

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 159, August 4th, 1920 eBook

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CHARIVARIA.

A drought is reported from India and Eastern Africa. Considering the amount of water which has recently escaped from clouds over here it is not surprising to find that they are feeling the pinch in other countries.

* * *

A correspondent writes to a weekly paper inquiring when Sir *Eric Geddes* was born. We admire the fellow's restraint in not asking "Why?"

* * *

We understand that one wealthy connoisseur has decided to give up buying Old Masters in order to save up for the purchase of a railway ticket.

* * *

The Daily Mail points out that Lord *Northcliffe* has left England for the Continent. Sir *Eric Geddes* is said to have remarked that he will catch his lordship coming back.

* * *

A gentleman who is about to travel to a South Coast resort writes to inquire what his position will be if some future Government reduces the railway fares before he arrives at his destination.

* * *

In view of the increased railway fares there is some talk of starting a Mansion House Fund to convey Scotsmen home from England before it is too late.

* * *

Of the new railway rates it can be said that those who go farthest will fare worse.

* * *

With reference to the man who was seen laughing in the Strand the other day, it should be pointed out that he is not an English tax-payer but a Colonial who was catching the boat home next morning.

* * *



A Christmas-card posted at Farnham in December, 1905, has just been delivered at Iychurch. The theory is that the postal authorities mistook it for a business communication.

* * *

The monocle is coming into fashion once again, and it is thought that a motorist wearing one goggle will soon be quite a common sight.

* * *

In view of their unwieldiness and size it is being urged that motor charabancs should be required to carry a special form of hooter, to be sounded only when there is no room for a vehicle coming in the other direction to pass. A more elaborate system of signals is also suggested, notably two short squawks and a long groan, to signify "My pedestrian, I think."

* * *

According to a County Court judge it is the duty of every motorist who knocks down a pedestrian to go back and ask the man if he is hurt. But surely the victim cannot answer such a question off-hand without first consulting his solicitor.

* * *

A great pilgrimage of house-hunters has visited the enormous marrow which is growing in an allotment at Ingatestone, but the strong military guard sent to protect it has succeeded up to the present in frustrating all attempts to occupy it.

* * *

A motor fire-engine dashed into a draper's shop in the North of London last Tuesday week. We understand that one of the firemen with great presence of mind justified his action by immediately setting fire to the building.



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* * *

A petrified fish about fifty feet long has been discovered in Utah. This is said to be the largest sardine and the smallest whale America has ever produced.

* * *

Building operations were interrupted in North London last week, when a couple of sparrows built a nest on some foundations just where a bricklayer was due to lay a brick the next day.

* * *

Six tourists motoring through the mountainous district of Ardeche Department fell a thousand feet down a precipice, but escaped without injury. We understand that in spite of many tempting offers from cinematograph companies the motorists have decided not to repeat the experiment.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *The Girl*. "Isn't that Mr. Jones Bowling?"]

The Enthusiast. "Yes. *The other day he took three wickets for six.*"

The Girl. "How dreadful! *I'd no idea he drank.*"]

* * * * *

Solving the holiday fare problem.

"None but the rich can pay the fare" is as true at this moment as when the words were first penned.

The reference, of course, is to the return fare, for the single fare of tomorrow is hardly more than we paid without complaint in years gone by for the journey there and back.

How comparatively few people seem to be aware that the solution of the difficulty lies in not returning. Could anything be simpler?

Nobody wants to return. In preparing for a holiday our thoughts are concentrated on when to go, where to go and how to get there. Who bothers himself about when to come back, where to come back from, and how to do it? After all, holiday-making is not to be confused with prize-fighting.



That we have come back in the past has been due as much to custom as to anything. Someone introduced the silly fashion of returning from holidays, and we have unthinkingly acquired the habit. Once we shake off this holiday convention the problem of the return fare is solved.

Just stay where you are and all will be well. Sooner or later your friends or your employer (if your return is really considered desirable) will send a money-order. But that is their look-out. The point is that the return fare need not trouble *you*. And you can please yourself as to what you buy with the money-order.

Why all this outcry then about the cost of travelling in the holiday season?

* * * * *

“M. Lappas, the young Greek tenor whose debut last season won him a host of fiends.”—*Daily Paper*.

As Mephistopheles, we presume.

* * * * *



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“Lost, Monday, July 19th, silver purse containing 10s. note and photographs; also lady’s bathing costume.”—*Local Paper*.

Wrapped up in the “Fisher,” no doubt.

* * * * *

I once knew a bowler named Patrick
Who, after performing the “hat-trick,”
 Remarked, as he bowed
 His respects to the crowd,
“It’s nothing: I often do that trick!”

* * * * *

Badly SYNGED.

The scene is the morning-room of the Smith-Hybrows’ South London residence. It is the day following the final performance of the Smith-Hybrows’ strenuous season of J.M. *Synge* drama, undertaken with the laudable intention of familiarising the suburb with the *real* Irish temperament and the works of the dramatist in question.

Mrs. Smith-Hybrow is seated at the breakfast-table, her head buried behind the coffee urn. She is opening her letters and “keening” softly as she rocks in her chair.

Mrs. Smith-Hybrow (scanning a letter). Will I be helping them with the sale of work? It’s little enough the like of me will be doing for them the way I was treated at the last Bazaar, when Mrs. McGupperty and Mrs. Glyn-Jones were after destroying me with the cutting of the sandwiches. And was I not there for three days, from the rising of the blessed sun to the shining of the blessed stars, cutting and cutting, and never a soul to bear witness to the destroying labour of it, and the two legs of me like to give way with the great weariness (*keens*)? I’ll have no call this year to be giving in to their prayers and beseechings, and I won’t care the way the Curate will be after trying to come round me, with his eyes looking at me the way the moon kisses the drops of dew on the hedgerows when the road is white.

*[Opens another letter, keening the while in a slightly higher key.
Enter Gertrude Smith-Hybrow. She crosses to the window and stares out.*

Gertrude. There are black clouds in the sky, and the wind is breaking in the west and making a great stir with the trees, and they are hitting one on the other. And there is rain falling, falling from the clouds, and the roads be wet.



Mrs. S.-H. It is your mackintosh you will be wanting when you are after going to the Stores.

Gertrude (coming to the table and speaking with dull resentment). And why should I be going to the Stores the way I have enough to do with a meeting of the League for Brighter Homes and a luncheon of the Cubist Encouragement Society? Isn't it a queer hard thing that Dora cannot be going to the Stores, and her with time enough on her hands surely?

[Sits in her place and begins keening. While she has been speaking Dora has entered hurriedly, buttoning her jumper.]



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Dora (vigorously). And is it you, Gertrude Smith-Hybrow, that will be talking about me having time on my hands? May the saints forgive you for the hard words, and me having to cycle this blessed day to Mrs. Montgomery's lecture on the Dadaist Dramatists, and the meringues and the American creams to be made for to-night's Tchekoff *Conversazione*. Is it not enough for a girl to be destroyed with the play-acting, and the wind like to be in my face the whole way and the rain falling, falling?

[Sits in her place and keens.

Mrs. S.-H. (after an interval of keening). Is it your father that will be missing his train this morning, Dora Smith-Hybrow?

Dora (rousing herself and selecting an egg). It is my father that will be missing his train entirely, and it is his son that would this minute be sleeping the blessed daylight away had I not let fall upon him a sponge that I had picked out of the cold, cold water.

Gertrude. It is a flapper you are, Dora Smith-Hybrow.

Dora. It is a flapper you will never be again, Gertrude Smith-Hybrow, though you be after doing your queer best to look like one.

Mrs. S.-H. Whisht! Is it the time for loose talk, with the wind rising, rising, and the rain falling, falling, and the price of butter up another threepence this blessed morning?

[They all three recommence keening. Enter Mr. Smith-Hybrow followed by Cyril.

Mr. S.-H. (staunching a gash in his chin). Is it not a hard thing for a man to be late for his breakfast and the rain falling, falling, and the wind rising, rising. It's destroyed I am with the loss of blood and no food in my stomach would keep the life in a flea.

[Sits in his place and opens his letters savagely. Cyril, a cadaverous youth, stares gloomily into the depths of the marmalade.

Cyril (dreamily). There's gold and gold and gold—caverns of gold. And there's a woman with hair of gold and eyes would pick the locks of a man's soul, and long shining hands like pale seaweed. Is it not a terrible thing that a man would have to go to the City when there is a woman with gold hair waiting for him in the marmalade pot—waiting to draw him down into the cold, cold water?

Dora. Is it another spongeful you are wanting, Cyril Smith-Hybrow, and myself destroyed entirely waiting for the marmalade?

[Cyril blushes, passes the marmalade, sits down languidly and selects an egg. Mrs. S.-H. pours out the coffee and resumes her keening.



Mr. S.-H. (glaring at her). Is it not a nice thing for the wife of a respectable City stockbroker to sit at the breakfast-table making a noise like that of a cow that is waiting to be milked?

Mrs. S.-H. (hurt). It is keening I am.



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Gertrude (passing him "The Morning Post"). Is it not enough that the price of butter is up another threepence this blessed day, and the wind rising, rising, and the rain falling, falling?

Mr. S.-H. It is destroyed we shall all be entirely.

Cyril (gazing into the depths of his egg). There was a strange queer dream I was after having the night that has gone. It was on the rocks I was....

Mr. S.-H. (glaring at the market reports). It is on the rocks we shall all be.

Cyril. ... on the rocks I was by the sea-shore ...

Dora (slightly hysterically). With the wind rising, rising?

Cyril (nodding). ... and the rain falling, falling. And a woman of the chorus drove up in a taxi, and the man that had the driving of it was eating an orange. The woman came and sat by the side of me, and the peroxide in her hair made it gleam like the pale gold coins that were in the banks before the Great War (*more dreamily*). Never a word said she when I hung a chain of cold, cold sausages about her neck, but her eyes were shining, shining, and into my hands she put a tin of corned beef. And it is destroyed I was with the love of her, and would have kissed her lips but I saw the park-keeper coming, coming out of the sea for tickets, and I fled from the strange queer terror of it, and found myself by a lamp-post in Hackney Wick with the wind rising, rising, and the rain falling, falling.

[He stops. The others stare at him and at one another in piteous inquiry. The women begin keening. Mr. S.-H. seizes the remaining egg and cracks it viciously.

Mr. S.-H. (falling back in his chair). Damnation!

[The air is filled with a pungent matter-of-fact odour. Dora, holding her handkerchief to her nose, rushes valiantly at the offender and hurls it out of the window on to a flower-bed. The SYNGE spell is broken.

* * * * *

Mr. Punch begs to thank the seven hundred and forty-three correspondents who have so thoughtfully drawn his attention to the too familiar fact that "there's many a slip 'twixt the Cup and the LIPTON."

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE BLUE RIBBON OF THE SEA.



COLUMBIA. "YOUR HEALTH, SIR THOMAS, AND BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME."

SIR THOMAS LIPTON. "BUT LEAVE A KISS WITHIN THE CUP AND [*very tactfully*] I'LL NOT ASK FOR WINE."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Professional (to self-made man having his first lesson)*. "YOU'VE HIT THIS ONE HARD ENOUGH, SIR, AND NO MISTAKE. WHY, I'VE NEVER SEEN A BALL GASHED LIKE THAT BEFORE."

Self-made Man. "WELL, LAD, AH MOSTLY DO GET RESULTS FROM ONYTHING AH TAKES OOP."]



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* * * * *

THE SUCCULENT COMEDIANS.

Among the literary and artistic treasures of American collectors the manuscript of LAMB'S essay on Roast Pig is eminent. I have seen this rarity, which is now in the strong room where Mr. PIERPONT MORGAN keeps his autographs safe equally from fire and from theft—if not from the desire to thief. Much did I covet in this realm of steel, and LAMB'S MS. not least. The essay occupies both sides of large sheets of foolscap, written in a minute hand, with very few corrections, both the paper and the time occupied in transcription, if not also in actual composition, being, I should guess, the East India Company's. It is not, I imagine, the first draft, but the first fair copy after all the changes had been made and the form was fixed; and its author, if he is in any position to know what is going forward on a planet which he left some six-and-eighty years ago, must have been amused when he heard that so much money—thousands and thousands of dollars—had been given for it at auction the other day.

Reading the essay again, in the faded ink on the yellowing paper, I realised once more that everything that can be said about little pigs, dead and ripe for the eater, had been said here and said finally. But the living? That very evening I was to find little live pigs working for their maintenance under conditions of which I had never dreamed, in an environment less conducive, one would suppose, to porcine activity than any that could be selected.

It was at Coney Island, that astonishing permanent and magnified Earl's Court Exhibition, summer Blackpool and August-Bank-Holiday-Hampstead-Heath, which New York supports for its beguilement. In this domain of switchbacks and chutes, merry-go-rounds and shooting-galleries, dancing-halls and witching waves, vociferous and crowded and lit by a million lamps, I came suddenly upon the Pig Slide and had a new conception of what quadrupeds can do for man.

The Pig Slide, which was in one of the less noisy quarters of Luna Park, consisted of an enclosure in which stood a wooden building of two storeys, some five yards wide and three high. On the upper storey was a row of six or eight cages, in each of which dwelt a little live pig, an infant of a few weeks. In the middle of the row, descending to the ground, was an inclined board, with raised edges, such as is often installed in swimming-baths to make diving automatic, and beneath each cage was a hole a foot in diameter. The spectators and participants crowded outside the enclosure, and the thing was to throw balls, which were hired for the purpose, into the holes. Nothing could exceed the alert and eager interest taken by the little pigs in the efforts of the ball-throwers. They quivered on their little legs; they pressed their little noses against the bars of the cages; their little eyes sparkled; their tails (the only corkscrews left in America) curled and uncurled and curled again: and with reason, for whereas, if you

missed—as was only too easy—nothing happened, if you threw accurately the fun began, and the fun was also theirs.

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This is what occurred. First a bell rang and then a spring released the door of the cage immediately over the hole which your ball had entered, so that it swung open. The little pig within, after watching the previous infirmity of your aim with dejection, if not contempt, had pricked up his ears on the sound of the bell, and now smiled a gratified smile, irresistible in infectiousness, and trotted out, and, with the smile dissolving into an expression of absolute beatitude, slid voluptuously down the plank: to be gathered in at the foot by an attendant and returned to its cage all ready for another such adventure.

It was for these moments and their concomitant changes of countenance that you paid your money. To taste the triumph of good marksmanship was only a fraction of your joy; the greater part of it consisted in liberating a little prisoner and setting in motion so much ecstasy.

We do not use baby pigs in this entertaining way in England. At the most we hunt them greased. But when other beguilements weary we might. The R.S.P.C.A. could not object, the little pets are so happy. And what a privilege is theirs, both alive and dead, to enchant creation's lord.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Ordinary Artist (to Ultra-Modern ditto)*. "HOW TOPPING THOSE KIDDIES LOOK WITH THE SUN ON THEM! OH, I FORGOT—I MEAN THOSE THINGS SPLASHING ABOUT OVER THERE. OF COURSE YOU DON'T SEE THEM AS HUMAN BEINGS."]

* * * * *

"In order to give a lead in economy King George and Queen Mary and a number of peeresses have decided not to wear plumes or tulle veils at the opening of Parliament."—*Australian Paper*.

Very self-sacrificing of HIS MAJESTY.

* * * * *

"'My husband says I must leavee teo-night,' said a wife at Acton. 'Oh, hee eceanee't givee you ... notice to quit,' said the magistrate."—*Evening Paper*.

His worship seems to have settled the matter with e's.

* * * * *

THE MINISTERING ANGEL.



[Yawning, it is now claimed, is an excellent thing for the health.]

Stretched prone upon my couch of pain,
An ache in every limb,
Fell influenza having slain
My customary *vim*,
I mused, disconsolate, about
The pattern of my pall,
When lo! I heard a step without
And Thomson came to call.

“Your ruddy health,” I told him, “mocks
A hand too weak to grip
The tea-cup with its captive ox
And raise it to my lip;”
To which he answered he had come
To bring for my delight
Red posies of geranium
And roses pink and white.

’Twas kind of Thomson thus to seek
To mitigate my gloom,
But why did he proceed to speak
Of how he’d reared each bloom,
Telling in language far from terse
On what his blossoms fed
And how he made the greenfly curse
The day that it was bred?



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He told me how he rose at dawn
To titivate the land
(’Twas here that I began to yawn
Behind a courteous hand),
And how he thought his favourite pea
Had found the soil too dry
(And here I feared my yawns would be
Apparent to his eye).

On fruit and blossom good and bad
He rambled on unchecked,
Until his conversation had
Such curative effect
That in the end it drove away
My weak despondent mood.
I clasped his hand and blessed the day
He came to do me good.

* * * * *

“MORE DEARER PUBLICATIONS.”—*Daily Mail*.

More dearer nor what they was? Dear, dear!

* * * * *

From *Young India*, the organ of Mr. GANDHI:—

“In our last issue the number of those in receipt of relief is given at 500. This is a printer’s devil. The number is 5,000.”

Mr. GANDHI ought to exorcise that devil.

* * * * *

“The tests were entirely satisfactory, and the pilot manoeuvred for a quarter of an hour at a height of 500 metres and a speed of 150 millimetres an hour.”—*Aeronautics*.

This is believed to be the nearest approach to “hovering” that has yet been achieved by a machine.

* * * * *

NITRATES.



All alone I went a-walking by the London Docks one day,
For to see the ships discharging in the basins where they lay;
And the cargoes that I saw there they were every sort and kind,
Every blessed brand of merchandise a man could bring to mind;
There were things in crates and boxes, there was stuff in bags and bales,
There were tea-chests wrapped in matting, there were Eastern-looking
frails,
There were baulks of teak and greenheart, there were stacks of spruce and
pine,
There was cork and frozen carcasses and casks of Spanish wine,
There was rice and spice and cocoa-nuts, and rum enough was there
For to warm all London's innards up and leave a drop to spare;

But of all the freights I found there, gathered in from far and wide,
All the smells both nice and nasty from the Pool to Barkingside,
All the harvest of the harbours from Bombay to Montreal,
There was one that took my fancy first and foremost of them all;
It was neither choice nor costly, it was neither rich nor rare
And, in most ways you can think of, it was neither here nor there,
It was nothing over-beautiful to smell nor yet to see—
Only bags of stuffy nitrate—but it meant a lot to me.

I forgot the swarming stevedores, I forgot the dust and din,
And the rattle of the winches hoisting cargo out and in,
And the rusty tramp before me with her hatches open wide,
And the grinding of her derricks as the sacks went overside;
I forgot the murk of London and the dull November sky—
I was far, ay, far from England, in a day that's long gone by.



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I forgot the thousand changes years have brought in ships and men,
And the knots on Time's old log-line that have reeled away since then,
And I saw a fast full-rigger with her swelling canvas spread,
And the steady trade-wind droning in her royals overhead,
Fleecy trade-clouds on the sky-line—high above the Tropic blue—
And the curved arch of her foresail and the ocean gleaming through;
I recalled the Cape Stiff weather, when your soul-case seemed to freeze,
And the trampling, cursing watches and the pouring, pooping seas,
And the ice on spar and jackstay, and the cracking, volleying sail,
And the tatters of our voices blowing down the roaring gale ...
I recalled the West Coast harbours just as plain as yesteryear—
Nitrate ports, all dry and dusty, where they sell fresh water-dear—
Little cities white and wicked by a bleak and barren shore,
With an anchor on the cliff-side for to show you where to moor;
And the sour red wine we tasted, and the foolish songs we sung,
And the girls we had our fun with in the days when we were young;
And the dancing in the evenings down at Dago Bill's saloon,
And the stars above the mountains and the sea's eternal tune.

Only bags of stuffy nitrate from a far Pacific shore,
From a dreary West Coast harbour that I'll surely fetch no more;
Only bags of stuffy nitrate, with its faint familiar smell
Bringing back the ships and shipmates that I used to know so well;
Half a lifetime lies between us and a thousand leagues of sea,
But it called the days departed and my boyhood back to me.

C.F.S.

* * * * *

ROSES ALL THE WAY.

Fired by an Irish rose-grower's pictures of some of his beautiful new seedlings we are tempted to describe one or two of our own favourite flowers in language similar to his own. This is an example of the way he does it:—

“LADY MAUREEN STEWART (*Hybrid Tea*).—A gloriously-finished globular slightly imbricated cupped bloom with velvety black scarlet cerise shell-shaped petals, whose reflex is solid pure orangey maroon without veining. An excellent bloom, ideal shape, brilliant and non-fading colour with heavy musk rose odour. Erect growth and flower-stalk. Foliage wax and leathery and not too large. A very floriferous and beautiful rose. 21s. each.”

Why not also these?—



DAVID (*Hybrid Tory-Lib.*).—A gloriously-finished true-blue-slightly-imbricated-with-red-flag coalition rose whose deep globular head with ornate decorative calyx retains its perfect exhibition-cross-question-hostile-amendment symmetry of form without blueing or burning in the hottest Westminster sun. Its smiling peach and cerise endearments terminating in black scarlet shell-shaped waxy Berlin ultimata are carried on an admirably rigid peduncle. Equally vigorous in all parts of Europe. Superbly rampant. Not on sale.



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AUSTEN (*Tea and most other things*).—This bottomless-cupped bank-paper-white-edged-and-rimmed-with-tape-pink-margin bloom, the reflex of whose never-fading demand notes is velvety black thunder-cloud with lightning-flash six-months-in-the-second-division veinations, has never been known to be too full. It is supported by a landlordly stalk of the utmost excess-profits-war-profits-minor-profits rigidity. A decorative, acquisitive and especially captivating rose, and already something more than a popular favourite. 18s. in L1.

SIR THOMAS (*Ceylon and India Tea*).—This true sport from the British bull-dog rose has a slightly globular double-hemisphere-popular greatly-desiring-and-deserving-to-be-cupped bloom whose pearly preserved cream flesh is delicately flushed and mottled with tinned salmon and dried apricot. Rich golden and banking-account stamina, foliage deep navy blue with brass buttons and a superb fragrance of western ocean. Its marvellous try-try-try-again floriferousness in all weathers is the admiration of all beholders. Price no object.

* * * * *

From a weather forecast:—

“General Outlook.—It appears probable that further expressions will arrive from the westward or north-westward before long, and that after a temporary improvement the weather will again become unsettled; with much cloud and occasional rain.”—*Evening Paper*.

In which event further expressions (of a sultry character) may be expected from all round the compass.

* * * * *

“COME UNTO THESE YELLOW SANDS.”

[Illustration: “COME UNTO THESE YELLOW SANDS AND THEN—]

[Illustration: —TAKE HANDS.”—[*The Tempest*, Act I., Sc. 2.]

* * * * *

QUEEN'S COUNSEL.

The Fairy Queen shook her head in answer to my question. “No,” she said, “I have no favourite flower.”

She had dropped in after dinner, as was her occasional habit, and at the moment sat perched on a big red carnation which stood in a flower-glass on the top of my desk.



“You see,” she continued, floating across to where I was sitting and lowering her voice confidentially, for there were a good many flowers about—“you see it would never do. Just think of the trouble it would cause. Imagine the state of mind of the lilies if I were to show a preference for roses. There’s always been a little jealousy there, and they’re all frightfully touchy. The artistic temperament, you know. Why, I daren’t even sleep in the same flower two nights running.”

“Yes, I see,” I said. “It must be very awkward.”

I lapsed into silence; I had had a worrying day and was feeling tired and a little depressed. The Queen fluttered about the room, pausing a moment on the mantel-shelf for a word or two with her old friend the Dresden china shepherdess. Then she came back to the desk and performed a brief *pas seul* on the shining smooth cover of my pass-book. My mind flew instantly to my slender bank-balance and certain recent foolishnesses.



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“Talking of favourites,” I said—“talking of favourites, do you take any interest in racing?”

Instantly the Queen subsided on to my rubber stamp damper, which was fortunately dry.

“Oh, yes,” she replied, “I take a *great* interest in racing. I love it. I can give you all sorts of hints.”

I thought it was a pity she hadn’t called a week or two earlier. I might have been a richer woman by a good many pounds.

“And there are so many kinds,” continued the Queen earnestly. “Now in a butterfly race it’s always best just to hold on and let them do as they like. It’s not a bit of use trying to make them go straight. Rabbits are better in that way, but even rabbits are a little uncertain at times. Full of nerves. But have you ever tried swallow-racing?” she went on enthusiastically. “It’s simply splendid. You give them their heads and you never know *where* you may get to. But, anyway, it doesn’t really matter in the least afterwards who wins; it’s only while it’s happening that you feel so thrilled, isn’t it?”

I didn’t acquiesce very whole-heartedly. I’m afraid my thoughts were with my lost guineas. It *had* rather mattered afterwards. I really had been very foolish.

“You look depressed,” said the Fairy Queen. “Can I help you? I’m really extremely practical. You know, don’t you,” she leaned forward and looked at me earnestly, “that I should be delighted if I could assist you with any advice?”

I hesitated. Just before she came I had been anxiously considering as to how I was going to make one hundred pounds do the work of two during the next few weeks; but somehow I didn’t quite like to mention such material matters to the Queen; it didn’t seem suitable.

I looked up and met her kind eyes fixed on mine with an expression of the gentlest interest and solicitude.

“I wonder,” I said, still hesitating, “whether you know anything about stocks and shares?”

“Stocks and shares,” she repeated slowly, looking just a little vague and puzzled. And then—“Oh, yes, of course I do, if that’s all you want to know.”

I felt quite pleased now that I had really got it out.

“If you could just give me a useful hint or two I should be tremendously grateful,” I said. Already thousands loomed entrancingly before me. Already I saw myself settled in that darling cottage on the windy hill above Dacombe Wood. Already—

“I think I had better get a pencil and paper,” I said. “My memory’s dreadful.”



But the Fairy Queen shook her head.

“I’ll write it down for you,” she said, “and you can read it when I’m gone. That’s so much more fun. But I don’t need paper.”

She drew a tiny shining implement from her pocket and, picking up a couple of rose-petals which had fallen upon the table, she busied herself with them for a moment at my desk, her mouth pursed up, her brows contracted in an expression of intense seriousness.



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“There,” she said, “that’s that. And now show me *all* your new clothes.”

We spent quite a pleasant evening over one thing and another, and I forgot all about the rose-leaves until after she had gone; but when I came back to my empty sitting-room they shone in the dusk with a soft radiance which came, I discovered, from the writing on them. It glowed like those luminous figures on watches which were so entrancing when they first appeared. I had never realised before that they were fairy figures.

I spread the petals out on my palm, feeling quite excited at the prospect of making my fortune by such means, though I was a little anxious as to how I was going to make use of the information I was about to acquire.

“I will ask Cousin Fred,” I decided (Cousin Fred being a stockbroker), and I smiled a little to myself as I thought how amazed and possibly amused my dapper cousin would be when he learnt the source of my knowledge. He might even refuse to believe in it—and then where should I be?

I needn’t have troubled. When I unfolded my rose-petals this is what I read:—

“*Stocks.*—The white ones are much the best and have by far the sweetest scent.

Shares.—*Always go shares.*”

R.F.

* * * * *

HEART OF MINE.

(Being a rather hysterical contribution from our Analytical Novelist.)

Friday.—I suppose one never realises till one is actually dead how nearly dead one can be without actually being it. You see what I mean? No. Well, how blithely, how recklessly one rollicks through life, fondly believing that one is in the best of health, in the prime of condition, and all the time one is the unconscious victim of some fatal infirmity or disease. I mean, take my own case. I went to see my doctor in order to be cured of hay fever. He examined my heart. He made me take off my shirt. He hammered my chest; he rapped my ribs with his knuckles to see if they sounded hollow. I don’t know why he did this, but I think he was at one time attached to a detective and has got into the habit of looking for secret passages and false panels and so on.

Anyhow, he suspected my chest, and he listened at it for so long that any miscreant who had been concealed in it would have had to give himself away by coughing or blowing his nose.



After a long time he said, “Your heart’s dilated. You want a complete rest. Don’t work. Don’t smoke. Don’t drink. Don’t eat. Don’t do anything. Take plenty of exercise. Sit perfectly still. Don’t mope. Don’t rush about. Take this before and after every meal. Only don’t have any meals.” I laughed at him. I knew my heart was perfectly sound, much sounder than most men’s. I went home. I didn’t even have the prescription made up.



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Saturday.—Now comes the tragic thing. *That very night I realised that he was right.* There *is* something wrong with my heart. It is too long. It is too wide. It is too thick. It is out of place. It would be difficult to say *exactly* where the measurements are wrong, but one has a sort of *sense* ... you know?... One can feel that it is too large.... A swollen feeling.... Somehow I never felt this before; I never even felt that it was there ... but now I always know that it is there—trying to get out.... I put my hand on it and can feel it definitely expanding—like a football bladder. Sometimes I think it wants to get out at my collar-bone; sometimes I think it will blow out under my bottom rib; sometimes some other way. It is terrible....

I have had the prescription made up.

Sunday.—The way it beats! Sometimes very fast and heavy and emphatic, like a bad barrage of 5.9's. Fortunately my watch has a second-hand, so that I can time it—forty-five to the half-minute, ninety-five to the full minute. Then I know that the end is very near; everyone knows that the normal rate for a healthy adult heart is seventy-two. Then sometimes it goes very slow, very dignified and faint, as when some great steamer glides in at slow speed to her anchorage, and the engines thump in a subdued and profound manner very far away, or as when at night the solemn tread of some huge policeman is heard, remote and soft and dilated—I mean dilatory, or as when—But you see what I mean.

Monday.—How was it, I wonder, that all this was hidden from me for so long? And now what am I to do? I am a doomed man. With a heart like this I cannot last long. I have resigned my clubs; I have given up my work. I can think of nothing but this dull pain, this heavy throbbing at my side. My work—ha! Yesterday I met another young doctor at tea. He asked me if there was any “murmur.” I said I did not know—no one had told me. But after tea I went away and listened. Yes, there was a murmur; I could hear it plainly. I told the young doctor. He said that murmurs were not considered so important nowadays. What matters is “the reaction of the heart to work.” By that test I am doomed indeed. But the murmur is better.

Tuesday.—I have told Anton Gregorovitch Gregorski. He says he has a heart too.

Wednesday.—I have been learning things to-day. I am worse even than the doctor thought. In a reference book in the dining-room there is a medical dictionary. It says: “Dilatation leads to dropsy, shortness of breath and blueness of the face.” I have got some of those already. I have never seen a face so blue. It is like the sea in the early morning.

Thursday.—The heart is bigger again to-day—about an inch each way. The weight of it is terrible to carry.... I have to take taxis.... This evening it was going at thirty-two to the minute....



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Friday.—Last night, when I tried to count the beats, I could not find it.... It must have stopped.... Anton Gregorovitch says it is the end.... This is my last entry....

Saturday.—My face is very blue. It is like a forget-me-not ... it is like a volume of *Hansard*....

I shall go to see the doctor as I promised ... he can do nothing, but it will interest him to see how much bigger the heart has grown in the last few days....

No more....

Sunday.—The doctor said it was much better.... It is undilated again.... After all I am not going to die. But the reaction to work is still bad. This evening I make it sixty to the minute....

Monday.—This morning's count was seventy-two. It is terrible....

A.P.H.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Sympathetic Old Lady*. "AND WHEN YOU WENT DOWN FOR THE THIRD TIME THE WHOLE OF YOUR PAST LIFE OF COURSE FLASHED BEFORE YOUR EYES?"

Longshore Billy. "I EXPECT IT DID, MUM, BUT I 'AD 'EM SHUT AT THE TIME, SO I MISSED IT."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Mollie*. "AUNTIE, DON'T CATS GO TO HEAVEN?"

Auntie. "NO, MY DEAR. DIDN'T YOU HEAR THE VICAR SAY AT THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE THAT ANIMALS HADN'T SOULS AND THEREFORE COULD NOT GO TO HEAVEN?"

Mollie. "WHERE DO THEY GET THE STRINGS FOR THE HARPS, THEN?"]

* * * * *

FLOWERS' NAMES.

SHEPHERD'S PURSE.

There was a silly shepherd lived out at Taunton Dene
(Hey-nony-nony-no for Taunton in the summer!)



And oh, but he was bitter cold! and oh, but he was mean!
The maidens vowed a bitterer had never yet been seen
At Taunton in the summer.

He lived to gather in the gold—he loved to hear it chink
(Hey-nonny-nonny-no for Taunton in the summer!),
And he could only dream of gold—of gold could only think;
And all the fairies watched him, and they watched him with a wink
At Taunton in the summer.

At last one summer noonday, when the sky was blue and deep
(Hey-nonny-nonny-no for Taunton in the summer!),
They made him heavy-headed as he watched beside his sheep
And all the little Taunton elves came stealing out to peep
At Taunton in the summer.

They opened wide his wallet and they stole the coins away
(Hey-nonny-nonny-no for Taunton in the summer!),
They took the round gold pieces and they used them for their play,
They rolled and chased and tumbled them and lost them in the hay
At Taunton in the summer.

And when they'd finished playing they used all their magic powers
(Hey-nonny-nonny-no for Taunton in the summer!);
The silly shepherd woke and wept, he sought his gold for hours,
And all he found was drifts and drifts of tiny greenish flowers
At Taunton in the summer.



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* * * * *

MORE WORK FOR HIS MAJESTY'S JUDGES.

"Potato disease has unfortunately made its appearance in the — district, the early and second early crops being seriously attacked. The late crops are free from disease up to the present, and it is hoped by judicial spraying to save them."—*Local Paper*.

* * * * *

From an interview with the Superintendent of Regent's Park:—

"'People seem surprised,' he said, 'when I tell them that within a few minutes' walk of Baker Street Station, and the incessant din of Marylebone Road, such birds as the cuckoo, flycatcher, robin and wren have reared their young.'"—*Observer*.

To hear of the cuckoo bringing up its own family in any circumstances was, we confess, a little bit of a shock.

* * * * *

"'Idling, my dear fellow!' was Mr. Jerome K. Jerome's decisive answer to my question: 'What do you most like doing at holiday-time?'

'But if, and only when, I am really driven to exertion, let me have a horse between my legs, a pair of oars, and a billiard-table, and I ask nothing more of the gods.'"—*Answers*.

The next time Mr. JEROME indulges in this performance may we be there to see.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH.

WAR-WEARY WORLD (*at the Jamboree*). "I WAS NEARLY LOSING HOPE, BUT THE SIGHT OF ALL YOU BOYS GIVES IT BACK TO ME."]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Monday, July 26th.—When the Peers were about to discuss the Law of Property Bill, which seeks to abolish the distinction between land and other property, Lord CAVE dropped a bombshell into the Committee by moving to omit the whole of Part I. Lords HALDANE and BUCKMASTER were much upset and loudly protested against the



proposal to cut out “the very heart and substance of the measure.” The LORD CHANCELLOR was less perturbed by the explosion and was confident that after further discussion he could induce the CAVE-dwellers to come into line with modern requirements. Thirty-four clauses thus disappeared with a bang; and of the hundred and odd remaining only one gave much trouble. Objection was taken to Clause 101, granting the public full rights of access to commons, on the grounds *inter alia* that it would give too much freedom to gipsies and too little to golfers. Lord SALISBURY, who, like the counsel in a famous legal story, claimed to “know a little about manors,” was sure that only the lord could deal faithfully with the Egyptians, but, fortified by Lord HALDANE’S assurance that the clause gave the public no more rights and the lords of the manor no less than they had before, the House passed it by 42 to 29.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN, for the Board of Trade, bore the brunt of the early questioning in the House of Commons. He sustained with equal imperturbability the assaults of the Tariff Reformers, who asserted that British toy-making—an “infant industry” if ever there was one—was being stifled by foreign imports: and those of the Free Traders, who objected to the Government’s efforts to resuscitate the dyeing trade.

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The alarming rumours in the Sunday papers about the PRIME MINISTER'S state of health were effectively dispelled by his appearance on the Front Opposition, a little weary-looking, no doubt, but as alert as ever to seize the weak point in the adversary's case and to put his own in the most favourable light. From the enthusiasm of his announcement that the Soviet Government had accepted our invitation to attend a Conference in London, one would have thought that the Bolshevists had agreed to the British proposals unconditionally and that peace—"that is what the world wants"—was now assured.

[Illustration: *David*. "YOU KNOW THE RHYME, GRANDMAMA, THAT SAYS—

'THIS LITTLE PIG WENT TO MARKET,
AND THIS LITTLE PIG STAYED AT HOME'?"

The Mother of Parliaments. "YES, DAVID, DEAR. WHY DO YOU MENTION IT?"

David. "OH, I WAS MERELY WONDERING WHAT WAS TO BE DONE ABOUT IT.]"

Abhorrence of the Government of Ireland Bill is the one subject on which all Irishmen appear to think alike. It is, no doubt, with the desire to preserve that unanimity that the PRIME MINISTER announced his intention of pressing the measure forward after the Recess "with all possible despatch."

But before that date it looks as if Irishmen would have despatched one another. The little band of Nationalists had handed in a batch of private-notice Questions arising out of the disturbances in Belfast. Their description of them as the outcome of an organised attack upon Catholics was indignantly challenged by the Ulstermen, and the SPEAKER had hard work to maintain order. The contest was renewed on a motion for the adjournment. As a means of bringing peace to Ireland the debate was absolutely futile. But it enabled Mr. DEVLIN to fire off one of his tragical-comical orations, and Sir H. GREENWOOD to disclaim the accusation that he had treated the Irish problem with levity. "There is nothing light and airy about me," he declared; and no one who has heard his pronounciation of the word "Belfast" would doubt it.

Before and after this melancholy interlude good progress was made with the Finance Bill, and Mr. CHAMBERLAIN made several further concessions to the "family-man."

Tuesday, July 27th.—The Lords rejected the Health Resorts and Watering Places Bill under which local authorities could have raised a penny rate for advertising purposes. Lord SOUTHWARK'S well-meant endeavour to support the Bill by reminding the House that Irish local authorities had enjoyed this power since 1909 was perhaps the proximate cause of its defeat, for it can hardly be said that the last few weeks have enhanced the reputation of Ireland as a health resort.

Mr. HARMSWORTH utterly confounded the critics of the Passport Office. Its staff may appear preposterously large and its methods unduly dilatory, but the fact remains that it is one of the few public departments that actually pays its way. Last year it spent thirty-seven thousand pounds and took ninety-one thousand pounds in fees. "See the world and help to pay for the War" should be the motto over its portals.

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It is, of course, quite proper that soldiers who wreck the property of civilians—albeit under great provocation—should receive suitable punishment. But a sailor is hardly the man to press for it. Lieutenant-Commander KENWORTHY received a much-needed lesson in etiquette when Major JAMESON gravely urged, in his penetrating Scotch voice, that soldiers in Ireland should be ordered not to distract the prevailing peace and quiet of that country, but should keep to their proper function of acting as targets for Sinn Fein bullets.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN dealt very gingerly with Sir ARTHUR FELL'S inquiry as to whether "any ordinary individual can understand the forms now sent out by the Income Tax Department?" Fearing that if he replied in the affirmative he would be asked to solve some particularly abstruse conundrum, he contented himself with saying that the forms were complicated because the tax was complicated, and the tax was complicated because of the number and variety of the reliefs granted to the taxpayer. It does not seem to have occurred to him that it is the duty of the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER to make the tax simple as well as equitable. Is it conceivable that he can have forgotten ADAM SMITH's famous maxims on the subject, and particularly this: "The time of payment, the manner of payment, the quantity to be paid, ought all to be clear and plain to the contributor, and to every other person"?

[Illustration: MR. BONAR LAW PACKS HIS TRUNKS.]

The House did not rise till half-past one this morning, and was again faced with a long night's work. In vain Sir DONALD MACLEAN protested against the practice of taking wee sma' Bills in the wee sma' oors. Mr. BONAR LAW was obdurate. He supposed the House had not abandoned all hope of an Autumn recess. Well, then, had not the poet said that the best of all ways to lengthen our days was to steal a few hours from the night?

The Report stage of the Finance Bill was finished off, but not until the Government had experienced some shocks. The Corporation tax, intended partially to fill the yawning void which will be caused some day by the disappearance of E.P.D.—on the principle that one bad tax deserves another—was condemned with equal vigour, but for entirely different reasons, by Colonel WEDGWOOD and Sir F. BANBURY. They "told" together against it and had the satisfaction of bringing the Government majority down to fifty-five.

The champions of the Co-operative Societies also put up a strong fight against the proposal to make their profits, for the first time, subject to taxation. Mr. CHAMBERLAIN declined, however, to put them in a privileged position as compared with other traders, but carried his point only by sixty-one votes.

Wednesday, July 28th.—In spite of the limitation of Questions the Member for Central Hull still manages to extract a good deal of information from the Treasury Bench. This afternoon he learned from Mr. LONG that the Board of Admiralty was not created solely

for the purpose of satisfying his curiosity; and from Mr. KELLAWAY that the equipment of even the most versatile Under-Secretary does not include the gift of prophecy.



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At long last the House learned the Government decision regarding the increase in railway fares. It is to come into force on August 6th, by which time the most belated Bank-Holiday-maker should have returned from his revels. Mr. BONAR LAW appended to the announcement a surely otiose explanation of the necessity of the increase. Everybody knows that railways are being run at a loss, due in the main to the increased wages of miners and railway-men. Mr. THOMAS rather weakly submitted that an important factor was the larger number of men employed, and was promptly met with the retort that that was because of the shorter hours worked.

Cheered by the statement of its Leader that he still hoped to get the adjournment by August 14th the House plunged with renewed zest into the final stage of the Finance Bill. Mr. BOTTOMLEY, whose passion for accuracy is notorious, inveighed against the lack of this quality in the Treasury Estimates. As for the war-debt, since the Government had failed to "make Germany pay," he urged that the principal burden should be left for posterity to shoulder.

These sentiments rather shocked Mr. ASQUITH, who, while mildly critical of Government methods, was all in favour of "severe, stringent, drastic taxation." Mr. CHAMBERLAIN repeated his now familiar lecture to the House of Commons, which, while accusing the Government of extravagance, was always pressing for new forms of expenditure. In the study of economy he dislikes abstractions—except from the pockets of the taxpayer.

* * * * *

"Company's water is on to the house and cowshed."—*Advert. in Daily Paper.*

Now we know why our water is sometimes contaminated with milk.

* * * * *

"One of the most striking of the collection of exhibits of fascinating interest [at the Imperial War Museum] is the Air Force map for carrying out the British plan for bombing Berlin. Specimens of the bombs, weighing 3,000 pounds each, are also included in this museum of war souvenirs with the object of demonstrating the resources of the Empire and giving a stimulus to its trade."—*South African Paper.*

Motto for British traders: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try trinitrotoluene."

* * * * *

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT.



I went into the morning-room with a worried frown upon my brow. Kathleen was doing the accounts at the table.

“Kathleen,” I said, “it’s Veronica’s birthday on Wednesday and—”

“What did you say seven eighths were?” said Kathleen. “I asked you last week.”

“I can’t possibly carry complicated calculations in my head from week to week,” I said; “you should have made a note of it at the time. It’s Veronica’s birthday on Wednesday, and what do you think she wants?”

But Kathleen was enthralled by the greengrocer’s book. “Have we really had eight cabbages this week?” she said. “We must, I suppose. Greengrocers are generally honest; they live so near to nature. Well, now,” she shut up her books, “what were you saying, dear?”



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I sighed, cleared my throat and began again. "It's Veronica's birthday on Wednesday, and what do you think she wants? She wants," I said dramatically, "a 'frush' from the bird-shop in the village. The ones that hang in cages outside the door."

"Well," said Kathleen, "why not?"

"Why not?" I became more than serious. "A daughter of ours has demanded for a plaything a caged bird. Psychologically it is an important occasion. Now or never must she learn to look upon a caged bird with horror. What I am thinking of is the psychological effect upon the child's character. The psychological—"

"You needn't worry about Veronica's psychology," said Kathleen. "Veronica's psychology is in the right place."

"You misunderstand the meaning of the word," I said loftily. "However, if you wish to wash your hands of Veronica's training, if you refuse to cope with your own child, I must take it upon myself."

"Do," said Kathleen sweetly; "I'll listen."

* * * * *

It was Veronica's birthday. We were outside the bird-shop. The thrushes in cages hung around the door.

Veronica lifted grave blue eyes to me trustingly. "You promised me a frush, darlin'," she said.

Veronica is small for her name and has a disarming habit of introducing terms of endearment into her conversation.

"You didn't quite understand me," I said gently. "I said I'd think about it."

"Yes, but that means promising, doesn't it? Finking about it *means* promising. I *fought* you meant promising. I fought all night you meant promising. Darlin'." The last word was a sentence all by itself.

Kathleen raised her eyebrows when we came out with the bird in the cage.

"This isn't quite the moment," I said with dignity; "it's best to let her get it first and realise afterwards."

"Let's all go to Crown Hill now," said Veronica in a voice that admitted of no denial.

* * * * *



We were on Crown Hill. Veronica had hugged the cage to her small bosom all the way, making little reassuring noises to its occupant.

“Now,” said Kathleen, “hadn’t you better begin? Isn’t this the psycho—you know what moment?”

I took a deep breath and began.

“Veronica,” I said, “listen to me for a moment. If you were a little bird—”

But she wasn’t listening to me. She had held up the little wooden cage, opened the clasp of the door and, with a rapt smile on her small shining face, was watching the “frush” as he soared into the air with a sudden burst of song.

We none of us spoke till he had vanished from sight. Then Veronica broke the silence.

“It’s all my very own plan,” she said proudly. “I planned it all by myself. An’ all my birfdays I’m going to have one of that nasty man’s frushes for a present, and we’ll all free come up here and let it out—always an’ always an’ for ever an’ ever—right up till I’m a hundred.”



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“Why stop at a hundred?” I murmured, recovering myself with an effort.

But I could not escape Kathleen’s eye.

“I hope you feel small,” it said.

I did.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *The Colonel*. “ANYONE MAY MISS THE TIDE OR GET STUCK UPON A MUD-BANK; BUT TO LOSE THE MATCHES AND FORGET THE WHISKY IS TO PROVE YOURSELF UNWORTHY OF THE NAME OF ‘YACHTSMAN’!”]

* * * * *

RHYMES OF THE UNDERGROUND.

I.

I never heard of Ruislip, I never saw its name,
Till Underground advertisements had brought it into fame;
I’ve never been to Ruislip, I never yet have heard
The true pronunciation of so singular a word. I’d like to go to Ruislip; I’d like to feast my
eyes
On “scenes of sylvan beauty” that the posters advertise;
But, though I long to view the spot, while I am in the dark
About its name I dare not face the booking-office clerk. Suppose I ventured “Riz-lip” and
in answer to his “Eh?”
Stammered “Ruse-lip, Rise-lip, Rees-lip,” just imagine how he’d say,
“Well, where *do* you want to book to?” and the voices from behind,
“Must we wait until this gentleman has ascertained his mind?”

II.

The trains that stop at Down Street—(Sing willow-waly-O!)—
They run through Hyde Park Corner as fast as they can go;
And trains at Hyde Park Corner that stop—(Oh dearie me!)—
Contrariwise at Down Street are “non-stop” as can be. There’s a man at Down Street
Station—he came there years ago
To get to Hyde Park Corner—(Sing willow-waly-O!)—
And, as the trains go past him, ’tis pitiful to see
Him beat his breast and murmur, “Oh dearie, dearie me!”

* * * * *



"The Rev. R.S. — has accepted the post of librarian of Pussy House, Oxford."—*Local Paper*.

And will soon get to work on the catalogue.

* * * * *

"WANTED—a middle-aged Witty Indian to read Bengali religious books and capable of telling witty and fairy tales from 12 to 3 p.m."—*Indian Paper*.

This might suit Mr. GANDHI. If not witty, he is very good at fairy-tales.

* * * * *

VADE MECUMS.

I have invented a new sort of patience. It is called Vade Mecums. The rules are quite simple and all the plant you need for it is a "Vade Mecum" traveller's handbook and a complete ignorance of all languages but your own. Get one of these fascinating little classics, a passport and a single to Boulogne, and you can begin at once.

The game consists in firing off (in the local lingo) every single phrase that occurs in the book. The only other rule in the game is that the occasion for making each remark must be reasonably apposite. You need not keep to the order in the book and no points are awarded for pronunciation, provided that the party addressed shows by word or deed that he (or she) has understood you. By way of illustration I will give some account of my first experiments in this enthralling pastime.



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As it happened I was able to start at once—too soon, in fact, to be altogether comfortable. We had scarcely put out from Folkestone before I got my chance. The sea was distinctly rough, but I just had time to open my *Vade Mecum* at page 228 (sub-heading, “On embarking and what happens at sea”), and to read to a passing French steward the first sentence that caught my eye. It was as follows: “The wind is very violent; the sea is very rough; the waves are very high; the rolling of the vessel makes my head ache; I am very much inclined to be sick.”

After that I made no more progress till we reached Boulogne; but from the steward’s subsequent actions I judged that he had understood; so I was one up.

My *Vade Mecum*, like most of its kind, was unfortunately compiled many years ago and had never been brought up to date. This, of course, saved me the expense of having to hire aeroplanes or even motor-cars, but it landed me in quite a number of difficulties at the opposite extreme, as you will see.

For instance, in order to polish off the heading, “Of what may happen on the road,” I was compelled to obtain a carriage. Judge then my joy when, on reaching a carriage builder’s, I discovered a whole section tucked away in a corner of the book dealing exclusively with that very topic. I can think of no other conceivable circumstances under which I could have said, “The wheels are in a miserable state; the body is too heavy; the springs are too light; the shafts are too short; the pole is too thin; the shape is altogether old-fashioned, and the seats are both high and uncomfortable.”

Yet now I said it all—in two halves, it is true, and in two different shops; but still I said it all. The first half cost me three front teeth, which fell out while the outraged *carrossier* was ejecting me; the second cost me a large sum of money, because somehow or other I found I had *bought* the vehicle in question. This I fancy must have been occasioned by my turning over two pages at once, so that I suppose I really said, “Mr. X., you are an honest man; I will give you ten thousand francs, but on condition that you furnish splinter-bars and traces also for that price.”

Still one must pay for one’s pleasures, and once *en route* I made short work of the “What-may-happen-on-the-road” section. The sentence from which I anticipated most trouble was this: “Postilion, stop. A spoke of one of the wheels is broken; some of the harness is undone; a spring is also broken and one of the horses’ shoes is come off.” I got out all this (without having to tell a lie too) and was just looking feverishly through the book to find phrases to describe the rickety state of every other part of the vehicle when the off hind-wheel came in half, the front axle snapped and the carriage rolled over on its side stone dead. When I came to myself I found that I was comfortably seated in a ditch, my driver beside me and my *Vade Mecum* still open in my hand; so I had the gratification of being able to continue the conversation where I had left off. “We should do well,” I read, “to get out.”

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I will not detain you long over the difficulties that I had with the “Society” section. But I feel I ought to mention the business of the Countess, if only to put intending players on their guard. There is a puzzling phrase which occurs in answer to the observation, “Pray come nearer the fire; I am sure you must be cold.” The proper answer is, “No, I thank you. I am very well placed here beside the Countess.” It took me a month to find a Countess, two to meet her in the drawing-room of a mutual friend, and four to recover from the hole which the irascible little Count made in me when we met next morning on the field of honour.

So I pass sadly and with tears of chagrin to my ultimate defeat. I met my Waterloo, my friends, in the section labelled “The Tailor.” Requests within reason I can comply with, for the fun of the thing. Eatables and drinks, suites of rooms and carriages, when ordered on the lavish scale of my *Vade Mecum*, are not exactly *cheap* now-a-days. But it’s about the limit when one’s *Mecum* expects one to squander the savings of a lifetime in ordering several suits of clothes at once. And yet there it was as large as life, the accursed sentence that made me shut the book with a snap and come home:—“These coats fit me well, though the cut is not fashionable. I shall require also three pairs of trousers, three nankeen pantaloons and four waistcoats.”

If anyone feels inclined to try my patience—and theirs—I should like to mention that I have a nice annotated *Mecum* and a good second-hand carriage for disposal at a very moderate figure.

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A VICTIM OF FASHION.

Like everybody else that one knows, Kidger is an ex-service man. During the last year of that war on the Continent some time ago he had the acting rank of captain, as second in command of a six-mangle army laundry.

When I knew him in pre-war days he was an amiable character, with only two serious weaknesses. One of these was an exaggerated fastidiousness about clothes, and the other an undue deference to the dicta of the Press. A leader in *The Tailor and Cutter* would make him thoughtful for days. This fatal concern about clothing amounted to a mania where neckwear was concerned.

In pre-war days he wore the ordinary single, perpendicular variety of collar, with sharp turn-over points, starched and white to match his shirts.

Before leaving England to join his laundry, Kidger, with a magnificent gesture, abandoned his fine collection of collars to his aunt, bidding her convert them to some patriotic end. The fond lady, however, fearing lest anything should befall her nephew if



a hot sector of the line moved up to the laundry, preserved them carefully, and Kidger was very glad to reclaim them on his demobilisation.

One unfortunate day Kidger's morning paper contained one of those Fashions for Men columns, where he learned that the best people were wearing only soft collars, as they couldn't stand being cooped up in starch after the freedom of uniform. Kidger felt that as an ex-army man it was up to him to maintain any military tradition, and he immediately bought several dozen, soft white collars with long sharp points. The fellow in the shop said they were correct.

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A week later another expert mentioned in print that no man who had any self-respect wore collars with sharp corners.

Kidger is not a manual worker. He reduced his cigarette allowance and bought some round-cornered ones, white as before. And then his aunt directed the poor fellow's attention to a paragraph by an authority signing himself "The Colonel," which stated that none but the profiteer was wearing white collars, and that you might know the man who had done his bit by the fact that he wore a blue one with slightly rounded corners, accompanied by a self-coloured tie of a darker shade, tied in a neat butterfly bow.

This was a blow to Kidger, but he resigned from his golf club and laid in some haberdashery in accordance with "The Colonel's" orders. Recommendations would be too mild a word. I saw the paragraph—most peremptory.

But in a rival paper "Brigadier" mentioned only three days later that none but the most noxious bounder and tout would be found dead in a blue collar with a white shirt. Kidger saw the truth of this at once; he had receptivity if not intuition. After a trying interview with his banker he bought several blue shirts.

Then the General who contributes "Sartorial Tips" to several leading journals remarked that, since all kinds of people were wearing coloured shirts and collars, the man who desired to retain or achieve that touch of distinction which means so much must at any cost wear white ones; and that, further, Society was frowning on the slovenly unstarched neck-wear of the relapsed temporary gentleman.

Kidger began to show signs of neurasthenia. His stock of pre-war collars was exhausted, or rather eroded. His faithful aunt, however, remembered a neglected birthday and gave him a dozen new ones, of the up-and-down model, to save Kidger's delicate neck. These, with his nice butterfly-bow ties, looked really well, and Kidger recovered his old form.

I warned him to keep to the police and Parliamentary news in the papers, but his eyes would wander. The result was that he learned from "Brigade Major" that the wearing of a butterfly bow with a double event collar was a solecism past forgiveness or repentance, and that its smart appearance was the deadly bait which caught the miserable bumpkin who ignorantly fancied that a man could dress by the light of nature.

Kidger collapsed. His aunt volunteered to sell her annuity and help him, but the innate nobility of the man forbade him to accept this useless sacrifice.

His medical attendant tells me that he is now allowed to read only poetry, wearing a sweater meanwhile, and that arrangements are being made for him to join a sheep-farming cousin in Patagonia, where collars are despised and newspapers invariably out of date.

W.K.H.

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[Illustration: *She*. "I TOLD 'EE TO GREASE THE WHEELS AFORE WE COME OUT."

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He. "IT BE AS MUCH AS I CAN DO TO KEEP UP WITH IT AS 'TIS.]"

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A SUPERFLUOUS ANNOUNCEMENT.

"The Government have found it impossible to proceed with the Government of Ireland before the Autumn Session."—*Daily Paper*.

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"Clerk (Junior) Wanted for Spinners' Office, age 1617.—*Yorkshire Paper*.

"Junior," we take it, is a misprint.

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EDWARD AND THE B.O.F.

It was the first Sunday of the season, and the select end of Folkesbourne revealed in each carefully curled geranium leaf, in each carefully-combed blade of grass, the thought and labour expended by the B.O.F. (Borough of Folkesbourne).

Upon the greensward stood orderly rows of well-washed chairs, each with B.O.F. neatly stencilled upon its back. On this day, however, and at this hour (12.30 P.M.) scarce a B.O.F. was visible; each was hidden by a well-dressed visitor. And between the orderly rows of well-dressed visitors paraded orderly pairs of superbly-dressed visitors.

I was standing at the corner by the steps leading to the lower parade and thence to the beach and the rocks where the common people (myself on week-days, for instance) go to paddle with their children. I was wearing my new pale-grey suit which cost—but you will know more or less what it cost; I need not labour an unpleasant subject—and I was actually talking at the time to a member of the B.O.F.

"This is Peace at last," he was saying; "the place really begins to look—"

It was at this moment that Edward appeared. His route was the very centre of the lawn. He was wearing a battered Panama hat, a much-darned brownish jersey, and his nether man—or rather boy, for Edward's years are but four—was encased in paddling drawers made of the same material as a sponge-bag. Black sand-shoes completed his outfit, and a broken shrimping-net trailed behind him. At the moment when Edward first caught my horrified eye a particularly well-groomed young gentleman of about his own age caught Edward's eye in turn. Edward paused to survey this silken wonder with



interest. Then, as if prompted thereto by the sight, he snatched off his hat and, casting it upon the ground, kicked it vigorously across the grass.

The removal of the hat was the last straw, for Edward's hair is provocatively red. My friend of the B.O.F. advanced towards him with the intention of exerting authority and restoring discipline. Edward turned at the sound of a stern voice. Possibly he might have put out his tongue—you never know with Edward. But, what was worse, far worse, he saw me. With a glad cry of "Daddy" he rushed to me and, regardless of the fact that his front was covered with green slime, the result of going *ventre a pierre* over the rocks, he flung his arms round my legs.



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I would gladly have sunk into the ground. All eyes were upon us, and remained, as I felt, upon me, even when a breathless nursery-maid had retrieved Edward and borne him seawards once more.

One especially I had noticed, a very superbly dressed female visitor who had paused to witness the whole scene and was now resuming her promenade. I dreaded the comment which I felt I should overhear as she passed me—"What a horrible child!" it would be at the very least. But women are strangely unaccountable, even in so highly civilised an atmosphere as this. I distinctly heard her say, "What a darling!"

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[Illustration: *Mother*. "IT IS VERY NAUGHTY TO TELL UNTRUTHS, KITTY. THOSE WHO DO SO NEVER GET TO HEAVEN."

Kitty. "DIDN'T YOU EVER TELL AN UNTRUTH, MUMMY?"

Mother. "NO, DEAR—NEVER."

Kitty. "WELL, YOU'LL BE FEARFULLY LONELY, WON'T YOU, WITH ONLY GEORGE WASHINGTON?"]

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THE HORRORS OF PEACE.

"Wanted.—Boy for Butchering, about 15 years old."—*Local Paper*.

Extract from a solicitor's letter:—

"The sale of the above premises is now nearing completion and we expect to have the conveyance ready for execution in the course of a short period the length of which depends to some extent upon how soon we can obtain the execution of the Bishop."

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NEO-TOPICS.

There was a young neo-DELANE
Whose writing was frequently sane;
But the name of LLOYD GEORGE
So uplifted his gorge
That it threatened to swallow his brain.



There was an adored neo-Queen
Who ruled the whole world on the screen;
She simply knocked spots
Off poor MARY OF SCOTS,
But she doubled the gloom of our Dean.

There was an advanced neo-Georgian,
Or perhaps we should say Georgy-Porgian,
When asked to declare
What his principles were,
He invariably answered, "Pro-Borgian."

There was a great neo-Art critic
Whose style was extremely mephitic;
He treated VAN GOGH
And CEZANNE as dead dog,
And JOHN as a growth parasitic.

* * * * *

OUR BLOATED PLURALISTS.

"Wanted, Organist. Small country church. Salary L20. Good lodgings.
(Could be held with post of Milker on Manor Farm; permanent work;
Sundays free; ample salary.)"—*Church Times*.

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"The Grimsby trawler *Silurian* has towed Sir George Grahame, Minister
Plenipotentiary in Paris, to be his Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary to the King of the Belgians."—*Provincial Paper*.

We really think the Government might have provided him with a torpedo-boat.



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“The one thing which the Cabinet does not intend to do is to authorise the proclamation of marital law. It would engage far too many troops.”
—*Provincial Paper*.

The Irish girls are so attractive.

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“A friend of mine bought from a bookseller who was also, oddly enough, a bibliophile himself, a copy of Arnold’s very rare book, *The Strayed Revetter*, by A. He gave 6d. It is worth L5.”—*Book Post*.

Surely more than that!

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“An Ipswichomnibus pushed its bonnet through the window of a millinery shop.”—*Daily Paper*.

This intelligent animal (believed to be the female of the Brontosaurus) was probably seeking a change of headgear.

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[Illustration: *Tripper*. “I’VE A BLOOMIN’ GOOD MIND TO REPORT YOU FOR PROFITEERING.”

Old Salt. “WHAT YER TALKIN’ ABOUT?”

Tripper. “WELL, THEM SHRIMPS I BOUGHT OFF YOU. ONE OF EM’S GOT ONLY ONE EYE.”]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

I rather wish that the publishers of *Invincible Minnie* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) had not permitted themselves to print upon the wrapper either their own comments or those of Miss ELISABETH SANXAY HOLDING, the author. Because for my part, reading these, I formed the idea (entirely wrong) that the book would be in some way pretentious and affected; whereas it is the simple truth to call it the most mercilessly



impersonal piece of fiction that I think I ever read. There is far too much plot for me to give you any but a suggestion of it. The story is of the lives of two sisters, *Frances* and *Minnie*; mostly (as the title implies) of *Minnie*. To say that no one but a woman would have dared to imagine such a heroine, much less to follow her, through every phase of increasing hatefulness, to her horrid conclusion is to state an obvious truism. It is incidentally also to give you some idea of the kind of person *Minnie* is, that female Moloch, devastating, all-sacrificing, beyond restraint.... As for Miss HOLDING, the publishers turned out to be within the mark in claiming for her "a new voice." I don't, indeed, for the moment recall any voice in the least like it, or any such method; too honest for irony, too detached for sentiment and, as I said above, entirely merciless. Towards the end I found myself falling back on the old frightened protest, "People don't do these things." I still cling to this belief, but the fact remains that Miss HOLDING has a haunting trick of persuading one that they might. Minor faults, such as an irritating idiom and some carelessness of form, she will no doubt correct; meanwhile you have certainly got to read—"to suffer" would be the apter word—this remarkable book, whose reception I await with curiosity.



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A much misunderstood man is Count BERNSTORFF, formerly German Ambassador at Washington. While we were all supposing him to be a bomb-laden conspirator, pulling secret strings in Mexico or Canada or Japan from the safe protection afforded to his embassy, really he was the most innocent of men, anxious for nothing but to keep unsophisticated America from being trapped by the wiles of the villain Britisher. One has it all on the best of authority—his own—in *My Three Years in America* (SKEFFINGTON). Of course awkward incidents did occur, which have to be explained away or placidly ignored, but really, if the warlords at home had not been so invincibly tactless in the matter of drowning citizens of the United States, this simple and ingenuous diplomat might very well have succeeded, he would have us believe, in persuading President WILSON to declare in favour of a peace-loving All-Highest. As an essay in special pleading the book does not lack ingenuity, and as an example of the familiar belief that other peoples will shut their eyes and swallow whatever opinions the Teuton thinks good to offer them, it may have interest for the psychologist. For the rest it is a very prosy piece of literature, only saved occasionally in its dulness by the unconscious crudity of the hatreds lurking beneath its mask of plausibility. One of these hatreds is clearly directed against Ambassador GERARD, to whose well-known book this volume is in some sort a counter-blast. Neither a historian seeking truth nor a plain reader seeking recreation will have any difficulty in choosing between them.

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Mr. D.A. BARKER, in *The Great Leviathan* (LANE), doesn't merely leave you to make the obvious remark about his having taken Mr. H.G. WELL'S loose, tangential and, for a beginner, extraordinarily dangerous method as a model, but rubs it in (stout fellow!) by transplanting his hero to India, seemingly in order to have excuse for writing a passage which one would say was obviously inspired by that gorgeous description of the jungle in *The Research Magnificent*. Mr. BARKER has enough matter for two (or three) novels and enough skill in portraiture to make them more coherent and plausible than this. The theme is old but freshly seen. *Tom Seton*, resolved to avoid risking for his beloved the unhappiness which his mother had found in the bondage of marriage, offers her—indeed imposes on her—a free union. How the pressure of *The Great Leviathan* (*Mrs. Grundy*—well, that's not perhaps quite the whole of the idea, but it will serve) drove her into the shelter of a formal marriage with a devoted don, I leave you to gather. I don't think the author quite succeeds in making *Mary's* defection inevitable, nor do I see the significance of the apparently quite irrelevant background of Indian philosophy and intrigue. But here's a well-written book, with sound positive qualities outweighing the defects of inexperience.



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Captain ALAN BOTT ("Contact") has a literary gift of a high order, the gift of getting the very last thrill out of his experiences while telling his tale in the simplest and most straightforward way. In *Eastern Nights* (BLACKWOOD) he describes his adventures as a prisoner of the Turks, first in Damascus and Asia Minor and finally in Constantinople. The narrative, which is purely one of action, the action being supplied by the efforts, finally successful, of the author and various brother-officers to escape from their most unattractive captivity, nevertheless offers a most vivid picture of the social fabric of the Near East and in particular of the attitude of the *melange* of Oriental peoples that comprised the Turkish Empire towards the War in which they found themselves taking part, most of them with reluctance and all inefficiently. Apathy rather than calculated brutality was chiefly responsible for the hardships suffered by the prisoners of war of all nations who were unfortunate enough to fall into Turkish hands. From the point of view of an officer determined to escape, however, the prevalence of this quality was not without its advantage. Most of the officials (Turks and Germans excepted) with whom Captain BOTT and his fellow-officers had to do were pro-Ally at heart and ready enough to assist an escaping prisoner if they did not happen to be too timid. And even the Turk was amenable on occasion to baksheesh. Altogether a most fascinating book, *Eastern Nights* is likely to win wide appreciation not alone for its literary merit but as a stirring record of the courage and resource, under desperate and trying conditions, of the Empire's soldiers.

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Miss HENRIETTA LESLIE belongs to the school of novelists who believe in telling you all about their characters and leaving you to pass judgment on them yourself, without expert assistance. It is a fine impartial method which succeeds in representing life and the indecisiveness of human nature very well; but such books somehow lack the glow of more partisan writings. In *A Mouse with Wings* (COLLINS) she tells the story of a woman's life from the time of her engagement until her son is a young man and she herself married again. *Olga* is a splendid creature, but, as Miss LESLIE cleverly lets you see for yourself, the belief in her own principles and their application, which is the essence of her character, alienates her husband and makes something like a ninny of *Arnold*, her son. *A Mouse with Wings* is not only the sobriquet of *Beryl*, the cheerful young Suffragette whom he loves, but has its application also to poor *Arnold*, who finds the courage to face life and a way out of it fighting in France. It is a nicely-written book with a little air of distinction, but, in case anyone should blame me for hushing it up, I ought to mention that both *Olga* and *Beryl* would probably have admired *Arnold* a great deal more had he "found himself" by way of Conscientious Objection.



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I can testify that Mr. ZANE GREY'S *The Man of the Forest* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) is a yarn told with considerable zest and with just that undercurrent of sentiment which sweeps large portions of the British public completely off its feet. In this book the heroine, *Helen Rayner*, and her sister, *Bo*, leave Missouri for their uncle's ranch in New Mexico; but before they reach their destination many and wonderful adventures befall them. To escape from being kidnapped by some superb scoundrels they were hustled off to *Milt Dale's* home in the forest, and there they had for a long time to remain. *Milt* was one of nature's gentlemen, but as his boon companion was a cougar (whose uninviting picture is to be seen upon the paper cover), this forest home had its slight inconveniences. Mr. GREY, however, writes of it so admirably that he almost persuades me to be a camper-out, provided always that I may live in a cavern and not in a caravan. Cowboys, bandits, Mormons and other vigorous characters keep things moving at a terrific pace. But stirringly full of incident as this tale is, Mr. GREY never forgets that it is love that really makes the world go round. He is in short a born storyteller, with a style by no means to be despised, and I see no reason why his popularity should not continue to wax here, and ultimately to rival its American magnitude.

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[Illustration: ATMOSPHERE IN OUR RIVER BUNGALOWS.

Hostess (to her husband, just arrived from Town). "YOU'VE FORGOTTEN THE CHOP-STICKS, JOHN. YOU'VE SPOILT THE PARTY!"]

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ANOTHER GEDDES PROMOTION.

"Among celebrities who will watch British seamanship matched against American are Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and Sir Auckland Geddes, British Admiral to the United States."— *Canadian Paper*.