

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 158, March 3rd, 1920 eBook

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Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

A lunatic who recently escaped from an asylum was eventually recaptured in a large dancing-hall in the West-End. The fact that he was waltzing divinely and keeping perfect time with the music aroused the other dancers' suspicions and led to his recapture.

* * *

The latest type of Tank, Mr. *Winston Churchill* informed the House of Commons, weighs thirty tons and can pass over a brick without crushing it. It is said to be modelled on the Profiteering Act.

* * *

The proposal of the *home secretary* to add fifty per cent. to taxi-cab fares and abolish the initial charge of sixpence is said to find favour both with owners and drivers. The men in particular have always chafed at the necessity of messing about with small silver.

* * *

Much sympathy is felt locally for the man who in the excitement caused by the declaration of the poll at Paisley lost his corkscrew.

* * *

"The ex-Kaiser was responsible for the War," says the *Koelnische Zeitung*. Our Hush-hush Department seems to have grown very lax of late.

* * *

A welcome case of judicial sympathy is reported from West London. It appears that a Society lady charged with shop-lifting pleaded that she was the sole support of two kennel-ridden poodles, and was immediately discharged.

* * *

The Press reports the existence of miles and miles of war-material in huge dumps near Calais and Boulogne. War Office officials, we hear, are greatly relieved, as they have been trying for several months to remember where they had left the stuff.

* * *

A lady with small capital would like to meet another similarly situated, with a view to the joint purchase of a reel of thread.

* * *

At Jerusalem a tree has been uprooted whose fall is locally believed to presage the destruction of the Turkish Empire. It is only fair to the tree to point out that if it had known of this it would probably, like the Government, have changed its mind at the last minute.

* * *

"One of the problems of civilized humanity," says a writer in *The Daily Mail*, "is the avoidance of pain-producing elements in ordinary diet." Nowadays it is impossible to eat even so simple a thing as a boiled egg in a restaurant without the risk of being stung.

* * *

The identity of the gentleman who, under the initials "A.G.," recently advertised in the Press for the thyroid gland of *Proteus diplomaticus* remains unrevealed.

* * *

It appears that the Government have undertaken not to engage in any more war with the Bolsheviks, if they, for their part, will endeavour to quell the peace which is still raging.

* * *

"Englishmen will never forget America," says a Service paper. For ourselves we had hoped that the American bacon affair was closed.

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* * *

A burglar broke into a barrister's chambers in the Temple last week. We understand that he got away without having any money taken off him.

* * *

A woman who said she had had six husbands asked a London magistrate to grant her a separation. It is supposed that she is breaking up her collection.

* * *

Owing to the thick fog experienced in London, last week several daylight hold-ups were unavoidably postponed.

* * *

With the present fashion in ladies' wear many owners of beautiful brooches are in the unhappy position of having nothing to attach them to.

* * *

In order to raise funds for the building of a new church-porch in a Birmingham parish a member of the committee suggested the sale of small flags in the street. Struck by the originality of this novel idea the chairman agreed to go into the matter in order to see if it was practicable.

* * *

A farmer writing from Bridgnorth, Salop, to a daily paper states that he has a tame fox which guards the house at night and shepherds the sheep by day. We understand that the Dogs' Trade Union takes a serious view of the whole matter, but is not without hope of being able to avert a strike.

* * *

The real value of co-operation was illustrated the other day on the Underground Railway when a lady complained that a straphanger was standing on her foot. Word was immediately passed down the carriage, with the result that by a combined swaying movement in one direction the offender was enabled to remove his foot.

* * *

It is estimated that three hundred and forty thousand persons made fortunes out of the War. Of these it is only fair to say that the number who actually encouraged the War to happen are few. The vast majority simply allowed it to come along and do its worst.

* * *

The Corporation of London made L18 on the sale of waste paper in the year 1919-1920, as compared with over L9000 in the year 1918-1919. It looks as if in the last-named year the Corporation was in communication with a Government Department.

* * *

"Why will not Scotsmen eat eels?" asks *The Manchester Guardian*. We cannot say, but we have always understood that the attitude is reciprocal.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "*Have you any—er—hats?*"]

* * * * *

The Post-war hero.

It was a stainless patriot, who could not bear to fight
For England the oppressor, or own that she was right;
But when the War was over, to show his martial breed,
He shot down three policemen and made a woman bleed.

* * * * *

Paisley to the Rescue of the coalition.



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(*The PRIME MINISTER to Mr. ASQUITH*)

Welcome, for Old Long Since's sake,
Home to your ancient seat!
It needed only this to make
My cup of joy complete;
The weary waiting time is past;
The yawning vacuum is mended;
And here we have you back at last—
Oh, *Herbert*, this is splendid!

As one whose wisdom overflows
With human nature's lore,
You know they make the keenest foes
Who have been friends before;
We loved as only Liberals do
Until their rival sabres rattle
And Greek joins Greek (like me and you)—
Then is the tug of battle.

As an old Parliamentary hand
Familiar with the ropes,
Those perils you will understand
With which a Premier copes
Whose big battalions run to seed,
Having indulged a taste for slacking,
And let their muscles moult for need
Of foemen worth the whacking.

Such was my case. By habit's use
They still obeyed the whip,
But loyal zeal grew limp and loose
And things were left to rip;
I had no hope to stay the rot
And fortify their old affections
(Save for the stimulus they got
From losing by-elections).

Daily I took, to keep me fit,
My tonic in *The Times*;
Daily recovered tone and grit
Reading about my crimes;
But one strong foe is what we lack
To put us on our best behaviour;

That's why in you I welcome back
The Coalition's saviour.

O.S.

* * * * *

Auction in the spacious times.

"It is Our Royal pleasure to will and declare one diamond," said the *virgin queen*, when the Keeper of the Privy Purse had arranged her hand for her. Sir *Walter Raleigh*, who sat on her left, was on his feet in a twinkling. "Like to like, 'twas ever thus," he murmured, bowing low to his Sovereign. "I crave leave to call two humble clubs, as becometh so mean a subject of Your Majesty," It is not known whether his allusion to the *queen's* call was intended to refer to the diamond rings upon *her majesty's* fingers or to the scintillating glint in *her majesty's* eyes, but she inclined her head graciously in acknowledgment of his remarks before turning to her partner.

"What say you, my Lord of *Leicester*?" she asked. "Wilt support a poor weak woman?" His Lordship, however, looked down his noble nose and said nothing for quite a long time. He found himself, to use a vulgar phrase, in the *consomme*. His hand contained the ace, king and six other spades, nothing to write home about in hearts or clubs, and one small diamond. To take from his partner the right to play the hand would be the act of a fool—the mere thought made him raise a hand to his neck as though to assure himself of its continuity. Even failure to support her call would be looked on as ungallant, if nothing worse.

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"How now, sirrah? Art sleeping in Our presence?" prompted the *queen* sharply.

The *Earl* swallowed noisily once or twice, just to show that he was awake, and then plunged.

"An it please you, Madam, two diamonds," he muttered, with but a sorry show of his habitual arrogance.

"Double!" said Sir *Francis Drake* in crisp seamanlike tones, whereat the Earl of *Leicester* was seen to fumble for the hilt of his rapier.

"Stay, my Lord," his liege commanded; "'tis true the Knight hath left his manners in Devonshire, or on the Spanish main mayhap, but keep your brawl for an hour and place more fitting. We redouble."

A momentary silence followed the *queen's* discourse, cut short by the uncouth ejaculation "'Ods fish!" which escaped from Sir *Francis* apparently without his consent. He embarked on an apology at once, based on the fact that he was but an honest sailor; but, meeting with no encouragement, he gave it up and fell to sucking his teeth.

Sir *Walter* meanwhile made good use of the interval to perfect a flower of speech signifying, in a manner worthy a courtier of his reputation, that he was content. His effort drew from the *queen* a glance as nearly approaching the "glad eye" as any that august spinster was ever known to dispense. The Laird of Kenilworth announced that he also was content; but historians should accept the statement with reserve. Sir *Francis* either wasn't sure whether the rules of the game allowed him to double again, or else had just enough tact not to do so. The game then proceeded.

Sir *Walter* led the ace of clubs. The appearance of the noble lord's solitary little diamond, as he laid down his hand, was greeted by a loud hiccough from the old salt, and the *queen* herself was only saved from swooning by the timely administrations of a page with a flask of sal-volatile.

When, fourth in hand, she trumped the honest sailor's ace, her partner had the hardihood to make conventional inquiry as to whether she had any clubs. *Her majesty* uttered in reply the one dreadful word, "Treason," thus avoiding with true statesmanship any direct answer to the question, and indicating clearly her opinion of his two-diamond call. The Keeper of the Privy Purse shot out a lean hand and gathered in the trick.

With the help of the ace of spades in dummy, the ace of hearts in her own hand, and a discriminating use of her Royal prerogative in the matter of following suit, all went well until the odd trick had been won. After that, however, Sir *Francis*, who had not doubled without good reason, proceeded to deal out six diamonds, led by the ace, king and queen. His partner unwisely allowed his feelings to get the better of him. "As *will*

SHAKSPEARE hath it," he observed with unction, "now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer—" but stopped on a sudden, with ears and scalp twitching horribly.

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“Ho without! Summon the guard!” roared the last of the Tudors, and immediately an N.C.O. and six private beef-eaters appeared on the scene. “Convey Our compliments to the Governor of the Tower,” she continued, addressing the N.C.O., “and bid him confine the Earl of *Leicester* during Our pleasure. My Lord,” she added, turning to her luckless partner, “twere well, methinks, you should have leisure in which to reflect on the folly of trifling with a woman.”

It is greatly to the *earl’s* credit that at this point he made strenuous endeavours to surrender his sword in accordance with the drill-book, but as it refused to come out of its scabbard he was obliged to unbutton the frog from his belt and hand over the weapon complete with leather gear. This formality achieved, he was led away to durance vile.

Sir *Francis*, poor fellow, fared scarcely better than the Earl. “Begone to sea, Sir Knight,” hissed the *queen*; “mayhap the Dons will teach you more becoming manners. Begone, I say, and look to ’t your ships return not empty, else shall you not receive payment of your winnings.”

Sir *Francis* went.

A glance at the pitiable condition of Sir *Walter* caused *her majesty’s* heart to soften somewhat. “Come, Sir,” she cooed, “an arm, prithee, and We will seek a place where you may read to Us the mummings of this strange bard, *will SHAKSPEARE*.”

Sir *Walter* at once regained control of his nerve-centres and escorted *her majesty* from the painful scene.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *The elusive pest.*

John Bull. “Got him!”

The profiteer. “I don’t think!”]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Patient*. “And you really think there is nothing wrong with my eyesight?”

Oculist. “Nothing at all. Perfectly normal.”

Patient. “Ah, then it must be the way I’ve been holding my putter.”]

* * * * *

George and the cow-Dragon.

The “rockerty-tockerty-tock” refrain of the carriage-wheels below me changed into a jarring whine as the train came to a full stop. I looked out on a dim-lit platform which seemed to be peopled only by a squad of milk-cans standing shoulder to shoulder like Noah’s Ark soldiers.

As the engine shrieked and plunged into its collar again the door was jerked open and a man projected himself into the carriage and, opening the window so that the compartment was flooded with cold air, leaned out and resumed his conversation with a friend till the train bore him out of shouting range. He then pulled up the window, trod on my foot, sat on my lap and eventually came to rest on the seat opposite me.

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It was a small man, red of head and bright of eye. He wore his cap at the back of his head, so as to exhibit to an admiring world a carefully-cultured curl of the “quiff” variety, which was plastered across his forehead with a great expenditure of grease. His tie was a ready-made bow of shot-colours, red, green, blue and purple, and from his glittering watch-chain hung many fanciful medals, like soles upon a line.

“Brother-in-law to me,” he remarked, jerking his thumb towards the back-rushing lights of Exeter.

“Who?” I inquired.

“That young feller I was talking to just now. Didn’t you see me talking to a young feller?”

“Oh, yes, I believe I did hear you talking to somebody.”

“Well, him. Married a sister to me, so he’s my brother-in-law, ain’t he?”

“Certainly.”

“Well, you’re wrong then. He’s only a half-brother-in-law, because she is only a half-sister to me, her ma marrying my old man. Understand?”

I said I did and pulled up my rug as a signal that I was going to sleep and the conversation was at an end.

“Anyhow, whatever he is, he’s good enough for her.”

I remarked that that was most satisfactory and closed my eyes.

He drew out a yellow packet of cigarettes, selected one and held them in my direction. I declined and again closed my eyes.

“Very good, please yourself, it’s one more for little Willie. All I can say is that you’re foolish not taking a good fag when it don’t cost you nothing. You don’t catch me refusing a free fag even when I don’t want to smoke. I takes it and puts it in my cap for when I do. Pounds I’ve saved that way, pounds and pounds.”

He lit his limp tube of paper and mystery, stamped out the match and spat deliberately on the floor.

“See me do that?”

I nodded with as much disgust as I could contrive.

“Know what them notices say I can get for that? Fined or imprisoned.”



He paused for me to marvel at his daring.

“Think I’m mad to take risks like that, don’t cher? Well, I aren’t neither. They couldn’t catch me out, not they.”

He brushed some ash off his lap on to mine and winked sagely.

“Suppose the guard was to come in here and start fining and imprisoning me for it, do you know what I’d do? I’d swear *you* did it.”

“But I should deny it,” I retorted hotly.

“Of course you would, old chum, and I shouldn’t blame you neither, but you wouldn’t stand no chance against me”—he leaned forward and tapped me on the knee as though to emphasize his words—“*I could lie your life away.*”

He sank back in his seat, his face aglow with conscious superiority. The clamour of the wheels increased as if they were live things burning with the fever of some bloodthirsty hunt.

“Firing her up,” said the red man; “always racing time, these passenger wagons. It’s a dog’s life and no blooming error.” He prodded my foot with his. “I said ‘it’s a dog’s life and no error.’”

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"What is?" I growled.

"Engine-driving, of course. I'm on the road myself. Goods-pushing just now, but I've been on the expresses off and on, though it don't suit me—too much flaring hurry."

He rattled off into technicalities of his trade, embroidered with tales of hair-bristling adventures and escapes.

"Yes, old chum, there's more in our trade than what most fat-headed passengers thinks. As long as an accident don't occur they don't know what trouble we've been to avoiding of it. I've a good mind to give 'em a smash-up now and again just to teach 'em gratitude. F'instance, me and me mate was running a local down Ilfracombe way last week when what d'you think we runned into?"

"Ilfracombe?" I hazarded sleepily.

"An old cow! Now what d' you think of that?"

"It was so much the worse for the coo," I quoted.

"What say?"

"It was so much the worse for the cow."

"Worse for the cow?"

"So GEORGE STEPHENSON said, and he invented the locomotive and ought to know, you'll admit."

The little man stared at me, his mouth open; for once he seemed bereft of words. We had slowed to a momentary stop, in a small station and pulled out again before he regained control of his tongue, then he broke loose.

"No, I don't admit it neither. I don't care if your friend George invented the moon, he talks like a fool, and you can tell him so from me."

"I can't, unfortunately; he's—"

"A chap that talks disrespectful and ignorant of cows like that didn't oughter be allowed to live. A cow is one of the worstest things you can run up against. I'd rather run into a row of brick houses than one of them nasty leathery old devils; and you can hand the information to your chum George."

"I tell you I can't; he's—"

“Ask any driver or fireman on the road, and if he don’t slip you one with a shovel for your withering ignorance he’ll tell you just what I’m telling you now. Yes, you and your funny friend.”

“Look here, GEORGE STEPHENSON has been—”

“Let your funny friend try running into a cow just for ’speriment. Just let him try it once. They tangle up in your bogies, all slippery bones and hide, slither along with you a yard or two, and the next thing you know is you’re over an embankment and your widder is putting in for insurance. Tell your pal George from me.”

The brakes ground on and the lights of a station flickered past the windows.

“My gosh!” exclaimed the red-headed man, springing to his feet, “this is Cullumpton, and I ought to have got out at the station before.” He wrestled with the door-handle. “And it’s all through sitting here listening to your everlasting damfool chatter about you and your friend George.”

“Who died forty years before I was born,” said I. “Good night.”

PATLANDER.

* * * * *

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[Illustration: *Robinson*. "IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU CHAPS STARTED TO DO SOMETHING. HARD WORK NEVER KILLED ANYBODY."

Mendicant. "YOU ARE MISTAKEN, SIR. I LOST THREE WIVES THROUGH IT."]

* * * * *

WIZARDS: KLINGSOR AND ANOTHER.

"Another *Parsifal* ought to be written from the angle of Klingsor, who was an enlightened Arabian, physician, scientist and probably Aristotelian.... The Knights, and Wagner with them, call him a wizard, which was a crude mediaeval way of 'slanging' any man who preferred knowledge to superstition."

This remarkable utterance by the musical critic of *The Daily Mail* in the issue of February 25th has created a sensation in the political world fully equal to that caused by the announcement of Mr. ASQUITH'S return for Paisley. Scientific and artistic circles have also been deeply moved.

Sir PHILIP SASSOON, Mr. LLOYD GEORGE'S new secretary, interviewed by our representative, said that the tribute to his chief was all the more welcome considering its source. His only criticism was that, instead of calling the charge of wizardry a "crude mediaeval" mode of invective, he should prefer to style it an ultra-modern application of the art of obloquy.

Sir OLIVER LODGE, in a wireless message from New York, entirely approved of *The Daily Mail's* reading of KLINGSOR'S character. He was clearly a scientist and a spiritualist of remarkable attainments. The defection of *Kundry* to the side of the Knights was a sad instance—but not without modern parallels—of the unrelenting pressure exerted on weak women by the zealots of orthodoxy.

Mr. A.B. WALKLEY said that he had long suspected KLINGSOR of being a crypto-Aristotelian, but the arguments of the writer in *The Daily Mail* had converted his suspicion to a certainty. He proposed to deal with the matter more fully in an imaginary dialogue between KLINGSOR and Sir OSWALD STOLL (who was a devout follower of HERBERT SPENCER) which would shortly appear in *The Times*.

Mr. DEVANT professed himself delighted with the vindication of KLINGSOR, who was undoubtedly, like ROGER BACON, a first-rate conjurer, far in advance of his time, and with limited resources was yet capable of producing illusions which would not have disgraced the stage of St. George's Hall.

The Archbishop of CANTERBURY excused himself from pronouncing a definite opinion on the subject, but pointed out that it would doubtless come within the purview of the inquiry into Spiritualism undertaken by high clerical authority.

Mr. JACOB EPSTEIN made the gratifying announcement that he was engaged on a colossal statue of Mr. LLOYD GEORGE in the character of the modern *Merlin*. His treatment might not commend itself to the leaders of Nonconformity in Wales, but his own artistic conscience was clear, and he felt he could count on the benevolent sympathy of the Northcliffe Press.

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The Editor of *The Times* strongly demurred to the statement that KLINGSOR was an Arabian. The great authority on KLINGSOR was the anonymous thirteenth-century epic poem on *Lohengrin*, the father of *Parsifal*, and he had no doubt (1) that the author was either a Czecho-Slovak or a Yugo-Slav; (2) that KLINGSOR, as the etymology suggested, was of the latter race. In these circumstances the attempt to establish an affinity between Mr. LLOYD GEORGE and KLINGSOR was nothing short of an outrage, which might have disastrous results on our relations with the new States of Central Europe.

Mr. J. MAYNARD KEYNES observed that the characterisation of Mr. LLOYD GEORGE, implicit in the defence of KLINGSOR made by the musical critic of *The Daily Mail*, indirectly confirmed his own impressions. It was true that the PREMIER did not physically resemble an Arab sheikh, and his knowledge of medicine, science or philosophy, to say nothing of geography, was decidedly jejune, but the sad case of President WILSON made it all too clear that he was capable of exerting a hypnotic influence on his colleagues. Mr. KEYNES did not think Mr. LLOYD GEORGE was an Aristotelian; he preferred to consider him an unconscious Pragmatist. This view he proposed to develop in his forthcoming volume on the Subliminal Conscience of Nonconformity.

* * * * *

TO JAMES (MULE) WHO HAS PLAYED ME FALSE.

[Many mules are appearing upon the streets of London and are showing an extraordinary and unexpected docility amidst the traffic.]

James, when I note your air supremely docile,
Your well-fed look of undisturbed content
(Doubtless you find this land an adipose isle
After lean times on active service spent),
I do not join with those who hymn your praises
For calmness mid the turmoil of the town;
I find myself consigning you to blazes—
James, you have let me down.

For I am one who, after having striven,
A hero (*vide* Press) though far from bold,
Has come back home and, naturally, given
Artistic touches to the tales he's told;
The Transport was my scene of martial labours;
That was the section where I saw it through;
And I have told astonished friends and neighbours
Some lurid yarns of you.



You are the theme I have been wont to brag on;
I've told how you, my now innocuous moke,
Would chew the tail-board off a G.S. wagon
By way of mere *plaisanterie* (or joke);
Dubbed you most diabolical of ragers,
A rampant hooligan, a fetid tough,
A thing without respect for sergeant-majors—
That is to say, hot stuff.

Full many a fair young thing I've seen displaying
A sympathetic pallor on her cheek
And wonder in her eye, when I've been saying
How almost every day in Salonique
You jazzed with me on brinks of precipices;
But when I talk to-day they cannot fail
To think of you in town and murmur, "This is
A likely sort of tale."

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To take, without one thought of evil plotting,
Even without one last protesting kick,
Thus kindly to somnambulistic trotting—
Oh, James, old pal, it was a dirty trick;
To show the yarns I'd told of you and written
(In letters home) were not entirely swank
At very least, I think, you might have bitten
The policeman at the Bank.

* * * * *

BOAT RACE "INTELLIGENCE."

"The Oxford University crew arrived at Henley yesterday for a week's practice. The Cambridge president, Mr. E.A. Berrisford, accompanied the crew as spare man."—*Provincial Paper*.

* * * * *

"The Government, said Mr. Bonar Law, had not received any intimation from the Netherlands Government that Holland had decided to keep the ex-Kaiser in Curacoa."—*Evening Standard*.

Good news for Mr. PUSSYFOOT.

* * * * *

"ESSEX and SUSSEX BORDERS.—To be Let, well-built Mansion, surrounded by fine gardens, situate in one of the finest parts of this delightful country."—*Daily Paper*.

But it must be rather a nuisance to cross the Thames every time you want to go from the Essex to the Sussex wing.

* * * * *

[Illustration: MANNERS AND MODES.

TYPICAL COSTUME FOR AN EARNEST WORKER IN THE CAUSE OF CHARITY.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: BEHIND THE SCENES IN CINEMA-LAND.

THE RAGE EXHIBITED BY AN AUTHOR WHILE HAVING ONE OF HIS NOVELS FILMED IS UTILISED BY THE INTELLIGENT MANAGER OF THE FILM COMPANY FOR A NEW “THREE-REEL COMIC,” ENTITLED “HOW AUTHORS WORK.”]

* * * * *

SUZANNE'S BANKING ACCOUNT.

“These want paying,” said Suzanne as she bounced into my nominally sacred den at a strictly prohibited hour. Therewith she thrust a *dossier* of tradesmen's bills into my feebly-resisting hands, and bang went an idea I had been tenderly nursing since breakfast.

“But I can't spend the rest of the morning writing cheques,” I protested. “I'm engaged just now on a most important article.”

“With your eyes shut,” commented Suzanne, stooping to a grossly unfair insinuation. “I must tell Cook to make the breakfast coffee stronger in future; then you might manage to—”

“Look here, Suzanne, you've been married to me long enough to know my methods of work. I can't begin an article until I've got the whole thing shaped in my mind, and to do that I must shut out everything else.”

“Especially your wife, I suppose. Well, I won't stay. You've got all the bills there; but don't start writing the cheques till you've got them well shaped in your mind.”

“But what on earth does all this mass of accounting literature represent?” I asked.

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“For the benefit of new readers a synopsis is attached,” said Suzanne. “They’re mostly small items; for instance, Madame Pillby—she’s the little dressmaker round the corner, you know; though why an all-British spinster should call herself ‘Madame’ I can’t imagine—five-and-fourpence-ha’penny.”

“Suzanne; I will *not* write a cheque for five-and-fourpence-ha’penny! Are they all like that?”

“The biggest is two guineas; that’s what it cost to have my last dance-hat altered to your specifications, because you said it tickled your nose. There are seventeen of them in all—bills, not hats; total, twelve pounds fifteen shillings and elevenpence three farthings, pa-pa.”

“I’ll tell you what I’m going to do,” I said. “I’m going to advertise in the Personal Columns of the papers that I will not be responsible for payment of any debts incurred by my wife under the sum of one pound. That’ll stop this half-crown cheque nuisance. Why don’t you go out and buy yourself a packet of assorted postal-orders?”

“I did once; but I got in with a nice long list just before closing-time, and there was very nearly a riot on both sides of the counter.”

“Well, anyhow, this sort of thing has got to stop; I can’t waste all the morning settling your miserable little bills. What we’ll do is this: you shall have your own banking-account, and in future you can write your own cheques—as long as the Bank will stick it.”

“Oh, how perfectly splendid!” cried Suzanne. “I’ve always wanted to have a cheque-book of my own, but Father thought it unsexing. Do let’s go and take out the licence at once.”

The precious hour of fertilisation was already wasted, so there and then I escorted Suzanne to the Bank. At my demand we were ushered into the Manager’s room, where we were received with a courtesy only too obviously tempered by the suspicion that I had come to suggest an overdraft. On my explaining our errand, however, the Manager’s features relaxed their tenseness, and as I wrote the cheque that brought Suzanne’s account into a sordid world he even attempted a vein of fatherly benediction.

“Now we shall require a specimen of the lady’s signature,” he said as he produced an amazingly obese ledger and indicated where Suzanne was to sign her name. “Remove the glove, please,” he added hastily.

“Just like old times in the vestry,” said Suzanne to me in a whisper. Then she wrote her name—“Suzanne Desiree Beverley Trumpington-Jones”—all of it. By the time she had

finished she had trespassed into several columns reserved for entirely different uses. The Manager surveyed the effect with consternation.

“Rather a long name, isn’t it?” he asked diffidently. “I was only wondering if our cheque-forms would accommodate it all.”

“Well, I’m not really responsible for it all,” she replied. “The Trumpington-Jones part is the more or less permanent result of a serious accident when I was little more than a child. But I might shorten it a bit. I sometimes answer to the name of Soozles, but I suppose that would only do for really intimate cheques. How would ‘S. Beverley T.-Jones’ do? I shouldn’t like to lose the ‘Beverley’ as it’s a kind of family heirloom, and I always use it, even when I’m writing to the sweep.”

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I edged away to the window and left them to settle the signature question among themselves.

“And what kind of cheques would you like—‘Order’ or ‘Bearer’?” I next heard the Manager asking.

“Show me some patterns, please,” commanded Suzanne.

On the wall was a frame containing a number of different cheque varieties, to which her attention was directed.

“Haven’t you any other colours?” she asked. “I thought a black-and-yellow cheque would be rather becoming; but don’t bother about it if it’s not in stock.”

She ended by taking one book of blue and one of purple cheques, and with these and a paying-in-book (which she said would do so nicely for spills) we at last departed. From behind the closed door of the private office I distinctly heard a prolonged sigh of relief.

A few days later I came upon Suzanne sitting at her writing-table and examining a cheque with a mystified air.

“Anything wrong?” I asked.

“I don’t quite know,” she replied. “I sent Angela this cheque the other day to pay for my ticket for the Law-Courts’ Revel, and she says the Bank people have returned it to her. And it’s marked ‘R.D.’ in red ink. Who is ‘R.D.’?”

“He’s the gentleman who censors cheques; and he has a way of disqualifying them when there’s not enough cash to pay them. Suzanne, what have you done with all that money I paid into your account last Monday?”

“But I’ve only paid those footling little bills. There must be tons of money left, unless the Bank’s been speculating with it.”

“Let me have a look at that cheque,” I said.

She handed it to me and I examined it carefully.

“I see it’s signed ‘Thine, Suzanne.’”

“But that’s how I always sign myself to Angela,” she said; “and the Manager distinctly told me to use my customary signature.”

“Signature—not signatures,” I explained gently. “They’re rooted in convention at the Bank and can’t bear the least approach to variety. And what’s this scribbled on the back of it?”

“Oh, that’s only a note I dashed off to Angela telling her what I was going to wear. It seemed such a pity to waste a sheet of notepaper when there was all that space to spare.”

I gave her a quarter-of-an-hour’s lesson in the art of drawing cheques. Then I took up the paying-in book which was lying on the table. I knew it ought to be in a virgin state as I had added nothing to the entrance money. “And what might all these figures portend?” I asked.

“Those? Oh, that’s baby’s weight-chart. I’m always going to keep it there.”

Well, well, if Suzanne looks after the weighing-in I can at least control the paying-in. And I left it at that.

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[Illustration: *Brown*. “WHAT DID THEY GIVE OLD SLOWCOMBE THE O.B.E. FOR?”
Jones. “THE ‘OTHER BEGGARS’ ENERGY,’ I IMAGINE.”]

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[Illustration: *Fond Parent (who has done pretty well in woollens)*. "WELL, SONNY, WE'VE DECIDED TO GIVE YOU THE BEST EDUCATION THAT MONEY CAN BUY. AFTER ALL, YOU WON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING EXCEPT BE A GENTLEMAN."]

* * * * *

IF THE ARMY ADVERTISED.

BATTALION ORDERS.

(1) *Duties, Officers*.—Orderly Officer for to-morrow: Second-Lieutenant W. Jenks.

W. Jenks is prepared to undertake duty for any brother subaltern. Terms—one day's pay, plus fifty per cent. for Saturdays or Sundays (handsome discount for cash in advance). Sleepless activity. Guards visited courteously but firmly. Any unusual occurrence handled with precision and despatch. Engage W. Jenks to do your duty, then sign your report with a clear conscience. Testimonials from all ranks.

(2) *Parades*.—0830 hours and 1130 hours, as per routine.

Hello! Hello!! Hello!!! Come in your hundreds. Amusing and health-giving. Bracing barrack-square; magnificent pedestrian exercise. Come and be experimented on by Sergt.-Major Whizbang, the great military spellbinder. See the Adjutant put Company Commanders through the hoop. Screams of laughter at every performance. Best places in the ranks for those who arrive early. Twice daily (Sundays excepted) till further notice. Breakfast kept for those attending first house.

(3) *Dress, etc., Officers*.—Attention is again drawn to recent instructions on these matters.

Why invite trouble when the local A.P.M. is simply yearning to advise you on points of etiquette? A kindly benevolent man who never forgets that he himself was once a regimental officer. He will tell you whether or not you may arm your aged grandmother across a busy London street without risking your commission. If you favour whiskers, call and see his inimitable museum of permissible patterns. Always at your service.

(4) *Musketry*.—The next party to fire General Musketry Course will proceed on the 2nd prox.

The finest form of outdoor sport (for these who prefer it to any other) is shooting. We are making up a little party to proceed to camp next week. Will you join us? Sylvan scenery; country air; simple wholesome diet; young and cheery society. Cigars or cocoanuts every time you hit the bull's-eye. Practice at stray dogs about camp is



encouraged. Secure the skin of one of these beautifully-marked creatures for your own barrack-room bedside.

(5) *Hair, Length of.*—The practice of allowing the hair to grow beyond the regulation length must cease.

Why suffer the inconvenience of long hair when our own regimental tonsorial artist is waiting to bob it for you free of charge? Luxurious saloon; deft workmanship; no tips. His speciality—memento locks. Twelve such souvenirs guaranteed from one crop. Bald soldiers supplied to taste from surplus clippings. A delicate, lasting and inexpensive compliment to lady friends on leaving a station. Start collecting now.

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INNS OF COURT RESERVE CORPS.

A psychical seance of the above disembodied Corps will be held on Friday the 26th March, in the Common Room of the Law Society in Chancery Lane (by kind permission of the Council), commencing 7.30 P.M.

Astral members desirous of attending should apply to their late Platoon Sergeants, or to Mr. H.L. BOLTON, 1, The Sanctuary, Westminster.

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[Illustration: THE RETURN OF THE EX-CHAMPION.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE. "WELCOME BACK! I'VE BEEN WANTING A SPARRING PARTNER TO GET ME INTO CONDITION; AND YOU'RE THE VERY MAN."]

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ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, February 23rd.—The Highland Fling involves, I understand, some complicated figures, but it is nothing to the Lowland Reel (COATS' variety), on which subject Sir AUCKLAND GEDDES was rather badly heckled this afternoon. A suggestion that Messrs. COATS might use the profits of their foreign trade to reduce the price to the home consumer drove the harassed Minister into an unconscious *mot*. "Suppose," he said, "they cut the thread ... where should we be then?"

[Illustration: THE TANK AND THE LITTLE BRICK.

(MR. CHURCHILL AND CAPTAIN WEDGWOOD BENN.)

"The tank, weighing thirty tons, is able to pass over a brick lying on the road without crushing it. This is a very important point."—*Mr. CHURCHILL.*]

Mr. CHARLES PALMER, the well-known *Globe*-trotter, has just completed a remarkable journey. Within the space of a few weeks he has traversed the distance from the Press Gallery to the Floor of the Chamber, going round by the Wrekin. During the last stage of the route the intrepid traveller was accompanied by Sir HENRY DALZIEL and Mr. BOTTOMLEY.

In introducing a Vote on Account of the Army for a trifle of seventy-four millions the WAR MINISTER proudly announced that Britain and Germany were the only countries in the world that had abolished conscription—and Germany's action was not exactly voluntary.

Mr. CHURCHILL'S description of a new tank, so fast that it could outstrip a foxhound "over a country," so cool that even in the tropics its crew would preserve their *sangfroid traditionnel*, and so delicately sprung that it could run over a brick without hurting itself—or the brick—momentarily encouraged the belief that here was the weapon to make war impossible. But almost in the same breath Mr. CHURCHILL stated that simultaneously the War Office had invented a rifle grenade which would put the super-tank out of action. "As you were!"

Criticism was not entirely disarmed. Mr. DEVLIN of course talked of Ireland—"the only country with which the Empire is at war to-day;" and little Capt. WEDGWOOD BENN rebuked Mr. CHURCHILL for his unfilial sneer at "pious America," and was himself advised "not to develop more indignation than he could contain."

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Tuesday, February 24th.—In both Houses the new policy of the Allies in regard to Soviet Russia was unfolded. The gist of it is that they will not enter into diplomatic relations with the Bolshevik Government until it is ready to adopt civilised methods, but in the meantime will heartily encourage trade with Russia. It would seem that the practical genius of our race has once more discovered a means of indulging sentiment without interfering with business.

[Illustration: THE LABOUR LORD CHANCELLOR.

A forecast.

LORD HALDANE.]

Lord BIRKENHEAD (not BROKENHEAD, by the way, as the *Cork Constitution*, inadvertently or not, calls him) chaffed LORD HALDANE on his “How Happy could I be with Either” attitude between Liberalism and Labour, and advised him definitely to be off with the old love and on with the new, in order that when Labour came into its own the Woolsack might be adequately filled.

Sir ALFRED MOND did not allow himself to be perturbed by the description of certain pictures in the Imperial War Museum as “freaks” and “libels,” for he had observed “with some astonishment” that most of the art critics had pronounced them to be very fine works of art. But when Mr. JEREMIAH MACVEAGH asked if some of these pictures were not portraits of Cabinet Ministers, “and if so how can they possibly be works of art?” the First Commissioner’s artistic conscience was stirred, and compelled him to give the questioner a little instruction in first principles. “Whether a portrait is a work of art depends,” he pointed out, “on the artist and not on the subject painted.”

The evening was devoted to drink. Sir JOHN REES, who urged the abolition of all wartime restrictions, would have been more effective, perhaps, if he had not striven so hard to be lively. One of his sallies, evoked by the impending *debut* of Lady ASTOR as a Parliamentary orator, was indeed, as she observed, “more than polite.”

She herself had her moments of gaiety, but was best, I thought, when seriously arguing for the continuance of the restrictions on alcohol in the special interests of women.

I am afraid, however, that the unregenerate were more intrigued by Mr. CARR’S claim that the Carlisle experiment had been a great success—“it was the only city in the country in which a man could buy a bottle of whisky to take home.”

Wednesday, February 25th.—Question-time in the Commons was dominated by the news that Mr. ASQUITH was in for Paisley, and Members were more concerned in discussing the effect of his return upon the Government and Opposition than in listening to Ministerial replies. Sir DONALD MACLEAN was “all smiles” over his approaching

release from the responsibilities of leadership; but Mr. HOGGE, I thought, looked rather like *Mrs. Gummidge* when “thinking of the old ’un.”

A nod from Mr. MACPHERSON and the Government of Ireland Bill was formally and silently introduced—strange contrast to the long debates and exciting scenes that attended the birth of the Bill’s three predecessors in 1886, 1893 and 1912.

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Sir ROBERT HORNE explained with his usual clarity and persuasiveness the new Unemployment Insurance Bill. The debate on it was interrupted to allow the discussion of a motion by Sir J. REMNANT advocating the increase of police pensions to meet the present cost of living. The police are, with good reason, very popular with the House. In vain the HOME SECRETARY pointed out that the Government even in this cause did not feel justified in “out-running the constable.” Forgetting all their recent zeal for economy Members trooped into the Bobbies’ Lobby and beat the Government by 123 to 57.

[Illustration: “Whether a portrait is a work of art depends on the artist and not on the subject painted.”—*Sir A. MOND on the Imperial War Museum Pictures.*]

The idea that Irishmen, however much they may dislike British rule, never miss an opportunity of raiding the British Treasury, has received a rude shock. Captain REDMOND, inquiring about the allocation of a sum of a quarter-of-a-million for reconstruction in Ireland, was surprised to learn that ten thousand pounds had been allotted to his own constituency, but not claimed. Mr. DEVLIN supplied the key to the mystery: “The reason it was not asked for was because we did not know it was there.”

I learn from *Who’s Who?* that the recreations of Sir ALFRED MOND include “golf, motoring and all forms of sport.” It must have been with keen regret, therefore, that he felt himself compelled to refuse facilities for cricket in Hyde Park, owing to the risk to the public. Viscount CURZON asked if cricket was more dangerous than inflammatory speeches. But the FIRST COMMISSIONER, speaking no doubt from personal experience, expressed the view that there was considerably more danger from a cricket-ball.

The Opposition had rather bad luck on the Constantinople debate. If they had waited till Monday, as originally arranged, they could have trained their big gun from Paisley on to the Government entrenchments. Through insisting on the earliest possible date, they had to content themselves with the far lighter artillery of Sir DONALD MACLEAN. Much, however, was hoped from Lord ROBERT CECIL, who was believed to be heavily charged with high explosives. But before he could come into range up jumped Sir EDWARD CARSON, and in a few brief sentences pointed out that until the PRIME MINISTER had told them the grounds for the decision to leave the Turk his capital, and the conditions under which he was to stay there, the House was talking in the air. Members thereupon clamoured for the PRIME MINISTER, who accordingly had to make his defence when he had heard only half the indictment, and to expend most of the ammunition he had prepared for Lord ROBERT, including some remarkable specimens of the “deadly parallel,” before receiving his adversary’s fire.

That in turn rather upset Lord ROBERT’S plan of campaign, and he was not much more destructive than Sir DONALD MACLEAN had been. The House as a whole seemed satisfied that the Allies had done their best with a problem for which there is no perfect

solution, and that there was at least a chance that the SULTAN would find the guns of an international fleet pointing at his palace windows a strong incentive to good behaviour.

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ANOTHER LADY M.P.?

“Mr. Asquith was accompanied by Mrs. Asquith and the audience singing ‘He’s a jolly good Lady Bonham-Carter.’”—*Scotch Paper*.

* * * * *

A FANCY BIRD.

When any friend of mine is in trouble I always make a point of writing and asking if there is anything I can do. As a rule, there isn’t, but it is a satisfaction to me to know I have made the offer. When I heard that Filmer was leaving his spacious house and grounds at Hampstead, selling half his furniture and moving into a third storey flat at Battersea, I wrote at once. I received in reply one of his usual barely decipherable scrawls: “Yes, old dear, you might find a home for my raven; it’s ancient and a bit rusty, but lots of life in it yet. I’m parting with all my garden things.”

I busied myself about the matter at once. When a man you have known and respected for years is driven by high prices and income-tax to vacate a beautiful home and asks such a simple thing of you as to find a shelter for his bird, you like to do your best. Personally I knew nothing of ravens, but I recognized the inadequacy of my garden for the accommodation of a bird of any kind, therefore I could not think of taking it. But I had a surface acquaintance with the owner of a carriage drive, and I approached him without delay. He was cold in his manner and said with so many calls upon him he could not see his way to contribute towards the expense of Filmer’s move, although he had no doubt, from my representation, that it was a deserving case.

The misunderstanding arose from my leading up to the object of my visit gradually instead of coming to the point at once and asking him to give a comfortable home to a raven. When I explained further he unbent and said he would think it over.

Later he wrote:—

Re RAVEN.

“DEAR SIR,—I have consulted an authority on this bird and find that its bad character has brought about its practical extinction in this country save in the mountain fastnesses of Wales and the craggy moors of Yorkshire. I also learn that its extended wings measure thirty-six inches on an average. I must decline to provide an asylum for such an extensive mass of depravity.”

I confess I was discouraged and also somewhat shocked. I felt Filmer should have enlightened me more on the characteristics of his *protege*. The episode taught me to

avoid preamble in my next quest for a domicile. Also I thought it only right to express myself with absolute frankness. The address of a lady with a reputation for a love of animals was given to me, and I hastened to call upon her. She answered the door herself.

“Madam,” I said, “may I ask you of your kind heart to give a home to an almost extinct bird of evil character about a yard across?”

She looked startled for a moment and then quietly closed the door.

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I was still further discouraged. I felt bound in honour to comply, if possible, with Filmer's comparatively simple request. By chance I ran across Timberley, a man brimful of resource and suggestion. "You want a brewery," he said; "that's the *milieu* for a raven. To my mind no brewery is artistically complete without one. A raven hopping about the casks gives a *je ne sais quoi*, a *cachet*, to the premises. You should get an introduction to a manager."

With some difficulty I did, and I waited upon him in his private office. He seemed immersed in business and asked me to be seated in such a brusque manner that I had no alternative but to remain standing.

"I must apologise for trespassing upon your valuable time, but it has been suggested to me that no brewery is complete without a raven—" I began, stammering slightly from nervousness.

"Well, we've got one. What about it?" he said.

In face of this unlooked-for development I could do nothing but bow and retire.

After this third failure to house the bird I threw convention to the winds and took to accosting utter strangers in the street with, "Will you have a raven?" I went rides in trams and tubes and canvassed the passengers. "Not to-day, thank you," was the response, save in a few instances. One man invited me to ask him again and he would do me in. A lady to whom I propounded the query as we were descending the moving staircase side by side precipitated herself forward with such haste that but for the intervening travellers she must have fallen headlong to the bottom. The mother of a family to whom I appealed shook her head politely and said she was obliged to me for the offer, but it was hard enough to pay for butcher's meat; she couldn't afford poultry.

Then at last, all my efforts having failed, I reluctantly took my pen and wrote to Filmer. In reply I received another of his scrawls:—

"What's this about a raven? Don't let it grow on you. The Victory Croquet Club is taking my ROLLER, L7 carriage forward. I gave L3 10s. for it second-hand ten years ago.

"N.B.—I had great difficulty in reading your writing. Don't cultivate illegibility; it's tiresome for your friends."

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[Illustration: NO, THIS IS NOT A CELEBRATED COMEDIAN TELLING A FUNNY STORY; IT'S MERELY A PRIVATE CITIZEN THREATENING TO REPORT TO THE PROFITEERING COMMITTEE.]

* * * * *

“Referring to charges of drunkenness the Chairman said there were 13 men and five women fined for drunkenness and residing at Chiswick.”—
Local Paper.

To reside at Chiswick may be an eccentricity, but surely is not an offence.

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[Illustration: *Auctioneer.* “COME, GENTS, HOW MUCH FOR THESE DOZEN BRACES?”

Tommy. “CAN’T TAKE MORE’N ELEVEN, GUV’NOR. LOST MY SECOND-BEST EVENING TROUSERS ON THE SOMME.”]

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AT THE PLAY.

“JOHN FERGUSON.”

After the unsatisfying theatre-diet which has fallen to me of late I was doubly glad to get my teeth into Mr. St. JOHN ERVINE'S good meaty ration at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. His theme is as old and new as Job. *John Ferguson* is a saintly Ulster farmer, apostle of the doctrine of non-resistance (rare type in those parts, I understand) and eager justifier of the ways of God to men. *Ferguson's* beloved farm is mortgaged; foreclosure imminent. Help is confidently expected from brother *Andrew* in America, but does not come. Daughter *Hannah*, sent with a message to the brutal mortgagee, is outraged by him. Prospective son-in-law *James*, man of great words but little heart, rushes into the night to kill the ravisher. But it is silent son *Andrew* (destined for the ministry) who does the killing, because he knows *James* to be a craven.

John Ferguson urges confidently the will of God that *James*, whom he believes blood-guilty, should not avoid arrest, and refuses to hide him. But when young *Andrew* insists on giving himself up to save *James* and his own peace the old man's faith, weakened, falters; he protests in his anguish, but rallies to accept this last blow from the hand of God—made none the easier to bear by the arrival, just a fatal fortnight late, of the money from his brother, a forgetful sort of man, who had mistaken the date of the mail. The tragic irony of the whole is skilfully heightened by the fact that it is half-witted “*Clutie*,” with his penny whistle and his random words, who goads young *Andrew* to his vengeance.

A grim tale finely (perhaps just a little too diffusely) told and admirably presented. Mr. ERVINE'S most effective stroke was, I think, the character of *James Caesar*, with his pathetic yet revolting self-condemnation, interpreted with a real mastery of art without artifice by Mr. J.M. KERRIGAN, of the old band of “Irish Players.” Miss MOYNA MACGILL (a name new to me) played her *Hannah* with an exquisite sincerity and restraint. A particular moment when, from her hysterical laughter at the careful choice made by her father's God of the moment for the arrival of the money, she breaks into a passionate “It's not right! It's not just!” was very fine. The whole character was skilfully built up. The part by no means played itself.

Mr. HERBERT MARSHALL'S *Andrew* was also an excellent performance. Was it quite right, however, that the morning after the murder he should appear so completely unruffled? (I admit I don't know my Ulster intimately). I rather think that Mr. MILES MALLESON'S well-studied “*Clutie*” might have been a little less coherent, with more fawning in his manner. He seemed something too normal for his purpose in the piece. The way in which the other characters staved off his piping was beyond all praise. I should guess, from specimens submitted, that his repertory was not extensive.

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Mr. REA, as the father, was of course competent, but surely a little overplacid throughout. He accepted the blow of his daughter's dishonour with scarcely a sign that submission caused him any serious pang—a seeming indifference shared by Miss MAIRE O'NEILL (*Hannah's* mother), who appeared quite untroubled a few minutes after the harrowing relation, and indeed seemed throughout to be playing too easily. Mr. RAYMOND VALENTINE had a “fat” part as the villain, and well and fatly he played it.

I realise more than ever the difficulties of an Irish Settlement.

T.

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[Illustration: OUR ANIMAL ARTIST, AFTER A HARD DAY AT THE ZOO, GOES HOME IN A NON-SMOKER AND FALLS ASLEEP.]

[Illustration: HE SLEEPS SO SOUNDLY THAT THE ENTRY OF A BIG-GAME HUNTER'S FAMILY FAILS TO DISTURB HIM.]

[Illustration: THE ROAR OF A PASSING TRAIN FITS IN WITH HIS DREAMS OF WILD ANIMALS, AND—HE WAKES!]

* * * * *

FAME.

For a long time past I had felt that something ought to be done about it, and then one evening as I opened my paper in the Tube I came suddenly upon the following paragraph:—

“Lunching yesterday with Jack Poppington at the Bitz, where, by the way, M. Caramel treated us to a superbly priceless *mousse a la Canadienne*, he told me that his *Little Pests* is selling like wildfire and proving a real bonanza to the lucky publishers, Messrs. Painter and Lilley. Had a pleasant chat with him about old times in the Army Pay Corps, in which we served together for nearly sixteen months during one of the hottest periods of hostilities ‘out yonder.’ More famous amongst the general public for his black ribboned tortoiseshell monocle and invariable presence at all truly semi-smart Bohemian functions, Poppington keeps a brindled bulldog, grows primulas and is, of course, known to a select circle as the energetic Organising Secretary of the North Battersea Entomological Society.”

The letterpress which I have quoted above was headed “Popular Pap” and formed a kind of frame for a photograph of Mr. Poppington, which seemed to show that his luncheon at the Bitz had not really agreed with him after all, and at the bottom of the column I noted the familiar signature of “*Marchand du Beurre.*”

As usual when I read paragraphs of this kind I first of all blushed guiltily and glanced round to see whether anyone had noticed how eagerly I was drinking it all in. Then I put on the faint superior smile of recognition which I felt that the situation obviously demanded. Good old Poppington! One of the best. What recollections it stirred! *Marchand* and he and I—

When I left the Tube I carefully crumpled the paper up and threw it away, and in the middle of dinner I took care to remark casually to Araminta, “By the way, I suppose you put *Little Pests* on the library list?”

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"Awfully sorry," she said, "but I'm afraid I hadn't heard of them."

"Poppington's latest," I said curtly.

"I'm afraid I haven't heard of Poppington either."

I gave a sigh of desperation and leant back in my chair.

"Well, really!" I protested. "Surely the man himself—everybody—I mean—his—his eye-glass—his bulldog—of course only a few of us fully appreciate the extent of his actual research work—but still—"

"All right, I'll get it," she replied.

That finished off Araminta easily enough, but the situation none the less was serious. Paragraphs exactly like this had been meeting my eye in almost every popular paper for month after month, and, though I use two memory systems and have an electric scalp shampoo each week, I find them increasingly difficult to cope with. *Who's Which* already transgresses the established canons of literary art. It is almost as tall lying down as standing up, and fellows like Poppington are not even in *Who's Which*. He had not, you observed, even obtained an O.B.E. What would happen if I met him at some public gathering or dinner and by some awful mischance forgot those salient facts?

It appeared to me that a process for reproducing short biographies of this nature in a slightly larger type on the shirt-fronts of eminent personages was badly needed; it should be coupled, I felt, with an arrangement of periscopes to help one when sitting beside the great man or standing behind his back. Or he might perhaps wear upon his sleeve something like the divisional signs which were so useful in France. Old Poppington, for instance, might have a—might wear an—I mean there might be something or other on his coat in red or green or blue to indicate the nature and scope of his secretarial activities and give a fellow the right lead. And to think that every week dozens and dozens of new Poppingtons are springing up like crocuses about me! It was a bewildering thought. They were becoming perhaps the most numerous and influential class in the community. I had visions of mass meetings of "well-known" men—"well-known" men marching in procession with flags to Downing Street to demand State recognition, statues and pensions, and insisting that it should be made a penal offence not to recognise their well-known features in the street. I made a great resolve. Why should I be left out of it? I determined to join the crowd.

I had got rather out of touch with old *Marchand* for some time, and had indeed forgotten exactly what he looked like, but I persuaded a mutual friend to point him out to me, and, selecting the psychological moment, cannoned into him heavily in the street. His spectacles dropped off and his note-book fell out of his hand.

“Why, if it isn’t *Du Beurre!*” I shouted, feigning an ecstatic surprise.

“I am sorry,” he said rather stiffly, when he had recovered his breath, “but I am afraid I haven’t the pleasure—”

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"I am John Smith," I said.

"I am afraid I still—"

"Allow me to tell you all about myself," I said. And I did.

I was a little nervous as to how he would take it, but the event justified me. When I opened my paper next evening I found the following words:—

"Ran across John Smith of Ravenscourt Park yesterday afternoon. Chatting with him about one thing and another, he told me something of the methods he has employed to bring about his present celebrity in that salubrious suburb. He has never, it appears, written a book, collaborated in a review, appeared in a night-club, lunched at the Bitz, sat on a committee, or been summoned as a witness in a sensational divorce case. His record, I fancy, must be one of the most thoroughly unique in Greater London."

There was no photograph of John Smith, but, biting partly into this paragraph and partly into another on the opposite side of the column, was one of Mortimer Despenser, the new film star, featured in *Scented Sin*, which really did almost as well. Dear old *Du Beurre*!

EVOE.

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MUSIC A LA MODE.

There was a young singer whose moans
Struck a chill to her auditors' bones;
So she had to explain
That she wasn't in pain,
But was trying to sing quarter-tones.

There once was a basso, a swain
Who came from the rolling Ukraine;
He could sing double D
From breakfast till tea
Without any symptom of strain.

There was a benevolent peer
Who wished to make Art less severe,
So he learned the Jazz drum
And bids fair to become
The black man's most terrible fear.

There once was a critic whose bane
Was his dread of a style that was plain,
 So, resolved to refresh us,
 He strove to be precious,
But sank to the nether inane.

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“AMATEUR SNOOKER POOL CHAMPIONSHIP: S.H. FRY DEFLATED.”—
*Provincial
Paper.*

It was noticed even during the Billiard competition that he never really got the wind up.

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“The chief obstacle to the development of water-power is usually the
question of finance, and if the scheme will not hold water from that
point of view it is not likely to float.”—*Electrical Review.*

And if it holds too much water it is certain to sink.

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

Irishman (discussing “roarer” recently purchased by P.-W.S.). “VERY WELL KNOWN,
SHE WAS, WID THE WARD UNION STAG HOUNDS. THE BOYS USED TO CALL
HER ‘THE WIDDA,’ FOR WHY THEY SAID YE COULD ALWAYS HEAR HER SOBBIN’
AFTHER THE DEER DEPARTED.”]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

Undeniably Mr. CARADOC EVANS is the bold boy. No doubt you remember (since they are so difficult to forget) the two volumes in which he dealt faithfully (and a bit over) with the manners of his countrymen in the land of their fathers. I have heard, and can well believe, that some of Mr. EVANS' own people were moved by this tribute even to the extent of threatening its author with personal violence. And now he has turned from Welsh Wales to English London, and gives us in *My Neighbours* (MELROSE) a further collection of sketches pleasantly calculated to prove that the general detestability of his compatriots remains unchanged by their migration from a whitewashed cottage to a villa in Suburbia. Whatever you may think of Mr. EVANS' work, whether it attracts or violently repels, there can be no question of its devastating skill. His sketches, no more than a few pages in length, contain never an idle word, and the phrases bite like vitriol. Moreover he employs an idiom that is (I conjecture) a direct transcription from native speech, which adds enormously to the effect. Understand me, not for worlds would I commend these volumes haphazard to the fastidious; I only say they are clever, arresting and violently individual. Also that, if you have not so far met the work of Mr. EVANS, here is your opportunity, in a volume that shows it at its best, or worst. Half-an-hour's reading will give you an excellent idea of it. At the end of that time you will probably send either to the chemist for a restorative or to the bookseller for the two previous volumes. Meanwhile, if I were the writer, I should purchase a bulldog.

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Mrs. GEORGE WEMYSS has for some time past specialised in spinster-aunts, bachelor-uncles and charming nieces. In *Oranges and Lemons* (CONSTABLE) she introduces us pleasantly to some more. The plot, in fact, is chiefly concerned with the violent squabbles of an uncle and aunt, who belong to different sides of the family, for the good graces of *Diana* (who is nineteen, or thereabouts, and radiant), and *Shant*, (who says so—just like that—and is five). There are also several young men. To test his abilities in the *Admirable Crichton* line *Diana* maroons the most favoured of these, together with three other aspirants to her hand, and her bachelor uncle, on an island in a Scottish loch, hamperless, on a soft day. As the affections of all the lovers remain undimmed, you can guess what kind of a girl *Diana* must have been. *Shant's* even more responsible job is to tumble off a pony and allay the temporary tartness which existed between her two elderly admirers, so that nothing but oranges and orange-blossoms remain. Really, of course, none of the story much matters. But if you want the sensation of having stayed with delightful people in delightful places, where rising prices are not even mentioned or thought of, Mrs. WEMYSS can give it you all the time.

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Night and Day (DUCKWORTH) is the title of VIRGINIA WOOLF'S last book; but there is no night for the author's clarity of vision, or her cleverness in describing every detail she has seen, or her delicate precision of style; there is only daylight, temperate, pervading, but at times, I am afraid, almost irritatingly calm. "Give me one indiscretion of sympathy or emotion on behalf of your characters," the reader is tempted to implore her; "let me feel that you are a little bit excited about them and I shall feel excited too." The story, after all, is the simple one (to put it in the shudderingly crude language of former days) of a girl's change of heart from an unreal love to one of whose sincerity she eventually convinces herself. *Katharine Hilbery*, the granddaughter of a great poet, brought up by a father whose only interest is in literature, and a charming mother who wanders in fields of Victorian romance, breaks off her engagement with a civil servant who has more taste than talent for letters, and chooses instead a man slightly below her in social position, but with firmness and decision of character and genuine skill in—what? Ironmongery? No, literature. All through the book I found myself wondering whether a mind so finely tempered as *Katharine's*, a perception so acute, was really fitted for anything so commonplace as, after all, love is. And I longed for the authoress, who explained every mood so amazingly well, to explain this too.

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Mrs. NORRIS is evidently a specialist in unconventional situations. In her last novel her theme was the intrigue between a man and his step-mother. In *Sisters* (MURRAY) it is the passion of a man for his living wife's married sister, and in neither case does the author seem to be conscious of anything out of the ordinary. Not that there is any air of naughtiness about the business. *Peter*, a rich cripple, loved *Cherry*, the youngest and prettiest of the three *Strickland* girls. But *Martin*, a casual impecunious stranger, stepped in and took her in one bite before *Peter* could quite realise she was no longer a child. So in default he married *Alix*, who was, incidentally, worth six of her. Meeting his *Cherry*, disillusioned about an unsatisfactory and unsuccessful *Martin*, he reaches out his hand for this forbidden fruit. Whereupon *Alix*, the selfless, drives herself and *Martin* over a cliff by way of making things smooth for *Peter* and *Cherry*, which was inconsiderate, if resourceful; for, while *Alix* is happily killed, poor *Martin* only breaks his back, so that all may end with the balance on the credit side of the Recording Angel's ledger with *Cherry* nursing her hopeless invalid. An unlikely story, pleasantly and competently told.

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My appreciation of *The Ancient Allan* (CASSELL) may be measured by my keen disappointment on finding that the concluding pages of the book were absent in the copy vouchsafed to me, and that (apparently) in their place a double dose of pages 279-294 was offered. Nevertheless I can safely assert that you will find this a yarn worth reading, for here Sir RIDER HAGGARD is in as good form as ever he was, when both he and *Allan Quatermain* were younger. *Lady Ragnall*, who is an old friend to readers of *The Ivory Child*, reappears here, having in her possession a mysterious and potent herb, which she persuades *Allan* to inhale. Then the fun takes on a great liveliness. *Allan* is wafted back to the days when Egypt was under the domination of the Persians, and he in his ancient existence performed some of the very doughtiest of deeds. No one living can tell such a tale with a greater dexterity and zest than Sir RIDER. And at that I will leave it, with one more regret that I was not allowed to be present when *Allan* recovered from the effects of Taduki (the herb that did it).

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I find that when the medicine of thought is wrapped up in the jam of fiction I generally take both more willingly than either alone. But if my author, holding out the spoonful, protests that the jam isn't jam at all but part of the dose, then my mouth does not open with quite its usual happy confidence. Miss W.M. LETTS has said something of the sort about her great little book, *Corporal's Corner* (WELLS, GARDNER, DARTON), and I wish she hadn't. It is cast in the form of letters written by a soldier in hospital to a nurse who has been good to him and whose lover has been killed at the Front. Miss Letts introduces it with a foreword which conveys the impression that a real *Corporal Jack* wrote these letters to a real nurse; but the letters themselves convince—or very nearly convince—me that the foreword itself is a mere device of authorship, and one which defeats its own intention of adding weight to the wise and tender and often humorous things the writer has to say. From his own death-bed *Corporal Jack*, together with his own love-story and that of his chum *Mac*, writes what he can of comfort to his friend, and whether his hand or Miss LETTS'S held the pen the book is the work of someone who knows all about sorrow, and only the initiated—who must be many for a decade to come—will know quite how well it is done.

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Of the late Mr. NOEL ROSS, who, to the infinite loss of British journalism, died at the early age of twenty-seven, Mr. Punch cannot trust himself to speak with the cold detachment of the critic. He saw life with the clear eye of happy youth and set it down with the easy pen of a ready writer. Coming from New Zealand, through the War, to England, his natural talents were at once recognised, and he won a position for himself on the staff of *The Times*. In the leisure moments spared from the service of the Old Lady of Printing House Square, he would crack a jest, now and then, with the Old Sage of Bouverie Street. Mr. EDWIN ARNOLD now publishes a collection of his writings

under the title, *Noel Ross and His Work*, and Mr. Punch confines himself to commending the volume to his readers.

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[Illustration: SOUVENIR-HUNTERS OF THE PAST.
SIR ISAAC NEWTON'S APPLE.]