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VOLUME 159, DECEMBER 29, 1920 ***

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

Vol. 159.

29th December, 1920.

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CHARIVARIA.

No newspapers were published on Saturday, Sunday or Monday. We did not begrudge them their holiday, but we do think *The Daily Mail* might have issued occasional bulletins respecting the weather at Thanet, as we consider three days is too long to keep their readers in suspense.

The most popular indoor game this winter seems to be Battledore-and-Juttlecock.

A woman informed a London magistrate last Tuesday that her husband thrashed her at Easter, Whitsuntide and on August Bank Holiday. Our thoughts were constantly with her during the recent Yuletide festivities.

Readers should not be alarmed if a curious rustling noise is heard next Saturday morning. It will be simply the sound of new leaves being turned over.

In view of the possible increase of their salaries it is not the intention of Members of Parliament to solicit Christmas-boxes. Householders, therefore, should be on their guard against men passing themselves off as M.P.s.

Our attention is drawn to the fact that the latest photograph of Mr. LLOYD GEORGE shows him to be smoking a cigar with the band on. We can only say that CROMWELL wouldn't have done it.

Our magistrates appear to be made of poor stuff these days. A man named SNAIL was last week summoned before the Feltham magistrates for exceeding the speed limit, yet no official joke was made. Incidentally, why is it that Mr. Justice DARLING never gets a real chance like this?

A New York policeman has been arrested in the act of removing a safe from a large drapery store. It is said that upon being seen by another policeman he offered to run and fetch a burglar.

Mme. DELYSIA has been bitten by a dog in New York. The owner's defence, that the animal had never tasted famous dancer before, is not likely to be accepted.

Like a soothing balm just before the old year dies comes the intimation from Mr. LOVAT FRASER that there is a bright side to things.

With reference to the opening of the pantomime season it is reported that a couple of new jokes have been found nesting in a Glasgow theatre.

Psychologists are inclined to attribute the recent night stampede of sheep in the Midlands, when thousands of them jumped their hurdles, to the influence of a large number of people concentrating on a well-known remedy for sleeplessness.

It is stated that rabies does not exist in Ireland. Our opinion is that it wouldn't be noticed if it did.

Very few English Christmas customs, we hear, are prevalent out in Russia. We have always felt that the custom of clients giving Christmas-boxes to their executioners will never become very popular.

It is rumoured that the repeated assassinations of General VILLA have made it necessary for him to resign his position as Permanent Chief Insurgent to the State of Mexico.

The Morning Post has remarked that nowadays the Eton boy is often reduced to travelling third-class. It is hoped to persuade Sir ERIC GEDDES to disguise himself as an Eton boy during the holidays to see how it feels.

It is now admitted that the plum-pudding which was badly mauled by a small boy in the Hoxton district on Christmas Day began it by inviting his assailant to "come on."

D'ANNUNZIO is reported to be coming to a more reasonable frame of mind. Apparently he is disposed to allow Italy a certain measure of independence.

People step out into the road and never look to right or left, says a London coroner. This makes things far too easy for motorists.

Dr. A. GRAHAM BELL recently told a Derby audience how he invented the telephone. We note that he still refuses to say why.

We are informed that, on and after the 1st of January, Mr. CHURCHILL cannot undertake to refute the opinions of any writer who has not been officially recognised as a best seller.

A scientist has succeeded in putting a pea to sleep with electro-magnetism. The clumsy old method of drowning it in a plate of soup should now be a thing of the past.

General TOWNSHEND says that with seventy thousand men he could have conquered half Asia. But then he might have lost Mr. HORATIO BOTTOMLEY.

What we want now is something to make the world safe for those who made the world safe for democracy.

There is now on the market a new patent contrivance which gives warning when the contents of an oven are on the point of burning. We have secured a sample, but unfortunately our cook still relies on her sense of smell.

"Leather is now much cheaper," we read. Yet we have noticed no drop in the price of restaurant steak.

On January 1st the Ministry of Munitions will enter upon its second year of winding up.



OUR GOGGLERS.

First Girl in grandmotherly spectacles (to second ditto). "How FRIGHTFULLY OUT OF DATE THAT WOMAN IS. FANCY—LORGNETTES!"

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THE HAPPY HOOTS.

Yes, it is nearly twelve now. In ten minutes we shall hear the bells—I mean the hooters. I wonder if there were hooters when TENNYSON wrote those popular lines about ringing in the New Year. Very likely he didn't hear them if there were, as there's nothing to show that he ever really stayed up late enough to see the New Year in. It's a pity, because the hooters would have fitted in to that poem most beautifully. The hooting idea is just what is wanted to give a dramatic contrast to the sugary ringing business.

"Ring out the false, ring in the true"

doesn't *convince* somehow; it's too impartial. One doesn't say to the footman, "Show the Rector up, please, and show this blackmailer out," even at the Lyceum. One says, "*Kick* this black-hearted hound out," and the footman realises then that you have something against the fellow. Just so one doesn't gather from the above line that the poet has any strong preference as between the false and the true, except that there is no good rhyme to "the false," unless you can count "waltz"; but what about—

Hoot out the old, ring in the new;
Hoot out the false, ring in the true?

Magnificent! There's some sting in that; it "gets over," and it brings the whole poem into harmony with modern practice.

Come on, we'd better have another dance before the great moment. I wonder if TENNYSON ever saw the New Year in at two guineas a head. I don't expect so. For that matter it's the first time we've done it at an expensive public "Revel" ourselves; but then this is the first year we've been absolutely bankrupt. Up till now we've been rather well off, and have celebrated cheaply at home. Do you realise that this is our wedding-day? I believe you'd forgotten; women never remember these things. Yes, it's six years ... Six years. And this is the first year we've been bankrupt. All the same, as I say, it's the first year we've come out and had a jolly good supper. Reckless? Yes, I'm afraid we are. But we've caught it from the Government ... However, to-morrow we'll start a new cheque-book.

Have you made your resolutions yet? I have. Do you remember this time last year? You said you'd keep accounts, and I said I wouldn't smoke so much. And all the year through our resolution has never wavered. I've got evidence of that. Look at my diary. Here we are:—

January 1st.—G. started keeping accounts. Gave up smoking.

And here we are again:—

March 20th.—G. started accounts.

March 29th.—Knocked off smoking.

That shows it was no mere flash-in-the-pan, doesn't it?

And we *went on* like that. Look at this:—

June 6th.—Gave up smoking.

June 7th.—Only one pipe since yesterday.

June 30th.—Cut myself down to four pipes a day.

July 1st-9th.—G. keeping accounts; knocked off smoking.

But I wonder why I kept writing it down. Even in September, you see, I wasn't taking it for granted:—

September 29th.—Quarter-Day. Not smoking this quarter. G. began new system of accounts.

It looks like bragging, doesn't it? But I don't think I can have meant it that way. Still, it is rather marvellous, when you come to think of it—here we are, after all these months, twelve of them, and we still stick doggedly to the same unswerving resolution. Nothing can alter it. That's what I call tenacity of purpose.

You don't think I'm serious? But I am. I'm just as serious as I was last year. This year I *shall* give up smoking. Only I think you ought to give up your hot-water bottle in sympathy. You won't? No, I know you won't. You're a slave of the bottle, you see. It doesn't do you any harm? Oh, yes it does. It makes your backbone flabby, and it makes you susceptible to colds, and it gives you chilblains, and, anyhow, it's morally pernicious, because it's an *indulgence* ... If I'd known you were a hot-water-bottle woman before we were married ... However, we needn't go into that. But if you won't give up your bottle I shan't give up smoking after all.

Look, they're opening the windows. We shall all catch cold. Can you hear anything? I can hear those people eating. What a draught! Can you hear anything? I can hear the eaters quite plainly now. Here comes Father Christmas. I believe he is going to give us all gifts.

Can you hear anything yet? I have been given a diary. What have you got? Another diary? Is yours for 1921? So is mine. How dull! Christmas will be on a Sunday next year, I see. So will our wedding-day. I hope you'll remember it this time. And they have arranged for the Spring to begin on March 21st. Think of it! Spring—in less than three months!

There they go.

Hoot out, wild hooters, to the wild sky!

What a jolly noise! Much better than bells, really much more accurate as an expression of one's feelings. There's a sort of "faint but pursuing" note about it. And that's how I feel, rather. It was a dreadful year, really, wasn't it?—that last one, I mean. No money, no clothes—nothing but rates and dentists and small accounts respectfully submitted for our esteemed favour. One long crisis.... But we kept the flag flying. This year—

Hallo! somebody 's going to recite. What do you think it will be? You'll never guess. Yes, you're quite right.

Ring out a slowly-dying cause
And ancient forms of party strife.

That sounds like a bit of Government propoganda. Disgraceful, I call it. If I was a Wee Free—

Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners—

That's a hit at somebody, too, I shouldn't wonder. Somebody must have written a topical verse for the occasion. Those people are still eating. I expect they are doing Hog-money, or whatever it is....

Are you still as obstinate as ever about that hot-water bottle? Very well, then, I shall now have the first smoke of the New Year. Oh, no; we 've got to do *Auld Lang Syne* first. I never *can* smoke while I'm singing.

"Should auld acquaintance ..." Do you know any of the people here? No? Do you ever want to see any of them again? No? Never mind, they've all paid a lot of money to hold our hands; let them have their money's worth ... "A right gude willie-waucht ..." Waiter! One large willie-waucht, please, and a small pint stoup ... Do you realise that this is the only night in the year when you can get a willie-waucht at this hour? What a world!

Six years. Do you see that nice couple over there? I bet they haven't been married as long as we have. And I bet they're not so bankrupt. This is going to be a dreadful year. I can see that at once.

But we'll keep the flag flying.

Ah, here come the willie-waucths. Thank you, waiter.

Well, my dear—a cup of kindness with you. Here's luck!

A. P. H.

Natural History on the Football Field.

"St. Columb's Court and North-End met at The Farm, when St. Columb's Court were the victors by three goats to one."

—*Irish Paper.*

"Harry — (19), described as a comedian, was bound over in £5 for six months under the rug, the property of Hilda —."

Provincial Paper.

It seems that HARRY was not the only comedian in court.

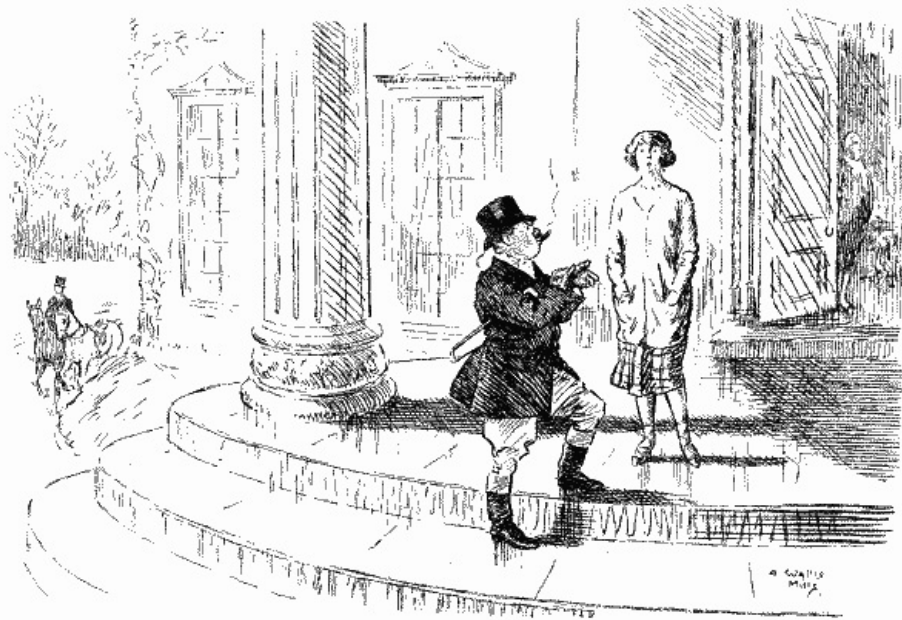
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A BOXING NIGHTMARE.

THE GOOD FAIRY GEORGINA. "I WAVE MY WAND—UTOPIA DOTH APPEAR ...
(*extemporising*) SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG. O DEAR! O DEAR! O DEAR!"

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Post-War Sportsman. "THE HOUNDS MEET ON THE LAWN TO-MORROW, MY DEAR. WE MUST GIVE THEM A STIRRUP-CUP."
Wife. "I HOPE THE CHEF KNOWS HOW TO MAKE IT. IF NOT I SUPPOSE CLARET-CUP WOULD DO?"

ELIZABETH'S CHRISTMAS.

"I've always thort 'ow I'd love to 'ave a reel nice Christmas," remarked Elizabeth—"a jolly proper kind o' one, you know, 'm."

"Don't you find Christmas a pleasant time, then?" I inquired.

"Well, you see, 'm, I bin in service ever since I was turned fifteen, an' you know wot Christmas in service is. An extry tip, I will say, but a lot of extry work to go along with it—and wot washin' up! Some'ow it orl seems so different in books an' on the pictures."

She sighed as she spoke and a look that was almost human crept into the arid region of her countenance. A feeling of compunction swept over me. Was it possible that this poor simple girl concealed depths of conviviality in her nature and a genial disposition which I, in common with all her former employers, had carelessly overlooked? I will admit that this unexpected phase in Elizabeth's character touched and interested me.

"Elizabeth," I cried in a sudden glow of enthusiasm, "you shall have your jolly Christmas—I will provide it. You shall have your turkey, plum-pudding, mince-pies, crackers, mistletoe and all the rest of it." *Cheeryble* in his most beneficent mood could not have felt more expansive than I did just then. "You can invite your friends; we shall not be at home, so you will have the place to yourself."

"Lor!" she ejaculated. "D'ye reerly mean it, 'm?"

"I do, Elizabeth. Let me know the sort of Christmas you've always longed for and I'll see that you get it."

She drew up her lank form and her face shone. "Well, 'm, I don't know where you get 'em, but for one thing I've often thort as 'ow I'd like to 'ave a festlebord."

"What's that?" I asked, puzzled. "Is it in the Stores' list?"

"I don't know, 'm, but there's always a lot about it in the books. When the Squire's son comes 'ome repentant at Christmas-tide they always gathers round a festlebord and rejoices."

I began to see light. "You mean a 'festal board'?"

"That's wot I sed, 'm."

"Well, you shall have one, Elizabeth, I'll see to that. I'd let you have a Squire's son as well, but unfortunately the only ones I know are not repentant—as yet. And now tell me which of your friends you would like to invite."

"There's my sister-in-lor 'ud like to come—'er that I 'aven't been on speakin' terms with for five years—but she shan't. An' my friend isn't comin'; I'll see to that arter the things she sed about me

to my young man's cousin—sorcyr baggage! As for my two aunts they don't set foot under the same roof as me arter the way——"

"Never mind about the people you're not inviting," I broke in; "we don't need a list of them. Who do you want to come?"

"Well, there's Mrs. Spurge, the char—a real nice lady, as you know, 'm. Then I'd like to arsk Polly, the sister of the cook wot lives in the 'ouse at the corner with red 'air; an' there's Mary Baxter. An' isn't it lucky my sailor-brother will be 'ome for the first time in ten years? Can 'e come too, 'm? 'E's been round the world twice."

"In that case, Elizabeth, he certainly ought to be invited. He may even have returned home repentant, so you will be able to rejoice at the festal board in proper style."

"Oh, 'm, isn't it luvrly? I won't 'arf have a beano this Christmas. Wot a time we'll 'ave, *wot* a time!"

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For my part I did not pass a very blithesome Christmas. Henry's aunt, who invited us, is rich, but she is also dull, and several times I found myself rather envying Elizabeth. While Aunt Jane nodded in her chair, Henry and I pictured those boisterous revels of Elizabeth and her friends, their boundless mirth, their unrestrained gaiety. We imagined them too gathered round the sailor-brother, listening with rapt delight as he told them stories of the far-off wonder-lands he had known. Henry sighed then and said there were times when he envied the so-called lower classes their capacity for enjoyment.

When we returned home Elizabeth greeted us with beaming countenance. "I 'ope you 'ad a good time," she said; "I know *I* 'ad."

"Then it really was as nice as you thought it would be, Elizabeth?"

"It was first-rate, 'm. Leastways orl went well until arter dinner, when we begins chippin' each other and ends in 'avin' a few words. My sailor-brother started it by chaffin' Polly about 'er red 'air an' arskin' why she didn't cut it orf, an' she told 'im then that if 'e'd such an objection to red she wondered 'e didn't cut 'is own nose orf. Arter that one thing led to another; we took sides an'——"

"Oh, Elizabeth, you don't mean to say you quarrelled?" I interrupted sorrowfully.

"Oh, no, it wasn't quarrellin', 'm—just bargain', you know. Any'ow it ended in Polly an' Mary an' my brother goin' off early. I was chilly to Mrs. Spurge owin' to 'er 'avin' said that she didn't believe my sailor-brother 'd ever been further than Wapping in a coal-berge. I shouldn't 'ave spoke to 'er again that evenin' if the book 'adn't brought us together again friendly, like."

"What book?" I asked, bewildered.

"One of yours that I got out of the study, 'm. Oh, *wot* a book! Sorter ghost story in a manner o' speakin'. I laughed an' I cried over it, turn about. So did Mrs. Spurge. You see we read bits out to each other—kep it up till three o'clock in the mornin', we did. It was luvrly!"

"And what was the book called?" I inquired.

"It's called *A Christmas Car'l*, 'm, by Mr. DICKINGS. Why didn't nobody tell me about it afore? It's far better 'n the pictures. 'Just like 'eaven,' Mrs. Spurge said."

"I'm glad you enjoyed yourself, Elizabeth."

"It's the 'appiest Christmas I ever 'ad, 'm. That there Mr. Dickings is a one! 'E do know wot's wot in festleboards."



Patient. "MY MISSIS SENT ME FUR A BOTTLE O' MEDICINE FUR ME CORF. SHE SAYS IT
KEEPS HER AWAKE O' NIGHTS. I SAYS, 'YOU'VE NOBBUT TO LIE AWAKE. I'VE GOT TO LIE
AWAKE AN' CORF.'"

HOW, WHY AND WHAT.

(Being the Tragedy of the Conscientious Inquirer who fell among Philistines.)

There was an old man who said, "How
Can I link the To-Be with the Now?"
But they said, "Poor old thing!
You've been reading Dean INGE,
And you're *not* high enough in the brow."

But in spite of this check he said, "Why
Is my Ego the same as my I?"
So they put him to bed
And placed ice on his head
till the cerebral storm had passed by.

Now I'm told he is asking them, "What
Use has psycho-analysis got?"
And they answer, "N.E.
If you're not an M.D.,
Or a novelist minus a plot."

"A cargo of 800 German pianos arrived at the Tyne from Hamburg on Saturday."
Daily Paper.

Another key industry in danger.



UNFINISHED DRAWING FOR "PUNCH" BY THE LATE F. H. TOWNSEND.

THE FIGURE OF THE LITTLE GIRL WAS SKETCHED ON THE MORNING OF HIS DEATH. THE LEGEND WHICH THIS PICTURE WAS TO ILLUSTRATE IS NOT KNOWN.

MAYBIRDS.

I can see some justification for keeping peacocks, especially if you have shaven lawns and terraces and sundials, though sundials, I imagine, are rather a nuisance now-a-days, because of the trouble of having them reset for summer and winter time. Peacocks at any rate are beautiful, and, if their voices are apt in England to become a little hoarse, that is only because they screech when the weather is going to be bad.

The pheasant is also a useful and beautiful fowl. One may put down bread-crumbs to attract the pheasant to one's garden when he is alive, or to one's plate when he is dead.

But I can see no justification whatever for keeping maybirds, for they are neither useful nor beautiful. Perhaps you do not know what a maybird is. I have five maybirds. I have them because people here would keep saying to me, "Look at the price of fresh eggs, and how much nicer it is to have your own." It is a curious thing about the country that people are always giving one disinterested advice in the matter of domestic economy. In London it is different. In London people let you take a twopenny bus ticket to Westminster instead of walking across the Park, and go to ruin in your own sweet way. They rather admire your dash. But in the country they tell you about these things.

So I went to a man and confessed to him my trouble about fresh eggs.

"I see," he said; "you want maybirds."

"No, I don't," I said; "I want hens."

"It's the same thing," he told me. "How many would you like?"

"Five," I said. I thought five would be an unostentatious number and make it clear that I was not trying to compete with the wholesale egg-dealers.

He segregated five maybirds and explained their points to me.

It appeared that one of them was a Buff Orpington and three were white Wyandottes and one had no particular politics. I should say now that it was an Independent. It has speckles and is the one that keeps getting into the garden.

I asked him when the creatures would begin to enter upon their new duties, and he said they would do so at once.

"What is their maximum egg-laying velocity?" I inquired.

"They'll lay about three eggs a day between them," he said, "these five birds."

"Why between them?" I enquired. But I consented to buy his birds, and he said if I liked he would

run round to my garden at once and run up a hen-house and a hen-run for me. "Run" seemed rather a word with him.

I said, "Yes, by all means."

He came round that evening and hewed down an apple-tree under the light of the moon to make room for the maybird-run, and in the morning he brought a large roll of wire-netting, and the next day he built a wooden house, and the day after that he brought his five maybirds, and the day after that he came round and asked for some cinders. He sprinkled these all over the enclosure, and I watched him while he worked.

"What is that for?" I asked.

"They want something to scratch in when they run about," he explained. "Exercise is what they need."

"They seem to be scratching already, but they don't seem to be running," I said. "Wouldn't it have been better to put a cinder-track all round the edge and train them to run races round it?"

He said that he hadn't thought of that, but I could try it if I liked. Then he gave me a bag of food, which he said was particularly efficacious for maybirds, and produced his bill.

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All this happened about a month ago, and for the last four weeks the principal preoccupation of my household has been the feeding of these five birds. I have had to lay a gravel-path from the aviary to the back premises in order to sustain the weight of the traffic. Huge bowls of hot food are constantly being mixed and carried to them, without any apparent consciousness on their part of their reciprocal responsibilities. What I mean to say is that there are no eggs. The food which they eat resembles Christmas-pudding at the time when it is stirred, and I have suggested that a sixpence should be concealed in it every now and then—sixpence being apparently the current price of an egg—in order to indicate the nature of our hopes.

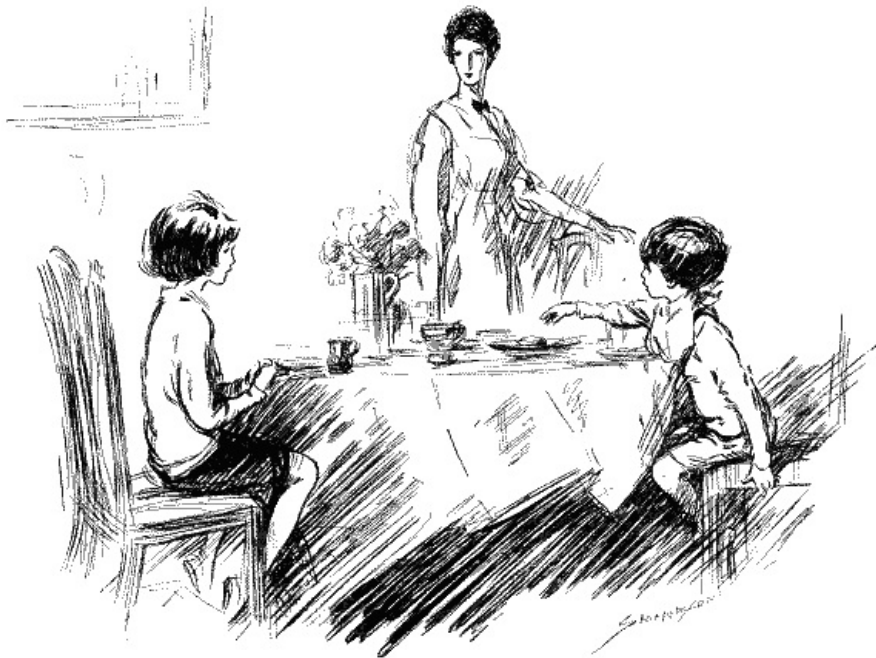
I have made other valuable suggestions. I have suggested putting an anthracite stove in their sitting-room, and papering the walls with illustrations representing various methods of mass production, ordinary methods having failed. I notice that cabbages are suspended by a string across the top of the parade-ground in order that the birds may obtain exercise by springing at them. The cabbages are eaten, but I do not believe that the birds jump. I believe that they clamber up the wire with their claws, walk along the tight-rope and bite the cabbage off with their teeth.

Sometimes, as I think I have mentioned, the one with speckles escapes into the garden, and I have several times been asked to chase it home. Nothing makes one look more ridiculous than chasing an independent maybird of no particular views across an onion bed. The rest of the animals appear to spend most of their time in walking about the run with their hands in their pockets looking for things on the ground.

But every now and then one or other of them makes the loud cry which is usually associated with successful egg-production; the whole household troops beaming with anticipation along the gravel-path; and it is then discovered that the Buff has knocked one of the Whites off her perch, or that one of the Whites has scratched a cinder on which the Buff had set her eye, or that the Independent member has made a bitter speech which is deeply resented by the Coalition. But there are no eggs.

About a week ago the corn which apparently forms a part of the necessary nourishment of maybirds, and is kept in an outhouse, was attacked by rats. I was told that I must do something about this. I buttered some slices of bread with arsenic and laid them down on the outhouse floor. The rats ate the bread and arsenic and went on with the corn. Unless a great improvement is manifested in the New Year I have decided to butter the maybirds with arsenic and place them in the outhouse too.

EVOE.



Nurse. "LITTLE GENTLEMEN, MASTER ERIC, LEAVE THE LAST MINCE-PIE TO THEIR SISTERS."
Generous Little Girl. "O NURSE, DO LET HIM BE A LITTLE CAD."

Cyclone in the Channel Islands.

"Meteorological Notes.
Harbour Office, Jersey.

Wind - E.W.E. - Strong Breeze."

Jersey Paper.

"To get away, the man must have jumped from a height of about ten feet to the ground, then across a garden, and over a wall about eight feet high into a laneway."

— *Irish Paper.*

Some "lep," as they say in Ireland.

"In the House of Lords on Saturday, the expiring Lords Continuance Bill [was] read a third time and passed."

— *Provincial Paper.*

Trust the Peers for looking after themselves.



LETTERS I NEVER POSTED.
CONCERNING GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

TO THE GIRL AT THE EXCHANGE.

The New Year is upon us and with it comes the determination to mend our bad habits and make serious efforts to turn over a new leaf. Perhaps you have already thought of this and have made some good resolutions; perhaps, on the other hand, you cannot think of anything amiss that needs correcting. In this case will you let me help you? In every other respect you may be perfection, but as an exchange operator, which is the only capacity in which (alas!) I know you, you are often lacking. I have no doubt that you are charming in private life and that we should get on famously if we met at dinner; but you have an irritating way of giving me the wrong number, which I do most cordially hope you will lose during 1921. When I protest, you merely say you are sorry, but what I suggest is that an ounce of careful listening at first is worth tons of sorrow later. Kingston doesn't really sound a bit like Brixton, and yet yesterday, when I asked for a Kingston number, you put me at once on to the same number in the other suburb. Constantly when I say I want 2365 you give me 2356. To give you your due you are always, I will admit, sorry; but ...

Another thing. Sometimes, when you ring me up and I answer, all you do is to ask, "Number, please," as though I had rung you. (It is then that I feel most that I should like to wring you.) When I reply, "But you rang me," you revert to your prevailing regretful melancholy and say, "Sorry you were troubled," and before I can go deeply into the question and discover how these things occur you ring off. Can't you make an effort during 1921 not to do this? Let it be a year of gladness.

Sometimes I am perfectly certain you don't ring up the number I want until after you have asked me once or twice if they have answered. Isn't that so? "I'll ring them again," you say with a kind of resigned adventurousness; but, knowing as I do that they have been waiting for my call, I am not taken in. But what I want to know is—what were you doing instead of ringing up at first? I suppose that these secrets will never be penetrated by the ordinary subscriber outside the sacred precincts; but I wish you would give me fewer of such problems to ponder during the year that is coming.

P.S.—Have you ever considered, with proper alarm, what would happen to a cinema story if a wrong number were provided by the operator, or if any delay whatever occurred? This should make you think.

TO A RACING JOURNALIST.

I suggest that you should include among your good resolutions for the New Year the decision not to allow your readers to participate in your special information as to which horse will come in first. Tell them all you like about yesterday's sport, but dangle no more "security tips" before their diminishing purses. If they must bet—which of course they must, as betting is now the principal national industry—let them at least have the fun of selecting the "also-ran" themselves.

TO MANY AN EDITOR.

In contemplating your 1921 programme of regeneration could you not make a vow to dispense with all headlines that ask questions? Probably you never see the paper yourself and therefore have no feeling in the matter, but I can assure you that the habit can become very wearisome. "Will it freeze to-day?" "Can Beckett win?" "Will Hobbs reach his 3,000 runs?" "Are the Lords going to pass the Bill?" Won't you make an effort to do without this formula? It is futile in itself and has the unfortunate effect of raising what surely are undesirable doubts as to whether journalists are any more sensible than their readers.

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TO ONE EDITOR IN PARTICULAR.

No comic hats in 1921, please.

TO THE P.M.G.

There is, as everyone (except possibly Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN and the cynic who professes to hate letters so much that he wishes that they cost a shilling a-piece to send) will agree, one good resolution which above all others you should concentrate upon for 1921, and that is to get back

our penny postage. With so many comparatively unnecessary things still untaxed, it never should have been sacrificed.

TO A PORK BUTCHER.

Among the problems of this latter day of discontents few are more pressing than speculating as to why sausages and pork-pies have so degenerated. Under the malign influence of Peace, sausages have become tasteless and pork-pies nothing but pies with pork in them; the crust chiefly plaster-of-Paris, and the meat not an essential element, soft and seductive and fused with the pastry, but an alien assortment of half-cooked cubes. I can understand that after a great war a certain deterioration must set in, but I fail to see why sausages and pork-pies, if made at all, should not be made as well as ever, especially as you get such a long price for them. Couldn't you—wouldn't you—try in 1921 to make them with some at least of the old care?

TO A CABINET MINISTER.

Might not a vow against writing for the papers be rather a nice one to observe during 1921? It is quite on the cards that one's duties to the State (not too inadequately paid for) ought to be sufficiently exacting to preclude journalism at all. There's a question of dignity too, although I hesitate to drag that in.

TO THE CHIEF OF THE POLICE.

Couldn't you (I hope I am addressing the right gentleman) arrange that before 1921 becomes 1922—twelve whole months—a simple device is made for taxis by which a square of red glass can be slipped over one of the lamps at night to indicate that the cab is free? I'm sure it wouldn't really be difficult, and the comfort of London would be enormously increased.

TO A TAXI-DRIVER.

You will perhaps note what I have just said to the Chief of the Police. If you had any interest in your work you would, of course, long since have fixed up something of the kind for yourself. But let that pass. All I am suggesting to you as a 1921 amendment is that you should bank in a more accessible part of your clothing. Waiting for change in this weather (especially with the flag still down) can be an exasperating experience. Won't you make a resolution during the coming year to keep your money nearer the surface?

E. V. L.



Neighbour (bearer of message, to billiard enthusiast). "You'RE WANTED AT 'OME, CHARLIE. YER WIFE'S JUST PRESENTED YER WITH ANOTHER REBATE OFF YER INCOME-TAX."

How to deal with Windbags.

"The address was punctured throughout with cheers."

"There would be a grand dinner and music, and splendidly-dressed ladies to look at, and things to eat that strangely twisted the girls' paws when they tried to tell about them,"

Weekly Paper.

Mem.—Never try to talk the deaf-and-dumb language after dinner.

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Profiteer (to his wife). "PRETTY MIXED LOT AT THIS HOTEL. 'ERE COME SOME MORE O' THEM PRE-WAR BLIGHTERS."

THE BARKER THAT MISSED FIRE.

On hearing a shuffle of feet in the porch and the clearing of little throats, I exclaimed, "Those carols again!" If between "those" and "carols" I inserted another word, I withdraw it.

I went into the hall and barked like a dog.

I have often said that, if anyone could earn a hundred pounds a week on the stage by barking like a dog, I could. Children like to come to my house to tea merely for the thrill of listening to my imitation. I used to flatter myself that I could bark like a dog even better than NELSON KEYS can imitate GERALD DU MAURIER.

I hardly gave the carol-singers time even to mention Royal David's city before I barked. Instantly one pair of little feet scuttled away towards the gate; then a voice called, "Don't be silly, Alf; come on back."

Two small girls stood at the front-door as I opened it. One of them smiled up at me and said, "He thinks he's going to be bit." She appeared to be amused by the idea. Down by the gate was a small muffled figure carrying a Chinese lantern. "Come on back, Alf," she called again, "and let's sing to the gentleman. You see," she explained to me in confidence, "he's got addeleoids and can't sing loud, so we let him hold the lantern."

I was beginning to feel sorry that I had played a trick on such inoffensive children and was about to assure them that my savage bull-terrier was safely locked up in the kitchen when the brave little lass began chattering again.

"My dad keeps dogs—all sorts," she told me, "and sells them to gentlemen. So I'm used to dogs." Then she turned once more to the lantern-bearer and commanded, "Now come on and sing, Alf. It ain't a dog at all; it's only the gentleman trying to make a noise like one."

"Rod Iron Red Mail Bird, year old; good breed; 16s."

— *Provincial Paper.*

We fancy it must be an armour-clad rooster of this species that, crossed with a Plymouth Rock, was responsible for the reinforced-concrete chicken that we met at dinner the other night.

"When once the exchanges of the world have righted themselves—and that is bound to come about sooner or later—then will follow such a reaction in the trade of the country that will exceed the expectations of the most sanguinary optimist."

—*Trade Paper.*

We think this must be intended as a hit at TROTSKY.

NEW RHYMES FOR OLD CHILDREN.

THE OYSTER.

The oyster takes no exercise;
I don't believe she really tries;
 And since she has no legs
I don't see why she should, do you?
Besides, she has a lot to do—
 She lays a million eggs.
At any rate she doesn't stir;
Her food is always brought to her.

But sometimes through her open lips
A horrid little creature slips
 Which simply will not go;
And that annoys the poor old girl;
It means she has to make a pearl—
 It *irritates*, you know;
So, crooning some small requiem,
She turns the thing into a gem.

And when I meet the wives of Earls
With lovely necklaces of pearls
 It makes me see quite red;
For every jewel on the chain
Some patient oyster had a pain
 And had to stay in bed.
To think what millions men can make
Out of an oyster's tummy-ache!

A. P. H.

"At — Hall, St. John's Wood, Tues., by auction, stock of a Furrier.—Cats. free."

Advt. in Daily Paper.

A case of adding insult to injury.



MICAWBER AND SON.

SENILE OPTIMIST. "AND TO YOU, MY BOY, I BEQUEATH—MY LIABILITIES. MAY YOU BE WORTHY OF THEM!"

JUVENILE DITTO. "THAT'S ALL RIGHT, SIR. SOMETHING'S SURE TO TURN UP!"

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ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT



AT THE MILLENNIUM STORES.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE (Chairman). "You've worked splendidly up to CHRISTMAS, AND IF YOU'LL PUT YOUR BACKS INTO IT FOR THE NEW YEAR TRADE I'LL SEE IF I CAN'T GIVE YOU A GOOD LONG HOLIDAY IN THE AUTUMN."

Mr. BONAR LAW (Manager). "OR SOME OTHER TIME."

MR. BONAR LAW, MR. LLOYD GEORGE, MR. SHORTT, MR. CHAMBERLAIN, MR. NEAL, SIR ERIC GEDDES, SIR ROBERT HORNE, MR. CHURCHILL.

Monday, December 20th.—As the result of being tossed backwards and forwards between the

two Houses the Government of Ireland Bill had already lost most of its awkward corners. The last two were rounded off to-day, when the Government secured that Southern Ireland should have three years, instead of two, in which to make up her mind whether to accept or refuse the proffered Parliament, and that in the meantime only a joint resolution of both Houses should prevent the Act from coming into operation. Lord MIDDLETON pressed hard for a retention of the Lords' veto, but was thrown overboard by Lord CREWE, who was greatly impressed by the LORD CHANCELLOR'S reminder that within three years there must be a General Election.

In the Commons Sir ROBERT HORNE performed his customary Monday dance among the fiscal eggshells. He declined to give an estimate as to the number of British workmen unemployed owing to the importation of German goods—"no man who breathes could do it"—and judiciously evaded acceptance of Sir FREDERICK HALL'S suggestion that one reason why Teuton manufacturers were snapping up Dominion contracts was that their employés worked eleven hours a day.

The close of one of the longest and weariest sessions on record finds the Government in a penitent mood. How long will it last? The PRIME MINISTER told one of his supporters that he hoped next year's programme would be less exacting, and immediately promised another measure dealing with dumping and exchange; and when Sir F. BANBURY helpfully suggested that the surest way to avoid an Autumn Session would be to introduce fewer Bills Mr. BONAR LAW turned on him with the retort that "a surer way would be to introduce none."

An amusing duel between well-matched opponents took place over liquor control. Mr. MACQUISTEN, whose voice, at once insinuating and penetrative, has been likened to a corkscrew, urged that the *bonâ-fide* frequenters of public-houses should be consulted in the settlement of the drink regulations. The present arrangement, in his view, was like entrusting the regulation of the Churches to avowed atheists. Lady ASTOR made full use of her shrill treble in retorting that it was the "victims"—by which apparently she meant the wives of Mr. MACQUISTEN'S *protégés*—who ought to have the last word. She herself had it in the series of incredulous "Oh's!"—uttered *crescendo* on a rising scale and accompanied by appropriate gesture—with which she received Mr. MACQUISTEN'S confident assertion that the working-men's clubs are the enemies of "the Trade."

Supplementary Estimates produced a good deal of miscellaneous information. On the Vote for Road Transport Colonel MILDMAY attacked the system of tar-spraying and told a melancholy story of a cow that skidded with fatal results. He was backed up by Sir F. BANBURY, who said that he had found the ideal pavement in soft wood and awakened memories of an ancient jest by suggesting that something might be done if he and the MINISTER OF TRANSPORT were to put their heads together.

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Tuesday, December 21st.—Sir WILLIAM DAVISON thundered against the Home Office for not taking steps to prevent the desecration of the Nelson Column by the delivery of seditious speeches. Sir JOHN BAIRD explained that it was impossible to know beforehand what sort of speech was going to be delivered. But his critic would have none of this paltry excuse. "Did not the regulations provide," he boomed, "that the objects of the meetings must be specified?" Fortunately for the Minister, who had nearly been blown off the Treasury Bench, Mr. HOGGE came to the rescue. "Is it not a fact," he inquired, "that the monument was erected to a man who turned a blind eye to orders?"

The strange case of Lord ROTHERMERE and the Committee on Public Accounts was further investigated. The Committee had reported that a certain stationery contract for the Air Ministry had been extravagant and improper. The AIR MINISTER at the time was the noble Lord who has lately been so eloquent about "squander-mania," but he has since, in a letter to the Press, declared that he never signed or initialled the order. Lieut.-Colonel ARCHER-SHEE and Mr. ORMSBY-GORE sought the opinion of the Treasury on the transaction, and Mr. BALDWIN replied that it was certainly usual for a Minister to be held responsible for his expenditure, and that if subordinate officials were thrown over by their chiefs it would be bad for the Service.

The Lords' amendments to the Commons' amendments to the Lords' amendments to the Government of Ireland Bill were agreed to. Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS thought to improve the occasion by a neat little speech expressing goodwill to Ireland, and, much to his surprise, found himself in collision with the SPEAKER, who observed that this was not the time for First Reading speeches.

It was rather hard on Lord PEEL, as the grandson of the great Sir ROBERT, to have to sponsor the Dyestuffs Bill. He frankly described it as "a disagreeable pill." Lord EMMOTT and other Peers showed a strong disinclination to take their medicine, but Lord MOULTON said that the chemists—naturally enough—were all in favour of it, and persuaded the House to swallow the bolus.

In the course of an eleventh-hour effort to destroy the Agriculture Bill Lord LINCOLNSHIRE described the PRIME MINISTER'S Christmas motto as *Tax Vobiscum*; and the success of his jape served as a partial solace for the defeat of his motion.



Old Sea-dog (to nervous passenger). "ROLL? SHE CAN ROLL! D'YE SEE THEM MARKS ON THE WALL? THAT'S OUR FEET."

A WARNING FROM THE SKY.

[The latest form of mascot is a trinket-model of the sign of the zodiac under which one was born.]

'Twas Caution bade me: "Think a while;
Calm thought may prove your saviour;
You've only seen her gala style
And very best behaviour;
What though her form's divinely planned
And rightly you adore it,
Her character's an unknown land,
You'd better first explore it."

But such exploring baffled me—
She had, to my vexation,
No younger brother I could fee
For stable information—
Until at last I noted (worn
Mid baubles weird and various)
A mascot which announced her born
Beneath the sign Aquarius.

An ancient tome declared how this
Implied that, though a beauty,
The girl was careless, slack, remiss
And negligent of duty;
I stilled in time my cardiac stir
And ceased my adoration,
Thanking my lucky stars and her
Explicit constellation.

AT THE PLAY

"PETER PAN."

Peter Pan, the play, must by now have long overtaken the age of *Peter Pan*, the boy; but, like him, it never grows any older. The cast may change, but that seems to make hardly any difference. The new *Peter* (Miss EDNA BEST) is as good as any of them. Graceful of shape and lithe of limb, he is still essentially a boy, the realised figure of BARRIE'S fancy; a little aloof and inscrutable; romantic, too, in his very detachment from the sentiment of romance that he provokes. Miss

FREDA GODFREY, the new *Wendy*, would have seemed good if we had not known better ones. To be frank, she looked rather too mature for the part; she needed a more childlike air to give piquancy to her assumption of maternal responsibilities. It was pleasant to see Mr. HENRY AINLEY unbend to the task, simple for him, of playing *Captain Hook* and *Mr. Darling*. One admired his self-control in refusing to impose new subtleties upon established and sacred tradition.

Of familiar friends, age has not withered the compelling charms of Mr. SHELTON's *Smee*, nor, in the person of Mr. CLEAVE, has custom staled the infinite futility of *Slightly*. I was glad, too, to find MISS SYBIL CARLISLE back in the part of *Mrs. Darling*, which she played most appealingly.

The lagoon scene was cut out this year; perhaps it was thought that there is enough lagoon in London just now. I could more willingly have spared the business of *Mr. Darling* and the kennel, the one blot in the play. My impression of this grotesquerie has not changed since I first saw *Peter Pan*.

Among new impressions was a feeling that the domestic details of the First Act are a little too leisurely, so that I appreciated the impatience of my little neighbour for the arrival of *Peter Pan*, whose acquaintance she had still to make. Also from the presence of children in my party I became conscious how much of the humour of the play—its burlesque, for example, of the stage villain—is only seizable by children who have grown up. BARRIE wrote it, of course, to please the eternal child in himself, but forgot now and then what an unusual child it was.

O. S.

On Wednesday, January 5th, 1921, at 3.30 and 8 P.M., in the Hall of the Inner Temple, the "Time and Talents" Guild will give a series of "Action Tableaux," dramatised by Miss WILSON-FOX, in illustration of the history of Southwark and Old Bermondsey from Saxon times to the present day. There will be singing, in character, by the Stock Exchange Choir. The profits will go in aid of the Settlement in Bermondsey, which has been carried on for twenty-one years among the factory girls by members of "Time and Talents," and to-day includes a Hostel, Clubs, a Country Holiday Fund and a cottage in the country. Applications for tickets may be made to Miss WILSON-FOX, 17, De Vere Gardens, Kensington, W. 8.

THE GREAT RESOLVE

["When *Chu Chin Chow* reaches its 2,000th representation on the 29th, it will have run for 1,582 days, 26 days longer than the War."

Sunday Times.]

Behind its pendent curtain folds
We know not what the future holds;
We only know that worlds have gone
Since *Chu Chin Chow* was first put on.

Mid all our stress and strife and change
This strikes me as extremely strange;
I think when plays go on like this
There ought to be an artistice.

But, when we have another war
After the peace we've toiled so for,
And empires break and thrones are bust
And nations tumble in the dust,

And culture, rising from the East,
On tottering Europe is released,
And Chinamen at last shall rule
In Dublin, Warsaw and Stamboul,

Soon as the roar of cannon ends
And all men once again are friends,
I must fulfil my ancient vow
And go and visit *Chu Chin Chow*.

ST. CECILIA OF CREMONA.

Punch has no desire to plunge into the controversy which has arisen over the employment of women in professional orchestras, especially as the cause has already been practically won, and here, at any rate, the saying, "What Lancashire thinks to-day England will think to-morrow," has failed to justify itself. The example of Manchester is not being followed in London, and what is deemed advisable for the Free Trade Hall in one city is not to dominate the policy of the Queen's Hall in the other.

But without going into the arguable points of this latest duel of the sexes, Mr. Punch, already in the last year which completes his fourth score, may be allowed to indulge in an old man's privilege of retrospect and incidentally to congratulate the ladies on the wonderful and triumphant progress they have made in instrumental art since the roaring 'forties. For in the 'forties women, though still supreme on the lyric stage, had hardly begun to assert themselves as executants, save on the pianoforte. *Punch* well remembers LISZT—with the spelling of whose name he had considerable difficulty—in his meteoric pianofortitude. But the young WILMA NERUDA, who visited London in 1849, escaped his benevolent notice. She was then only ten. It was not until twenty years later that, as Madame NORMAN-NERUDA, she revisited London, proved that consummate skill could be combined with admirable grace in a woman-violinist, took her place as a leader of the quartet at the Monday "Pops," upset the tyranny of the pianoforte and harp as the only instruments suitable for the young person, and virtually created the professional woman-violinist. Indeed, she may be said to have at once made the fiddle fashionable and profitable for girls.

On its invasion of Mayfair the pencil of DU MAURIER furnishes the best comment. Before 1869, woman-violinists were only single spies; now they are to be reckoned in battalions. And they no longer "play the easiest passages with the greatest difficulty," as was once said of an incompetent male pianist, but in all departments of technique and interpretation have fully earned Sir HENRY WOOD's tribute to their skill, sincerity and delicacy. When the eminent conductor goes on, in his catalogue of their excellences, to say, "They do not drink, and they do not smoke as much as men," he reminds Mr. Punch of two historic sayings of a famous foreign conductor. The first was uttered at a rehearsal of the Venusberg music from *Tannhäuser*: "Gentlemen, you play it as if you were teetotalers—*which you are not.*" The other was his lament over a fine but uncertain wind-instrument player: "With — it is always Quench, Quench, Quench."

Mr. Punch is old-fashioned enough to hope that, whether teetotalers or not, the ladies will leave trombones and tubas severely alone, and confine their instrumental energies mainly to the nice conduct of the leading strings—the aristocrats of the orchestra, the sovereigns of the chamber concert.

From a butcher's advertisement:—

"SPECIAL PRE-WAR PORK, AND BEEF, SAUSAGES."

—*Local Paper.*

While all in favour of old-fashioned Christmas fare, here we draw the line.

"Enough butter to cover 265,000,000 slices of bread was produced in Manitoba this year. Of 8,250,000,000 pounds produced, 4,100,000 has been exported."

—*Canadian Paper.*

Thirty-one pounds of butter to the slice is certainly the most tempting inducement to Canadian immigration we have yet noticed.

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THE INSPIRED MUSICIAN AND THE CHRISTMAS HAM.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

I can't help thinking that Mr. H. G. HIBBERT has not chosen altogether the right name for his second volume of theatrical and Bohemian gossip, *A Playgoer's Memories* (GRANT RICHARDS). It is not so unsophisticated as the title had somehow led me to expect. Indeed "unsophisticated" is perhaps the last epithet that could justly be applied to Mr. HIBBERT'S memories. I fancy I had unconsciously been looking for something more in the style of my own ignorant playgoing. "How wonderful she was in that scene with the broker's man," or "Do you remember the opening of the Third Act?" Not thus Mr. HIBBERT. For him the play itself is far less the thing than a peg upon which to hang all sorts of tags and bobtails of recollection, financial, technical and just not scandalous because of the discretion of the telling. His book is a repository of theatrical information, but the great part of it of more absorbing concern for the manager's-room or the stage-door than, say, the dress circle. But I must not be wanting in gratitude for the entertainment which, for all this carping, I certainly derived from it. As an expert on stage finance, for example, to-day and forty years back, Mr. HIBBERT has revelations that may well cause the least concerned to marvel. And there is an appendix, which gives a list of Drury Lane pantomimes, with casts, for half a century, including, of course, the incomparable first one; but that is not a memory of this world. A book to be kept for odd references in two senses.



CULPABLE NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF AN EDITOR OF AN ILLUSTRATED PAPER. IMPENDING LIBEL ACTIONS.

CAPTAIN ERIC BLIGHTMAN,
WHOSE ENGAGEMENT TO LADY
SARAH HUBB HAS JUST BEEN
ANNOUNCED.

BASHER SMITH, EX-HEAVYWEIGHT
CHAMPION OF STEPNEY, WHO IS TO ACT
AS REFEREE AT THE CORKERY-HACKETT
FIGHT ON FRIDAY.

What most interfered with my peace of mind over *The Happy Highways* (HEINEMANN) was, I think, its almost entire absence of highway, and the exceedingly unhappy nature of its confused and uncharted lanes. Indeed, I am wondering now if the title may not have been an instance of bitter irony on the part of Miss STORM JAMESON. Certainly a more formless mass of writing never within my experience masqueraded as a novel. There are ideas and reflections—these last mostly angry and vaguely socialistic—and here and there glimpses of illusory narrative about a group of young persons, brothers and a girl-friend, who live at Herne Hill, attend King's College and talk (oh, but interminably) the worst pamphlet-talk of the pre-war age. It is, I take it, a reviewer's job to stifle his boredom and push on resolutely through the dust to find what good, if any, may be hidden by it. I will admit therefore some vague interest in the record of how the War hit such persons as these. Also (to the credit of the author as tale-teller) she does allow one of the young men to earn a scholarship, and for no sane reason to depart instantly thereupon before the mast of a sailing-ship; also another, the central figure, to fall in love with the girl. The book is in three parts, of which the third is superfluously specialized as "chaos." Whether Miss JAMESON will yet write a story I am unable to say; I rather wonder, however, that Messrs. HEINEMANN did not suggest to her that these heterogeneous pages would furnish excellent material for the experiment.

I have discovered that Miss PEGGY WEBLING has quite a remarkable talent for making ordinary places and people seem improbable. She achieves this in *Comedy Corner* (HUTCHINSON) by sketching in her scenery quite competently and then allowing her characters to live lives, amongst it, so fraught with coincidence, so swayed by the most unlikely impulses, that a small draper's shop, a West End "Hattery" and an almshouse for old actresses become the most extraordinary places on earth, where anything might happen and nobody would be surprised. *Winnie*, her heroine, behaves more improbably than anyone else, but she is such a dear little goose that most amiable readers will be quite glad that she doesn't have to suffer as much as such geese would if they existed in real life. You can see from this that it is one of those books that are full of real niceness and goodwill, and it has besides plenty of plot and lots of interesting characters, and yet somehow it gives you the feeling of being out of focus. You read on, expecting every moment that clever Miss WEBLING will give things a little push in the right direction and make them seem true, and, while you are reading and hoping, you come to the happy ending.

Should you enter *The Gates of Tien T'ze* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) you will not regret it, but it is possible that you may be—as I was—a little breathless before the end of this vehement story is reached. The average tale of criminals and detectives is not apt to move slowly, but here Mr. LESLIE HOWARD GORDON maintains the speed of a half-mile relay race. I am not going to reveal his mystery except to say that *Tien T'ze* was a Chinese organisation which perpetrated crimes, and that *Donald Craig*, *Kyrle Durand*—his secretary (female) and cousin—and *Bruce MacIvor*, superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department, were employed in tracking it down and smashing it to pieces. Never have I met anyone in fiction (let fact alone) so clever as *Kyrle* in getting herself and her friends out of tight places. When *Craig* and *MacIvor* were so beset by *Tien T'ze* that their last hour seemed to have come I found myself saying, "It is time for *Kyrle* to emerge from her machine," and she emerged. In a novel of this *genre* it is essential that the excitement should never fall below fever-heat, but Mr. GORDON's book does better than that; its temperature would, I think, burst any ordinary thermometer.

"The Vicar's Study Circle is now engaged in considering the teaching of what is known as the 'Higher Criticism.' All interested are invited to attend, whatever sex they may claim to possess."

—*Parish Magazine*.

The Vicar evidently possesses the open mind so necessary for discussions of this sort.



AS WE SEE OTHERS: A CANDID APPRECIATION OF U.S.A.

The liner *de luxe* had swung in past Sandy Hook, and the tender had already come alongside with its mail and Press-gang. There ensued a furious race to interview the most distinguished passenger, and it was by the representative of *The Democratic Elevator*, who got there first, that the Sage, in the very act of recording the emotions provoked by his first sky-scraper, was *abordé*.

"Mr. Punch, I guess?" said he. "Pleased to meet you, Sir. And what do you think of the American nation?"

"Shall I tell you now," asked Mr. Punch, "or wait till I've actually seen it?"

"Right here," said the interviewer, and drew his note-book.

"Well," began Mr. Punch, "I think a good deal of it—I mean, I think a good deal about it. And it nearly always makes me smile. Of course you won't understand why it nearly always makes me smile, because we don't see fun in the same things. You don't appreciate our humour, and therefore you say that we haven't any. And if we don't appreciate your humour that proves again that we haven't any. So you'll never understand why it makes me smile, sometimes gently and sometimes rather bitterly, to think about your nation; but I'll tell you just the same.

"In the first place, what you call 'America' is only a small fraction of the American continent, not even as large as British North America. And in the second place what you call your 'nation'—well, some rude person once said of it that it isn't really a nation at all, but just a picnic. I won't go so far as that, but I hardly suppose you will be much better pleased if I call it a League of Nations. That is a phrase that you hate, because your President WILSON loves it.

"By the way, I must be very careful how I speak of your President, because you're so sensitive on that subject. You allow yourselves to abuse him as the head of a political party, but if other nations so much as question his omniscience he suddenly becomes the Head of a Sovereign State. An English Cabinet Minister once told me how an American gave vent in conversation to the most violent language in regard to the policy of the President of the day, and when at the end the Englishman very quietly said, 'I am inclined to agree with you,' the American turned on him in a fury, saying: 'Sir, I didn't come here to have my country insulted!'

"However, to return to your League of Nations. In England (where I come from) they are just now reviving a play by Mr. ISRAEL ZANGWILL, in which, if I recall it rightly, he makes out your country to be the Melting Pot into which every sort of fancy alien type is thrown, and turned out a pattern American citizen, a member of a United Family. I wish I could believe it. It seems to us that your German, even after passing through the Melting Pot, remains a German; that your Irishman, however much he Americanises himself for purposes of political power and graft, remains an Irishman. You never seem to get together as a nation, except when you go to war, and even then you don't keep it up, for you're not together now, although you're still at war with Germany. The rest of the time you seem to spend in having Elections and 'placating' (I think that's what you call it) the German interest, or the negro interest, or the Sinn Fein interest.

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"And this brings me to the point that makes me smile most of all—when it doesn't make me weep. Isn't it a pathetic thing that a really great and strong people like you should be so weak and little as to let your Press sympathise blatantly with the campaign of murder in Ireland; to suffer that campaign to be actively assisted by American gunmen; to look on while it is being financed by American money, here employed in conjunction with the resources of that very Bolshevism which you take care to treat as criminal in your own country?

"Isn't it pitiful that you should regard reprisals (hateful though they may be) as worse than the hideous murders which provoked them; forgetting your own addiction to lynch law; forgetting too (as some of our own people forget) that the sanctity of the law depends as much upon the goodwill and assistance of the populace as it does upon the police, and cannot else be maintained?

"Indeed your memory is not very good. Your Monroe Doctrine, which insists that nobody from outside shall interfere with your affairs, escapes you whenever you want to interfere with other people's. You even forget, at convenient times, your own Civil War. Just as there was not a protest made by you against the methods of our blockade of Germany for which an answer could not be found in some precedent set by you in that War of North and South, so now the best answer to your sympathy with the preposterous claims of an Irish Republic is to be found in those four years in which you fought so bloodily to preserve the integrity of your own Union.

"Yet you let men like DE VALERA go at large proclaiming the brutal tyranny of the alien Saxon and advertising his country as a Sovereign State—all because you have to 'placate' the Irish interest. I should very much like to hear what you would think of us if at our Elections we ran an Anti-You campaign and even made Intervention a plank in our platform (as one of your Parties did) for the sake of 'placating' the niggers or the Cubans or the Filipinos or any other sort of Dago in our midst.

"Of course we are told—and of course I believe it—that the 'best' American sentiment is all right. But, if so, it must be cherished by a very select few, or they would never tolerate a condition of things so rotten that, unless your coming President finds some cure for it, you are like to become the laughing-stock of Europe. I am almost tempted to go into the Melting Pot myself and show you, as none but an American citizen would ever be allowed to show you, how it is to be done. Unfortunately I am too busy elsewhere, putting my own country right.

"But to conclude—for I see that we are drawing close to the landing-stage—I do hope that in my desire to be genial I have not been too flattering. No true friend ever flatters. And in my heart,

which has some of our common blood in it (notoriously thicker than water), I cannot help loving your country, and would love it better still if only it gave me a better chance. Indeed, I belong at home to a Society for the Promotion of Anglo-American Friendship. More than that"—and here the Sage was seen to probe into a voluminous and bulging breast-pocket—"I have brought with me a token of affection designed to stimulate a mutual cordiality."

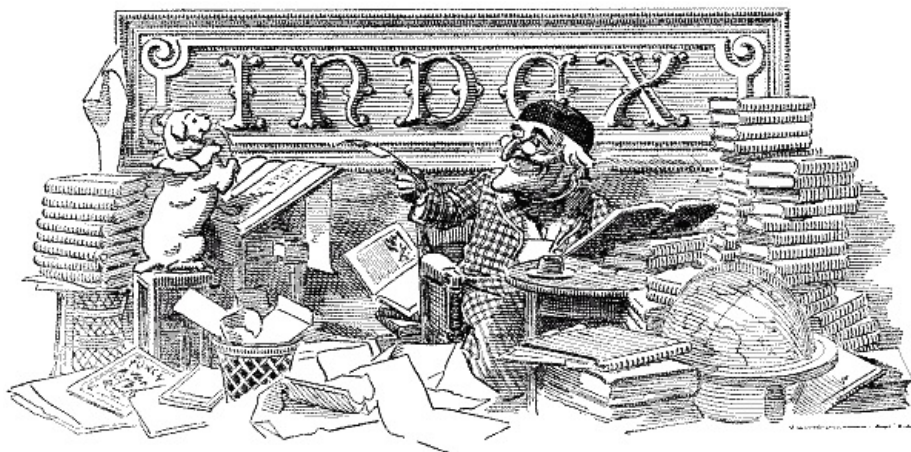
"Not a flask of whisky?" exclaimed the representative of *The Democratic Elevator*, suddenly moved to animation.

"No, not that, not that, my child," said Mr. Punch, "but something far, far better for you; something that gives you, among other less serious matter, a record of the way in which we in England, with private troubles of our own no easier than yours to bear, and exhausted with twice as many years of sacrifice in the War of Liberty (whose colossal effigy I have just had the pleasure to remark), still try to play an honourable part in that society of nations from which you have apparently resolved, for your better ease and comfort, to cut yourselves off. Be good enough to accept, in the spirit of benevolence in which I offer it, this copy of my

One Hundred and Fifty-Ninth Volume."



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