

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 159, August 25th, 1920 eBook

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CHARIVARIA.

"What we have got to do," says Lord *Rothermere*, "is to keep calm and mind our own business, instead of worrying about the affairs of every other nation." It seems only fair to point out that *The Daily News* thought of this as long ago as August, 1914.

* * *

Gooseberries the size of bantams' eggs, says a news item, won a prize at the Deeside Horticultural Show. When we remember the giant gooseberries of a decade ago it rather looks as if the nation were losing its nerve.

* * *

With reference to the messenger seen running in Whitehall the other day a satisfactory explanation has now been given. He was doing it for the cinema.

* * *

The average Scot, says an Anti-Prohibition writer, cannot stand many drinks. Our experience supports this view; but he can be stood a good many.

* * *

A picture-paper gossip states that Mr. *Churchill* enjoys very good health. Just a touch of writer's cramp now and then, of course.

* * *

In a recent riot in Londonderry, it is stated, a number of inoffensive neutrals were set upon and beaten by rowdies of both factions. We have constantly maintained that Irish unity can always be secured when there is something really worth uniting over.

* * *

A lighthouse is advertised for sale in *The Times*. It is said to be just the kind of residence for a tall man with sloping shoulders.

* * *

A correspondent asks in the weekly press for a new name for charabancs. We wish we could think there was any use in calling them names.

* * *



Seaside bathers are advised not to enter the water after a heavy meal. The seaside visitor who could pay for such a meal would naturally not have enough left to pay for a bathing-machine.

* * *

A Thames bargee was knocked down by a taxi-cab at Kingston-on-Thames last week. A well-known firm has offered to publish his remarks in fortnightly parts.

* * *

The West Dulwich man who struck a rate-collector on the head with a telephone claims credit for finding some use for these instruments.

* * *

Sir *Eric Drummond* has purchased the largest hotel in Geneva on behalf of the League of Nations. It is said that he has been taking lessons from Sir *Alfred* MOND.

* * *

Following closely upon the announcement of the noiseless gun invented in New York comes the news that they have now invented some sound-proof bacon for export to this country.

* * *

It is stated that the man who last week said he understood the Rent Act was eventually pinned down by some friends and handed over to the care of his relatives.

* * *

According to a morning paper another Antarctic expedition is to be organised very shortly. We understand that only those who can stand a northern wind on all four sides need apply.

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* * *

It is reported that a poultry-farmer in the West of England is making a fortune by giving his hens whisky to drink and then exporting their eggs to the United States.

* * *

A golf-ball was recently driven through the window of an express train near Knebworth. We are informed however that the player who struck the ball still maintains that the engine-driver deliberately ignored his shout of "Fore."

* * *

An amazing report reaches us from Yorkshire. It appears that a centenarian has been discovered who is unable to read without glasses or even to walk to market once a week.

* * *

The unveiling of one of the largest Peace memorials in the country is to take place on Armistice day this year. We hear that both the *Premier* and Mr. *Winston Churchill* have expressed a desire to attend unless prevented by the War.

* * *

Smart furriers, declares a fashion-paper, are pushing Beveren blue rabbit as one of the chic furs for the coming winter. The rabbit, our contemporary goes on to explain (superfluously, as it seems to us), is naturally blue.

* * *

On a recent occasion a meeting of the Dolgelly Rural Council had to be postponed, the members being absent hay-making. Parliament, on the other hand, has had to stop making hay owing to the Members being away in the country.

* * *

The Ministry of Food states that the period of normal supplies seems to come round in cycles of four years. Meanwhile the period of abnormal prices continues to come round in cycles of once a week. A movement in favour of postponing the cycle of payment till we get the cycle of plenty is not receiving adequate support from the provision trade.

* * *

Agricultural labourers near Peterborough have refused to work with Irishmen on the ground that the latter are troublesome. We always said that sooner or later someone would come round to Mr. *Lloyd George's* view on this point.

* * *

A newspaper reports the case of a waiter who refused a tip. It is said that the gentleman who offered it is making a slow recovery and may be able to take a little fish this week.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Caller. "Exchange? Get me double-six double-five nine Central—and get it quick, like they do it on the pictures."*]

* * * * *

The growth of the side-Car.

"Motor cars, cycles, _&c._

Argyll.—2 Bedrooms and sitting-room, with attendance."—Scotch Paper.

* * * * *

"Brighton Electric railway.

Page 3

Palace Pier and Kemp town cars every five years.”—Local Paper.

It is inferred that the Ministry of Transport has assumed control.

* * * * *

An apology to the Bench.

Humbly addressed to T.E.S.

If ever, where you hold the Seat of Doom,
I stand, my Lord, before you at the Bar,
And my forensic fame, a virgin bloom,
Lies in your awful hands to make or mar,
Let it not prejudice my case, I pray,
If you should call to mind a previous meeting
When on a champion course the other day
I gave your Lordship four strokes and a beating.

I own it savoured of contempt of court,
Hinted of disrespect toward the Bench,
That I should chuckle when your pitch was short
Or smile to see you in the sanded trench;
But Golf (so I extenuate my sin)
Brings all men level, like the greens they putt on;
One common bunker makes the whole world kin,
And Bar may scrap with Beak, and I with SCR-TT-N.

Nor did I give myself superior airs;
I made allowance for defective sight;
“The bandage which impartial Justice wears
Leaves you,” I said, “a stranger to the light;
Habituated to the sword and scales,
If you commit some pardonable blunder,
If” (I remarked) “your nerve at moments fails
With grosser ironmongery, where’s the wonder?”

So may the Law’s High Majesty o’erlook
My rash presumption; may the memory die
Of how I won the match (and further took
The liberty of mopping up the bye);
Remember just a happy morning’s round,
Also the fact that this alleged old fogey

Played at the last hole like a book and downed
The barely human feat of Colonel Bogey.

O.S.

* * * * *

If we all took to MARGOTRY.

[Mrs. ASQUITH'S feuilleton, which for so many people has transformed Sunday into a day of unrest, sets up a new method of autobiography, in which the protagonist is, so to speak, both *Johnson* and *Boswell* too. Successful models being always imitated we may expect to see a general use of her lively methods; and as a matter of fact I have been able already, through the use of a patent futurist reading-glass (invented by Signer Margoni), to get glimpses of two forthcoming reminiscent works of the future which, but for the *chronique egoistique* of the moment might never have been written, and certainly not in their present interlocutory shape.]

I.

From "First Aid to literature."

By Edmund Gosse.

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... Not the least interesting and delicate of my duties as a confidential adviser were connected with a work of reminiscences which created some stir in the nineteen-twenties. How it came about I cannot recollect, but it was thought that my poor assistance as a friendly censor of a too florid exuberance in candour might not be of disservice to the book, and I accepted the invitation. The volume being by no means yet relegated to oblivion's dusty shelves I am naturally reluctant to refer to it with such particularity as might enable my argus-eyed reader to identify it and my own unworthy share therein, and therefore in the following dialogue, typical of many between the author and myself, I disguise her name under an initial. *Quis custodiet?* It would be grotesque indeed if one whose special mission was to correct the high spirits of others should himself fail in good taste.

Mrs. A. (laying down the MS. with a bang). I see nothing but blue pencil marks, and blue was never my colour. Why are you so anxious that I should be discreet? Indiscretion is the better part of authorship.

EDMUND (earnestly). It is your fame of which I am thinking. If you adopt my emendations you will go down to history as the writer of the best book of reminiscences in English.

Mrs. A. (with fervour). I don't want to go down to history. I want to stay here and make it. And you *(with emotion)*—you have cramped my style. I can't think why I asked you to help.

EDMUND. Everyone asks me to help. It is my destiny. I am the Muses' *amicus curiae*.

Mrs. A. Oh, blow Latin! *(Lighting two cigarettes at once)* What's the good of reminiscences of to-day, by me, without anything about L.G.?

EDMUND. Dear lady, it would never have done. Be reasonable. There are occasions when reticence is imperative.

Mrs. A. Reticence! What words you use!

(Caetera desunt.)

II.

FROM "A WEEK IN LOVELY LUCERNE."

By *D. Lloyd George*.

... I do not say that the mountains hereabout are not more considerable than those of our own beloved Wales, but as material to be employed in perorations they are far

inferior. There is not the requisite mist (which may symbolise ignorance or obstinacy or any temporary disturbance or opposition), later to be dispelled by the strong beams of the sun (representing either progress generally or prime-ministerial genius or pure Coalitionism). Other local features I felt, however, I might find rhetorically useful, such as THORWALDSEN'S Lion, so noble, so—so leonine, but doomed ever to adhere to the rock, how symbolic of a strong idealist unable to translate his ameliorative plans into action! The old bridge too, uniting the two sides of the city, as one can attempt to link Radicalism and Coalitionism—how long could it endure? And so on. One's brain was never idle.

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It was while we were at Lucerne that LORD RIDDELL and I had some of our most significant conversations. I set them down just as they occurred, extenuating nothing and concealing nothing.

LORD RIDDELL (with emotion). You are in excellent form to-day. Lucerne now has two lions—one of them free.

DAVID (surprised). I free? (*Sadly*) You forget that GIOLITTI is coming.

LORD RIDDELL. But that is nothing to you. Try him with your Italian and he will soon go.

DAVID. You are a true friend. You always hearten me.

LORD RIDDELL (with more emotion). But you are so wonderful, so wonderful! And now for to-day's amusements. Where shall we go? Up Mount Pilatus or to WILLIAM TELL'S Chapel?

DAVID. There is something irresistible to a Welshman in the word chapel. Let us go there. And WILLIAM TELL, was he not a patriot? Did he not defy the tyrant? I am sure that in his modest conventicle I can think of a thousand eloquent things. Let us go there.

LORD RIDDELL. My hero! my dauntless hero!

E.V.L.

* * * * *

"Even with a round of 73 in the morning Ray fell behind Vardon, who accomplished a remarkable round of 17 to lead the field."—*Provincial Paper.*

This is believed to be the first occasion on which any golfer has accomplished two holes in one shot.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "THE LION OF LUCERNE."]

MR. LLOYD GEORGE (*having jodelled heavily*). "NOT A SINGLE DISSENTIENT ECHO! THIS IS THE SORT OF PEACE CONFERENCE I LIKE." (*Continues to jodel.*)]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Mabel (in barefaced attempt to detain Mother when saying "Good-night").*
"OH, MUMMY, I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU A STORY ABOUT THREE LITTLE BOYS."

Mother. "NO, NO; GO TO SLEEP. THERE'S NO TIME TO TELL A STORY ABOUT THREE LITTLE BOYS."

Mabel. "WELL, THEN, LET ME TELL YOU A STORY ABOUT TWO LITTLE BOYS."]

* * * * *

THE RABBITS GAME.

"Don't forget to say 'Rabbits' to-morrow," said Angela. Angela is aged nine and my younger sister; I am thirteen and my name is Anne.

We both looked inquiringly at Father, and, as he didn't seem to remember, Angela in pained surprise began to explain. "If you say 'Rabbits' before you say anything else on the first day of a month you get a present during the month, but you mustn't say anything else first, or you won't."

It all came out in one breath and, though it looks clear enough now, Father was very stupid.

"I dislike rabbits," he said, "and I am very busy; your Mother will probably be glad of them for the servants."

The rebuke in Angela's eyes was severe. "We haven't got any rabbits," she said; "we are only going to say 'Rabbits' to-morrow morning when we wake up and we thought you might like to do the same."

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"Oh, I should," said Father; "thank you very much, I won't forget." And he wrote "Rabbits" down on his blotting-paper. "Now go and tell your Mother; she would like to say 'Rabbits' too, I know."

That seemed to terminate the interview, so we left him; but altogether it was not very satisfactory. You see, when we had "Bon-jour-Philippines," Father used to provide the presents; at least that was some time ago; we haven't had any "Bon-jour-Philippines" lately. The last time we did, Jack, that is my brother at Oxford, found one and split it with Father, and the next morning he said, "Bon-jour-Philippine" first and then asked for a present. Father asked him what he wanted, and he gave Father a letter that he had had that morning. Father got very angry and said that it was a disgrace the way tailors allowed credit to young wasters nowadays. He didn't say it quite like that, it was rather worse, and Mother said, "Hush, dear; remember the children," and Father said that they were all as bad and in the conspiracy to ruin him, and he went out of the room and banged the door.

Mother told Jack that he should have chosen a better moment, and Jack owned he had made a mistake and said that he ought to have got it in before Father had looked at the paper and seen the latest news of LLOYD GEORGE. I don't quite know what he meant, but Father often talks about LLOYD GEORGE, and he must be a beast.

I asked Jack later if he got his present, and he said that he had, but—and here he copied Father's voice so well that I had to laugh—"It is the very last time, my boy; when I was at Oxford I used to consider my Father, and I would have worked in the fields and earned money sooner than have given him bills to pay." Jack said that he knew one of the dons at Oxford who knew Father, and from what he said he thought that Father must have spent as long in the fields as NEBUCHADNEZZAR did.

I remembered all this as I went to find mother about "Rabbits," and I wasn't quite sure that we should get our present even if we did say it, so I told Angela, and she had a brilliant idea. "We will make Father say 'Rabbits' and give him a present ourselves, and he is sure to give us something in return." Angela is younger than I am, but she often thinks quite clever things like that, and they come in very useful sometimes.

We went to the summer-house in the garden to make plans. First we thought what would be the best present to give Father. Last Christmas we gave him a pipe, and he said that it was just what he wanted; it cost ninepence and was made like a man's head, and you put the tobacco in a hole in his hat.

Father lit it at once after breakfast, but two days after I saw Jakes the gardener smoking it. We thought at first that he had stolen it, and I went to Father, but he said that Jakes had thirteen children, and when a man was in trouble like that you ought to give up what you valued most to try to make that man happy, and that Jakes was awfully pleased when he gave him the pipe.

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You see that made it very difficult, as we had to get something that Father would like and Jakes too, as he still had thirteen children; and then I remembered that Mrs. Jakes had once looked at a woollen jumper that I had on, and said that it would be just the thing for her Mary Ann, who had a delicate chest, and Jakes would be sure to like what Mrs. Jakes liked, or else he wouldn't have married her. Of course a jumper wasn't really the sort of thing that Father could wear, but I thought he might wrap his foot up in it when he next had gout, and besides I shouldn't be wanting it much more myself, as the summer was coming on.

Angela said that she thought that would do well, and she wouldn't mind giving Father her jumper next month if he said "Rabbits," and it would do for Mrs. Jakes' next little girl.

So that was decided, and then we had to arrange the plan. The most important thing was for us to wake before Father, so that we could wake him and remind him before he had time to say anything else, and Angela remembered that Ellen, that's the housemaid, had an alarm clock, which she used to set at a quarter to six each morning. We waited until Ellen had gone downstairs and then took it and hid it in Angela's bed.

Next morning the clock went off. We were both rather frightened, and it was very cold and the room looked funny, as the blinds hadn't been pulled up, but we put our dressing-gowns on. Then Angela said that she had heard that if you woke a person who was walking in their sleep they sometimes called out, so I took a pair of stockings from the basket that had just come back from the wash to hold over Father's mouth while we woke him. They were waiting to be mended and had a hole in them, but that didn't matter much, as I screwed them up tight, and then we went into Father's room. They were both asleep, and Father had his mouth open all ready for the stockings, which was very lucky, as I was wondering how I could get them in.

We crept up to the bed, and I know I shivered, and I think Angela did too, as I was holding her hand. Then she called out "Boo" as loud as she could, and I stuffed the stockings into Father's mouth, and then they both woke up, and everything went wrong.

Mother thought the house was on fire and screamed, and it made Angela begin to cry. I quite forgot to tell Father to say "Rabbits," and just pressed the stockings further into his mouth.

Father struggled and made awful noises, and when he did get the stockings out the things he said weren't a bit like "Rabbits," and the only thing that he did say that I could write down here was that he thought he was going to be sick. The rest was dreadful.

We were both sent back to bed, and that morning as a punishment we were not allowed into the dining-room until Father and Mother had finished their breakfast; and Angela, who often thinks quite clever things, said that we had better not do "Rabbits" again for a

good long time. But after all it didn't matter much as the weather got a great deal colder, and I wore my jumper a lot, and so did Angela.



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* * * * *

[Illustration: "LOOK 'ERE—THIS ARF-CROWN WON'T DO. IT AIN'T GOT NO MILLING ON ITS HEDGE."

"BLIMY! NOR IT 'AS! I *KNEW* I'D FORGOTTEN SOMEFINK."]

* * * * *

FLOWERS' NAMES.

DAME'S DELIGHT.

There was a Lady walked a wood;
She never smiled, nor never could.
One day a sunbeam from the South
Kissed full her petulant proud mouth;
She laughed, and there, beneath the trees,
Fluttering in the April breeze,
Spread tracts of blossom, green and white,
Curtseying to the golden light—
The broken laugh of Dame's Delight.

* * * * *

FIRST LOVE AND LAST.

[It is pointed out by a contemporary that the dressmaker's waxen model has quite lost her old insipid air. The latest examples of the modeller's art show the "glad eye" and features with which "any man might fall in love."]

In the days when I started to toddle
I loved with a frenzy sublime
A dressmaker's beauteous model—
I think I was three at the time;
She was fair in the foolish old fashion,
And they found me again and again
With my nose in an access of passion
Glued tight to the pane.

But I thought they were gone past returning
Till Time should go back on his tracks,
Those days of a child's undiscerning
But fervent devotion to wax;
Could a heart, though admittedly restive,



Recapture that innocent mood
At sixty next birthday? I'm blest if
I thought that it could.

But Art, ever bent on progression,
Has taken the model in hand,
And brought in the line of succession
A figure more pleasingly planned;
Her eyes with the gladdest of glances,
Her lips and her hair and her cheek
Can puncture like so many lances
A bosom of teak.

* * * * *

HARD TIMES FOR HEROINES.

"Oh, Bertram," breathed Eunice as she glided into his arms, "if Ernest knew, what would he think?"

At this point of my story I admit that I was held up. I myself couldn't help wondering how Ernest would regard the situation. He was a perfectly good husband and, personally, I preferred him to Bertram the lover. I might get unpopular with my readers, however, if they suspected this, so I continued:—

"Ernest can never appreciate you as I do, dearest," Bertram whispered hoarsely; "he is cold, hard, indifferent—"

Again I paused. If Eunice had been the really nice girl I meant her to be she would have asked Bertram what on earth he meant by saying such things about her husband, and would have told him the shortest cut to the front-door. In which case she might never have got into print.

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The fact is the poor heroine of fiction has a hard time of it nowadays. Someone ought to write a treatise on “How to be Happy though a Heroine,” or uphold her cause in some way. Twenty-five years ago she lived in a halo of romance. Her wooers were tender, respectful and adoring; she was never without a chaperon. Her love-story was conventional and ended in wedding bells. To-day—just see how her position has altered. Generally she begins by being married already. Then her lover comes along to place her in awkward predicaments and put her to no end of inconvenience, very often only to make her realise that she prefers her husband after all. Or, on the other hand, the modern writer does not mind killing off, on the barest pretext, a husband who is perfectly sound in wind and limb and had never suffered from anything in his life until the lover appeared. The poor girl will tell you herself that it isn't natural.

Then there is the compromising situation. Magazine editors clamour for it—in fiction, I mean. We find the heroine flung on a desert island, with the one man above all others in the world that she detests as her sole companion. It is rather rough on her, but often still more rough on other people, as it may necessitate drowning the entire crew and passengers of a large liner just in order to leave the couple alone for a while to get to know each other better. And not until they find that they care for one another after all does the rescue party arrive. It will cruise about, or be at anchor round the corner, for weeks and weeks, so that it can appear on the horizon at the moment of the first embrace. This situation is so popular at present that it is surprising that there are enough desert islands to go round.

Again, the lonely bungalow episode is pretty cheerless for the heroine. She accepts an apparently harmless invitation to spend a week-end with friends in the country. When she arrives at the station there is no one to meet her. After a course of desert islands this ought to arouse her suspicions, but she never seems to benefit by experience. At the bungalow, reached in a hired fly and a blinding snowstorm, she finds the whole household away. The four other week-end guests, her host and hostess and their five children, the invalid aunt who resides with the family, the three female servants and the boot-boy who lives in—all have completely vanished. The only sign of life for miles is the hero standing on the doorstep looking bewildered and troubled, as well he might, for he knows that he must spend the night in a snowstorm to avoid compromising the heroine.

And when the family return next morning and explain that they went out to look at the sunset, but were held up at a neighbour's by the weather, nobody seems to think the excuse a little thin.

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The heroine can never hope for a tranquil existence like other people. I read of one only recently who, just because she strongly objected to the man her parents wanted her to marry, was flung with him on an iceberg that had only seating capacity for two. And when the iceberg began to melt—writers must at times manipulate the elements—it meant that she must either watch the man drown or share the same seat with him. The rescue party held off, of course, until the harassed girl was sitting on his knees, and then received the pair as they slid down, announcing their engagement.

What do I intend to do with Bertram and Eunice? I am undecided whether to place them in the vicinity of a volcano, which, unknown to Bertram, has eruptive tendencies, or to send them up in an aeroplane and break the propeller in mid-Atlantic just as the rescue party (including the husband)—What? Do I understand anything about aeroplanes? Certainly not; but I know everything about heroines.

* * * * *

EVIDENCE.

“What’s all this I hear about the Abbey?” said my friend Truscott when I met him yesterday.

Truscott has just returned from New Zealand and is for the moment a little behind the times. But he can pick up the threads as quickly as most men.

“It’s in a bad way,” I told him. “All kinds of defects in the fabric, and there’s a public fund to make it sound again. You ought to subscribe.”

“It may be in disrepair,” he replied, “but it isn’t going to fall down just yet. I know; I went to see it this morning.”

“But how do you know?” I asked. “You may guess; you can’t know.”

“I know,” he said, “because I was told. A little bird told me, and there’s no authority half so good. Do you remember a few years ago a terrific storm that blew down half the elms in Kensington Gardens?”

I remembered. I had reason; for the trunks and branches were all over the road and my omnibus from Church Street to Piccadilly Circus had to make wide detours.

“Well,” Truscott continued, “someone wrote to the papers to say that two or three days before the storm all the rooks left the trees and did not return. They knew what was coming. Birds do know, you know, and that’s why I feel no immediate anxiety about the Abbey.”

“Explain,” I said.

“Well,” he continued, “when I was there this morning I watched a sparrow popping in and out of a nest built in a niche in the stonework over the north door.”

* * * * *

[Illustration: MANNERS AND MODES.

THEN AND NOW.

From an Early-Victorian “Etiquette for Gentlemen.”—“A GENTLEMAN CANNOT BE TOO CAREFUL TO AVOID STEPPING ON A LADY’S DRESS WHEN ABOUT TO GET IN OR OUT OF A CARRIAGE.”]

* * * * *

THOUGHTS ON “THE TIMES.”

(FROM A TRAIN.)

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Really the news is very bad this morning. On the front page there are two Foreign crises and a Home one. On the next page there is one Grave Warning and two probable strikes. On every other page there is either a political murder or a new war. It is awful ...

Yet somehow I don't feel depressed. I rather feel like giggling. An empty smoker in the Cornish express—*empty* except for me! Extraordinary! And all my luggage in the right van, labelled for Helston, and not for Hull or Harwich or Hastings. That porter was a splendid fellow, so respectful, so keen on his work—no Bolshevism about *him*. I gave him a shilling. I gave the taxi-man a shilling too. That guard is a pleasant fellow also; I shall give him two shillings, perhaps half-a-crown. Yet I see that the railways are seething with unrest.

I have just read *The Times'* leader. Everything seems to be coming undone ... Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, India. This Bolshevik business ... dreadful. The guard has got me a ticket for the Second Luncheon. A capital fellow. I gave him three shillings. Absurd. I have no more shillings now. I am overdrawn. There is a financial crisis. But that, of course, is general. I see that Mr. Iselbaum anticipates a general smash this winter. A terrible winter it is going to be ... no coal, no food ... We ought to be in by five, in time for a fat late tea ... Cornish cream ... jam. Gwen will be at the station, with the children, all in blue ... or pink perhaps. How jolly the country looks! Superficial, of course; the harvest's ruined; no wheat, no fruit. And unemployment will be very bad. And the more people there are unemployed the more people will strike ... Sounds funny, that; but true ... Hope they've given us the usual table in the coffee-room, that jolly window-table in the corner, where one can look across the bay to the cliffs and the corn-fields and the hills ... Only there's no corn, I suppose, this year ... And one has a good view of the rest of the room there ... can study the new arrivals at dinner, instead of having to wait till afterwards. Dinner is much the best time to study them; you can see at once how they eat. And it is so much easier to decide which is the sister and which the *fiancee* of the young man when they are all stationary at a table. When you only see them rushing about passages in ones it takes days.

All the usual families will be there, I suppose—the Bradleys and the Clinks, old Mrs. Puntage and the kids—if they can afford it this year ... Very likely they can't. I can't, certainly. But I'm going.

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“Not since the fateful week-end of August, 1914, when the destinies of Europe were decided in a few hours, have issues of such gravity engaged the attention of the British race....” Dreadful. I shall get some tennis tomorrow. I shan’t be called. I shall get up when the sun is on my face and not before. I shall dress very, very slowly, looking at the sea and the sands and the sun, not rushing, not shaving properly, not thinking, not washing a great deal, just sort of falling into an old coat and some grey flannels.... Then I shall just sort of fall downstairs—about half-past nine, and give the old barometer a bang. Then breakfast, very deliberate, but cheerful, because the glass went up when I banged it—it always goes up at that hotel ... like the cost of living. Up another five points to-day, I see. Bread’s going to be one-and-threepence. But of course there won’t be any bread this winter, so the price doesn’t much matter. But what about coal? and milk? and meat? “Several new sets of wage claims are due for decision within the next few weeks, and it is possible that two of them at least may not be determined without a cessation of work.” More strikes ... But not for a week or two. To-morrow there won’t be any papers at breakfast; there won’t be any letters. I shan’t catch the 9.5. After breakfast I shall smoke on the cliff—then some tennis. Most of the balls will go over the cliff, but when they have all gone one just slips down and bathes, and picks them up on the way. Undress on the rocks—no machines, no tents. Jolly bathing. Mixed, of course. This Tonbridge councillor is on about that again, I see. He ought to come to Mullion. Mixed bathing depends entirely on the mixture. He doesn’t realise that. Of course, if he *will* bathe at Tonbridge ...

“In diplomatic circles no one is attempting to conceal that the situation is extremely grave.” Now which situation is that? That must be one of these world-plots. Don’t really see how civilisation can carry on more than a week or two now. Lucky I only took a single, perhaps. It was only two pounds, but I hadn’t enough for a return. Never shall have enough, probably—but no matter. If the world is coming to an end, might as well be in a good part of it at the time. And it would be sickening to be snuffed out with an unused return-ticket in one’s pocket.

On the sands after lunch—build a few castles and dams and things for the children—at least, not altogether for the children, not so much as they think, anyhow. Tea at the farm, with plenty of cream, possibly an egg ... No eggs this winter, I see; some question of non-unionists. Then a little golf before dinner—and perhaps a little dancing afterwards. Coffee, anyhow ...

Then *The Times* arrives, all wrapped up, just as one is explaining about the seventh hole. It is all stiff and crinkly, and one spends a long time rearranging it, flattening out the folds ...

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And one never reads it. That's the best of all.

A.P.H.

* * * * *

[Illustration: NATIONAL RESEARCH.

THE DAILY QUEST, EVER WITH ITS FINGER ON THE PUBLIC PULSE, SENDS A SPECIAL COMMISSIONER TO OUR HOLIDAY RESORTS TO DISCOVER WHICH HAS THE NICEST NECKS.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *The Cheerful One*. "CONGRATULATIONS, OLD CHAP, ON FINDING YOUR GAME AGAIN."

Club Grouser. "FINDING MY GAME! WHY, I'VE JUST OFFERED TO SELL EVERY DAMNED CLUB IN MY BAG."

The Cheerful One. "YES, I KNOW. BUT YESTERDAY YOU WERE *GIVING* THEM AWAY.]"

* * * * *

PRONE.

To the Editor of "Punch."

SIR,—I am an architect (of forty-three years' standing) and I like to keep *au courant* with everything in the world of building (or of being about to build). Consequently anything new in constructional material interests me, and in this connection I would like to ask you what is or what are Prone? I have only seen it (or them) mentioned once, and from the context I gather that the word "prone" stands for the plural of "prone" (as "grouse" is the plural of "grouse," and as "house" might well stand for the plural of "house" nowadays, considering the shortage of dwellings), and that it (or they) is (or are) used either as a floor covering or otherwise in connection with working on the floor or ground.

My reason for so thinking is contained in the following interesting item, culled from a well-known daily newspaper:—

"There is in London one man at least who works hard every day and has to lay prone to do it.

He may be seen daily in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey re-cutting the names on the flagged gravestones which have been worn by countless pilgrims' feet. He has picked out many illustrious names, and others are to follow."

The sex and species of this hard-worker preclude the notion of any oviparous act, and I take it that one "lays prone" as one lays a mat or strip of carpet, for the purpose of facilitating labour that is done on the knees or stomach. If I am right I should like to get my builder to order some for his workmen absolutely at once.

Anything which would help to defeat the Trade Unions in their fight against speeding-up would be a blessing, especially to the architectural world, so perhaps you will be good enough to enlighten me on the nature of Prone, and where obtainable.

Believe me, Yours very gravely,
ONESIMUS STONE (F.R.I.B.A.).

* * * * *

From an American book on "How and What to Read":—

"Other great American short story writers include Bret Harte, Edward Everett Hale, Frank Stockton, and Mary E. Wilkins. With these may be included Thomas Hardy's 'Life's Little Ironies,' which are full of fun."

Mr. HARDY will be glad, no doubt, to add this little irony to his collection.

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* * * * *

THE KELPIE.

The scoffer rails at ancient tales
Of lake and stream and river;
The wise man owns that in his bones
The kelpie makes him shiver.

Big salmon-flies the scoffer buys,
Long rods and wading stockings;
Unpicturesque he walks in Esk
With unbelief and mockings.

"A river-horse! O-ho, of course!"
And shouts with ribald laughter;
He does not see in his cheap glee
The kelpie trotting after.

The storm comes chill from off the hill;
An eerie wind doth holloa;
And near and near by surges drear
The water-horse doth follow.

A snort, a snuff; enough, enough;
Past prayer or human help he
Comes never more to mortal door
Who meets the water-kelpie.

* * * * *

"THE KING ARRIVES IN SCOTLAND

ASKED TO LEAVE."

Consecutive Headlines in "The Daily Mirror."

The habit of reading the headlines in our pictorial newspapers without glancing at the pictures beneath them is liable to create false impressions.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Mrs. Symons (wishing to draw attention, in the time-honoured manner, to the amount of dust on the drawing-room furniture). "LOOK AT THAT, MARTHA; I CAN WRITE MY NAME ON THE PIANO."*

Martha. "FANCY, NOW, YOU SPELLING IT WITH A 'Y.'"]

* * * * *

TO A MAKER OF PILLS.

"The Pill Trade has fallen on evil days; no ex-service men seem to require pills."—*A pill manufacturer summoned for rates at Willesden.*

O Benefactor of the British Tommy,
So often sick in far unfriendly climes,
What tears of sympathy are flowing from me
To learn that you have fallen on evil times!
Yea, to my mind 'tis little short of tragic
That men no longer buy your potent spheres of magic!

Scarce less detested than the Bulgar bullet
Your bitter pellets of Quin. Sulph. gr. 5
Have often stuck in my long-suffering gullet,
Leaving me barely more than half alive,
Whilst the accursed drug, whose taste I dread,
Hummed like an aeroplane within my throbbing head.

And what about Acetyl-Salicylic,
And what of Calomels and Soda Sals?
Existence had been even less idyllic
Without those powerful and faithful pals!
Why, midst the fevers of the Struma plain you
Furnished the greater part of Tommy's daily menu.

Or what of that infallible specific,
Your Pil. Cathartic Comp., or No. 9,
Whose world-wide influence must have been terrific
Since first it found its footing in the Line?
The British Tommy took it by the million—
Why should it fail to sell now he has turned civilian?

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It is not base ingratitude that blinds him
To recognition of an ancient debt,
But rather that the sight of these reminds him
Of painful days which he would fain forget.
When life was one long round of guards and drills,
Marches, patrols, fatigues and sick parades—and pills.

Yet hear me, maker of the potent pilule:
Although my days of soldiering are o'er,
I'm fondly trusting that, when next I'm ill, you
Come to my rescue as you came of yore;
Meanwhile you'll understand that I, for one,
Refuse to buy your wares and eat them just for fun.

* * * * *

A DEAD HEAT.

"In the high jump final, Landen (U.S.A.) was first with a jump of 6ft. 4-1/2in.; Muller (U.S.A.) and E. Keleend (Sweedden) died for second place."—*Provincial Paper*.

* * * * *

"I heard Lord Rosebery say: 'Your little girl has got beautiful eyes.' I repeated this upstairs with joy and excitement to the family, who ... said they thought it was true enough if my eyes had not been so close together."—*Extract from Autobiography of Margot Asquith*.

Her "I's" are generally rather close together.

* * * * *

"The policy which should be adopted is first to take steps to prevent prices continuing to rise, and then to endeavour to reduce them until the purchasing power of the pound sterling is equal to the purchasing power of the dollar."—*Financial Paper*.

Judging by the New York exchange good progress has been made in this direction.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE "HOUSE"-BREAKER.

OVERTHROW OF THE PARLIAMENT OF DEMOCRACY; A DREAM OF THE
“COUNCIL OF
ACTION.”]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Mother*. “YOUR COUSIN JIM HAS OFFERED TO TAKE YOU TO DINNER
AND A THEATRE TO-NIGHT. AREN’T YOU PLEASED?”

Daughter. “OH, IT’S ALL RIGHT, BUT HE LOOKS SO ROTTENLY RESPECTABLE.”]

* * * * *

GEORGE, JANE AND LENIN.

Now that Soviet rule in England is apparently so imminent it seems to me that we ought to consider a little more closely the application of its practical machinery. The morning papers reach this village at three o’clock in the afternoon, so that nobody is in to read them, and when one comes back in the evening one is generally too lazy, but a couple of rather startling sentences about the coming Communist *regime* have recently caught my eye.

“The people of England, like the people of Russia,” runs the first, “will soon be working under the lash.” And the second, so far as I remember, says, “Our rations will no doubt be reduced to half a herring and some boiled bird-seed, which is all the unhappy Russians are getting to eat.”

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Before these changes fall suddenly upon us I think we should ponder a little on the way in which they will affect our urban and agricultural life.

Take the House of Commons. A very large and symbolic knout might occupy the position of the present mace, and from time to time the SPEAKER could take it up and crack it. As this needs a certain amount of practice it will be necessary to select a fairly horsey man as Speaker, and the Whips, who will follow the same procedure, should also be skilled practitioners. I see no difficulty in applying the same method to commercial and factory life in general, still less to the packing of the Underground Railway and the loading of motor-omnibuses and trams.

It is rather when we come to scattered rural communities that the system seems likely to break down. Take the case of George Harrison in this village. When I first met George Harrison, and he said that he thought the weather was lifting, he was carrying a basket of red plums which he offered to sell me for an old song. On subsequent occasions I met him—

1. Driving cows. (At least I suppose he was driving them; he was sitting sideways on a large horse doing nothing in particular, and some of the cows were going into one field and some into another, and a dog was biting their tails indiscriminately.)
2. Clearing muck and weeds out of the stream.
3. Setting a springe for rabbits.
4. Delivering letters, because the postman doesn't like walking up the hill.

Now I maintain that there would be insuperable difficulties in making George carry out all these various activities under the lash. Anyone, I suppose, under a properly constituted Soviet *regime* might be detailed as George Harrison's lasher, Mr. SMILLIE, Mr. G.K. CHESTERTON, Lord CURZON, Mr. CLYNES or the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND. Can you imagine Mr. CHESTERTON walking about on guard duty in a rabbit warren while George Harrison set springes in accordance with the principles laid down by the Third Internationale for rabbit-snaring? or the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND standing in gum-boots in the middle of a stream and flicking George Harrison about the trousers if he didn't rake out old tin cans at forty to the minute as laid down by the Moscow Code? Now I ask you.

And then there is this half a herring and boiled bird-seed arrangement. George Harrison has a sister of eighteen who kindly comes in to do cooking and housework for us every day. She thinks us frightfully queer, and if we bought some herrings and bird-seed and asked her to cook them for us I have no doubt she would oblige, but, though she doesn't much care what we eat, there are a lot of things she doesn't eat herself, and fish is one of them. Porridge, which, I suppose, is a kind of bird-seed, is another.

Not that Jane calls it eating, by the way. She calls it “touching,” and there are any number of things that she doesn’t fancy touching. She will touch enormous platefuls of bacon or sausages or almost any derivative of the domestic pig, and the same applies to puddings and cake. But beef and mutton she does not touch, nor margarine, and we have to be almost as careful that Jane Harrison has plenty of the right things to touch as about the whole of the rest of the family.

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Now here again I think it would be quite possible to induce the people of England in our large industrial centres to ration themselves on boiled herring and bird-seed. We should not use those names, of course. The advertisements on the hoardings would say:—

THE BOUNTIFUL HARVEST OF THE SEA BROUGHT TO THE BREAKFAST TABLE

or

WHAT MAKES THE SKYLARK SO HAPPY?
TRY HARRABY'S HEMP. A SONG IN EVERY SPOONFUL.

But propaganda of that sort would have no effect on Jane. She would simply say that she never cared to touch herrings and that she did not fancy hemp-seed.

When I consider the cases of George and Jane I am bound to believe either that the Russian moujiks (if this is still the right word) are more docile and tractable than ours, or else that the Soviet *regime* will need a great deal of adaptation before it can be extended to our English villages. Or, of course, it may be possible that some of the minuter details of M. LENIN'S administration have not been fully revealed to me. I shall find out about this no doubt when I return to London. In the meantime I am banking on George and Jane, whatever the COUNCIL OF ACTION may do.

EVOE.

* * * * *

THE OLD ORDER CHANGES.

“‘He brightened up a lot when his mother-in-law arrived,’ said an onlooker.—“*Provincial Paper*.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Wee Donald Angus*. “PLEASE, SIRR, WHAT TIME WULL IT BE?”

Literal Gentleman. “WHEN?”]

* * * * *

LUCERNE.

O, every dog must have its day
And ev'ry town its turn;
For fair is fair ... and, anyway,
Let's talk about Lucerne.



Lucerne is in Switzerland, and I am in Lucerne. The moment I heard that Mr. LLOYD GEORGE was coming to Lucerne I felt that a new importance was added to Switzerland, to Lucerne, to me and, if I may say so, to Mr. LLOYD GEORGE. But I felt that, if I didn't do something about it, Lucerne and Mr. LLOYD GEORGE would get away with all the credit and my part in the affair would be overlooked.

The question arose as to what to call that "something"? After a great deal of thought I decided to try you with a short and simple "Lucerne," one of my reasons being that, if you get down to the hard facts, there is no such place.

Try (as the G.P.O. suggests to disappointed envelopes)—try

LUZERN.

Now don't let us have any argument about it, please. It makes no difference how long you have called the place "Lucerne" or how many of you there are. It is no good saying that English people and French people call it "Lucerne" and as victors the Entente have the right to impose their wishes; and it is no good quoting authorities at me. Luzern calls itself Luzern, and, to satisfy myself that it is not mistaken on the point, I have obtained complete corroboration from the *Amtliches Schweizerisches Kursbuch*, an authority whose very name is enough to make your *Bradshaw* look silly and shut up.

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The avowed object of the PREMIER is to get away from people and politics and to have at last a little uninterrupted holiday. Probably he counts on the difficulty of getting at him there, having regard to that terrible bit of the journey Bern—Luzern, which covers sixty miles, takes three hours and involves twenty-four stops, even if you take the mid-day express. There is a train in the afternoon (its number is 5666, and I warn you against it) which takes four hours, though it only stops twenty-four times also. The sinister fact is that all the trains on this route stop as often as they can, which I attribute to that general wave of idleness which is to-day spreading over Europe. But number 5666 is worse than others; or else it is getting old and tired. I notice that among the trains doing the return journey there is no number 5666; I suppose it has just as much as it can do to get there and that it never does return.

The PREMIER was not far out to count on this protective element, and it is still the fact that, if you approach Luzern carelessly, it is ninety-nine to one that you will spend the best years of your young life on that particular stretch of railway. But nowadays there is a back way round, by Basel. Be quite firm in asking for your ticket. If the ticket man says, "You mean Bale?" or, "You mean Basle?" say, "No, I don't. I mean Basel." You have me and my friend, *Amtliches Schweizerisches Kursbuch*, behind you. Stick firmly to your point, and by approaching Luzern from the North you will approach it by a real express which only takes two hours to do its sixty miles and hardly stops at all to take breath. So that finishes with Bern, as to the spelling of which, though you would personally like to see some more "e's," you now repose confidence in me. Would you like me to quote my authority?... All right; I won't say it again if it frightens the children.

In the old days of Peace, Luzern was full of honeymoon couples, and, when Peace and honeymoons and all that sort of nonsense were put a stop to, it became full of German interned prisoners of war. It boasts many first-class hotels. One of them is patronised by the Greek ex-Royal Family. A little unfortunate; but still you cannot expect to come and enjoy yourself in Switzerland without the risk of running into an ex-Royal Family every corner you go round, and, what is more, a Royal Family that wouldn't be ex-if it wasn't for you. It is a very good hotel, and I recommend it for anyone who proposes just to pop over here.

Get hold of L.G. while he is not busy and explain to him how thoroughly misguided all his policies are, especially as to the Near East. My idea is to group, according to subject and side, all those who intend to get hold of the PREMIER, while he is alone, and to have a quiet chat with him. I have my eye on a large hangar on the other side of the Lake, which was built to house a dirigible and ought to hold the bulk of those who want a word about Ireland,

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a place they could put right in five minutes if it was left to them. Deputations which have some idea of declaring strikes, general strikes and international strikes, if matters are not arranged to their liking, will be received between the hours of ten and twelve, and two and four, at the Kursaal. Saturday afternoons and Sundays will be reserved for quiet walks. I am mapping out some interesting routes, marking with a red dot the spots where the PREMIER is likely to stop and admire the view, and where you can approach him quietly from behind and involve him in an argument about Russia before he has time to get away.

Image a PREMIER arrived at the end of all the beautiful sights to be seen locally, inured to all the magnificent scenery around him, and no longer attracted by the novelty of life abroad, longing, it may be, for just one touch of home. Then is the moment for the little surprise I am keeping for him up my sleeve. "Come along to a place close by," I shall say to him, for I see myself with the whole business well in my hands now; "come along to a village I know, whose very name will make you feel at home."

Just outside Luzern we stop at Meggen, but it's not that. Kussnacht gets us well abroad again, and there is nothing particularly homely about Immensee, Arth-Goldau, Steinen, Schwyz or Brunnen. In fact I can see my PREMIER getting suspicious and wondering what new political move this may be, when suddenly there will burst upon his astonished gaze—

FLUELLEN.

Let us leave him there, alone with his emotions, into which it would be impertinent to probe. I may tell you quietly apart that there is a difference of opinion between me and *Amtliches Schweizerisches Kursbuch* about this name. He wants to ration the l's, but, having been there and heard the name pronounced, I have refused to be taught how to spell a good Welsh name by a darned foreigner. If we are going to have any nonsense about it I have said that I shall stand out for the proper, full and uncorrupt spelling: FLLEWELLYN.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "ERE—CHUCK IT, MISSUS. WHY CAN'T YER LET US FIGHT IN PEACE?"]

* * * * *

"'That,' declared Mr. Lloyd George amid loud cheers, 'is one of the most formidable challenges ever given to democracy. Without hesitation every Government must accept that challenge.' 'Certainly we will,' retorted the Prime Minister."—*Evening Paper*.

No wonder Mr. LLOYD GEORGE wants a holiday if he has begun to talk to himself.

* * * * *

“A telegram from Paris says: It is announced here that an agreement has been concluded between France, Great Britain and Italy regarding the delimitation of the open golf championship.”—*Provincial Paper*.

It will be noticed that America seems once more to have held aloof from the councils of the Allies.

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* * * * *

“TO HIM THAT HATH ...”

It was Butterington who first put me up to the idea. I asked him a simple question about the habits of the Sigalion Boa, a certain worm in whose ways I was taking an interest at the time, and he at once replied that he himself was not in the fur line.

“Whenever,” he went on, “I require information on any subject I apply to my bank. Why don’t you do the same?”

This opened up an entirely new prospect. To me my bank was an institution which kept my accounts, issued money and, on occasion, lent it. It never entered my head that it was also ready to perform the functions of an inquiry office and information bureau.

Previous communications from me had always begun, “Sir, with reference to my overdraft”—you know the sort of thing one generally writes to banks; expostulating, tactful, temporising letters.

This time however I addressed them in different vein. Rejecting all mention of overdrafts as being in doubtful taste, I wrote:—

SIR,—I shall be greatly obliged if you will kindly inform me, at your early convenience:

(1) Whether it is a fact that the African rhinoceros has no hair on the hind legs?

(2) Whether, in the case of my backing Pegasus in the first race, ‘any to come’ on Short Time in the fourth, and Short Time not starting, I am entitled to my winnings over Pegasus?

(3) Whether, after perusing seventeen favourable reports from mining engineers and eighty-seven enthusiastic directors’ speeches, I am justified in assuming that gold actually does exist in the Bonanzadorado mine?

Yours faithfully,

THESIGER CHOLMONDELEY BEAUCHAMP.

After some delay they answered as follows:—

SIR,—We have much pleasure in replying to the queries contained in your favour, of the 27th ult.:—

(1) Yes; (2) Yes; (3) No.

Assuring you always of our best endeavours in your service,

We remain, Yours faithfully,
per pro The Cosmopolitan Bkg. Corpn.

C.O. SHINE.

So far so good. The Bank's manner left nothing to be desired, and its replies were certainly to the point. I began to think of Mr. C.O. Shine as my personal friend and speculated as to whether his first name were Claude or Clarence.

During the following week, whenever I became curious on any subject, I made notes of fresh queries to propound. After accumulating a sufficient number I again wrote to the Bank. I forget the exact points upon which I required information; one of them, I fancy, was the conjectured geologic age of the Reichardtite strata. Anyhow I got no answer to any of them.

Instead, three days later, I received the following letter:—

SIR,—We regret to announce that, owing to a clerical error in this office, your account was last month wrongly credited with a cheque for L13,097 5s. 10d. which was made payable to another client of the same name.

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Adjustments have now been made which reveal a balance on your account of L110 11s. 3d. *in our favour*. We trust that you will find it convenient to cover this overdraft at an early date.

With reference to your letter of the 19th inst. containing assorted inquiries, we beg to intimate that we can in no circumstances undertake to advise clients on general matters which lie outside the scope of our interests.

Yours faithfully,
per pro The Cosmopolitan Bkg. Corpn.

CHARLES O. SHINE.

And this time C.O.S. did not even “remain” in the plural.

I at once showed Butterington this offensive communication.

“Well,” said he, “of course they won’t answer communications unless you have a balance.”

That is the way rich men talk.

“I am never without one,” I replied with dignity, “on one side or the other.”

“There you differ from your namesake, whose balance is clearly always on the right side. Hence that first kindly letter, addressed to you in error.”

* * * * *

THE ROMANCE OF ADVERTISEMENT.

The following items, culled from recent issues of *The Daily Lure*, show where you should go to find really interesting, stimulating and flat-catching notices:—

Partner, with not less than five thousand pounds, wanted for a wild-duck farm in the island of Mull. Must be a man of iron constitution; Gaelic speaker and teetotaler preferred.

* * *

Wanted, a cheap Desert Island, with a good water-supply and home comforts, by a Georgian poet weary of the racket of Hammersmith.

* * *

Complete suits of armour, guaranteed bottle-proof, ten guineas each, suitable for elderly pedestrians in charabanc areas.

* * *

Madame Bogolubov, Crystal-gazer in ordinary to the ex-King CONSTANTINE, is prepared for a small fee to advise intending explorers, prospectors or treasure-seekers as to suitable spots for excavation, oil-boring, *etc.*

* * *

Disused Martello Tower on the Irish coast, fifty miles from a police barrack, offered cheap as an appropriate basis of observation to psychic enthusiasts anxious to study the ways of leprechauns, banshees, *etc.*

* * *

Genuine portraits by VAN DYCK, VELASQUEZ and REMBRANDT must be sold immediately to pay a debt of honour. Price thirty shillings each, or would take part payment in pre-war whisky.

* * *

Semi-paralysed Yugo-Slav professor, speaking seventeen languages, will give lessons to neo-plutocrats in the correct pronunciation of the names of all the foreign singers, dancers and artists performing or exhibiting in London.

* * *

Persons interested in edible fungi may be glad to take shares in a fungus plantation about to be started in the neighbourhood of Toller Porcorum, Dorchester.

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* * * * *

THE RETURN OF THE COLONEL.

House, the enigmatic Colonel, WILSON'S right-hand man in France
When the PRESIDENT was leading Peace's great Parisian dance,
Once again returns to Europe as a journalist free-lance.

He's a most sagacious person, indisposed to carp or grouse,
So we hope he'll be successful, aided by his tact and *nous*,
In upholding Mr. WILSON, *not* in bringing down the House.

* * * * *

THE UBIQUITOUS SCOT.

From *The Times*' summary of news:—

“Our Constantinople correspondent, in a message reviewing the situation in Armenia, states that the Armenians have captured the ancient town of Nakhitchewan, where a Tartan Government had been set up.”

Small wonder that, people complain that no place is safe from Scotland's activities. Meanwhile there seems a likelihood of a Tarzan Government being set up in the film world.

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From Mrs. ASQUITH'S reminiscences:

“One day after this conversation he [the late Lord Salisbury] came to see me in Cavendish Square, bringing with him a signed photograph of himself. This was in the year 1904, at the height of the controversy over Protection.”—*Sunday Times*.

As Lord SALISBURY is generally supposed to have died in 1903, Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE has been requested to investigate the incident.

* * * * *

THE EVIL THAT MEN DO.

[Illustration: THE LAST MAN WAS IN AND WITH ONLY ONE RUN WANTED—]

[Illustration: SMITH, OF ALL PEOPLE, DROPPED A CATCH.]

[Illustration: HE STOLE AWAY—]

[Illustration: BUT HIS SIN FOLLOWED HIM.]

[Illustration: HE DECIDED—]

[Illustration: TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.]

[Illustration: AFTER MANY YEARS HE RETURNED.]

[Illustration: “GOOD HEAVENS, SMITH, I HAVEN’T SEEN YOU SINCE YOU DROPPED THAT CATCH AT THE CIRCLE.”]

[Illustration: “YES, I ONCE SAW HIM PLAY WHEN I WAS QUITE A LAD. ON THAT OCCASION HE HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO DROP A CATCH.”]

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AT THE PLAY.

“HIS LADY FRIENDS.”

The humours of the average farce are so elemental that in the matter of its setting there is small need to worry about geographical or ethnical considerations. Of course, if its *locale* is French you may have to modify its freedom of thought and speech, but with a very little accommodation to national proprieties you can either transplant the setting of your play or you can leave it where it was and make use of the convention that for stage purposes all Frenchmen have a perfect command of our tongue and idiom. But to take a frankly English novel by an English writer, adapt it, as Messrs. NYITRAY and MANDEL have done, for the American stage with an American setting, and then bring it over here and produce it with only one or two actors in the whole cast to illustrate the purity of the American accent, is perhaps to presume rather too much on our generous lack of intelligence.

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However we have got Mr. CHARLES HAWTREY back again and that is what really matters. As a philanderer protesting innocence in the face of damnatory facts we know him well enough; but here we have him innocent and ingenuous as an angel, yet hard put to it to convince anyone but himself of his guilelessness. A millionaire (dollars) with a wife of economic disposition, who declines to spend his money for him, he feels drawn to a course of knight-errantry and rides abroad in search of damsels in pecuniary distress, with the avowed object of “spreading a little sunshine.”

[Illustration: “I want to spread a little sunshine.”

James Smith ... Mr. CHARLES HAWTREY.

Eva Johns ... Miss JOAN BARRY.]

This quest, as you will easily understand, was not a very difficult one for a man prepared to be imposed upon by just any adventuress, and in the neighbourhood of his various business-branches, San Francisco, Washington, Boston, he soon found a ready channel for the employment of his superfluous wealth. The natural affection, however, which his generosity inspired was not utilised by him, and you must try to believe that, in spite of the most sinister appearances, he remained a faithful husband.

With the methods by which he appeased his wife’s suspicions I will not trouble you, partly because I could not follow them myself, owing to the obscurity of the plot at its most critical moment. Enough that all ends well with her firmly-expressed resolution that in the future she will herself do all the necessary squandering.

Mr. CHARLES HAWTREY as *James Smith* was irresistible in most of the old ways and a few new ones. The play would have gone poorly without him, in spite of the piquancy of Miss JOAN BARRY as a flapper, the fourth and final recipient of his chaste bounty. Miss JESSIE BATEMAN as *Mrs. James Smith* had no chance till just at the end with the turning of the worm. To the part of *Lucille Early*—the *Earlys*, as a couple, were designed to contrast with the *Smiths*, the wife in this case spending the money which the husband hadn’t got—Miss ATHENE SEYLER, who was meant for better things, gave a certain distinction, but perhaps “pressed” a little too much. Mr. JAMES CAREW, who played *Edward Early*, was conspicuous as the sole male representative of the American language in this American play. The fleeting visions that we had of Miss MONA HARRISON as a refractory and venal cook excited general approval. The three *protegees* of *James Smith* were only faintly distinguishable in their rather crude banality.

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The fun of the farce differed from that of most farces in depending less upon situations than upon dialogue. The First Act, with the situations still to come, was the best. I have not had the good fortune to read Miss EDGINGTON'S novel, but one might be permitted to assume, from the excellence of much of the wit, that, whatever the play may in other respects have lacked of subtlety or refinement, such defect was no fault of hers. What Mr. CHARLES HAWTREY himself thought of it all I cannot say, but the play did not begin to compare, either for irony or singleness of motive, with the last two in which he figured, *The Naughty Wife* and *Home and Beauty*. He clearly enjoyed his own part, but it was rather noticeable that in his brief speech at the fall of the curtain he confined himself to a personal acknowledgment of the public's sympathy with him in his illness and their loyalty throughout his career, and made no reference to the play or its authors.

O.S.

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A SUPER-SURPRISE.

I have not seen the stalking
By a rabbit of a bear,
Nor yet an oyster walking
Sedately up the stair;
But a marvel as amazing
Inspires these doggerel rhymes,
For I've read a leader praising
The PREMIER in *The Times*.

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A HOUSE-WARMING.

"Considerable damage was done by fire at —— Cottage on Wednesday evening. The stairs, part of the floor, doors, furniture, *etc.*, were destroyed.

—— presided at the piano, and Mrs. —— presided over the refreshments. 'God save the King' was sung at the close of the enjoyable day."—*Local Paper*.

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The Labour "Council of Action" have kindly stated that they are "content to leave the French Government to the French people." They are however reserving the right to leave the British Government to the Bolsheviks.

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“We must repeat the Scots proverb that—’Delays are dangerous.’”—*Sunday Paper*.

Or, as DRYDEN says in his Address to a Haggis, “De’il tak’ the hindmost.”

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“The proportion of sane to insane persons in civilized countries is about one to 300.”—*Canadian Paper*.

Surely Carlyle said something very like this years ago.

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COMMERCIAL CANDOUR.

“RAINCOATS AT LESS THAN COST PRICE LAST 3 DAYS.”—*Advert. in Provincial Paper*.

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“Lady has Left-off Clothing; privately.”—*Provincial Paper*.

Of course. That goes without saying.

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[Illustration: *Trainer (to Irish apprentice who has finished among the "also ran")*. "WHY DIDN'T YOU HANG ON TO THE FAVOURITE? DIDN'T I TELL YOU YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE HE WAS AFRAID OF."

Apprentice. "THAT'S JUST IT, SORR. 'T WAS THE WAY HE WAS SO AFRAID OF ME, WHIN WE CAME INTO THE STRAIGHT, HE JUST FLED AWAY FROM ME."]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

Those who appreciate the short story of quality will be pleasantly stirred by the announcement of *Island Tales* (MILLS AND BOON), a posthumous volume containing what is probably the last writing of the late JACK LONDON. I can say at once that these seven stories show his art in one aspect of its best. Not here the LONDON, whom some of us might prefer, of the strenuous adventure-tale, with whom there was no respite till, at the end of anything up to a hundred sinew-cracking pages, we won through to the appointed end. That South Sea atmosphere, so insidiously appealing to the literary temperament (from STEVENSON to STACPOOLE you can see it at work) has steeped these tales in the lotus-leisure of perpetual afternoon, so that the action of them tends to become overlaid by slow reflective talk, old memories and the sense of ancient things. Most notable is this in the first, where the actual romance, quick, human and haunting, does not so much as show its face till after forty pages of old-time local colour. Perhaps of all the seven I myself would prefer the last—"The Kanaka Surf," a slight intrigue, but a perfect epic of such bathing as, I suppose, can be understood nowhere but on these enchanted coasts. To read it is to realise what a loss we suffer in one who could put such jewelled loveliness on to the printed page—and what another loss in not seeing the original for ourselves. I suppose no tribute to the power of genius could be more eloquent.

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After the German Revolution of 1918, KARL KAUTSKY, a prominent Socialist, was appointed by the new Government to examine and edit the documents in the Berlin Foreign Office relating to the outbreak of the War. His work was completed in time for the Peace Conference and would, he believes, if published at that time, have convinced the Allies that the new German Government ought not to be made responsible for the sins of the old one. But it would also have shown that the old Government was the main instigator of the War, and that the German people, having danced to the tune, even if they did not call for it, deserved to pay the piper. For that reason, perhaps, the German Government withheld Herr KAUTSKY'S revelations. Now he has published them on his own account, under the title, *The Guilt of William Hohenzollern*

(SKEFFINGTON). A more damning indictment has never been drawn. From the moment of the ARCHDUKE'S assassination the KAISER and his advisers determined to make it

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the pretext for destroying Serbia, and crushing Russia and France if they dared to interfere. BISMARCK once said that “never are so many lies told as before a war, during an election and after a shoot.” His own manipulation of the Ems telegram was venial compared to the manner in which the German diplomatists, egged on by their ruler—whose *marginalia* on the despatches furnish the most amusing reading in the volume—used all the arts of chicanery to deceive Europe as to their real intentions and to defeat the efforts of England—on whose neutrality they confidently counted—to secure a peaceful settlement. Though primarily addressed to the German proletariat, Herr KAUTSKY’S book has its value for all of us—“lest we forget.”

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On page 103 of *The White Hen* (MILLS AND BOON) we read that the *Duke* laughed softly. “‘It is just like a romance,’ he sighed happily,” which was precisely where, without intending it, the *Duke* placed his ducal finger upon the weak spot in the whole business. Because if ever a story was “like a romance,” and like nothing else on earth, and filled with characters each and all pledged to preserve its unreality at all costs, here is that tale. The plot, of which there is a generous allowance, turns chiefly upon the problem, when is a white hen less a hen than a jewel casket? Answer, when she has swallowed, and is erroneously thought to have retained, a famous diamond, upon which an impoverished but noble (see above) French family had depended for the *dot* that should enable their daughter to wed a plutocratic but otherwise detestable suitor. I take it you will hardly need telling that this is the moment chosen by Romance, under the expert guidance of Miss PHYLLIS CAMPBELL, to bring along an even more wealthy young American, mistaken (of course) for his own chauffeur and working such havoc upon the heart of the heroine that, when the latter accidentally recovered the diamond from its feathered *cache*, she very sensibly decided to say nothing about it. Whereupon, because the other characters, especially an unpleasant Duchess, were unaware that, as the shop announcements say, “Poultry was Down Again,” much profitable confusion resulted, though nothing to impugn the justice of the ducal verdict quoted above. So that, if your taste jumps with that of his Grace, you also can “sigh happily,” otherwise you will perhaps omit the adverb—and select a story less exclusively romantic.

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There is a spirit of Yorkshire and a spirit, I suppose, characteristic of Suburbia, and on the outskirts of certain large manufacturing towns there must exist a formidable blending of these two. To express the double flavour of this essence requires, I should say, a subtler and more elaborate method than Mr. W. RILEY has attempted to use in *A Yorkshire Suburb* (JENKINS). He has imagined for the purpose of

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these sketches an architect, *Murgatroyd*, who in planning most of the houses in the locality has attempted to express in brick and stone the characters of their several occupants. This is a device which becomes rather monotonous as the book proceeds, besides imposing a series of strains which neither architecture nor credulity can easily bear. Since these are rather superior suburbanites, dialect is for the most part absent, and it is hard to feel that they are very different people from those who live about the borders of Manchester or London; a character like *Mrs. Flitch*, for instance, who is angelic to behold but a spiteful gossip at heart, is, alas! to be found anywhere. And where the dialect does crop out it does not seem to be dependent on suburban soil for its raciness. I don't doubt the accuracy of Mr. RILEY'S Yorkshiremanship, but I do think he has under-estimated the difficulty of localising the peculiar genius of villadom.

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Though billed by her publisher as a merciless analyst, Mrs. MORDAUNT is really (if you want to fling this kind of title about) an eclectic synthetist or synthetic symbolist. Her wicked people are prodigiously wicked, wickedness personified, in fact; her good folk are noble-hearted without stint or measure. I don't personally think that anybody could be quite so completely and gratuitously evil as good-looking *Charles Hoyland* in *The Little Soul* (HUTCHINSON); or, being so, could possibly be recommended, still less engaged, as tutor to a sensitive youth; or, being so engaged, tolerated for two days. He certainly could not hold down his job long enough to corrupt his pupil, *Anthony Clayton*, by exchanging souls with him under the nose of mad but perceptive *Mrs. Clayton* and sane sister *Diana*. This conspicuously chaste *Diana* is an attractive person, and so is the recklessly charitable *Dr. McCabe*, her appropriate mate, who first had to fly the country through helping a chorus-girl out of a difficulty and then (more or less) won the War by revolutionising bacteriology or something like that. However, Mrs. MORDAUNT interests because she is so palpably interested herself.

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The scenes of *Lure of Contraband* (JARROLD'S) are laid in the Devonshire of some hundred years ago. It is, as its title suggests, a tale of smuggling, and it contains an account of a hand-to-hand fight between the hero and the villain which I advise all members of the National Sporting Club to read. They may be shocked by the tactics of the villain, but at the same time they will see what a bout of fisticuffs meant in those days. Mr. J. WEARE GIFFARD is a master of atmosphere, and I, at any rate, lived happily in his Appledore, and imagined myself drinking prime (and cheap) French brandy in the Beaver Inn; while *Lieutenant Perkins*, who commanded the "preventive men," sat in his tall-backed chair by the fireplace and kept his eyes and ears open to detect anything that was suspicious. But he was not foolish enough to ask many

questions about the French brandy. An excellent yarn, simply and straight-forwardly told.

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[Illustration: *Customer*. "AND WHAT DO YOU THINK OF LLOYD GEORGE?"

Barber. "THINK OF 'IM, SIR? WITH A MOP OF 'AIR LIKE 'E'S GOT—A NICE EXAMPLE TO THE NATION!"]

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"A photograph of the Olympic games at Antwerp was transmitted yesterday to Paris, a distance of 200 miles, over a telephone wire. It is in the nature of an experiment, and if it succeeds Messrs. Cook hold out promises of further day trips to the Continent."—*Daily Paper*.

Intending trippers must, of course, be proficient in the tight-rope wire.