

Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 152, February 14, 1917 eBook

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CHARIVARIA.

“We will hold up wheat, we will hold up meat, we will hold up munitions of war and we will hold up the world’s commerce,” says Herr *Ballin*. Meanwhile his countrymen on the Western front are content to hold up their hands.

It is reported from German Headquarters that the *Kaiser* intends to confer on Count BERNSTORFF the Iron Cross with white ribbon. This has, we understand, caused consternation in official circles, where it is felt that after all the Count has done his best for Germany.

“We are at war,” says the *Berliner Tageblatt*, a statement which only goes to prove that there is nothing hidden from the great minds of Germany.

The report that Mr. *Henry Ford* has offered to place his works at the disposal of the American authorities seems to indicate that he is determined to get America on his side, one way or the other.

Mr. S.F. *Edge*, the famous motorist, now on the *food controller’s* staff, has given it as his opinion that a simple outdoor life is best for pigs. We are ashamed to say that our own preference for excluding them from our drawing-room has hitherto been dictated by purely selfish motives.

America is making every preparation for a possible war, and Mexico, not to be outdone, has decided to hold a Presidential election.

It is true that Mr. *George Bernard Shaw* has visited the Front, but too little has, we think, been made of the fact that he wore khaki—just like an ordinary person, in fact.



A sensational story reaches us to the effect that a new journalistic enterprise in Berlin is being devoted to the “reliable reporting of news.” We have always maintained that to be successful in business you must strike out on original lines.

An exhibition of Zeppelin wreckage has been opened in the Middle Temple Gardens. The authorities are said to be considering an offer confidentially communicated to them by the German Government to add Count *zeppelin* as an exhibit to the rest of the wreckage.

Members of the Honor Oak Golf Club are starting a piggery on their course, and an elderly golfer who practises on a common near London is about to write to *The Spectator* to state that on Saturday he started a rabbit.

The American Association for the Advance of Science decided at a recent convocation that the ape had descended from man. This statement has evoked a very strong protest in monkey circles.

The tuck-shops of Harrow have been loyally placed out of bounds by the boys themselves, though of course these establishments, like the playing fields of Eton, had their part in the winning of Waterloo.



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One of our large restaurants is printing on its menus the actual weight of meat used in each dish. In others, fish is being put on the table accompanied by its own scales.

We are requested to carry home our own purchases, and one of the firms for whom we feel sorry is Messrs. *Furness, Withy & company*, of Liverpool, who have just purchased Passage Docks, Cork.

Australia by organising her Commonwealth Loan Group, once again lives up to her motto, "Advance, Australia."

The Coroner of East Essex having set the example of keeping pigs in his rose garden, it is rumoured that *The Daily Mail* contemplates offering a huge prize for a Standard Rose-Scented Pig.

To be in line with many of our contemporaries we are able to state definitely that the War is bound to come to an end, though we have not yet fixed on the exact date.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Food development in the Parks.*

A forecast of next valentine's day.

Spinster (reads). "Dearest, meet me by the scarecrow in Hyde Park."]

* * * * *

Air-Castles.

When I grow up to be a man and wear whate'er I please,
Black-cloth and serge and Harris-tweed—I will have none of these;
For shaggy men wear Harris-tweed, so Harris-tweed won't do,
And fat commercial travellers are dressed in dingy blue;
Lack-lustre black to lawyers leave and sad souls in the City,
But I'll wear Linsey-Woolsey because it sounds so pretty.



I don't know what it looks like,
I don't know how it feels,
But Linsey-Woolsey to my fancy
Prettily appeals.

And when I find a lovely maid to settle all my cash on,
She will be much too beautiful to need the gauds of fashion.
No tinted tulle or taffeta, no silk or crepe-de-chine
Will the maiden of my fancy wear—no chiffon, no sateen,
No muslin, no embroidery, no lace of costly price,
But she'll be clad in Dimity because it sounds so nice.

I don't know what it looks like,
I do not know its feel,
But a dimpled maid in Dimity
Was ever my ideal.

* * * * *

The last menu card.

"To-day is one of the great moments of history. Germany's last card is on the table. It is war to the knife. Either she starves Great Britain or Great Britain starves her."

Mr. Curtin in "The Times."

Mr. Curtin has lost a great chance for talking of "War to the knife-and-fork." Possibly he was away in Germany at the time when this *jeu d'esprit* was invented.



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* * * * *

“The Canadian papers are unanimous that the German peace proposals are premature, and will be refused saskatoon.”

Examiner (Launceston, Tasmania).

We had not heard before that Germany had asked for Saskatoon, but anyway we are glad she is not going to get it.

* * * * *

From a schoolgirl's essay:—

“The Reconnaissance was the time when people began to wake up ...
Friar Jelicoe was a very great painter; he painted angles.”

Probably an ancestor of the gallant gentleman who recently had a brush with the enemy.

* * * * *

Tactless tactics.

Were I a burglar in the dock
With every chance of doing time,
With Justice sitting like a rock
To hear a record black with crime;
If my conviction seemed a cert,
Yet, by a show of late repentance,
I thought I might, with luck, avert
A simply crushing sentence;—

I should adopt, by use of art,
A pensive air of new-born grace,
In hope to melt the Bench's heart
And mollify its awful face;
I should not go and run amok,
Nor in a fit of senseless fury
Punch the judicial nose or chuck
An inkpot at the jury.

So with the Hun: you might assume
He would exert his homely wits
To mitigate the heavy doom



That else would break him all to bits;
Yet he behaves as one possessed,
Rampaging like a bull of Bashan,
Which, as I think, is not the best
Means of conciliation.

For when the wild beast, held and bound,
Ceases to plunge and rave and snort,
The Bench, I hope, will pass some sound
Remarks on this contempt of court;
The plea for mercy, urged too late,
Should prove a negligible cipher,
And when the sentence seals his fate
He'll get at least a lifer.

O.S.

* * * * *

Heart-to-heart talks.

(The KAISER and Count BERNSTORFF.)

The Kaiser (concluding a tirade). And so, in spite of my superhuman forbearance, this is what it has come to. Germany is smacked in the face in view of the whole world—yes, I repeat it, is smacked in the face, and by a nation which is not a nation at all, but a sweeping together of the worst elements in all the other nations, a country whose navy is ludicrous and whose army does not exist; and you, Count, have the audacity to come here into my presence and tell me that, with the careful instructions given to you by my Government and by myself, you were not able to prevent such an end to the negotiations? It is a thing that cannot be calmly contemplated. Even I, who have learnt perhaps more thoroughly than other men to govern my temper—even I feel strangely moved, for I know how deplorable will be the effect of this on our Allies and on the other neutral Powers. Our enemies, too, will be exalted by it and thus the War will be prolonged. No, Count, at such a moment one does not appear before one's Emperor with a smiling face.



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Count B. God knows, your Majesty, that it is not I who have a smiling face. At such a moment there could be no reason for it. But your Majesty will remember, in justice to myself, that I have not ceased to warn your Majesty from the very beginning that unless something actual and definite was conceded to the feeling of the United States trouble would surely come. First there was the treatment of Belgium—

The Kaiser. Bah! Don't talk to me of Belgium and the Belgians. No more ungrateful race has ever infested the earth. Besides, did I not say that my heart bled for Louvain?

Count B. The Americans, your Majesty, had the bad taste not to believe you. It was in vain that I spread those gracious words of yours broadcast throughout the land. They only laughed at your Majesty.

The Kaiser. Yes, I know they did, curse them.

Count B. Then there came the deplorable sinking of the *Lusitania*.

The Kaiser. Oh, don't speak to me of the *Lusitania*. I'm sick to death of the very name. Besides, how do you dare to call her sinking deplorable? I authorised it; that ought to be enough for you and for everybody else.

Count B. I beg your Majesty's pardon. When I said "deplorable" I was alluding not so much to the act itself as to its effect on opinion in the United States. From that moment the Americans stiffened in their attitude towards us and became definitely and strongly unfavourable. I warned your Majesty of this over and over again, but your Majesty preferred to disregard what I said.

The Kaiser. And have you any complaint to make? Is your opinion of yourself so high that one may not without sacrilege disregard your opinion?

Count B. Your Majesty is pleased to jest. I am not infallible, not being an Emperor, but I happen in this case to have been right. And then on the top of all the other things comes the Note announcing the new under-sea policy, and the ridiculous offer to allow the Americans to be safe in one ship a week, provided she is painted in a certain way. No, really, with a proud nation—

The Kaiser. Proud! A race of huckstering money-grubbers.

Count B. With a proud nation—I must repeat it, your Majesty—such a course must lead straight to war. But perhaps that was what your advisers wanted, though I cannot see why they should want it. But for myself I must ask your Majesty to remember that I foretold what has come to pass. There is perhaps yet time to undo the mischief.

The Kaiser. No, it is too late.

* * * * *

AS OTHERS SEE US.

The General Officer Commanding, as he appears to:

(1) *His Chief of Staff.*—The one insuperable obstacle to tactical triumphs such as CAESAR and NAPOLEON never knew.

(2) *His youngest A.D.C.*—A perpetual fountain of unsterilized language.



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(3) *Certain Subalterns*.—The greatest man on earth.

(4) *Tommy Atkins*.—A benevolent old buffer in scarlet and gold who periodically takes an inexplicable interest in Tommy’s belt and brass buttons. An excuse for his sergeant’s making him present arms.

(5) *The British Public*.—A name in the newspapers.

(6) *Himself*.—(a) Before dinner: An unfortunate, overworked and ill-used old man. (b) After dinner: England’s hope and Sir WILLIAM ROBERTSON’S right hand.

(7) *His Wife*.—A very lovable, but helpless, baby.

* * * * *

From an Indian teacher’s report on the progress of his school:—

“A sad experience. Spirits for a time were very high. Our menials talked of exploits and masters of glory in store. But soon the famines set in. The treachery of the elements ravished the hopes of agriculturists, the major portion of the supporters of the — school. The puffs of misery bleached white the flush of early and latter times; dinner-hours grew few and far between; and with the Sun of Loaf sank all wakefulness to light and culture.”

This last feature sounds a little like Berlin.

* * * * *

[Illustration: RATIONAL SERVICE.

JOHN BULL. “SACRIFICE INDEED! WHY, I’M FEELING FITTER EVERY MINUTE, AND I’VE STILL PLENTY OF WEIGHT TO SPARE.”]

* * * * *

[Illustration: “HOW THIS EGG GOT PAST THE FOOD CONTROLLER I CAN’T IMAGINE.”]

* * * * *

THE THREE DICTATORS.

(Being a tragedy of the moment and incidentally a guide to the art of handing out correspondence to the typist.)

I.

There are, of course, as many styles of dictating letters as there are of writing them; but three stand out. One is the Indignant Confidential; one the Hesitant Tactful; and one the No-Nonsense Efficient. Bitter experience in three orderly London houses only a day or so ago chances to have led to such complete examples of each of these styles that the reader has the felicity of acquiring at the same time a valuable insight into business methods and a glimpse of what Nature in the person of Jack Frost can do with even the best regulated of cities.

We will take first the Hesitant Tactful, where the typist is not merely considered as a human being but invited to become an ally. The dictator is Mr. Vernon Crombie.

“Oh, Miss Carruthers, there’s a letter I want to dictate and get off by hand at once, because my house isn’t fit to live in through burst pipes. The plumbers promised to send yesterday, but didn’t, and to-day they can’t come, it seems, and really it’s most serious. Ceilings being ruined, you know. The bore is that there aren’t any other plumbers that I know of, and one is so at the mercy of these people that we must go very delicately. You understand. We mustn’t say a word to set their backs up any higher than they already are. Anger’s no good in this case. Here we must be tactful, and I want you to help me. I knew you would.



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Now we'll begin. *To Messrs. Morrow & Hope. Dear Sirs,—I hate—no, that's a little too strong, perhaps—I much dislike—that's better—I much dislike to bother you at a time when I know you must be overworked in every direction—you see the idea, don't you? What we've got to do is to get on their soft side. It's no use bullyragging them; understanding their difficulties is much better. You see that, don't you? Of course; I knew you would. Now then. Where was I? Oh yes—overworked in every direction; but if, as you promised yesterday, but unfortunately were unable—I think that's good, don't you? Much better than saying that they had broken their promise—to manage, you could spare a man to attend to our pipes without further delay—I think you might underline without further delay. Would that be safe, I wonder? Yes, I think so—I should be more than grateful. And now there's a problem. What I have been pondering is if it would be wise to offer to pay an increased charge. I'd do anything to get the pipes mended, but, on the other hand, it's not a sound precedent. A state of society in which everyone bid against everyone else for the first services of the plumber would be unbearable. Only the rich would ever be plumbed, and very soon the plumbers would be the millionaires. Perhaps we had better let the letter go as it is? You think so and I think so. Very well then, just *Believe me, yours faithfully*, and I'll sign it.”*

And now the Indignant and Confidential. Mr. Horace Bristowe is dictative: “Ah, here you are, Miss Tappit. Now I've got trouble with the plumbers, and I want to give the blighters—well, I can't say it to you, but you know what I mean. There's my house dripping at every pore, or rather pouring at every drip—I say, that's rather good; I must remember that to tell them this evening. Just put that down on a separate piece of paper, will you. Well, here's the place all soaked and not a man can I get. They promised to send on Tuesday, they promised to send yesterday, and this morning comes a note saying that they can't now send till to-morrow. What do you think of that? And they have worked for me for years. Years I've been employing them.

“Let's begin, anyway. *To Messrs. Tarry & Knott. Dear Sirs—No, I'm hanged if I'll call them dear. Ridiculous convention! They're not dear—except in their charges. I say, that's not bad. No, just put *Gentlemen*. But that's absurd too. They're not gentlemen, the swine! They're anything but gentlemen, they're blackguards, swindlers, liars. Seriously, Miss Tappit, I ask you, isn't it monstrous? Here am I, an old customer, with burst pipes doing endless damage, and they can't send anyone till to-morrow. Really, you know, it's the limit. I know about the War and all that. I make every allowance. But I still say it's the limit. Well, we must put the thing in the third person, I suppose,*



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if I'm not to call them either 'dear' or 'gentlemen.' *Mr. Horace Bristowe presents his comp*—Good Heavens! he does nothing of the kind—*Mr. Horace Bristowe begs to*—Begs! Of course I don't beg. This really is becoming idiotic. Can't one write a letter like an honest man, instead of all this flunkey business? Begin again: *To Messrs. Tarry & Nott. Mr. Horace Bristowe considers that he has been treated with a lack of consideration*—no, we can't have 'considers' and 'consideration' so near together. What's another word for 'consideration'?—*treated with a lack of—a lack of*—Well, we'll keep 'consideration' and alter 'considers.' Begin again: *Mr. Horace Bristowe thinks*—no, that's not strong enough—*believes*—no. Ah, I've got it—*Mr. Horace Bristowe holds that he has been treated by you with a lack of consideration which*—I wonder if 'which' is better than 'that'—*a lack of consideration that, considering his long*—no, we can't have 'considering' just after 'consideration'—*that*—no, *which*—*which*—*in view of his long record as*—What I want to say is that it's an infernal shame that after all these years, in which I've put business in their way and paid them scores of pounds, they should treat me in this scurvy fashion, that's what I mean. The swine! I tell you, Miss Tappit, it's infamous. I—(and so on).

The No-Nonsense Efficient businessman, so clear-headed and capable that it is his continual surprise that he is not in the Cabinet without the preliminary of an election, handles his correspondence very differently. He presses a button for Miss Pether. She is really Miss Carmichael, but it is a rule in this model office that the typist takes a dynastic name, and Pether now goes with the typewriter, just as all office-boys are William. Miss Pether arrives with her pad and pencil and glides swiftly and noiselessly to her seat and looks up with a face in which mingle eagerness, intelligence, loyalty and knowledge of her attainments.

"To Messrs. Promises & Brake, says the business man,—Gentlemen comma the pipes at my house were not properly mended by your man yesterday comma and there is still a leakage comma which is causing both damage and inconvenience full stop Please let me have comma in reply to this comma an assurance that someone shall be sent round at once dash in a taxi comma if necessary full stop. If such an assurance cannot be given comma I shall call in another firm and refuse to pay your account full stop. Since the new trouble is due to your employee's own negligence comma I look to you to give this job priority over all others full stop. My messenger waits full stop. I am comma yours faithfully comma. Let me have it at once and tell the boy to get a taxi."

II.

None of the plumbers sent any men.

* * * * *



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[Illustration: THE BROTHERS TINGO, WHO ARE EXEMPTED FROM MILITARY SERVICE, DO THEIR BIT BY HELPING TO TRAIN LADIES WHO ARE GOING ON THE LAND.]

* * * * *

“In some courts the carrying of matches has been regarded as a light offence, but this will not be the case in future.”—*Irish Times*.

We note the implied rebuke to the jester on the Bench.

* * * * *

SONGS OF FOOD-PRODUCTION.

II.

Mustard-and-Cress in Mayfair,
Belgravia’s Winter Greens;
None so nicely as *they* fare
Save Cox’s Kidney Beans;
Mustard-and-Cress in boxes,
Greens in the jardiniere,
And a trellis of Beans at Cox’s,
Facing Trafalgar Square.

Lady Biffington’s daughters
Are mulching the Greens with Clay;
Lady Smiffington waters
The Mustard-and-Cress all day;
And Cox’s cashiers (those oners!)
Are feeling extremely rash,
For they’re pinching the tips of the Runners
As they never would pinch your cash.

Mighty is Mayfair’s Mustard,
The Cress is hardy and hale;
Belgravia’s housemaids dust hard
To keep the dust from the Kale;
But Cox’s cashiers look solemn,
For their Beans (which sell by the sack)
Would cover the Nelson Column
If they didn’t keep pinching them back.



“WEATHER AT HEALTH RESORTS.

Temp.				
Sunshine.	Max.	Min.	Weather.	
Felixstowe	0.0	22	29	Some snow.”

Morning Paper.

And some thermometer.

PETHERTON’S DONKEY;

OR, PATRIOTISM AND PUBLICITY.

I hadn’t had a letter-writing bout with Petherton for some time, and, feeling in need of a little relaxation, I seized the opportunity afforded by Petherton’s installing a very noisy donkey in his paddock adjoining my garden, and wrote to him as follows:—

DEAR MR. PETHERTON,—I do not like making complaints against a neighbour, as you know, but the new tenant of your field does not seem to argue a good selection on your part, unless his braying has a more soothing effect on you than it has on me.

Yours sincerely,
HARRY J. FORDYCE.

I was evidently in luck, as I drew Petherton’s literary fire at once.

SIR (he wrote),—I should have thought that you would have been the last person in the world to object to this particular noise. Allow me to inform you that I purchased the donkey for several family and personal reasons which cannot possibly concern you.

Faithfully yours,
FREDERICK PETHERTON.

I translated this letter rather freely for my own ends, and replied:—

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DEAR PETHERTON,—I apologise. I had no idea that the animal was in any way connected with your family. If it is a poor relation I must say you are fortunate in being able to fob him (or should it be her?) off so easily, as he (or she) appears to live a life of comparative luxury, at little cost, I should imagine, to yourself. I shall be glad to know whether the animal, in exercising its extraordinary vocal powers, is calling for his (or her) mate, or merely showing off for the amusement of your fascinating poultry who share its pleasaunce.

Can't you possibly fit the brute with a silencer, as the noise it makes is disturbing, especially to me, my study window being very close to the hedge?

Yours sincerely,
HARRY FORDYCE.

P.S.—I am thinking of laying down a bed of poisoned carrots for early use. Perhaps with your chemical knowledge you can suggest an effective top-dressing for them.

Petherton rose to the bait and wrote—the same night—as follows:—

SIR,—In your unfortunate correspondence with me you have always shown yourself better at rudeness than repartee. Did you not learn at school the weakness of the *tu quoque* line of argument? You speak of your study window being near my field. The name “study” suggests literary efforts. Is it in your case merely a room devoted to the penning of senseless and impertinent letters to unoffending neighbours, who have something better to do than waste their time reading and answering them? I hope this letter will be the last one I shall find it necessary to write to you.

Re your postscript. Try prussic acid, but pray do not confine it to the toilets of your carrots. A few drops on the tongue would, I am sure, make you take a less distorted view of things, and you would cease to worry over such trifles as the braying of a harmless animal.

Faithfully yours,
FREDERICK PETHERTON.

Of course I simply had to reply to this, but made no reference to the *tu quoque* question. He had evidently failed to grasp, or had ignored, the rather obvious suggestion in the last few words of my first letter on the subject. I wrote:—

MY DEAR CHAP,—Thanks so much for your prompt reply and valuable information about prussic acid. There was, however, one omission in the prescription. You didn't say on whose tongue the acid should be placed. If you meant on the donkey's it seems an excellent idea. I'll try it, so excuse more now, as the chemist's will be closed in a few minutes.



Yours in haste,
HARRY F.

Petherton was getting angry, and his reply was terse and venomous:—

SIR,—Yes, I did mean the donkey's. It will cure both his stupid braying and his habit of writing absurd and childish letters.

But if you poison *my* donkey it will cost you a good deal more than you will care to pay, especially in war-time.



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It is a pity you're too old for the army; you might have been shot by now.

Faithfully yours,
FREDERICK PETHERTON.

I had now got on to my fourth speed, and dashed off this reply:—

DEAR FREDDY,—I like you in all your moods, but positively adore you when you are angry. As a matter of fact I am very fond of what are so absurdly known as dumb animals, and am glad now that the chemist's was closed last night before I decided whether to go there or not. BALAAM himself would have been proud to own your animal. It roused me from my bed this morning with what was unmistakably a very fine asinine rendering of the first few bars of "The Yeoman's Wedding," but unfortunately it lost the swing of it before the end of the first verse.

Yours as ever,
HARRY.

Petherton gave up the contest; but I let him have a final tweak after seeing the announcement of his splendid and public-spirited action to help on the War Food scheme.

DEAR OLD BOY (I wrote),—How stupid you must have thought me all this time! Only when I learnt from the paragraph in this morning's *Surbury Examiner* that, in response to the suggestion of the Rural District Council, you have lent your field to the poor people of the neighbourhood for growing War Food did I realise the meaning of the dulcet-toned donkey's presence in your field.

The growing of more food at the present time is an absolute necessity, but it was left to you to discover this novel method of proclaiming to Surbury that here in its midst was land waiting to be put to really useful purpose.

I do not know which to admire the more, your patriotism or the ingenuity displayed in your selection of so admirable a mouthpiece from among your circle of friends.

Yrs.,
H.

Petherton has left it at that.

* * * * *

NURSERY RHYMES OF LONDON TOWN.

(SECOND SERIES.)



XVIII.

BAYSWATER.

The Bays came down to water—
Neigh! Neigh! Neigh!
And there they found the Brindled Mules—
Bray! Bray! Bray!
“How dare you muddy the Bays’ water
That was as clear as glass?
How dare you drink of the Bays’ water,
You children of an Ass?”

“Why shouldn’t we muddy your water?
Neigh! Neigh! Neigh!
Why shouldn’t we drink of your water,
Pray, pray, pray?
If our Sire was a Coster’s Donkey
Our Dam was a Golden Bay,
And the Mules shall drink of the Bays’ water
Every other day!”

XIX.

KENTISH TOWN.

As I jogged by a Kentish Town
Delighting in the crops,
I met a Gipsy hazel-brown
With a basketful of hops.

“You Sailor from the Dover Coast
With your blue eyes full of ships,
Carry my basket to the oast
And I’ll kiss you on the lips.”



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Once she kissed me with a jest,
Once with a tear—
O where's the heart was in my breast
And the ring was in my ear?

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Head of Government Department (in his private room in recently-commandeered hotel). "BOY! BRING SOME MORE COAL!"*]

* * * * *

WAR'S ROMANCES. [Now that fiction is occupying itself so much with military matters, it is necessary to warn the lady novelist—as it used to be necessary in other days to warn her in relation to sport—to cultivate accuracy. There is a constant danger that the popular story will include such passages as follow.]

"Corporal Cuthbert Crewdson," said the Colonel in a kindly voice, "your work has been very satisfactory—so much so that I have decided to promote you. From to-day you will no longer be Corporal, but Lance-Corporal." With a grateful smile our hero saluted and retired to draw his lance at the Adjutant's stores.

* * * * *

"Darling," cried the handsome young private, "I told the Colonel of our engagement, and he said at once I might bring you to tea at our Mess any Sunday afternoon."

* * * * *

One night, as Private Jones and the Sergeant-major were strolling arm-in-arm through the High Street...

* * * * *

"Remember," said the old Major, eyeing his eighteen-year-old subaltern son with a shrewd affectionate glance, "a little well-placed courtesy goes a long way. For instance, if a Sergeant should call you 'Sir,' never forget to say 'Sir' to him."

* * * * *

Osbert, his cane dangling from his left hand and with Mabel at his side, sailed proudly down Oxford Street. Suddenly a Tommy hove in sight. At once Osbert passed his stick to his other hand, leaving the left one free. The next moment the man was saluting, and Osbert, bringing up his left hand in acknowledgment, passed on.



“It is always well to be scrupulously correct in these little details,” he explained.

* * * * *

Mildred, her heart beating rapidly, stood shyly behind the muslin curtain as George, looking very gallant in khaki, strode past the window with his frog hopping along at his side.

* * * * *

Sidney Bellairs, apparently so stern and unbending on parade, was adored by his men. Often he had been known, when acting as “orderly officer” (as the officer is called who has to keep order), to carry round with him a light camp-stool, which, with his unfailing charm of manner, he would offer to some weary sentry. “There, my boy, sit down,” he would say, without a trace of condescension.

* * * * *

Lord Debenham succeeded because even in small things he could look ahead. “Ethelred,” he would say to his batman, “there is to be a field-day to-morrow, so see that my haversack, water-bottle and slacks are put ready for me in the morning.”



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“Very good, my lord,” the orderly would answer.

* * * * *

Marmaduke sprang forward. The Hun’s bomb, its pin withdrawn, was about to explode. Coolly removing his costly gold-and-diamond tie-pin, he thrust this substitute into the appointed place in the terrible sizzling bomb, and stood back with a little smile. The next moment his General stepped towards him and pinned to his breast the Victoria Cross.

* * * * *

Colonel Blood belonged to the old school—irascible, even explosive, but at bottom a heart of gold. Often after thrashing a subaltern with his cane for some neglect of duty he would smile suddenly and invite the offender to dine with him at the Regimental Mess as if nothing had happened.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Lady (asking for the third time)*. “HAVE WE REACHED NO. 234 YET?”

Conductor. “YES, MUM. HERE YOU ARE.” [*Stops bus.*]

Lady. “OH, I DIDN’T WANT TO GET OUT. I ONLY WANTED TO SHOW MY LITTLE FIDO WHERE HE WAS BORN.”]

* * * * *

A NEW DANGER.

“I don’t know if you realise,” said Ernest, “that since Army signalling became fashionable a new danger confronts us.”

“If you mean that an enthusiast might start semaphoring unexpectedly in a confined space and get his neighbour in the eye, I may say that I have thought of it,” I answered. “But it isn’t worth worrying very much about. He wouldn’t do it more than once.”

“It isn’t that,” said Ernest. “It’s something much more subtle and insidious. It is the growing tendency in ordinary conversation to use ‘Ack’ for A, ‘Beer’ for B, ‘Emma’ for M, ‘Esses’ for S, ‘Toe’ for T, *etc.* When you told me you were going to see your Aunt at 3 P.M., for instance, you said ‘3 Pip Emma.’ And it isn’t as if you were at all good at Semaphore or Morse either.

“Imagine,” he continued, “the effect upon a congregation of the announcement from the pulpit that the Reverend John Smith, Beer Ack, will preach next Sunday. Or upon a



meeting when told that Mr. Carrington Ponk, J. Pip, will now speak. Think of Aunt Jane and all her Societies," he went on gloomily. "Imagine her saying that she's going to an Esses Pip G. meeting to-morrow. It's a dreadful thought. It will extend to people's initials, too. The great T.P. will be Toe Pip O'CONNOR. Something will have to be done about it."

"There's only one thing to be done," I said. "You must get into Parliament and bring in a Bill about it. All might yet be well if you were an Emma Pip."

* * * * *

THE HUNGRY HUNS.

"The *Berliner Tageblatt's* correspondent states that the ground at St. Pierre Vaast has been converted into a marsh in which half-frozen soldiers, wet to the skin and knee-deep in mud, absorb the shells."

New Zealand Paper.



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* * * * *

“The dispute, he claimed, was not started by the employees, but by the employer making sweeping reductions in the ages of the men.”

Daily Paper.

If he wants to do this sort of thing with impunity he should employ women.

* * * * *

A FOOD PROBLEM.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—Please *do* tell me. Must I count sausages under the meat or the bread allowance? I do so want to help my country *faithfully*.

Yours,
WORRIED HOUSEWIFE.

* * * * *

“REWARD 2s. 6d. Lost, a small Silver Toothpick, value sentimental.”

Nottingham Evening Post.

The latest thing in love-tokens.

* * * * *

“After a debate lasting three days, the Senate rejected the motion approving Mr. Wilson’s Nose.”—*The Bulletin (Lahore)*.

The Senate has since shown its impartiality by registering its profound disapproval of the KAISER’S Cheek.

* * * * *

“A special constable has received the Silver Medal of the Society for Protection of Life from fire for his gallantry in mounting a ladder at a local fire last May and rescuing a cook.”—*Daily Paper.*

It is understood that members of the regular “force” consider that he showed some presumption in not leaving this particular task to them.

* * * * *



[Illustration: BLIGHTED PROSPECTS.

BERNSTORFF (*bitterly*). "PRETTY MESS YOU'VE MADE OF IT WITH YOUR NEW FRIGHTFULNESS. I'VE LOST MY JOB!"

HINDENBURG (*also bitterly*). "WELL, YOU'RE WELCOME TO MINE."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Dug-out (who has been put off on the last three greens by his caddie sneezing, and has now fozzled his putt again)*. "CONFOUND YOU! WHY DIDN'T YOU SNEEZE? I WAS COUNTING ON IT."]

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Wednesday, February 7th.—HIS MAJESTY opened Parliament to-day for what we all hope will be the Victory Session. But it will not be victory without effort. That was the burden of nearly all the speeches made to-day, from the KING'S downwards. HIS MAJESTY, who had left his crown and robes behind, wore the workmanlike uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet; and the Peers had forgone their scarlet and ermine in favour of khaki and sable. When Lord STANHOPE, who moved the Address, ventured, in the course of an oration otherwise sufficiently sedate, to remark that "the great crisis of the War had passed," Lord CURZON was swift to rebuke this deviation into cheerfulness. On the contrary, he declared, we were now approaching "the supreme and terrible climax of the War."



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He permitted himself, however, to impart one or two comforting items of information with regard to the arming of existing merchant-ships, the construction of new tonnage and the development of inventions for the discovery and deletion of submarines. For excellent reasons, no doubt, it was all a little vague, but in one respect his statement left nothing to be desired in the way of precision. "The present Government, in its seven weeks of office, had taken but two large and one small hotels," and is, I gather, marvelling at its own moderation.

I was a little disappointed with the speeches of the Mover and Seconder of the Address in the Commons, for of recent years there has been a great improvement in this difficult branch of oratory. Sir HEDWORTH MEUX must, I think, have been dazzled by the effulgence of his epaulettes, which were certainly more highly polished than his periods. When in mufti he is much briefer and brighter. As Mr. ASQUITH however found both speeches "admirable," no more need be said.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, as one must for convenience style him—though in truth there is no Opposition, in the strict sense of the word—just said what he ought to have said. For one brief moment he seemed to be straying on to dangerous ground, when he put some questions regarding the scope of the coming Imperial Conference; but the rest of his speech was wholly in keeping with the peroration, in which he pleaded that in the prosecution of the Nation's aim there should be "no jarring voices, no party cross-currents, no personal or sectional distractions."

Unfortunately there is a section of the Commons over which he exercises no control. When Mr. BONAR LAW, as Leader of the House, rose to reply, the "jarring voices" of Mr. SNOWDEN and others of his kidney were heard in chorus, calling for the PRIME MINISTER. Mr. LAW paid no attention to the interruption. He cordially thanked Mr. ASQUITH for his speech, "the best possible testimony to the unity of this country," and assured him that the Imperial Conference would be primarily concerned with the successful prosecution of the War. The GERMAN EMPEROR had proved himself a great Empire-builder, but it was not his own empire that he was building.

Later on Mr. PRINGLE reverted to the absence of the PRIME MINISTER, which he, as a person of taste, interpreted as "studied disrespect of the House of Commons." In this view he was supported by Mr. KING. Mr. LLOYD GEORGE must really be careful.

Strange to say, no public notice was taken of another distinguished absentee—the Member for East Herts. A few days ago, after a violent collision with Mr. JUSTICE DARLING, MR. PEMBERTON-BILLING announced his intention of resigning his seat and submitting himself for re-election. But since then we have been given to understand that a vote of confidence proposed by PEMBERTON, seconded by

BILLING, and carried unanimously by the hyphen, had convinced him that, as in the leading case of Mr. CECIL RHODES, "resignation can wait."

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Thursday, February 8th.—When we read day by day long lists of merchant vessels sunk by the enemy submarines two questions occur to most of us. How does the amount of tonnage lost compare with the amount of new tonnage put afloat, and what is the number of submarines that the Navy has accounted for in recent months? Mr. FLAVIN put the first question to-day, but found Sir LEO CHIOZZA MONEY, who usually exudes statistics at every pore, singularly reticent on the subject. All he would say was that a large programme of new construction was in hand.

Private Members blew off a great volume of steam to-day on the proposal of the Government to take the whole time of the House. Scotsmen, Irishmen and an Englishman or two joined in the plea that at least they should be allowed to introduce their various little Bills, even if they did not get any further. Perhaps if a Welshman had joined the band they might have been listened to. As it was, only one of them received any comfort. This was Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL, who was informed that the Bill to deprive the enemy dukes of their British titles, for which he has been clamouring these two years, would shortly be introduced. But for the rest Mr. BONAR LAW was not inclined at this crisis in our fate to encourage the raising of questions, most of them acutely controversial, which would distract attention from the War.

On an amendment to the Address Mr. LESLIE SCOTT took up his brief for the British farmer, who, deprived of his skilled men and faced with higher prices for fertilizers and feeding-stuffs, was expected to grow more food without having any certainty that he would be able to dispose of it at a remunerative price. Farming is always a bit of a gamble, but in present conditions it beats the Stock Exchange hollow. Some of the proposals which Mr. SCOTT outlined to improve the situation would have been denounced as revolutionary three years ago, and were a little too drastic even now for Mr. PROTHERO. Squeezed between the WAR MINISTER and the FOOD CONTROLLER, the MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE rather resembles the *Dormouse* in *Alice in Wonderland*; but he is really quite all right, thank you. Mr. GEORGE LAMBERT thinks that the author of “The Psalms in Human Life” is too saintly to tackle Lords DERBY and DEVONPORT, but, if my memory serves me, DAVID—no allusion to the PREMIER—had a rather pretty gift of invective.

Let no one say that England is not at last awake. Mr. CHARLES BATHURST to-night made the terrific announcement that in some parts of the country Masters of Hounds are—shooting foxes.

“This brings the War home,” said FERDINAND THE FEARFUL when he heard the news.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Jones (to cloak-room attendant). “HOW MUCH?”*]



Cloak-room Attendant. "THERE IS NO VERBAL CHARGE, SIR."]

* * * * *

"It was agreed to express satisfaction with the announcement that the price fixed for the potato crop of 1917 was not a maximum price."—*Scots Paper.*

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This must be the happy mean of which we hear so much.

* * * * *

THE RECENT TRUCE.

Students of geography know that Ballybun is divided from the back gardens of Kilterash by the pellucid waters of that noble stream, the Bun, which hurls itself over a barrier of old tin-cans in a frantic effort to find the sea. But they do not know that this physical division, long ago bridged, is nothing to the moral and political division which will keep the two for ever asunder.

Several of our younger citizens have written to me from the trenches to ask how the War is progressing. I have usually in reply quoted the remark of one of their number on leaving us for the Front after a short holiday, that he was now looking forward to a little peace and rest. I wish here to add a postscript to this concerning a recent unexpected truce.

Political geography is not written as it should be, so that there may be people who have not even heard of the Great War between Ballybun and Kilterash. No one knows for certain when it started, or why. A local antiquary, after prolonged study of chronicles, memorials, rolls and records, to say nothing of local churchyards, refers it with some confidence to the reign of HENRY II. (LOUIS VII. being King of France, in the pontificate of ADRIAN IV. and so on), and to the forcible abduction of a pig (called the White Pearl) by the then ruling monarch of Kilterash. The Editor of *The Kilterash Curfew*, in one of his recent "Readings for the Day of Rest," remarked that Christian charity compelled him to hurl this foul aspersion back in the teeth of this so-called antiquary; the whole world knew that the pig had been born in the parish of Kilterash, but had "strayed" across the Bun, as things too often had the habit of straying.

I am the "so-called antiquary." My little pamphlet proves in less than three hundred pages the truth of my allegation concerning the abduction of the White Pearl, giving the original texts on which I rely and the genealogies of all concerned in a sordid story.

Since 1157, as far as history records, we have been afflicted with only two periods of truce. One was when, on hearing of the foul wrong done by the German Brute in Belgium, we united in enlisting recruits for our local regiment. This truce was broken by my worthy friend, the Editor of *The Curfew*, who pointed out, more in anger than in sorrow, that Ballybun had sent six men fewer than Kilterash. The second truce—again broken by the enemy—concerned myself. Wishing to add, if possible, to the evidence from monuments contained in my pamphlet, I was copying an inscription I had only just discovered in the disused churchyard of Killyburnbrae, when one of these light Atlantic showers sprang up and soaked me to the backbone. The result was influenza and a high temperature, which rose while I was reading *The Curfew* upon my brochure, "*The*

White Pearl of Ballybun, an Impartial Examination with the Original Documents herein set out and now for the first time deciphered by a Member of the Society of Antiquarians. Dedicated to All Lovers of the Truth. Printed by the Ballybun Binnacle Press."

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The Curfew said of this fair statement of the evidence (with the original documents, mind you) that it smacked of German scholarship and their graveyard style of doing things. My blood boiled at this, and to keep me cool my niece, who lives with me, pulled down all the blinds, as the sun was strong.

An old fish-woman passing by saw this and said, "Well, well, the poor old fellow's gone at last! A decent man in his time, with no taste in fish! We must all come to it." From her the news spread forty miles on either side of her and reached the Editor of *The Curfew* in the middle of a philippic. Next morning I was astounded to read in his editorial columns: "Our distinguished neighbour and friend—if he will allow us to call him so—is now no more; in other words is gone ... as VIRGIL remarks ... famous antiquarian ... scrupulous and methodical, and, as we remarked in our last issue, reminiscent of the palmy days of the best German monumental scholarship ... our slight differences never affected the esteem in which we held him as a patriot, citizen, ratepayer and Man...."

Now this was kindly and fair. I have written to my worthy friend and have proposed to dedicate to him my forthcoming work (non-partisan) on the "Slant Observable in Some Church-Spires, Part I." When he had to unbury me, war had to be resumed—it was his side that insisted upon it—but as far as the two chieftains are concerned it is a war without bitterness. He now introduces his attacks with "Our honoured and able antiquarian friend"; while my answers breathe such sentiments as "The genial editor of that well-conducted organ."

* * * * *

[Illustration: FOOD VALUES IN OUR RESTAURANTS.

Customer. "WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST FOR TO-DAY, MISS?"

Waitress (late of Girton). "WELL, SIR, ROAST MUTTON, TWO VEGETABLES AND SWEETS WILL GIVE YOU THE NECESSARY PROTEIN, CALORIES AND CARBOHYDRATES."]

* * * * *

AS YOU WERE.

"Blow to Narkets. Rise of nearly 400 points. Cotton jump. Germany's note breaks the market."

Liverpool Echo, Feb. 1.

"Blow to Markets. Fall of nearly 400 points. Cotton slump."



Same Paper, Later Edition.

In spite of this sensational transformation of a jump into a slump we are glad to see that typographically at any rate the markets had recovered a little from their early derangement.

* * * * *

“Supposing a man has porridge and bacon for breakfast and a cut from the point or a shop or steak for luncheon he may find that he has consumed his meat allowance for the day.”

Daily Mail (Manchester Edition).

Is not the food problem sufficiently difficult already without these additional complications? The man who wants a whole shop for his luncheon will get no sympathy from us.



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From a list of Canon MASTERMAN'S lectures on "The War and the Smaller Nations of Europe":—

"April 2nd (possibly), 'The Reconstruction of Europe.'"—*Western Morning News*.

We commend the lecturer's caution, but hope it will prove to have been superfluous.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THIS IS NOT A SCENE FROM A REVUE—IT IS HARDLY DULL ENOUGH FOR THAT—BUT AN EVERYDAY PERFORMANCE ON THE PLATFORM OF ANY RAILWAY STATION DURING THE RECENT COLD SPELL.]

* * * * *

A FORWARD MINX.

The garden wall was high, yet not so high but that any young lady bent on attracting the notice of her neighbours could look over it. Miss Dot indeed regarded an outside flight of steps which led to an upper storey as an appointed amelioration to the hours which she was expected to spend in the garden, for it was an easy scramble from the stairs to the top of the wall, whence she could survey the world. To be sure the wall was narrow as well as high, but a timorous gait shows off a pretty figure, and slight nervousness adds a pathetic expression to a pretty face; to both of which advantages Dot was not, it is to be believed, altogether indifferent when khaki coats dwelt the other side of that wall.

On this particular day she was trying to attract notice in so unrestrained a manner that her mother remarked it from an upper window. But mothers, we are told in these latter days, are not always the wisest guardians of their "flapper" daughters. This mother had a decided *penchant* for a khaki coat herself; only she demanded braid on the cuff and a smartly cut collar, and these she would greet in the street with a tender act of homage which rarely failed to win admiring attention. But for a daughter who would dash down the road after a Tommy she had contempt rather than disapproval. So she watched with interest, but, alas! with no idea of interference.

At first there were only "civvies" about, and though the admiration of any youthful male was dear to Dot's heart, and though chaff and blandishments were not wanting, still the wall was high, and she lacked the resolve to descend. But presently two khaki coats appeared and the matter grew more serious. It was evident that it was not principle or modesty that held her back, but just timidity, for she responded eagerly to the advances of her admirers, but could not quite pluck up courage for that long jump down. Affairs



grew shameless, for the khaki coats fetched a ladder to assist the elopement; but Dot made it clear that there were difficulties in that method of flight, though she wished there were not. At last she was enticed to a lower portion of the wall, and there, half screened by shrubs, she was lifted off by the shoulders, deliciously reluctant, and received into the cordial embrace of an enthusiastic soldiery.



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And her mother retired to the sofa!

Shortly afterwards musketry instruction was proceeding in a public place; and behind the little group of learners sat Dot, in the seventh heaven of joy, drinking it all in with eager attention. And the instructing officer did not seem to mind.

“How sad and mad and bad it was,” a theme for the moralist, the conscientious objector, the Army reformer, the social reformer, the statistician. Yet perhaps even their solemn faces might relax to-day at the sight of a long-legged Airedale puppy marching at the head of the battalion to which she has appointed herself mascot.

* * * * *

QUIS CUSTODIET?

“Engineer desires position as Manager of Works Manager.”—*The Aeroplane*.

* * * * *

“——and Sons will sell by Auction four Shorthand and Jersey Cows.”

Morning Paper.

As the FOOD CONTROLLER’S Department is said to be still short of clerks, he may like to bid for these accomplished creatures.

* * * * *

AT THE PLAY.

“FELIX GETS A MONTH.”

This “whimsical comedy,” made by Mr. LEON M. LION out of a novel by the late TOM GALLON, began in a distinctly intriguing mood. *Felix* had an uncle, a sport, on whom he had once played a scurvy practical joke. This highly tolerant victim eventually cut up for a round million, which he left to nephew *Felix* on condition that he should enter Umberminster as naked as the day he was born and earn his living therein for a full calendar month—a palpable posthumous hit to the old man. *Felix* accordingly, equipped as laid down in the will, is left by the family solicitor in a wood, and, after a night and a day in hiding, appears shivering at the Mayor’s parlour window, abstracts a rug for temporary relief, and prevails upon the maid, a romantic little orphan (who had been reading about river-gods and mistakes *Felix* for one), to borrow a suit of the Mayor’s clothes—into which he gets in time to interview that worthy when he returns with his



grim lady. “You’ll get a month,” says she with damnable iteration; and the resourceful *Felix*, with an eye to the whimsical will, whimsically suggests that justice would be better fulfilled by his putting in the month at the Mayor’s house as odd-job man than by his being conveyed to the county jail. And the Mayor whimsically agrees.

After that, I regret to say, honest whimsicality took wing, and the show became merely—shall we say?—eupeptic. And certainly a much more elaborate meal than my lord DEVONPORT allowed me would be required to induce a mood sufficiently tolerant to face without impatience the welter which followed. The three incredible people—mercenary virgin, heavy father and aimless smiling villain—that walked straight out of the Elephant and Castle into

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the Second Act were not, I suspect, any elaborate (and quite irrelevant) joke of the actor-author's at the expense of the transpontine method, but just queer puppets brought on to disentangle the complications, though I confess I half thought that the villain, Mr. LAWRENCE LEYTON, was pulling our legs with a quite deliberate burlesque. On the whole I am afraid this play is but another wreck on that old snag of the dramatised novel.

But there were plenty of isolated good things, such as Mr. O.B. CLARENCE'S really excellent Mayor, puzzled, pompous, eagle-pecked. Miss FLORENCE IVOR, the eagle in question, gave a shrewd and shrewish portrait of a wife gey ill to live with. Mr. REGINALD BACH'S very entertaining imaginary portrait of a faithful boy scout was a stroke of genius, his "call of the wild" being by far the best whim of the evening. Miss EVA LEONARD-BOYNE as *Ninetta*, the orphan, did her little job tenderly and prettily, but I couldn't believe in *Ninetta* in that galley, and I doubt if she did. Mr. GORDON ASH was the debonair hero. I do most solemnly entreat him to consider the example of some of the elders in his profession who have adopted a laugh as their principal bit of business. It may turn into a millstone. Was he not laughing the same laugh on this very stage in a very different part three days ago? He was. If he got a month, laugh-barred, he would profit by the sentence. For he has jolly good stuff in him.

T.

[Illustration: BORROWED PLUMES IN A MAYOR'S NEST.

Alderman Twentyman . Mr. O.B. CLARENCE.

Felix Delany Mr. GORDON ASH.]

* * * * *

MORE COMMANDEERING.

From a report of the PRIME MINISTER'S speech at Carnarvon:—

"There are eight million houses in this country. Let us have VICTORY GUM FACTORY, Nelson, Lancs."—*Daily Dispatch*.

But surely he does not want to be known as "The Stickit Minister."

* * * * *



“A grocer in a London suburb complains that on Saturday he and his staff were 'run off their legs by the extraordinary demands of customers.’”—*Westminster Gazette*.

We congratulate the printer on his gallant effort to depict the situation.

* * * * *

“Wanted, Cook Generals, House Parlourmaids; fiends might suit.”—*Irish Paper*.

Discussion of the eternal servant problem is apt to be one-sided; it was quite time that we heard from the *advocatus diaboli*.

* * * * *

TO STEPHEN LEACOCK

(Professor of Political Economy at McGill University, Montreal, and author of “Further Foolishness” and other notable works of humour).



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The life that is flagrantly double,
Conflicting in conduct and aim,
Is seldom untainted by trouble
And commonly closes in shame;
But no such anxieties pester
Your dual existence, which links
The functions of don and of jester—
High thought and high jinks.

Your earliest venture perhaps is
Unique in the rapture intense
Displayed in these riotous Lapses
From all that could savour of sense,
Recalling the “goaks” and the gladness
Of one whom we elders adored—
The methodical midsummer madness
Of ARTEMUS WARD.

With you, O enchanting Canadian,
We laughed till you gave us a stitch
In our sides at the wondrous Arcadian
Exploits of the indolent rich;
We loved your satirical sniping,
And followed, far over “the pond,”
The lure of your whimsical piping
Behind the Beyond.

In place of the squalor that stretches
Unchanged o’er the realist’s page,
The sunshine that glows in your Sketches
Is potent our griefs to assuage;
And when, on your mettlesome charger,
Full tilt against reason you go,
Your Lunacy’s finer and Larger
Than any I know.

The faults of ephemeral fiction,
Exotic, erotic or smart,
The vice of delirious diction,
The latest excesses of Art—
You flay in felicitous fashion,
With dexterous choice of your tools,
A scourge for unsavoury passion,
A hammer for fools.



And yet, though so freakish and dashing,
You are not the slave of your fun,
For there's nobody better at lashing
The crimes and the cant of the Hun;
Anyhow, I'd be proud as a peacock
To have it inscribed on my tomb:
"He followed the footsteps of LEACOCK
In banishing gloom."

* * * * *

From an Indian clerk's letter to his employer:—

"I am glad that the War is progressing very favourably for the Allies. We long for the day when, according to Lord Curzon's saying, 'The Bengal Lancers will petrol the streets of Berlin.'"

Quite the right spirit.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Awe-struck Tommy (from the trenches)*. "LOOK, BILL—SOLDIERS!"]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

It may be as well for me to confess at once the humiliating fact that I am not, and never have been, an Etonian. If that be a serious disqualification for life in general, how much more serious must it be for the particular task of reviewing a book which is of Eton all compact, a book, for example, like *Memories of Eton Sixty Years Ago*, by A.C. AINGER, with contributions from N.G. LYTTELTON and JOHN



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MURRAY (MURRAY). For I have never been “up to” anybody; I have never been present at “absence”; I have no real understanding of the difference between a “tutor” and a “dame”; I call a “*p[oe]na*” by the plebeian name of “imposition”; and, until I had read Mr. AINGERS’S book, I had never heard of the verb “to brosier” or the noun substantive “bever.” Altogether my condition is most deplorable. Yet there are some alleviations in my lot, and one of them has been the reading of this delightful book. I found it most interesting, and can easily imagine how Etonians will be absorbed in it, for it will revive for them many an old and joyful memory of the days that are gone. Mr. AINGER discourses, with a *mitis sapientia* that is very attractive, on the fashions and manners of the past and the gradual process of their development into the Eton of the present. He is proud, as every good Etonian must be, of Eton as it exists, but now and again he hints that the Eton of an older time was in some respects a simpler and a better place. The mood, however, never lasts long, and no one can quarrel with the way in which it is expressed. General LYTTELTON, too, in one of his contributions, relates how on his return from a long stay in India he visited Eton, expecting to be modestly welcomed by shy and ingenuous youths, and how, instead, he was received and patronised by young but sophisticated men of the world. The GENERAL, I gather, was somewhat chilled by his experience. Altogether this book is emphatically one without which no Etonian’s library can be considered complete.

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Perhaps of all our War correspondents Mr. PHILIP GIBBS contrives to give in his despatches the liveliest sense of the movement, the pageantry and the abominable horror of war. Pageantry there is, for all the evil boredom and weariness of this pit-and-ditch business, and Mr. GIBBS sees finely and has an honest pen that avoids the easy *cliche*. You might truthfully describe his book, *The Battles of the Somme* (HEINEMANN), as an epic of the New Armies. He never seems to lose his wonder at their courage and their spirit, and always with an undercurrent of sincerely modest apology for his own presence there with his notebook, a mere chronicler of others’ gallantry. This chronicle begins at the glorious 1st of July and ends just before Beaumont-Hamel, which the author miserably missed, being sent home on sick leave. It is a book that may well be one of those preserved and read a generation hence by men who want to know what the great War was really like. God knows it ought to help them to do something to prevent another. Yet there is nothing morbid in it. As the sergeant thigh-deep in a flooded trench said, “You know, Sir, it doesn’t do to take this war seriously.” The armies of a nation that takes its pleasures sadly take their bitter pains with a grin; and that grin is what has made them such an unexpectedly tough proposition to the All-Seriouses.



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An old adage warns us never to buy a "pig in a poke." Equally good advice for the heroines of fiction or drama would be never under any circumstances to marry a bridegroom in a mask. In more cases than I can recall, neglect of this simple precaution has led to a peck of trouble. I am thinking now of *Yvonne*, leading lady in *The Mark of Vraye* (HUTCHINSON). I admit that poor *Yvonne* had more excuse than most. Hers was what you might call a hard case. On the one hand there was the villain *Philippe*, a most naughty man, swearing that she was in his power, and calling for instant marriage at the hands of *Father Simon*, who happened to be present. On the other hand, the gentleman in the mask revealed a pair of eyes that poor *Yvonne* rashly supposed to belong to someone for whom she had more than a partiality. So when he suggested that the proposed ceremony should take place during *Philippe's* temporary absence from the stage, with himself as substitute, *Yvonne* (astonished perhaps at her own luck so early in the plot) simply jumped at the idea. Then, of course, the deed being done, off comes the mask, and behold the triumphant countenance of her bitterest foe, *Charles de Montbrison*, whom she herself had disfigured as the (supposed) murderer of her brother. Act drop and ten minutes' interval. Need I detail for you the subsequent course of this marriage of inconvenience? The courage and magnanimity of one side, the feminine cruelty melting at last to love, and finally the inevitable duologue of reconciliation, through which I can never help hearing the rustle of opera-cloaks and the distant cab-whistles. Charming, charming. Mr. H.B. SOMERVILLE has furnished a pleasant entertainment, and one that (like all good readers or spectators) you will enjoy none the less because of its entire familiarity.

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The Flight of Mariette (CHAPMAN AND HALL) is a slender volume, whose simplicity gives it a poignancy both incongruous and grim. Much of it you might compare to the diary of a butterfly before and whilst being broken on the wheel. *Mariette*, the jolly little maid of Antwerp, was so tender and harmless a butterfly; and the machine that broke her life and drove her to the martyrdom of exile was so huge and cruel a thing. How cruel in its effects it is well for us just now to be again reminded, lest, in these days of hurrying horrors, remembrance should be weakened. To that extent therefore Miss GERTRUDE E.M. VAUGHAN has done good service in compiling this human document of accusation. In a preface Mr. JOHN GALSWORTHY pleads the cause of our refugee guests, not so much for charity as for comprehension. Certainly, *The Flight of Mariette* will do much to further such understanding. I think I need only add that half the proceeds of its sale will go to feed the seven million Belgians still in Belgium (prey to the twin wolves of Prussia and starvation) for you to see that three shillings and sixpence could hardly be better used than in the purchase of a copy.



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I was beginning to wonder whether Mr. EDEN PHILLPOTTS was suffering from writer's cramp, so much longer than usual does it seem since I heard from him. Now, however, my anxiety is relieved by *My Devon Year* (SCOTT), a delightful book which could have come from no other pen than his. It is a marvel how many fragrant things he still finds to say, and with what inexhaustible freshness, about his beloved county. I hesitate to give these sketches an indiscriminate recommendation, because to those who walk through the country with closed eyes they will have little or no meaning; but if you are in love with beauty and can appreciate its translation into exquisite language you will draw from them a real and lasting joy. Let me confess now that I once asked Mr. PHILLPOTTS to give Devonshire a rest, and that I accept *My Devon Year* as a convincing proof that this request was ill-considered.

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I wish Mr. DOUGLAS SLADEN would not throw so many bouquets at his characters. *Roger Wynyard*, the hero of *Grace Lorraine* (HUTCHINSON), was really just a very ordinary youth, but when I discovered that he was "the fine flower of our Public-School system," "as chivalrous as a Bayard," and so forth, I began—unfairly, perhaps, but quite irresistibly—to entertain a considerable prejudice against him. Let me hasten, however, to add that Mr. SLADEN has packed his novel with the kind of incident which appeals to the popular mind, though his conclusion may cause a shock to those who think that our divorce-laws are in need of reform. In the matter of style Mr. SLADEN is content with something short of perfection. "It was easier for her to forgive a man, with his happy-go-lucky nature, for getting into trouble, than to forgive his getting out again by not being sufficiently careful not to add to the other person's misfortune." For myself, I do not find it so easy to forgive these happy-go-lucky methods in a writer who ought to know better by now.

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[Illustration: *Sentry*. "WHO GOES THERE?"]

Tommy. "FRIEND."

Sentry (on recognising voice). "FRIEND! I DON'T THINK. WHY, YOU'RE THE CHAP WHO BAGGED MY MESS-TIN BEFORE THE LAST KIT-INSPECTION."]

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THE WAR LOAN; A LAST APPEAL.

Now, by the memory of our gallant dead,
And by our hopes of peace through victory won,



Lend of your substance; let it not be said
You left your part undone.

Lend all and gladly. If this bitter strife
May so by one brief hour be sooner stayed,
Then is your offering, spent to ransom life,
A thousand times repaid.

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