

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 159, October 6, 1920 eBook

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Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

"Motorists," says a London magistrate, "cannot go about knocking people down and killing them every day." We agree. Once should be enough for the most grasping pedestrian.

* * *

"A Kensington lady," we read, "has just engaged a parlourmaid who is only three feet seven inches in height." The shortage of servants is becoming most marked.

* * *

A play called *The Man Who Went to Work* is shortly to be produced in the West End. It sounds like a farce.

* * *

A police-sergeant of Ealing is reported to have summoned six hundred motorists since March. There is some talk of his being presented with the illuminated addresses of another three hundred.

* * *

All the recent photographs of Sir *Eric Geddes* show him with a very broad smile. "And I know who he's laughing at," writes a railway traveller.

* * *

With reference to the Press controversy between Mr. H.G. *Wells* and Mr. *Henry Arthur Jones*, we understand that they have decided to shake hands and be enemies.

* * *

"In New Zealand," says a weekly paper, "there is a daisy which is often mistaken for a sheep by the shepherds." This is the sort of statement that the Prohibitionist likes to make a note of.

* * *

A statistician informs us that a man's body contains enough lime to whitewash a small room. It should be pointed out however that it is illegal for a wife to break up her husband for decorative purposes.

* * *



The Manchester Communist Party have decided to have nothing whatever to do with Parliament. We understand that the *Premier* has now decided to sell his St. Bernard dog.

* * *

“There are no very rich people in England,” says a gossip-writer. We can only say we know a club porter who recently stated that he had a cousin who knew a miner who ... but we fear it was only gossip.

* * *

“It is possible for people to do quite well without a stomach,” says a Parisian doctor. Judged by the high prices, we know a grocer who seems to think along the same lines.

* * *

Special aeroplanes to carry fish from Holland to this country are to run in the winter. The idea of keeping the fish long enough to enable them to cross under their own power has been abandoned.

* * *

An Ashford gardener has grown a cabbage which measures twelve feet across. It is said to be uninhabited.

* * *

The Rules of Golf Committee now suggest a standard ball for England and America. The question of a standard long-distance expletive for fozzlers is held over.

* * *

A youth charged at a police-court in the South of London with stealing five hundred cigars, valued at threepence each, admitted that he had smoked twenty-six of them. We are glad to learn that no further punishment was ordered.

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* * *

The Waste Trade World states that there is a great demand for rubbish. Editors, however, don't seem to be moving with the times.

* * *

Off Folkestone, a few days ago, a trawler captured a blue-nosed shark. Complaints about the temperature of the sea have been very common among bathers this year.

* * *

"No one has yet been successful in filming an actual murder," states a *Picture-goers' Journal*. It certainly does seem a pity that our murderers are so terribly self-conscious in the presence of a cinematograph man.

* * *

The Daily Express states that Mrs. *Bamberger* has decided not to appeal against her sentence. If that be so, this high-handed decision will be bitterly resented by certain of the audience who were in court during the trial and eagerly looked forward to the next edition.

* * *

A *Daily Mail* reader writes to our contemporary to say that he found forty-two toads in his garden last week. We can only suppose that they were there in ignorance of the fact that he took in *The Daily Mail*.

* * *

A pike weighing twenty-six pounds, upon being hooked by a Cheshire fisherman, pulled him into the canal. His escape was much regretted by the fish, who had decided to have him stuffed.

* * *

It is possible that Mr. *Tom Mann*, the secretary of the A.S.E., will shortly retire under the age limit. It is rumoured that members have started to collect for a souvenir strike as a parting tribute.

* * * * *



[Illustration: *Bus Conductor (after passenger's torrents of invective on the subject of increased fare). "Right-O, Ma. I'll tell 'em EVERYTHINK you've said Wen I takes the chair at the next directors' meeting."]*

* * * * *

The Ethiopian again.

"Coal still black."

Heading in "Church Family Newspaper."

* * * * *

"The output in the first quarter this year was at the rate of 248,000,000 million tons a year. It fell in the second quarter to 232,000,000. Between and beyond these lines there is an ample margin for bargaining."

Evening Paper.

Abundantly ample.

* * * * *

Lessons from nature.

To an Autumn primrose.

"If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?"
Wordsworth.

Symbol of innocence, to Tories dear,
Whom I detect beside the silvan path
Doing your second time on earth this year
That I may cull a generous aftermath,
Let me divine your reason
For thus repullulating out of season.



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Associated with the vernal prime
And widely known as “rathe,” why bloom so late?
Was it the lure of so-called “Summer-time,”
Extended well beyond the usual date?
Our thanks for which relieve
Are SMILLIE’S, though they didn’t ask his leave.

Rather I think you have some lofty plan,
Such as your old friend *Wordsworth* loved to sing;
That for a fair ensample set to Man
You duplicate your output of the Spring;
That in your heart there lodges
Dimly the hope of shaming Mr. *Hodges*.

Ah! gentle primrose by the river’s brim!
Like *Peter Bell* (unversed in woodland lore),
He’ll miss your meaning; you will be to him
A yellow primrose—that and nothing more;
He’ll read in you no sign
Of Nature’s views about the datum-line.

O.S.

* * * * *

THE MINERS’ OPERA.

About a week ago, when they took Titterby away to the large red-brick establishment which he now adorns, certain papers which were left lying in his study passed into my hands, for I was almost his only friend. It had long been Titterby’s belief that a great future lay before the librettist who should produce topical light operas on the GILBERT and SULLIVAN model, dealing with our present-day economic crises. The thing became an *idée fixe*, as the French say, or, as we lamely put it in English, a fixed idea. There can be no doubt that he was engaged in the terrible task of fitting the current coal dispute to fantastic verse when a brain-cell unhappily buckled, and he was found destroying the works of his grand piano with a coal-scoop.

Most of the MS. in my possession is blurred and undecipherable, full of erasures, random stage-directions and marginal notes, amongst which occasional passages such as the following “emerge” (as Mr. SMILLIE would say):—

“*Secretary*. The fellow is standing his ground,
He’s as stubborn and stiff as a war-mule.



Minister. A
Means will be found
If we look all around
To arrive at a suitable formula.

Chorus. Yes, you've got to arrive at a formula."

Difficult though my task may be I feel it the duty of friendship to attempt to give the public some faint outline of this fascinating and curious work. Scenarios, *dramatis personae* and choruses had evidently caused the author inordinate trouble, for at the top of one sheet I find:—

"ACT I.

Interior of a coal-mine. Groups of colliers with lanterns and picks (? tongs). Enter Chorus of female consumers."

Then follows this note:—

"MEM. Can one dance in coal-mine? Look up COAL in 'Ency. Brit.' Also CELLAR FLAP;"

and later on, at the end of a passage which evidently described the dresses of the principal female characters introduced, we have the words:—



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*“BRITANNIA. ? jumper, bobbed hair.
ANARCHY. ? red tights.”*

Nothing in this Act survives in a legible form, but in Act II. we are slightly more fortunate:
—

“SCENE.—Downing Street (it begins). Enter mixed Chorus of private secretaries, female shorthand writers and representatives of the Press, followed by Sir ROBERT HORNE, Mr. ROBERT WILLIAMS and Mr. SMILLIE.”

What happens after this I can only roughly surmise, but most probably Mr. SMILLIE proves false to Britannia and flirts for some time with Anarchy, egged on by Mr. WILLIAMS and urged by Sir ROBERT HORNE to return to his earlier flame. At any rate, after a little, the handwriting grows clearer, and I read:—

*“Mr. SMILLIE (striking the pavement with his pick).
We mean to strike.*

*Chorus. He means to strike, he means to strike,
Rash man! Did ever you hear the like
Of what he has just asserted?
Living is dear enough now, on my soul,
What will it be when we can't get coal?*

*PRIME MINISTER (entering suddenly).
This strike must be averted.”*

There seems to have been some doubt as to how the PRIME MINISTER'S entrance should be effected, for at this point we get the marginal note: “_? From door of No. 10. ? On wings. ? Trap door. ? Riding St. Bernard Dog.”

But the difficulty was evidently settled, and the Chorus begins again:—

*“Oh, here is the wizard from Wales,
The wonderful wizard from Wales,
The British Prime Minister,*

MR. WILLIAMS. Subtle and sinister.

*Chorus. Oh, no! That is only your fancy.
Disputes he can manage and check;
All parties respond to his beck.*

MR. WILLIAMS. He talks through the back of his neck!



Chorus. When he talks through the back of his neck
We call it his neck-romancy.”

Of the arguments used by Mr. LLOYD GEORGE after this spirited encouragement no record remains but the following passage:—

“My dear Mr. SMILLIE,
We value you highly
Howe’er so ferociously raven you.
We must find a way out,
And we shall do, no doubt,
If we only explore every avenue.

Chorus. Yes, please, do explore every avenue.

[*Exeunt Mr. LLOYD GEORGE and Mr. SMILLIE arm-in-arm, R. (? followed by St. Bernard) and return C. Exeunt L. and return C. again, and so on.*

Chorus. Oh, have you explored every avenue?”

Apparently they have, for later on we get—

“*PRIME MINISTER.* Then why should you want to strike
When the Government saves your faces?
You can get more pay when you like
On the larger output basis.”

And the Chorus of course chimes in:—

“They can get more pay when they like
On the larger output basis.”

And there is a note at the side: “*Chorus to wave arms upwards and outwards, indicating increased production of coal.*”

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It seems to have been at some time after this, and probably in Act III., that Titterby went, if I may put it so vulgarly, off the hooks. I think he must have got on to the conference between the mineowners and the representatives of the miners, and struggled until the gas became too thick for him. At any rate, after several unreadable pages, the following unhappy fragment stands out clear:—

“Mr. SMILLIE still stands irresolute, running his fingers through his hair.

Chorus of Mineowners (pointing at him).

Ruffled hair requires, I ween,
Something in the brilliantine
Or else in the pomatum line.
How shall we devise a balm
Mr. SMILLIE’S locks to calm?
Hullo! here comes the Datum-Line!

*Enter Datum-Line. (? can Datum-Line be personified? ? comic.
? check trousers. ? red whiskers. _)”*

Nothing more has been written, and it must have been at this point, I suppose, that Titterby got up and assaulted his piano. It all seems very sad.

EVOE.

* * * * *

[Illustration: A PROSPECTIVE JONAH?

THE CAPTAIN (*to Sir ERIC GEDDES*). “I SOMETIMES WONDER WHETHER A MAN OF YOUR ABILITY OUGHT NOT TO FIND A BETTER OPENING.”

[It is rumoured that the Ministry of Transport is to have a limited existence.]]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Lady*. “NO COD LEFT, MR. BROWN?”

Fishmonger (confidentially). “WELL, MRS. SNIPPS, I’LL OBLIGE YOU. I ALWAYS KEEPS A BIT UP MY SLEEVE FOR REG’LAR CUSTOMERS.”]

* * * * *



CONSOLATION.

You may be very ugly and freckledy and small
And have a little stubby nose that's not a nose at all;
You may be bad at spelling and you may be worse at sums,
You may have stupid fingers that your Nanna says are thumbs,
And lots of things you look for you may never, never find,
But if you love the fairies—you don't mind.

You may be rather frightened when you read of wolves and bears
Or when you pass the cupboard-place beneath the attic stairs;
You may not always like it when thunder makes a noise
That seems so much, much bigger than little girls and boys;
You may feel rather lonely when you waken in the night,
But if the fairies love you—*it's all right*.

R.F.

* * * * *

"I trust it may be sufficient to convince readers that Mr.
Chesterton is CONTINUED AT FOOT OF NEXT COLUMN."

Sunday Paper.

At last the ever-recurring problem of where to put the rest of Mr. CHESTERTON has
been solved.

* * * * *

THE LITTLE MOA

(and how much it is).



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I have been reading a lot about Polynesia lately, and the conclusion has been forced upon me that dining out in that neighbourhood might be rather confusing to a stranger.

Imagine yourself at one of these Antipodean functions. Your host is seated at the head of the table with a large fowl before him. Looking pleasantly in your direction he says:
—

“Will you have a little moa?”

Not being well up in the subject of exotic fauna you will be tempted to make one of the following replies:—

(1) (With *Alice in Wonderland* in your mind) “How can I possibly have more when I haven’t had anything at all yet?”

(2) “Yes, please, a lot more, or just a little more,” as capacity and appetite dictate.

(3) “No, thank you.”

The objection to reply No. 1 is that it may cause unpleasantness, or your host may retort, “I didn’t ask you if you would have a little more moa,” and thus increase your embarrassment.

No. 2 is a more suitable rejoinder, but probably No. 3 is the safest reply, as some of these big birds require a lot of mastication.

In the event of your firing off No. 3, your host glances towards the hostess and says—

“Oo, then” (pronounced “oh-oh”).

To your startled senses comes the immediate suggestion, “Is the giver of the feast demented, or is he merely rude?”

Just as you are meditating an excuse for leaving the table and the house, your hostess saves the situation by saying sweetly, “Do let me give you a little oo,” playfully tapping with a carvingknife the breastbone of a winged creature recumbent on a dish in front of her.

It gradually dawns upon you that you are among strange birds quite outside the pale of the English Game Laws, and that you will have to take a sporting chance.

While you are still in the act of wavering the son of the house says, “Try a little huia.”

If you like the look of this specimen of Polynesian poultry you signify your acceptance in the customary manner; otherwise, in parliamentary phraseology, “The Oos have it.”



For my own part I fancy that, unless or until some of these unusual fowls are extinct, I shall not visit Polynesia, but rest content with Purley. Our dinner-parties may be dull, but at least one knows one's way about among the dishes.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Fed-up Owner (to holiday Artist)*. "CHARMING, MY DEAR YOUNG LADY —CHARMING—WITH ONE IMPORTANT OMISSION. YOU'VE FORGOTTEN TO PUT IN THE NOTICE ON THE TREE."]

* * * * *

A BALLAD OF THE EARLY WORM.

The gentle zephyr lightly blows
Across the dewy lawn,
And sleepily the rooster crows,
"Beloved, it is dawn."

The little worms in bed below
Can hear their father wince,
While, up above, a feathered foe
Is busy making mince.



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In vain they seize his slippery tail
And try to pull him back;
It makes their little cheeks turn pale
To hear his waistband crack.

They draw him down and crowd around;
Their tears bespeak their love;
For part of him is underground
And part has gone above.

But not for long does sorrow seize
The subterranean mind,
For father grows another piece
In front or else behind.

And now he's up before the dawn,
Long ere the world has stirred,
And eats his breakfast on the lawn
Before the early bird.

* * * * *

WHEN THE YOUNG LEAD THE YOUNG.

“Lady Nurse or Nursery Governess (young) wanted for post near Ventnor, I.W., for boy 21/2 years. Experience, similar age, and happy disposition essential.”—*Weekly Paper*.

* * * * *

“Oxford, Tuesday.

The Royal Commission on Oxford and Cambridge Universities began its Oxford session this afternoon in the Extermination Schools.”

Daily Paper.

Absit omen!

* * * * *

THE CONSPIRATORS.



II.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—The Third International is not a Rugby football match. It is a corporation of thrusters whose prospectus announces that it will very shortly have your blood, having first acquired exclusive rights in your money. Have you two acres and a cow? Have you seven pounds three and threepence in the Post-Office Savings Bank? Have you any blood? Very well, then; THIS CONCERNS YOU.

There was a meeting of shareholders in Moscow as recently as July last. The Chairman said: “Gentlemen—I beg your pardon, Comrades,—I am happy to be able to report promising developments. Our main enterprise in Russia, for technical reasons with which I will not now trouble you, is not for the moment profit-producing; but we have been able to promote some successful ventures abroad. In all parts of the civilised world—and Ireland—we may anticipate a distribution of assets in the near future.” And among those assets to be parcelled out are, I may say, your acres, your cow, your savings and yourself.

There followed a meeting of the Executive Committee (I wish they would avoid that tactless word “executive,” don’t you?). Simple and brisk instructions were drafted for foreign agents, bidding them get on with it and not spare themselves, or in any case not spare anyone else. These were inscribed on linen, which was folded over, with the writing inside, and neatly hemmed. Shortly afterwards a number of earnest young men wearing tall collars and an air of exaggerated innocence sought to cross various frontiers and were surprised and offended when rough and rude officials stole their collars and set about taking them to pieces.

Page 8

I hate to speak slightly of anyone, but these world-revolutionaries have no business to be so young. According to my view a professor of anarchy and assassination ought to be a man of middle-age with stiff stubble on his chin. He has no business to be a pale and perspiring youth, tending to long back hair and apt to be startled by the slightest sound when he is alone. And what a lot of them write poetry, and such poetry too! That is the manner of the man who is going to seize your house and usurp your cow, while you will be lucky if you are allowed a place on a perch in your own fowl-house.

We had an opportunity of seeing them in procession when a consignment of these world-revolutionaries drove off in state from Berne about the time of the Armistice. I told you, last week, that we had a Legation of them, very kindly lent by the Moscow management, and I also told you that our Italian juggler had let us into the secret of their midnight lucubrations, of which we had duly informed the officials interested in such matters. We had front places when the motor lorry called for them and the military escort arrived to assist all the passengers to take, and keep, their seats. Into the lorry were packed the Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary, the Charge d’Affaires, the First Secretary, the Second Secretary, the Third Secretary, the Legal and Spiritual Advisers and the Lady Typist. Their features were not easy to distinguish; when the Bolshevists assume dominion over us they will not nationalize our soap. One or two fell out, but were carefully replaced by willing hands and bayonets; and so home.

Now that is a sight you don’t often see: a Diplomatique Corps being returned to store in a motor lorry. The disappointing thing about them was that, for all their fiery propaganda and for all their drastic resolutions, never a one of them produced so much as a squib-cracker. The only people to derive any excitement from the affair were the small children, who took it for a circus.

The best they could do for us was a general strike. What all this had to do with trades or unions nobody seemed to know, least of all the workers. But there was an attractive sound about the then novel phrase, “Direct Action,” and it gave a sense of useful business to that otherwise over-portly word, “Proletariat.” And the local politicians, promised good jobs in LENIN’S millennium, made great use of the phrase, “Dictatorship of the Proletariat.” Thus many an honest workman joined in under the belief that it meant an extra hour’s holiday on Saturdays, an extra hour in bed on Mondays and an extra bob or two of wages.

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While it lasts, even a bloodless revolution can be very tiresome; almost as disquieting as a general election. Everybody who isn't revolting is mobilised to keep the revolution from being molested. There are no trams, because the drivers are demonstrating; no shops, because the shopmen are mobilised; no anything, because everyone is out watching the fun. So you go into the square to watch also. You see little groups of revolutionaries looking sullen and laboriously class-hating. You see a lot of soldiers looking very ordinary but trying not to. The riff-raff scowl at the soldiers, who are ordered out to shoot at them. The soldiers scowl at the riff-raff at whom they are ordered not to shoot. And, for some reason which the experts have not yet fathomed, it always pours with rain.

When we had succeeded in persuading the soldier who was posted to guard our hotel that we were not the proletariat and might safely be let pass, we found a gathering of inside-knowledge people discussing the situation. The Government ought to have known all about it long before—how the Bolsheviks were stirring up trouble. "They did," said we; "we told them." There was a silence at this, but a smile on the face of the audience which we at first mistook for incredulity. We referred darkly to our private information, derived, as I told you in my last, from the Italian juggler. "Did he do juggling tricks with *your* ink-pots too?" asked the French element. "How much money did *you* give him?" asked all the other elements. "And I suppose he also told you," said the Italian officer, "that he had no confidence in his own people and that the British alone enjoyed his respect?"

At this moment the Americans came in and asked us to quit arguing and attend while they told us how they had unearthed the great plot.... When together we reckoned up the Italian juggler's net takings we realised that it is an ill revolution which brings no one any good.

Yours ever,
HENRY.

(To be continued.)

* * * * *

CUBBIN' THRO' THE RYE.

[Suggested by a recently reported incident in the Midlands,
when a pack divided, one part getting out of hand and running
among standing crops.]

Gin a body meet a body
Cubbin' thro' the rye,
Gin a body tell a body,



“Seed ’em in full cry,”
Useless then to blame the puppies,
Useless too to lie;
Whippers-in can’t *a/ways* stop ’em,
Even when they try.

Gin a body meet a body
Cubbin’ thro’ the rye,
What a body calls a body
Dare I say?—not I;
Farmers get distinctly stuffy,
Neither are they shy,
And Masters, when they’re really rattled,
Sometimes make reply.

* * * * *

BRAVE NEWS FOR PUSSYFOOT.

“A good many Church-people at home have been pressing teetotalism, and are now pressing Prohibition, and it is possible that they may succeed about the time when the moon grows cold.”—*Weekly Paper*.



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* * * * *

[Illustration: THE MAN YOU GIVE A GAME TO.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: "RIGHT-O. IF YER WANTS A FIGHT I'M READY. AN' AS WE'VE ONLY ONE PAIR O' GLOVES, AN' YOU'RE THE YOUNGEST, I'LL BE A SPORT AN' LET YOU WEAR 'EM."]

* * * * *

THE MYSTERY OF THE APPLE-PIE BEDS.

(Leaves from a holiday diary.)

I.

An outrage has occurred in the hotel. Late on Monday night ten innocent visitors discovered themselves the possessors of apple-pie beds. The beds were not of the offensive hair-brush variety, but they were very cleverly constructed, the under-sheet being pulled up in the good old way and turned over at the top as if it were the top-sheet.

I had one myself. The lights go out at eleven and I got into bed in the dark. When one is very old and has not been to school for a long time or had an apple-pie bed for longer still, there is something very uncanny in the sensation, especially if it is dark. I did not like it at all. My young brother-in-law, Denys, laughed immoderately in the other bed at my flounderings and imprecations. He did not have one. I suspect him....

II.

Naturally the hotel is very much excited. It is the most thrilling event since the mixed foursomes. Nothing else has been discussed since breakfast. Ten people had beds and about ten people are suspected. The really extraordinary thing is that numbers of people seem to suspect *me*! That is the worst of being a professional humourist; everything is put down to you. When I was accompanying Mrs. F. to-day she suddenly stopped fiddling and said hotly that someone had been tampering with her violin. I know she suspected me. Fortunately, however, I have a very good answer to this apple-pie bed charge. Eric says that his bed must have been done after dinner, and I was to be seen at the dance in the lounge all the evening. I have an alibi.



Besides I had a bed myself; surely they don't believe that even a professional humourist could be so bursting with humour as to make himself an apple-pie bed and not make one for his brother-in-law in the same room! It would be too much like overtime.

But they say that only shows my cleverness....

III.

Then there is the question of the Barkers. Most of the victims were young people, who could not possibly mind. But the Barkers had two, and the Barkers are a respected middle-aged couple, and nobody could possibly make them apple-pie beds who did not know them very well. That shows you it can't have been me—I—me—that shows you I couldn't have done it. I have only spoken to them once.

They say Mr. Barker was rather annoyed. He has rheumatism and went to bed early. Mrs. Barker discovered about her bed before she got in, but she didn't let on. She put out the candle and allowed her lord to get into his apple-pie in the dark. I think I shall like her.



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They couldn't find the matches. I believe he was quite angry....

IV.

I suspect Denys and Joan. They are engaged, and people in that state are capable of anything. Neither of them had one, and they were seen slipping upstairs during the dance. They say they went out on the balcony—a pretty story....

V.

I suspect the Barkers. You know, that story about Mrs. B. letting Mr. B. get into his without warning him was pretty thin. Can you imagine an English wife doing a thing of that kind? If you can it ought to be a ground for divorce under the new Bill. But you can't.

Then all that stuff about the rheumatism—clever but unconvincing. Mr. Barker stayed in his room all the next morning *when the awkward questions were being asked*. Not well; oh, no! But he was down for lunch and conducting for a glee-party in the drawing-room afterwards, as perky and active as a professional. Besides, the really unanswerable problem is, who could have *dared* to make the Barkers' apple-pie beds? And the answer is, nobody—except the Barkers.

And there must have been a lady in it, it was so neatly done. Everybody says no *man* could have done it. So that shows you it couldn't have been me—I—myself....

VI.

I suspect Mr. Winthrop. Mr. Winthrop is fifty-three. He has been in the hotel since this time last year, and he makes accurate forecasts of the weather. My experience is that a man who makes accurate forecasts of the weather may get up to any devilry. And he protests too much. He keeps coming up to me and making long speeches to prove that he didn't do it. But I never said he did. Somebody else started that rumour, but of course he thinks that I did. That comes of being a professional humourist.

But I do believe he did it. You see he is fifty-three and doesn't dance, so he had the whole evening to do it in.

To-night we are going to have a Court of Inquiry....



VII.

We have had the inquiry. I was judge. I started with Denys and Joan in the dock, as I thought we must have somebody there and it would look better if it was somebody in the family. The first witness was Mrs. Barker. Her evidence was so unsatisfactory that I had to have her put in the dock too. So was Mr. Barker's. I was sorry to put him in the dock, as he still had rheumatics. But he had to go.

So did Mr. Winthrop. I had no qualms about him. For a man of his age to do a thing like that seems to me really deplorable. And the barefaced evasiveness of his evidence! He simply could not account for his movements during the evening at all. When I asked him what he had been doing at 9.21, and where, he actually said he *didn't know*.



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Rather curious—very few people *can* account for their movements, or anyone else's. In most criminal trials the witnesses remember to a minute, years after the event, exactly what time they went upstairs and when they passed the prisoner in the lounge, but nobody seems to remember anything in this affair. No doubt it will come in time.

The trial was very realistic. I was able to make one or two excellent judicial jokes. Right at the beginning I said to the prosecuting counsel, "What *is* an apple-pie bed?" and when he had explained I said with a meaning look, "You mean that the bed was not in *apple-pie order*?" Ha, ha! Everybody laughed heartily....

VIII.

In my address to the jury of matrons I was able to show pretty clearly that the crime was the work of a gang. I proved that Denys and Joan must have done the bulk of the dirty work, under the tactical direction of the Barkers, who did the rest; while in the background was the sinister figure of Mr. Winthrop, the strategical genius, the lurking Macchiavelli of the gang.

The jury were not long in considering their verdict. They said: "We find, your Lordship, that you did it yourself, with some lady or ladies unknown."

That comes of being a professional humourist....

IX.

I ignored the verdict. I addressed the prisoners very severely and sentenced them to do the Chasm hole from 6.0 A.M. to 6.0 P.M. every day for a week, to take out cards and play out every stroke. "You, Winthrop," I said, "with your gentlemanly cunning, your subtle pretensions of righteousness—" But there is no space for that....

X.

As a matter of fact the jury were quite right. In company with a lady who shall be nameless I did do it. At least, at one time I thought I did. Only we have proved so often that somebody else did it, we have shown so conclusively that we can't have done it, that we find ourselves wondering if we really did.

Perhaps we didn't.

If we did we apologise to all concerned—except, of course, to Mr. Winthrop. I suspect him.



A.P.H.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE END OF THE SEASON.

Sympathetic Friend. "WELL, YOU'VE LAID HER UP NICELY FOR THE WINTER, ANYHOW."]

* * * * *

MIXED METEOROLOGICAL MAXIMS.

(By a Student of Psychology.)

When the glass is high and steady
For domestic broils be ready.
When the glass is low and jerky
Then look out for squalls in Turkey.
When the air is dull and damp
Keep your eye on Mr. CRAMP.
When the air is clear and dry
On BOB WILLIAMS keep your eye.
When it's fine and growing finer



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Keep your eye upon the miner.
 When it's wet and growing wetter
 'Twill be worse before it's better.
 When the tide is at its ebb
 Fix your gaze on SIDNEY WEBB.
 When the tide is at high level
 Modernists discuss the Devil.
 Floods upon the Thames or Kennet
 Stimulate the brain of BENNETT;
 While a waterspout foretells
 Fresh activities in WELLS.
 When it's calm in the Atlantic
 Gooseberries become gigantic.
 When it's rough in the Pacific
 Laying hens are less prolific.
 When the clouds are moving *largo*
 There is no restraining MARGOT.
 When their movement is *con brio*
 'Ware CHIOZZA MONEY (LEO)!
 When the sun is bright but spotty
 Diarists become more dotty.
 When the sun is dim and hazy
 Diarists become more crazy.
 When the nights are calm and still
 Faster travels GARVIN'S quill.
 When the blizzard's blast is hissing
 REPINGTON is reminiscing.

If you ponder well these lines You can read the weather signs In accordance with the rule Binding both on sage and fool:— *Anything in mortal ken May befall us anywhen.*

* * * * *

COMMERCIAL IMPORTUNITY.

“Services! Dozens other cars available, L1,500 to L50. Call and insult us.”

Motor Journal.

* * * * *



MORE VISIONS OF THE UNSEEN.

“The roads are peculiarly situated, and are dangerous not only because they are main cross roads, but also on account of the hidden view they afford of each other.”—*Local Paper*.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Teacher*. “AND WHAT DOES ff MEAN?”

Pupil (after mature deliberation). “Fump-Fump.”]

* * * * *

THE DEVOTED LOVER.

["Loiterers will be treated as trespassers."—*Notice on Tube Station*.]

No longer laud, my Jane, the ancient wooer
Who for the favours of his ladye fayre
Would sally forth to strafe the evil-doer
Or beard the dragon in his inmost lair;
Find it no more, dear heart, a ground for stray tiffs
Because, forsooth, you can't detect in me
A tendency to go out whopping caitiffs
Daily from ten till three.

He proved himself in his especial fashion,
Daring the worst to earn a lover's boon,
But I, no less than he a prey to passion,
Faced risks as great this very afternoon,
When at the Tube a long half-hour I waited
(In fond obedience to your written beck)
Where loiterers, it practically stated,
Would get it in the neck.



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The liftmen who from time to time ascended
To spill their loads (in which you had no part)
Regarded me with eagle eyes intended
To lay the touch of terror on my heart;
But through a wait thus perilously dreary
My spirits drooped not nor my courage flinched;
“She cometh not,” I merely sighed, “I’m weary
And likely to be pinched.”

You came at last, long last, to end my fretting,
And now you know how your devoted bard
Faced for your sake the risk of fine or getting
An unaccustomed dose of labour (hard);
Harbour no more that idiotic notion
That love to-day is unromantic, flat;
Gave *Lancelot* such a proof of his devotion,
Did *Galahad* do that?

* * * * *

PAMELA’S ALPHABET.

Scene.—A DOMESTIC INTERIOR.

Pamela’s father, in one armchair, is making a praiseworthy effort to absorb an article in a review on “The Future of British Finance.” In another armchair Pamela’s mother is doing some sort of mending. Pamela herself, stretched upon the hearthrug, is reading aloud interesting extracts from a picture-book.

Pamela (in a cheerful sing-song). A for Donkey; B for Dicky.

Her Father. What sort of dicky?

Pamela (examining the illustration more closely). All ugly black, bissect for his blue mouf.

Her Mother (instructively). Not blue; yellow. And it’s a beak, not a mouth.

Pamela. I calls it a mouf. He’s eating wiv it. (*With increasing disfavour*) A poor little worm he’s eating. Don’t like him; he’s crool. (*She turns the page hurriedly and continues*) C for Pussy; D for Mick.

[*This is the name of the family mongrel. That the picture represents an absolutely thoroughbred collie matters nothing to Pamela. She spends some time in admiring Mick, then rapidly sweeps over certain illustrations that fail to attract.*



Pamela (stopping at the sight of a web-footed fowl, triumphantly). G for Quack-quack.

Her Father. Oh, come, Pamela, that's not a quack-quack; that's a goose. It makes quite a different noise.

[Anticipating an immediate demand for a goose's noise he clears his throat nervously.]

Pamela (with authority). This one isn't making any noise. It's jus' thinking. (*Her father accepts the correction and swallows again.*) H for Gee-gee. Stupid gee-gee.

Her Father. Why stupid?

Pamela. 'Acos its tail looks silly.

Her Father (glancing at the tail, which bears some resemblance to an osprey's feather). You're right; it does.

Her Mother. I wonder whether it's wrong to let children get accustomed to bad drawings?



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Her Father. Pamela doesn't get accustomed—she criticises. If it weren't for a silly tail here, a stupid face there, her critical faculty might lie for ever dormant.

Pamela (having turned over four or five pages with one grasp of the hand, as if determined to suppress the unsatisfactory horse). R for Bunny.

Her Mother. No, dear, Rabbit. R for Rabbit. B for Bunny.

Pamela (gently). No; B is for Dicky. The ugly dicky wiv the blue mouf.

Her Father (rashly). The blackbird.

Pamela (conscious of superior knowledge). That isn't its name. That's what it looks like, all black; but its name is Dicky. B for Dicky.

Her Father. Well, have it your own way. What does S stand for?

Pamela (turning to the likeness of an elderly quadruped, with great assurance). Baa-lamb!

Her Father. Sometimes we call baa-lambs sheep.

Pamela. I don't.

Her Father. You will when you grow older.

Pamela. I won't be any older, not for ever so long. Not till next birfday. (*Pushing her book away and assuming an air of extreme infancy*) Tired of reading. Want a piggy-back, please!

Her Father (firmly taking up his review again). Not just now. I'm busy with a picture-book.

[*A reproachful silence falls upon the room.*]

Pamela (presently, in a mournful chant). A for Don-key. B for Dicky—

The Scene closes.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE PRINCE COMES HOME.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: MORE OUTLINES OF HISTORY.]



Sailor. "WE HAVE JUST SEEN SOME ORANGE-PEEL AND BANANA-SKINS FLOATING ON THE STARBOARD, SIR."

Columbus. "WAS THERE ANY CHEWING-GUM?"

Sailor. "NO, SIR."

Columbus. "THEN IT MUST BE THE WEST INDIES WE'RE COMING TO, AND I'D HOPED IT WAS GOING TO BE AMERICA.]"

* * * * *

FLOWERS' NAMES.

CROW'S-FOOT.

Have you noticed that the splendid dreams, the best dreams that there are,
Come always in the darkest nights without a single star?
When the moonless nights are blackest the best dreams are about;
I'll tell you why that should be so and how I found it out.

There's a bird who comes at night-time, and underneath his wings,
All warm and soft and feathery, lie tiny fairy things;
He spreads his wings out widely (you see them, not the dark)
And you hear the fairies whispering, "Hush! hush!" "I'll tell you!" "Hark!"

The bird is black and feathery, but his feet are made of gold;
He chiefly comes in summer-time, for fairies hate the cold;
And if the nights are velvet-dark and full of summer airs
He lingers till the sun creeps up and finds him unawares.



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And so you'll see in summer-time, when all the dew is wet,
The footprints of his golden claws maybe will linger yet;
The little golden flower-buds will gleam like golden grain,
And if you pick and cherish them perhaps you'll dream again.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "HAVE YOU EVER BEEN UP IN AN AEROPLANE, GRANDPA?"

"NO, MY BOY—NOT YET."]

* * * * *

HONOURS EASY.

I.

Not very long ago the following advertisements appeared in the same column of *The Southshire Daily Gazette*:

"Lost, a pure black Pekinese dog, wearing a silver badge marked 'Cherub.' Handsome reward offered. F.B., Grand Hotel, Brightbourne."

"Found, a black Pekinese, wearing a silver badge marked 'Cherub.' No reward required. The Limes, Cheviot Road, Brightbourne."

II.

On the same morning the paper was opened and scanned almost simultaneously by Mrs. Frederick Bathurst in the sitting-room which she and her husband occupied at the Grand Hotel, and by Mr. Hartley Friend in the morning-room at "The Limes."

"Oh, Fred," exclaimed Mrs. Bathurst, "Cherub has been found. He's all safe at a house called 'The Limes,' in Cheviot Road. Isn't that splendid?"

"Very good news," said her husband. "I told you not to worry."

"It's a direct answer to prayer," said Mrs. Bathurst. "But—"

"But what?" her husband inquired.



“But I do wish you had taken my advice not to offer any reward. You might so easily have left it open. People aren’t so mercenary as all that. It stands to reason that anyone staying at an hotel like this and bringing a dog with them—always an expensive thing to do—and valuing it enough to advertise its loss, would behave properly when the time came.”

“I don’t know,” Mr. Bathurst replied. “Does anything stand to reason? The ordinary dog-thief, holding up an animal to ransom, might be deterred from returning it if no mention of money was made. You remember we decided on that.”

“Oh, no, I don’t think so. You merely had your way again, that was all. I was always against offering a reward. And the word ‘handsome’ too. In any case I never agreed to that. You put that in later. Another thing,” Mrs. Bathurst continued, “I knew it in some curious way—in my bones, as they say—that the fineness of Cherub’s nature, its innocence, its radiant friendliness, would overcome any sordidness in the person who found him, poor darling, all lost and unhappy. No one who has been much with that simple sweet character could fail to be the better for it.”

Mr. Bathurst coughed.

“That is so?” his wife persisted.

“Well,” said Mr. Bathurst, after helping himself to another egg, “let us hope so, at any rate.”



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"It's gone beyond mere hope," said his wife triumphantly. "Listen to this;" and she read out the sentence from the second advertisement, "'No reward required.' There," she added, "isn't that proof? I'll go round to Cheviot Road directly after breakfast and say how grateful we are, and bring the darling back."

III.

Meanwhile at "The Limes" Mr. Hartley Friend was pacing the room with impatient steps.

"I do wish you would try to be less impulsive," he was saying to his wife. "Anything in the nature of business you would be so much wiser to leave to me."

"What is it now?" Mrs. Friend asked with perfect placidity.

"This dog," said her husband, "that fastened itself on you in this deplorable way—whatever possessed you to rush into print about it?"

"Of course I rushed, as you say. Think of the feelings of the poor woman who has lost her pet. It was the only kind thing to do."

"'Poor woman' indeed! I assure you she's nothing of the sort. One would think you were a millionaire to be ladling out benefactions like this. 'No reward required.' Fancy not even asking for the price of the advertisement to be refunded!"

"But that would have been so squalid."

"'Squalid!' I've no patience with you. Justice isn't squalor. It's—it's justice. As for your 'poor woman,' listen to this." And he read out the Bathurst advertisement with terrible emphasis on the words "Handsome reward offered." "Do you hear that—'handsome'?"

"Yes, I hear," said his wife amiably; "but that isn't my idea of making money."

"I hope you don't suppose it's mine," said her husband. "But there is such a thing as common sense. Why on earth the accident of this little brute following us home should run us into the expense of an advertisement and a certain amount of food and drink I'm hanged if I can see."

"Well, dear," said his wife with the same amiability, "if you can't see it I can't make you."

IV.

A few minutes later the arrival of "a lady who's come for the Peek" was announced.



“No,” said Mr. Friend as his wife rose, “leave it to me. I’ll deal with it. The situation is very delicate.”

“How can I thank you enough,” began Mrs. Bathurst, “for being so kind and generous about our little angel? My husband and I agreed that nothing more charmingly considerate can ever have been done.”

At this point Mrs. Friend followed her husband into the room, and Mrs. Bathurst renewed her expressions of gratitude.

“But at any rate,” she added to her, “you will permit me to defray the cost of the advertisement? I could not allow you to be at that expense.”

Before Mrs. Friend could speak her husband intervened. “No, madam,” he said, “I couldn’t think of it. Please don’t let the mention of money vulgarize a little friendly act like this. We are only too glad to have been the means of reuniting you and your pet.”



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E.V.L.

* * * * *

“Rufford Abbey is, of course, a wonderful old place, and all the front, from gable to gable, is genuine tenth-century, built in 1139.”

Sunday Times.

It looks as if the ca' canny idea was not so new as we thought it.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Lady with Pram (who has been pointing out to newcomer the beauties of the neighbourhood, where a strike is threatened).* “THAT’S ONE OF THE ’OT ’EADS.”]

* * * * *

AT THE PLAY.

“EVERY WOMAN’S PRIVILEGE.”

When *Dahlia* refused the hand of a wealthy middle-aged nut, with faultless knickerbockers and a gift for lucubrated epigrams, preferring to throw in her lot (platonically) with a young and penniless social reformer, we took no notice of those who feared a scandal (“scandals are not what they were,” as she said), nor of the girl’s assertion that she had no use for the alleged romance of marriage. We were confident that the little god whose image, with bow and arrow, stood in the garden of *Dahlia*’s ancestral home, would put things right for us in the end. Yet we were not greatly annoyed when he made a mess of his business and married her to the wrong man; for in the meantime such strange things had been allowed to occur and the right man had proved such a disappointment that we didn’t much care what happened to anybody.

It was the rejected lover, *Mortimer Jerrold*, who conceived two bright ideas for conquering her independence of mind, apparently for the benefit of his rival. First he contrived to get *Harold Glaive*, the young socialist, selected as a candidate for Parliament, hoping (if I read the gentleman’s motive rightly) that his probable failure would touch the place where her heart should have been. This scheme did not go very well, for he was chosen to contest the seat held by *Dahlia*’s own father (which caused a lot of trouble), and in the result beat him.

Meanwhile *Jerrold* had had an alternative brain-wave. He thought that if he pinched the latchkey of *Dahlia*’s Bloomsbury flat, broke in at night, and made a show of assaulting her modesty he could prove to her that she was only a poor weak woman after all.



Nothing, you would say, could well have been more stupid. Yet, according to Mr. HASTINGS TURNER'S showing (and who were we to challenge his authority?) it came off. We were, in fact, asked to believe that a girl who had protested her freedom from all sense of sex was suddenly made conscious of it by the violence of a man whose advances, when decently conducted, had left her cold; and from that moment developed an inclination to marry him. An assault by a tramp or an apache would apparently have served almost as well for the purpose. If this is "Every Woman's Privilege" it is fortunate that so few of them get the chance of exercising it.



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Miss MARIE LOeHR herself came very well out of a play that can hardly add to the author's reputation. Her personality lent itself to a part which demanded a blend of feminine charm with a boyish contempt for romance. And she had a few good things to say. It was not Mr. HALLARD'S fault if he failed to win our perfect sympathy for a hero whom the heroine addressed as "Spats." As for Mr. BASIL RATHBONE, who played the part of *Harold Glaive*, I cannot imagine why he took it on. Apart from his timorous declaration of love, conveyed on a typewriter, there was no colour in it, and nothing whatever to show why his passion petered out. I think that the author, in his surprise at the success of *Harold's* rival, must have forgotten all about it. Mr. HERBERT ROSS was excellent as *Dahlia's* father, a pleasantly futile baronet under the thumb of a sour-tongued managing female, an old-fashioned part in which Miss HELEN ROUS has nothing to learn. Miss VANE FEATHERSTON, as the lady who finally absorbed the baronet, did her little gratuitous piece all right.

I cannot get myself to believe that all these intelligent actors are under any illusion as to the merits of the comedy. With the best wishes in the world for the success of Miss MARIE LOeHR'S enterprises, I am bound to regard it as yet another instance of a play where the attractions of the leading part have a little deranged the judgment of the actor-manager.

O.S.

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[Illustration: *Richard Petafor* (Mr. HUBERT HARBEN), the apostle of Materialism and Physical Exercise, trying to convert *Antony Grimshaw* (Mr. HERBERT MARSHALL), the believer in Mysticism and Armchairs.]

* * * * *

"THE CROSSING."

Mr. ALGERNON BLACKWOOD and Mr. BERTRAM FORSYTH (assisted by Mr. DONALD CALTHROP) present to us in *The Crossing* a certain *Mr. Anthony Grimshaw*, a princely egotist of the poetic-idealist type who gets up on the hearth-rug and says to his family, "I am a humanitarian before everything," and things like that, and then wonders why his wife is estranged from him. He has a daughter, *Nixie*, who is not old enough to know how bad all this is, and together they hear the wind singing glees without words (or in Volapuk, but anyway not intelligible to us poor normals), a thing Mr. ALGERNON BLACKWOOD has been doing or pretending to do for years without once taking me in.

Anthony is run over and (as we say) dies. After an extraordinarily tiresome conversation in the morning-room with his friend and his son and his mother (who are also what



people call dead) it dawns upon him that something odd has happened to himself also. His wife and two children, after his (so-called) death, become blissfully happy and set to work to finish his book, that being, as they think, his wish. Well, I wonder. At any rate in death (as we say) he was not divided—from his egotisms.



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One knows well enough, alas, how the temptation to spiritual drug-taking has grown as the result of the accumulated sorrows of these past years, but it is not well that such a treatment of the eternal question should be taken seriously. Is this sort of thing really better than the harp-and-cloud theory? It is not. One looked in vain for any trace of real vision, any true sense of the height and depth of the problem.

Mr. MARSHALL struggled quite manfully with the part of *Anthony*, and of course he had his moments. I hope so good a player is not developing the "actor's pause," of which I detected signs. Miss IRENE ROOKE had nothing in particular to do and did it very well. Mr. HUBERT HARBEN as the impenitent profiteer from Lancashire, *Anthony's* brother-in-law, was better suited than I have seen him for some time, and provided the very necessary relief. The precocious children infuriated me, but that is purely temperamental. The actors who played the parts of those who had "crossed" were wrapped in such an atmosphere of gloom, to the strains of such meretricious music that (on the evidence) I can only advise people to defer their crossing as long as possible; a thing they will doubtless do, even if they have a friendlier feeling to the new religion than I can command.... I am afraid I proved a bad sailor.

T.

* * * * *

TWO STUDIES IN MUSICAL CRITICISM.

(With grateful acknowledgments to "The Times" and "The Morning Post.")

I.

We had quite a hectic time at the Philharmonic—I nearly wrote the Phillemonade—concert last night, what with two Czechs, Dabcik and Ploffskin, slabs of WAGNER, and Carl Walbrook's Humorous Variations, "The Quangle Wangle," conducted by Carl himself. If the honest truth be told, we sat down to the Variations with no more pleasurable anticipation than one sits down with in the dentist's chair, preparatory to the application of gags, electric drills and other instruments of odontological torture. (Strange, by the way, that no modernist has translated the horrors of the modern Tusculum into terms of sound and fury!) But we were most agreeably surprised to find ourselves following every one of the forty-nine Variations with breathless interest. Mr. Walbrook is indeed a case of the deformed transformed. We found hardly a trace of the poluphloisboisterous pomposity with which he used to camouflage his dearth of ideas. His main theme is shapely and sinuous, and its treatment in most of the Variations titillated us voluptuously. But, since it is the function of the critic to criticise, let us justify our *role* by noting that the scoring throughout tends to glutinousness, like that of the pre-war Carlsbad plum; further, that a solo on the muted viola against an accompaniment of

sixteen sarrusophones is only effective if the sarrusophones are prepared to roar like sucking-doves, which, as LEAR would have said, “they seldom if ever do.” Still, on the whole the Variations arrided us vastly.



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It was a curious but exhilarating experience to hear the Bohemians, the playboys of Central Europe, interpreted in the roast-beef-and-plum-pudding style of the Philharmonic at its beefiest and plummiest. Dabcik survived the treatment fairly well, but poor Ploffskin was simply stodged under. But they were in the same boat with RICHARD the Elder, whose Venusberg music was given with all the orgiastic exuberance of a Temperance Band at a Sunday-School Treat, recalling the sarcastic jape of old HANS RICHTER during the rehearsal of the same work: "You play it like teetotalers—which you are not." Yet the orchestra were lavish of violent sonority where it was not required; the well-meaning but unfortunate Mr. Orlo Jimson, who essayed the "Smithy Songs" from *Siegfried*, being submerged in a very Niagara of noise. WAGNER'S scoring no doubt is "a bit thick," but then he devised a special "spelunk" (as BACON says) for his orchestra to lurk in, and there is no cavernous accommodation at the Queen's Hall.

II.

Though fashion considers September as an unpropitious time for the production of novelties, the scheme arranged for the patrons of the Philharmonic Concert last night, under the direction of Sir Henry Peacham, was successful in bringing together an audience of eminently respectable dimensions. The occasion served for the launching under favourable circumstances of what constituted the chief landmark of the programme—a set of orchestral variations with the quaint title of "The Quangle Wangle," from the prolific pen of Mr. Carl Walbrook. It is satisfactory to be able to record the gratifying fact that this work met with cordial acceptance. In the interests of serious art, the borrowing of a title from one of the works of a writer so addicted to levity as EDWARD LEAR may perhaps be deprecated, but there can be no doubt of the ingenuity and sprightliness with which Mr. Walbrook has addressed himself to, and accomplished, his task. If we cannot discover in his composition the manifestation of any pronounced individuality or high artistic uplift, it none the less commands the respect due to the exhibition of a vigorous mentality combined with a notable mastery of orchestral resource and mellifluous modulation. At the conclusion of the performance Mr. Walbrook was constrained to make the transit from the artistes' room to the platform no fewer than three times before the applausive zeal of the audience could be allayed.

The remainder of the scheme was copious and well-contrived. Pleasurable evidence of the friendly interest shown in the fortunes of the Czecho-Slovakian Republic was forthcoming in the performance of two works by composers of that interesting race—Messrs. Dabcik and Ploffskin—of which it may suffice to say that the temperamental peculiarities of the Bohemian genius were elicited with conspicuous brilliancy under the inspiring direction of Sir Henry Peacham.

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In a vocal item from *Siegfried*, Mr. Orlo Jimson evinced a sympathetic appreciation of the emotional needs of the situation which augurs favourably for his further progress, and the powerful support furnished him by the orchestra was an important factor in the enjoyment of his praiseworthy efforts. An almost too vivacious rendering of the Venusberg music brought the scheme to a strepitous conclusion. It may, however, be submitted that so realistic an interpretation of the Pagan revelries depicted by the composer is hardly in accordance with the best traditions of the British musical public.

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[Illustration: THE DREAM OF BLISS.]

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[Illustration: *Fussy Old Party (who likes to make sure)*. "ARE YOU CERTAIN YOU GO TO TUNBRIDGE WELLS?"

Driver (to Conductor). "ERE, BILL, WE ARE CARELESS. SOMEONE MUST HAVE PINCHED THE NAME-BOARDS WHEN WE WEREN'T LOOKING."]

* * * * *

"There is no such thing as infallibility in rerum naturae."—*Provincial Paper*.

Nor, apparently, in journalistic Latin.

* * * * *

"Reward.—Bedroom taken Tuesday, 27th, between Holborn and Woburn-place. A basket and umbrella left."—*Daily Paper*.

We compliment the victim of this theft on his courtesy in calling the thieves' attention to their oversight.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Exhausted War Profiteer*. "DEER FORESTS FOR THE 'IDLE RICH' BE BLOWED! THE 'NEW POOR' CAN 'AVE 'EM FOR ME."]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.



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

The long-promised *Herbert Beerbohm Tree* (HUTCHINSON), than which I have expected no book with more impatience, turns out to be a volume full of lively interest, though rather an experiment in snap-shot portraiture from various angles than a full-dress biography. Mr. MAX BEERBOHM has arranged the book, himself contributing a short memoir of his brother, which, together with what Lady TREE aptly calls her *Reverie*, fills some two-thirds of it with the more intimate view of the subject, the rest being supplied by the outside appreciations of friends and colleagues. If I were to sum up my impression of the resulting picture it would be in the word "happiness." Not without reason did the TREES name a daughter FELICITY. Here was a life spent in precisely the kind of success that held most delight for the victor—honour, love, obedience, troops of friends; all that *Macbeth* missed his exponent enjoyed in flowing measure. Perhaps TREE was never a great actor, because he found existence too "full of a number of things"; if so he was something considerably jollier, the enthusiastic,

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often inspired amateur, approaching each new part with the zest of a brief but brilliant enthusiasm. I suppose no popular favourite ever had his name associated with more good stories and wit, original and vicarious. Despite some entertaining extracts from his commonplace book I doubt if this side of him is quite worthily represented; at least nothing here quoted beats Lady TREE'S own *mot* for a mendacious newspaper poster—*Canard a la Press*. Possibly we are still to look for a more official volume of reference; meantime the present memoir gives a vastly readable sketch of one whose passing left a void perhaps unexpectedly hard to fill.

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In the prefatory chapter of *Our Women* (CASSELL) Mr. ARNOLD BENNETT coyly disclaims any intention of tackling his theme on strictly scientific principles. The warning is perhaps hardly necessary, since, apart from the duty which the author owes to his public as a novelist rather than a philosopher, the title alone should be a sufficient guide. One would hardly expect a serious zoologist, for instance, in attempting to deal with the domesticated fauna, to entitle his work *Our Dumb Friends*. The book is divided in the main between adjuration and prophecy. As a result of their emancipation from economic slavery, Mr. BENNETT expects women—women, that is to say, of the “top class,” as he calls it—to adopt more and more the *role* of professional wage-earners; but at the same time he insists that they do not as yet take themselves seriously enough as professional housekeepers. How the two functions are to be combined it is a little difficult to see, but apparently women are to retain a profession as a stand-by in case they fail to marry or to remain married. At the same time Mr. BENNETT takes it for granted that woman will never relinquish her position as a charmer of man, or even the use of cosmetics and expensive lingerie. Speaking neither as a novelist nor as a philosopher, I cannot help feeling that Mr. BENNETT is too apt to consider the things he particularly likes about women to be eternal, and those that he does not like so much to be susceptible of alteration and improvement. Anyhow, it looks as if *Our Men* were going to have rather a thin time.

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Miss BEATRICE HARRADEN calls her latest story *Spring Shall Plant* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON). She might equally well have called it *The Successes of a Naughty Child*. Certainly it is chiefly concerned with the many triumphant insubordinations of *Patuffa* (whom I suspect of having been encouraged by her too challenging name) both at home and at the various schools from which she either ran away or was returned with thanks. This is all mildly attractive if only from the vivacity of its telling; but I confess to having felt a mild wonder whether a child's book had not got on to my table by error—when the grown-ups suddenly began to carry on in a way



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that placed all such doubts at rest. There was, for example, a Russian lady, godmother of *Patuffa*, who escaped from somewhere and established herself, with others of her kind, in an attic in Coptic Street. My welcome for this interesting fugitive was to some extent shaken by a realisation that she was (so to speak) a refugee from the other side and, in a sense, a spiritual ancestress of Bolshevism. Miss HARRADEN would however object, and justly, that the clean-purposed conspirators of the earlier revolution had little in common with the unsavoury individuals who at present obscure the Russian dawn. Soon after this, *Patuffa's* papa begins to go quite dreadfully off the rails, even to the extent of wishing to elope with her governess and eventually losing all his money and shooting himself. There was also a famous violinist—well, you can see already that *Patuffa's* vernal experiences were on generous lines. It is to the credit of all concerned that she and her story retain an appreciable charm under adverse conditions.

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Nothing, one would imagine, could promise much more restful reading than a book that concerns itself with such things as christening robes for caterpillars, the dyeing blue of white chickens and searches among Californian lilies and pine-trees for the soul of a hog unseasonably defunct. But, since this most uncharitable age refuses to believe anything just because it is told it should, the peaceful pages of *The Diary of Opal Whiteley* (PUTNAM) are unfortunately fussed over with a controversy that no one who reads them can quite escape. Miss WHITELEY'S diary is presented with every circumstance of solemn asseveration as the unaided work of a child of seven, only now pieced together by the writer after quite a number of years. If you care to throw yourself into the argument you will certainly find heaps of reasons for thinking unkind things, as the writer would say, of the truth of this claim, particularly in the completeness with which every incident is carried through various stages to its literary finish; but, if you will be ruled by me, you will try to forget anything but the book itself, with its quite charming pictures of many animals and one little girl, their understanding friend. The quaint idiom in which the diary is supposed to have been written (or, of course, was written) adds to the delight of a rather uncommon feeling for nature at its simplest, while the scrapes for which the small heroine receives (or, you may say, is alleged to receive) well-deserved punishment preserve the book from ever dropping into mere mawkishness. A great pity, I think, that it was not published rather as based on childish memories than as the actual printed script of a prodigy.

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Moon Mountains (HURST AND BLACKETT) is a story which with the best will in the world I found it impossible to regard wholly seriously. The greater part of the scene is laid in Darkest Africa, where the father of the hero, *Peter* (my hope that the *Peter* habit had blown over appears to have been premature), disappears at an early stage. The subsequent course of events reminds me of the words of the musical-comedy poet, popular in my youth, who wrote, "It were better for you rather not to try and find your father, than to find him"—well, certainly better than to find him as *Peter* found his. Perhaps it would not be unfair to suppose that Miss MARGARET PETERSON had at this point her eye already firmly fixed upon her big situation. Certainly the course of *Peter* is rather impatiently and spasmodically sketched till the moment when matters are sufficiently advanced to ship him also to Africa, in company with an elderly hunter of butterflies named *Mellis*. Their adventures form the bulk of the tale (filled out with some chat about elephants, and a sufficiency of love-making on the part of *Peter*), and I suppose I need hardly tell you how one of them, poor *Mellis*, is immediately captured and brought before the terrible white king of the hidden lands, nor how this same monarch, a really dreadfully unpleasant person, turns out to be—Precisely. So there the tale is; little more incredible than, I dare say, most of its kind; and if you have no rooted objection to characters all of whom behave like persons who know they are in a book there is no reason why you should not find it at least passably entertaining.

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Mr. F. BRETT YOUNG'S manner of presenting *The Tragic Bride* (SECKER) is not free from affectation, and this is the more irritating because his literary style is in itself admirably unpretentious. But having recorded this complaint I gladly go on to declare that his tale of *Gabrielle Hewish* has both charm and distinction. I protest my belief in *Gabrielle* both in her Irish and English homes, but my protest would have been superfluous if Mr. BRETT YOUNG had not almost super-taxed my powers of belief. So also with *Arthur Payne*; he is a fascinating lad, and the battle between his mother and *Gabrielle* for possession of him was a royal struggle, fought without gloves yet very fairly. All the same I caught myself doubting once or twice whether any boy could at the same time be so human and so inhuman. It is to Mr. BRETT YOUNG'S credit that these doubts do not interfere with one's enjoyment of his book, and the reason is that he is first and last and all the time an artist.

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[Illustration: *New Clerk*. "BEG PARDON, SIR, BUT THERE'S A GENTLEMAN OUTSIDE WHO SAYS THAT YOU'VE ROBBED HIM OF ALL HE HAD."

Turf Accountant. "WELL, WHAT'S HIS NAME? ASK HIM TO GIVE YOU HIS NAME. HOW AM I TO DISTINGUISH HIM IF HE DOESN'T SEND HIS NAME IN?"]