perfect three miles, and she had an eye to the country and a word to say about all she saw. When we turned to come back, I felt Brimstone make his usual spurt forward, but I was not prepared for Treacle's sudden break away. He was off like a rocket. That small child's cap was flung across my eyes in a sudden gust. I had retrieved it in a second, but it was time lost, and, by Jove! she was out of sight round a bend. I followed after, might and main, but the racket of Brimstone's hoofs only sent Treacle flying faster. I caught sight of the small figure leaning back, the bright hair flying. Then they were gone again. My heart beat very fast. "She had never learned to gallop!" At every bend I hardly dared to look for what I might find. I knew Treacle, once started, would dash for home. If the child could only stick it, all might be well. I pounded along, and after a two-mile run I came on them. She had pulled him in and was walking him, waiting for me, a little turned in the saddle, one minute hand resting lightly on his broad back. She was prettily flushed, her hair blown, but she hadn't even lost her crop.

"Did you stop to get my cap?" she said as we came up. "Thanks awfully."

I wanted to hug the little thing, but her dignity forbade any such exhibition.

The only other reference to the afternoon's experience was on a postcard I happened to see written the same night, addressed to her mother.

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“DARLING BEE” (it ran in very large baby characters),—“I had the most adorable ride to-day I ever had. I learned to galup all by myself. I thaut at first the horse was running away with me, but Uncle Dick soon caut me up. He had my cap.

Your loving
PHILLIDA.”

I only hope that Isabel will think it was all just as deliberate as that.

* * * * *

[Illustration: BEHIND THE SCENES IN CINEMA-LAND.

“YOU NEEDN’T BE A BIT NERVOUS ABOUT HANDLING THE CHILD, ME LAD. IT’S NOT A REAL ONE.”]

* * * * *

“The Ashton-under-Lyne fight is beginning, and *The Daily News* comes forward to-day with the suggestion that the Liberal candidate should withdraw.

The practical effect of the candidature of a Liebral may be only to reduce the Labour majority....

In such circumstances we think it matter for great regret that there should be any Libtral candilature....

Upon this the comment at the Liberal headquarters to-day was, ‘Well, it is a little difficult to know just where we are, isn’t it?’—*Evening Paper*.

Yes, or *what* we are, for that matter.

* * * * *

“GILBERT-SULLIVAN OPERAS.

Friday, ‘Trial by July.’”—*Provincial Paper*.

It seems a long remand.

* * * * *

JOURNALISTIC CAMARADERIE.

“The whole of this preliminary business is nauseating, and in *real* sporting circles it is taboo as a topic of conversation. No wonder *The Times* devoted a leading article to the matter the other day.”—*Daily Mail*.

How these NORTHCLIFFE journals love one another!

* * * * *

[Illustration: *P.C. (referring to notes)*. “I TOLD ’ER SHE WOULD BE REPORTED, YOUR WORSHIP, TO WHICH SHE REPLIED, ’GO AHEAD, MY CHEERY LITTLE SUNBEAM!’”]

* * * * *

MORE CHAMPIONSHIPS.

The sporting public is so intrigued by the prospect of a DEMPSEY-CARPENTIER match that other impending championship events are in danger of being forgotten.

The present position in the challenge for the World’s Halma Championship is this. Mr. George P. Henrun is patriotically endeavouring to secure the contest for Britain, and to that end has put up a purse of half-a-guinea. The Societe Halma de Bordeaux has cut in with a firm offer of twenty-two francs, and the matter now remains in abeyance while financial advisers calculate the rate of exchange in order to ascertain which proposal is the more advantageous. The challenger, of course, is Tommy Jupes, aged twelve, of Ashby-de-la-Zouche. His opponent, the champion, has an advantage of three years in age and two inches in reach, but the strategy of Master Jupes is said to be irresistible. Only last week he overwhelmed his mother, herself a scratch player, when conceding her four men and the liberty to cheat twice.

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The public will be thrilled to hear that a match has now been arranged between the two lady aspirants for the World's Patience Championship, viz., Miss Tabitha Templeman, of Bath, and Miss Priscilla J. Jarndyce, of Washington. To meet the territorial prejudices of both ladies the contest will take place in mid-Atlantic, on a liner. There will be no seconds, but Miss Templeman will be accompanied by the pet Persian, which she always holds in her lap while playing, and Miss Jarndyce will bring with her the celebrated foot-warmer which is associated with her greatest triumphs. The vexed question of the allocation of cinema royalties has been settled through the tact of Mr. Manketlow Spefforth, author of *Patience for the Impatient*. One lady wanted the royalties to be devoted to a Home for Stray Cats, and the other expressed a desire to benefit the Society for the Preservation of Wild Bird Life. Mr. Spefforth's happy compromise is that the money shall be assigned to the Fund in aid of Distressed Spinsters.

Bert Hawkins, of Whitechapel, has expressed his willingness, on suitable terms, to meet T'gumbu, the powerful Matabele, in a twenty-ball contest for the World's Cokernut-Shying Championship. There is however a deadlock over details. T'gumbu's manager is adamant that the match shall take place in his nominee's native village of Mpm, but Mr. Hawkins objects, seeing little chance of escaping alive after the victory of which he is so confident. He says he would "feel more safer like on 'Ampstead 'Eaf." Another difficulty is that Mr. Hawkins insists on wearing his *fiancee's* headgear while competing, and this is regarded by T'gumbu as savouring of witchcraft. Mr. Hawkins generously offers his opponent permission to wear any article of his wives' clothing; but the coloured candidate quite reasonably retorts that this concession is practically valueless. On one point fortunately there is unanimity: both parties are firm that all bad nuts must be replaced.

* * * * *

ANOTHER ASIAN MYSTERY.

"OLD AND RARE PAINTINGS. Exquisite works of old Indian art. Mytholo-Roast Beef or Pork: Bindaloo Sausages gical, Historical, Mediaeval."—*Englishman (Calcutta)*.

* * * * *

"Two capable young gentlemen desire Posts in good families as Companions, ladies or children; mending, hairdressing, decorations; willing to travel; in or near London."—*Daily Paper*.

What did *they* do in the Great War?

* * * * *

“One of the exquisite features was the presence of the Deacon’s wives. We had 83 upon our Roll of Honour, and of these 36 turned up.”—*Parish Magazine*.

The other forty-seven being presumably engaged in looking after the Deacon.

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"In addition to the fine work done by the Irish regiments he assured them that many a warm Irish heart beat under a Scottish kilt."—*Local Paper*.

Surely Irishmen enlisted in Scottish regiments are not so down-hearted as all that!

* * * * *

THE TALE OF THE TUNEFUL TUB.

["Why do so many people sing in the bathroom?... The note is struck for them by the running water. While the voice sounds resonantly in the bath-room it is not half so fine and inspiring when the song is continued in the dressing-room. The reason is that the furniture of the dressing-room tends to deaden the reverberations."—*Prof. W.H. BRAGG on "The World of Sound."*]

When to my morning tub I go,
With towel, dressing-gown and soap,
Then most, the while I puff and blow,
My soul with song doth overflow
(Not unmelodiously, I hope).

The plashing of the H. and C.
Castalian stimulus affords;
I reach with ease an upper G
And, like the wild swan, carol free
The gamut of my vocal chords.

And when, my pure ablutions o'er,
The larynx fairly gets to work,
Amid the unplugged water's roar
I caper, trolling round the floor,
In tones as rich as THOMAS BURKE.

But in my dressing-room's retreat
My native wood-notes wilt and sag;
Not there those raptures I repeat;
My bellow now becomes a bleat
(For reasons, ask Professor BRAGG).

So, Ruth, if song may find a path
Still through thy heart, be listening by
The bathroom while I take my bath;

But leave before the aftermath,
Nor while I'm dressing linger nigh.

On the acoustic side, I fear,
My chest of drawers is quite a "dud;"
The chairs would silence Chanticleer,
Nor would I have you overhear
When I have lost my collar-stud.

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BOOKS AND BACKS.

The proposal to revive the old "yellow back" cover for novels, partly in the interest of economy in production, partly to attract the purchaser by the lure of colour, has caused no little stir in the literary world. In order to clarify opinion on the subject Mr. Punch has been at pains to secure the following expressions of their views from some of the leading authors of both sexes:—

Mr. J.M. KEYNES, C.B., the author of the most sensational book of the hour, contributed some interesting observations on the economics of the dye industry and their bearing on the question. These we are reluctantly obliged to omit. We may note however his general conclusion that the impact on the public mind of a book often varies in an inverse ratio with the attractiveness of its appearance or its title. At the same time he admits that if he had called his momentous work *The Terrible Treaty*, and if it had been bound in a rainbow cover with a Cubist design, its circulation might have been even greater than it actually is. But then, as he candidly owns, "as a Cambridge man, I may be inclined to attach an undue importance to 'Backs.'"

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Mr. FREDERIC HARRISON writes: "MATT. ARNOLD once chaffed me for keeping a guillotine in my back-garden. But my real colour was never sea-green in politics any more than it is yellow in literature or journalism. Yet I have a great tenderness for the old yellow-backs of fifty years ago. Yellow Books are another story. The yellow-backs may have sometimes affronted the eye, but for the most part they were dove-like in their outlook. Now 'red ruin and the breaking-up of laws' flaunt themselves in the soberest livery. I do not often drop into verse, but this inversion of the old order has suggested these lines, which you may care to print:—

"In an age mid-Victorian and mellow,
Ere the current of life ran askew,
The backs of our novels were yellow,
Their hearts were of Quaker-like hue;
But now, when extravagant lovers
Their hectic emotions parade,
In sober or colourless covers
We find them arrayed."

Mr. CHARLES GARVICE points out that the choice of colour in bindings calls for especial care and caution at the present time, owing to the powerful influence of association. Yellow might lend impetus to the Yellow Peril. Red is especially to be avoided owing to its unfortunate appropriation by Revolutionary propagandists. Blue, though affected by statisticians and Government publishers, has a traditional connection with the expression of sentiments of an antinomian and heterodox character. At all costs the sobriety and dignity of fiction should be maintained, and sparing use should be made of the brighter hues of the spectrum. He had forgotten a good deal of his Latin, but there still lingered in his memory the old warning: "*O formose puer, nimium ne crede colori.*"

Miss DAISY ASHFORD, another of our "best sellers," demurs to the view that a gaudy or garish exterior is needed to catch the public eye. The enlightened child-author scorned such devices. Books, like men and women—especially women—ought not to be judged by their backs, but by their hearts. She confessed, however, to a weakness for "jackets" as a form of attire peculiarly consecrated to youth.

Madame MONTESSORI cables from Rome as follows:—"The colour of book-covers is of vital importance in education. I wish to express my strong conviction that, where books for the young are concerned, no action should be taken by publishers without holding an unfettered plebiscite of all children under twelve. Also that the polychromatic series of Fairy Stories edited by the late Mr. ANDREW LANG should be at once withdrawn from circulation, not only because of the reckless and unscientific colour scheme adopted, but to check the wholesale dissemination of futile fables concocted and invented by irresponsible adults of all ages and countries."



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SONGS OF THE HOME.

III.—THE GUEST.

I have a friend; his name is John;
He's nothing much to dote upon,
But, on the whole, a pleasant soul
And, like myself, no paragon.

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I have a house, and, then again,
An extra room to take a guest;
And in my house I have a spouse.
It's good for me; I don't protest.

By her is every virtue taught;
Man does as he is told, and ought;
He has to eat his own conceit,
So, "Just the place for John!" I thought.

The unsuspecting guest arrives;
But (note the worthlessness of wives)
Does he endure the kill-or-cure
Refining process? No, he thrives.

He's led to think that he has got
The very virtues I have not;
Her every phrase is subtle praise
And oh! how he absorbs the lot.

She finds his wisdom full of wit
And listens to no end of it;
And if he dash tobacco-ash
On carpets doesn't mind a bit.

All that the human frame requires,
From flattery to bedroom fires,
Is his; and I must self-deny
To satisfy his least desires.

I have a friend; his name is John;
I tell him he is "getting on"
And "growing fat," and things like that....
He pays no heed. He's too far gone.

HENRY.

* * * * *

"PUPILS wanted for Pianoforte and Theory.—J.G. Peat, Dyer and Cleaner."—*New Zealand Herald*.

"That strain again! It had a dying fall."—*Twelfth Night*, Act I., Sc. 1, 4.

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"The lowest grade of porter is the grade from which railway employees in the traffic departments gravitate to higher positions."—*Daily Paper*.

The EINSTEIN theory is beginning to capture our journalists.

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There was a Society Sinner
Who no longer was asked out to dinner;
 This proof of his guilt
 So caused him to wilt
That he's now emigrated to Pinner.

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[Illustration: MORE ADVENTURES OF A POST-WAR SPORTSMAN.

Post-War Sportsman. "WOT'S THE MATTER?"

Mrs. P.-W.S. "WHEN I WANT HIM TO JUMP THE FENCE HE JUST STOPS AND EATS IT. WHAT AM I TO DO?"

P.-W.S. "COME ALONG WI' ME, MY DEAR; I'LL SHOW YOU. 'E CAN'T EAT A GATE."]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

In the war-after-the-war, the bombardment of books that is now so violently raging upon all fronts, any contribution by a writer as eminent as Lord HALDANE naturally commands the respect due to weapons of the heaviest calibre. Unfortunately "heavy" is here an epithet unkindly apt, since it has to be admitted that the noble lord wields a pen rather philosophic than popular, with the result that *Before the War* (CASSELL) tells a story of the highest interest in a manner that can only be called ponderous. Our

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ex-War Minister is, at least chiefly, responding to the literary offensives of BETHMANN-HOLLWEG and TIRPITZ, in connection with whose books his should be read, if the many references are properly to be understood. As every reader will know, however, Lord HALDANE could hardly have delivered his apologia before the accuser without the gates and not at the same time had an eye on the critic within. Fortunately it is here no part of a reviewer's task to obtrude his own political theories. With regard to the chief indictment, of having permitted the country to be taken unawares, the author betrays his legal training by a defence which is in effect (1) that circumstances compelled our being so taken, and that (2) we weren't. On this and other matter, however, the individual reader, having paid his money (7_s_. 6_d_. net), remains at liberty to take his choice. One revelation at least emerges clearly enough from Lord HALDANE'S pages—the danger of playing diplomat to a democracy. "Extremists, whether Chauvinist or Pacifist, are not helpful in avoiding wars" is one of many conclusions, double-edged perhaps, to which he is led by retrospect of his own trials. His book, while making no concessions to the modern demand for vivacity, is one that no student of the War and its first causes can neglect.

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It is not Mr. L. COPE CORNFORD'S fault that his initials are identical with those of the London County Council, nor do I consider it to be mine that his rather pontifical attitude towards men and matters reminds me of that august body. Anyone ignorant of recent inventions might be excused for thinking that *The Paravane Adventure* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) is the title of a stirring piece of sensational fiction. But fiction it is not, though in some of its disclosures it may be considered sensational enough. In this history of the invention of the Paravane Mr. CORNFORD hurls a lot of well-directed bricks at Officialdom, and concludes his book by giving us his frank opinion of the way in which the Navy ought to be run. It is impossible, even if one does not subscribe to all his ideas, to refrain from commending the enthusiasm with which he writes of those who, in spite of great difficulties, set to work to invent and perfect the Paravane. If you don't know what a Paravane is I have neither the space nor the ability to tell you; but Mr. CORNFORD has, and it's all in the book.

* * * * *

A stray paragraph in a contemporary, to the effect that the portrait of the heroine and the story of her life in Baroness VON HUTTEN'S *Happy House* (HUTCHINSON) is a transcript of actual fact, saves me from the indiscretion of declaring that I found Mrs. Walbridge and her egregious husband and the general situation at Happy House frankly incredible. Pleasantly incredible, I should have added; and I rather liked the young man, *Oliver*, from Fleet

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Street, whom the Great Man had recently made Editor of *Sparks* and who realised that he was destined to be a titled millionaire, for is not that the authentic procedure? Hence his fanatical obstinacy in wooing his, if you ask me, none too desirable bride. I hope I am not doing the author a disservice in describing this as a thoroughly wholesome book, well on the side of the angels. It has the air of flowing easily from a practised pen. But nothing will induce me to believe that *Mrs. Walbridge*, putting off her Victorian airs, did win the prize competition with a novel in the modern manner.

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Mr. ALEXANDER MACFARLAN'S new story, *The Inscrutable Lovers* (HEINEMANN), is not the first to have what one may call Revolutionary Ireland for its background, but it is by all odds the most readable, possibly because it is not in any sense a political novel. It is in characters rather than events that the author interests himself. A highly refined, well-to-do and extremely picturesque Irish revolutionary, whom the author not very happily christens *Count Kettle*, has a daughter who secretly abhors romance and the high-falutin sentimentality that he and his circle mistake for patriotism. To her father's disgust she marries an apparently staid and practical young Scotch ship-owner, who at heart is a confirmed romantic. The circumstances which lead to their marriage and the subsequent events which reveal to each the other's true temperament provide the "plot" of *The Inscrutable Lovers*. Though slender it is original and might lend itself either to farce or tragedy. Mr. MACFARLAN'S attitude is pleasantly analytical. It is indeed his delightful air of remote criticism, his restrained and epigrammatic style queerly suggestive of ROMAIN ROLAND in *The Market Place*, and his extremely clever portraiture, rather than any breadth or depth appertaining to the story itself, that entitle the author to a high place among the young novelists of to-day. Mr. MACFARLAN—is he by any chance the Rev. ALEXANDER MACFARLAN?—may and doubtless will produce more formidable works of fiction in due course; he will scarcely write anything smoother, more sparing of the superfluous word or that offers a more perfect blend of sympathy and analysis.

* * * * *

Susie (DUCKWORTH) is the story of a minx or an exposition of the eternal feminine according to the reader's own convictions. I am not sure—and I suppose that places me among those who regard her heroine as the mere minx—that the Hon. Mrs. DOWDALL has done well in expending so much cleverness in telling *Susie's* story. Certainly those who think of marriage as a high calling, for which the vocation is love, will be as much annoyed with her as was her cousin *Lucy*, the idealist, at once the most amusing and most pathetic figure in the book. I am quite sure that *Susies* and

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Lucys both abound, and that Mrs. DOWDALL knows all about them; but I am not equally sure that the Susies deserve the encouragement of such a brilliant dissection. Yet the men whose happiness she played with believed in *Susie's* representation of herself as quite well-meaning, and other women who saw through her liked her in spite of their annoyance; and—after all the other things I have said—I am bound, in sincerity, to admit that I liked her too.

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You could scarcely have given a novelist a harder case than to prove the likeableness of *Cherry Mart*, as her actions show her in *September* (METHUEN), and I wonder how a Victorian writer would have dealt with the terrible chit. But FRANK SWINNERTON, of course, is able to hold these astonishing briefs with ease. Here is a girl who first turns the head of *Marian Forster's* middle-aged husband in a pure fit of experimentalism, and then sets her cap with defiant malice at the young man who seems likely to bring real love into the elder woman's life. And yet *Marian* grows always fonder of her, and she, in the manner of a wayward and naughty child, of *Marian*. Insolence and *gaucherie* are on the one hand, coolness and finished grace on the other, and, although there are several moments of hatred between the two, their affection is the proper theme of the book. As for *Nigel*, he is impetuous and handsome, and falls in love with *Marian* because she is sympathetic, and with *Cherry* because she is *Cherry*, and also perhaps a little because the War has begun and the day of youth triumphant has arrived. But he does not make a very deep impression upon me, and as for *Marian's* husband, who is big and rather stupid, and always has been, I gather, a bit of a dog, he scarcely counts at all. *Marian*, however, is an extremely clever and intricate study, and for *Cherry*—I don't really know whether I like *Cherry* or not. But I have certainly met her.

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Mr. Punch has pleasure in calling attention to two small volumes, lately issued, which reproduce matter that has appeared in his pages and therefore does not need any further token of his approbation: to wit, *A Little Loot* (ALLEN AND UNWIN), by Captain E.V. KNOX ("EVOE"); and *Staff Tales* (CONSTABLE), by Captain W.P. LIPSCOMB, M.C. ("L."), with illustrations, now first published, by Mr. H.M. BATEMAN. Also to *A Zoovenir* (Dublin: The Royal Zoological Society of Ireland), by Mr. CYRIL BRETHERTON ("ALGOL"), a book of verses which have appeared elsewhere and are being sold for the benefit of the Dublin Zoo.

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[Illustration: *The Fool*. "GOOD MASTER CARPENTER, I AM IN GREAT NEED OF WIT FOR TONIGHT'S FEAST. HAST THOU ANY MERRY QUIP OR QUAINTE CONCEIT WHEREWITH I MIGHT SET THE TABLE IN A ROAR?"

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The Carpenter. "NAY, MASTER FOOL, I HAVE BUT ONE WHICH I FASHIONED MYSELF WITH MUCH LABOUR. IT GOETH THUS: 'WHEN IS A DOOR NOT A ——?'"

The Fool." ENOUGH! THAT JOKE HATH ALREADY COST ME TWO GOOD SITUATIONS."]