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Title: Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 150, February 23, 1916

Author: Various  
Editor: Owen Seaman

Release date: September 21, 2007 [eBook #22697]

Language: English

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI, VOL. 150,  
FEBRUARY 23, 1916 \*\*\*

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# PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

Vol. 150.

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February 23, 1916.

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## CHARIVARIA.

The threatened shortage of paper has led a few unkind persons to enquire upon what our diplomatic victories are hereafter to be achieved.

An interned German was recently given a week's freedom in which to get married, and the interesting question has now been raised as to whether his children, when they reach the age of twenty-one, will be liable to the Conscription Act or will have to be interned as alien enemies.

According to Miss ELLEN TERRY but little attention has been given by the critics to the letters in SHAKESPEARE'S plays. We rather thought that one of Germany's intelligent young professors had recently subjected the letters to a searching analysis, the result being to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that England started the War.

From *The Observer*:—

"The King has sent a congratulatory letter to Mrs. Mann of Nottingham, who has nine sons serving in the Army and Navy. This is believed to be a record for one working-class family."

Though a mere bagatelle, of course, for the idle rich.

We regret to read of the death from tuberculosis of one of the most popular and playful of the Zoological Society's crocodiles. Death is said to have been hastened by a severe chill contracted by the intelligent reptile as the result of leaving off a warm undervest, the gift of an elderly female admirer, in order to pursue, in jest, of course, the keeper of the reptile house down a drain.

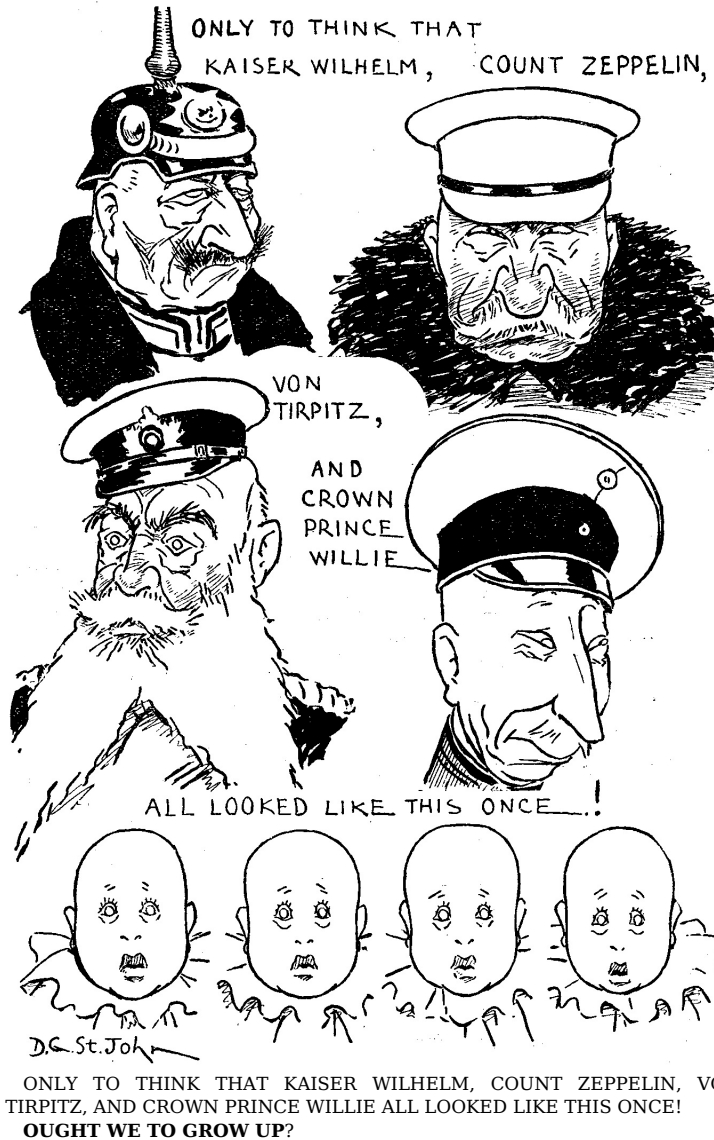
A Persian newspaper entitled *Kaveh* is now being published in Berlin for the purpose of increasing popular interest in Persian affairs. Its title is short for "*Kaveh kanem!*" (Beware of the Bulldog!)

Women who have volunteered to do agricultural work in place of men called to the colours will wear a green armband, green being selected in preference to red on account of the possibility of cows.

The proposal that wives whose husbands, though of military age, have not attested under the Derby Act

shall be allowed to wear a ribbon on the left arm to signify that it is not their fault, is said to have received considerable support.

There is no pleasing everybody. Last week Mr. TENNANT told the House of Commons that hereafter "the Navy would undertake to deal with all hostile aircraft attempting to reach this country, while the Army undertook to deal with all aircraft which reached these shores." And now the Horse Marines are asking bitterly why they are not to be permitted to share in the great work.



The German Government has put restrictions on the sale of sauerkraut, and a hideous rumour is afoot to the effect that they are preparing to use it on the prisoners by forcible feeding.

It is said of the Chicago meat-packers that they use every part of the pig except the squeal. As the result of the restriction put upon wood pulp an equally economical process is to be applied to our old newspapers.

"Several new records were established at the Geelong wool sales, including 20d. for greasy merino lambs.—*Reuter.*"

This revival of the ancient pastime of chasing the greasy lamb will be of interest to antiquarians.

From The *Irish Times*: "Wanted Lad as assistant plumber. *Experience not necessary.*" After all there is something to be said for the ravages of war.

## ERZERUM: A SET-BACK IN THE HOLY WAR.

KAISER TO SULTAN.

My Moslem brother, this is sad, sad news,  
So sad that I permit myself to mention  
How much it modifies my sanguine views  
Of Allah's intervention.

In that combine for holy ends and high

Of which I let him figure as the joint head  
I must (between ourselves) confess that I  
Am gravely disappointed.

Without his help I did the Balkan stunt,  
But when I left him to his own devices  
To operate upon a local front  
He failed me at the crisis.

I could not run the show in every scene,  
Not all at once; and Caucasus was chilly—  
Fifty degrees of frost, which would have been  
Bad for the health of WILLIE.

And then to think that he should let me down  
When I was sore in need of heavenly comfort,  
Making the Christian free of Erzerum town,  
Which, as you know, is "some" fort.

Not that I mind the mere material loss,  
But poor Armenia, hitherto quiescent,  
Who sees the barbarous brigands of the Cross  
Trampling her trusted Crescent!

True, you have spared the major part this pain,  
But for the remnant, who escaped your heeding,  
My heart (recovered, thank you, from Louvain),  
Once more has started bleeding.

O.S.

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## MY WAR STORIES.

Did you ever try to write War stories? I am not alluding to Press telegrams from Athens, Amsterdam or Copenhagen, but legitimate magazine fiction. Once I was reasonably competent and could rake in my modest share of War profits. But recently Clibbers, of the International Fiction Syndicate, approached me and said, "Old man, do me some War stuff. Anything you like, but it must have a novel climax."

"Not in a War story," I protested.

"Can you deliver the goods?" said Clibbers sternly.

After that what could I do but alter the stories I had in stock.

For example there was my fine story, "Retrieved." The innocent convict (would that I had the happy innocence of the convict of fiction!) emerges from Portmoor. In a few well-chosen words the genial old prison governor (to avoid libel actions I hasten to say that no allusion is made to any living person) advises the released man to make a new career. The convict marches to the recruiting office and enlists. In a couple of paragraphs he is at the Front; on the second page he saves the Colonel's life, captures a German trench on page three, and in less time than it takes to do it gains the V.C., discovers the villain dying repentant with a full confession in his left puttee, and embraces the girl who chanced to be Red-Crossing in the rear of the German position—presumably having arrived there by aeroplane. This seemed to me both probable and credible in a magazine. Still a novel climax was needed. After the few well-chosen words from the prison governor I took the convict to the nearest public-house, let him discover that the new restrictions were in force, and brought the story to a novel conclusion by making him say with oaths to the recruiting officer that he would be jiggered if ever he formed fours for such a rotten old country.

I thought that, at any rate, I had provided one surprise for my readers. Then I turned to my psychological study, entitled "The Funk." There wasn't much story in this, but a good deal about a man's sensations when in danger. I could picture the horror of it from personal experience, for my rear rank man has nearly brained me a dozen times when the specials have bayonet drill (I also have nearly brained—but I am wandering from the subject). Well, the Funk at the critical moment ran away, but, being muddled by German gas clouds, ran straight into the German lines. He thought that people were trying to intercept his flight. In panic he cut them down. At the last moment he cut the CROWN PRINCE'S smile in twain. (In fiction, mark you, it is quite allowable to put the CROWN PRINCE into the firing line). Then came glory, the D.C.M. and a portrait of some one else with the Funk's name attached in *The Daily Snap*. However, novelty was needed. I concluded by leaving the Funk hiding in a dug-out when the British charged and eating the regiment's last pot of strawberry jam.

I turned to another romance, entitled "Secret Service," and found to my joy that this needed very little alteration. The hero chanced to be in Germany at the outset of the war. He was imprisoned at Ruhleben, Potsdam, Dantzic, Frankfort and Wilhelmshaven. He escaped from these places by swimming the Rhine (thrice), the Danube, the Meuse, the Elbe, the Vistula, the Bug, the Volga, the Kiel Canal and Lake Geneva. He chloroformed, sandbagged, choked and gagged sentinels throughout the length and breadth of Germany. From under a railway carriage seat he overheard a conversation between ENVER BEY and BERNHARDI. Concealed beneath a pew at a Lutheran church he heard COUNT ZEP. and VON TIRP. exchanging deadly secrets. Finally he emerged from a grandfather's clock as the KAISER was handing the CROWN PRINCE some immensely important documents, snatched them, stole an aeroplane, bombed a Zeppelin or two on his homeward way, and landed exhausted at Lord KITCHENER'S feet. Here came the change. Instead of opening the parcel to discover the plans of the German staff, the WAR SECRETARY found in his hand this document:—

"Sausage Prices in Berlin: Pork Sausage, 3 marks 80 pf.; Horse Sausage, 3 marks 45 pf.; Dog Sausage, 2 marks 95 pf. Gott mit uns.—WILHELM."

I sent the three romances to Clibbers and waited his reply with anxiety. It came promptly and as follows:—"Are you mad?—CLIBBERS."

Instantly I sent him the first versions of these magnificent fictions. He phoned me at once, "That's the kind of novelty I want. Send me some more."

You will see "Retrieved," "The Funk," and "Secret Service" in the magazines shortly. Don't trouble if the titles differ. After all, there are only three genuine War story plots.

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### More Stories of Old London.

(With acknowledgments to "The Evening News.")

Mr. George Washington Turpin, Islington, writes:—

"I wonder if Mr. G. R. Sims remembers a curious horsey character known as John Gilpin, who rode in state one day from his home in the City to the Bell at Edmonton. I shall never forget the crowd that assembled to see him pass through Islington. It's quite a while ago and my memory is not so clear as it might be, but being a bit of a road-hog he missed the Bell and went on to York or somewhere."

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### DUAL CONTROL.



"A KIND OF A GIDDY HARUMFRODITE—SOLDIER AN' SAILOR TOO."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

"Sir PERCY SCOTT has not quite left the Admiralty and has not quite joined the War Office."—Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH, in the House. Since this remark Lord KITCHENER, has announced that the Admiral is to act as expert adviser to Field-Marshal Lord FRENCH, who is taking over the responsibility for home defence against aircraft.

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### THE SIMMERERS.

"I shall never shake it off," said Francesca. It was six o'clock and she had just come in from having tea with some friends.

"Shake what off?" I said.

"My Cimmerian gloom," she said. "Haven't you noticed it?"

"No," I said, "I can't say I have. Perhaps if you stood with your back to the light—yes, there's just a *souçon* of it now, but nothing that I could honestly call Cimmerian."

"Of course you'd be sure to say that. I can never get you to believe in my headaches, and now you won't notice my Cimmerian gloom."

"Francesca," I said, "I do not like to hear you speak lightly of your headaches. To me they are sacred institutions, and I should never dare to tamper with them. Don't I always walk on tiptoe and speak in a whisper when you have a headache? You know I do, even when you don't happen to be in the room. If your gloom is the same sort of thing as your headache——"

"It's much worse."

"If it's only as bad I'm prepared to give it a most respectful welcome. But what is it all about?"

"It's about the War."

"God bless my soul, you don't say so. You're generally so cheerful about it and so hopeful about our winning. What *has* happened to give you the hump? We've blown up any amount of mines and occupied the craters, and we've driven down several German aeroplanes."

"Yes, I know," she said, "I admit all that; but I've just met Mrs. Rowley."

"And a very cheery little party she is, too."

"That," said Francesca, "is just it."

"What's just what?" I said.

"Don't be so flippant."

"And don't you be so cryptic. What's Mrs. Rowley's cheerfulness done to you?"

"I'll tell you how it happened," she said. "We met; 'twas at a tea, and first of all we talked about committees."

"Committees!" I said. "How glorious! Are there many?"

"Yes," she said. "There's the old Relief Committee, and the Belgian Committee, and the Soldiers' Comforts' Committee, and the Hospital Visitors' Committee, and the Children's Meals' Committee, and the Entertainments' Committee and the——"

"Enough," I said. "I will take the rest for granted. But isn't there a danger that with all these committees ——?"

"I know," she said; "you're going to say something about overlapping."

"Your insight," I said, "is wonderful. How did you know?"

"I've noticed," she said, "that when men form committees they always declare that there sha'n't be any overlapping, and then, according to their own account, they get to work and all overlap like mad. Now we women don't worry about overlapping. Most of us don't know what it means—I don't myself—but we appoint presidents and treasurers and secretaries, and then we go ahead and do things. If we were only left to ourselves we should never call a meeting of any committee after we'd once started it. It's the men who insist on committees meeting."

"Yes, and on keeping them from breaking their rules."

"What's the use of having committees if you can't break their silly old rules?"

"Amiable anarchist," I said, "let us abandon committees and return to Mrs. Rowley."

"Well," she said, "we soon got on to the War."

"You might easily do that," I said. "The subject has its importance. What does Mrs. Rowley think of it?"

"Mrs. Rowley thinks it's all perfectly splendid. She hasn't the least doubt about anything. She knows the uncle of a man whose cousin is in the War Office and often sees Lord KITCHENER in the corridors, and he's quite certain——"

"Who? Lord KITCHENER?"

"No, the uncle of the man whose cousin—he's quite certain the War will be over in our favour before next June, because there'll be a revolution in Potsdam and thousands of Germans are being killed in bread-riots every day, and lots of stuff of that sort."

"I understand," I said. "You began to react against it."

"Something of that kind. She was so terribly serene and so dreadfully over-confident that I got contradictious and had to argue with her—simply couldn't restrain myself—and then she said she was sorry I was such a pessimist, and I said I wasn't, and here I am."

"Yes," I said, "you are, and in a state of Cimmerian gloom, naturally enough. But you've come to the right place—no, by Jove, now that I think of it you've come to the wrong place, the very wrongest place in the world."

"How's that?"

"Because I met old Captain Burstall out walking, and he was miserable about everything. According to him we haven't got a dog's chance anywhere. The Government's rotten, the Army's rotten, the Navy's worse and

the British Empire's going to be smashed up before Easter."

"Captain Burstall's the man for my money. If I'd only met him I should have been as cheerful as a lark."

"And that," I said, "is exactly what I am, entirely owing to a natural spirit of contradiction. I just pulled myself together and countered him on every point."

"I daresay you did it very well," she said; "but if you're as cock-a-hoop as you make out I don't see how I'm ever to get rid of my depression. I shall be starting to contradict *you* next."

"Which," I said, "will be an entirely novel experience for both of us. But I'll tell you a better way; let's keep silent for ten minutes and simmer back to our usual condition of reasonable hopefulness."

"I can't promise silence," she said, "but I'll back myself against the world as a simmerer."

R. C. L.



*Jarge (on a visit to London).* "LET'S GO OOP PAST TH' WAR OFFICE, MARIA. WE MIGHT SEE KITCHENER."

*Maria.* "WE'LL DO NOTHIN' O' TH' SORT. MORE'N LIKELY YOU TWO'D GET TALKIN' AN' WE'D MISS OUR TRAIN."

SHAKSPEARE to the Slackers:—

"Dishonour not your mothers; now attest." *HENRY V., Act III., Scene I.*



*Joan (reading).* "IT SAYS HERE THAT THIS WAR IS ARMAGIDEON, AND THE END AS THE WOULD IS FIXED FOR THE BEGINNING OF APRIL."

*Darby.* "THERE, NOW! I ALWAYS SAID THE KAISER WOULD WRIGGLE OUT OF IT SOMEHOW!"

## ANOTHER AIR SCANDAL.

If ever I write a Hymn of Hate, or, at any rate, of resentment, it will not be about the Germans, but about a certain type of Englishman whom I encounter far too often and shall never understand. The Germans are now beyond any hymning, however fervent; they are, it is reassuring to think, a class by themselves. But my man should be hymned, not because it will do him any good, but because it relieves my feelings.

It is really rather a curious case, for he might be quite a nice fellow and, I have little doubt, often is; but he boasts and flaunts an inhuman insensibility that excites one's worst passions.

What would you say was the quality or characteristic most to be desired in every member of our social common-wealth? Obviously there is only one reply to this question: that he should be decently susceptible to draughts. If society is to go on, either we must all be so pachydermatous as to be able to disregard

draughts, or we must feel them and act accordingly. There should not be here and there a strange Ishmaelite creature whose delight it is to be played upon by boreal blasts. But there is. I meet him in the train, and the other day I hymned him.

O thou (my hymn of dislike, of annoyance, of remonstrance began):—

O thou, the foe of comfort, heat,  
O thou who hast the corner seat,  
Facing the engine, as we say  
(Although it is so far away,  
And in between  
So many coaches intervene,  
The phrase partakes of foolishness);—  
O thou who sittest there no less,  
Keeping the window down  
Though all the carriage frown,  
Why dost thou so rejoice in air?  
Not air that nourishes and braces,  
Such as one finds in watering-places,  
But air to chill a polar bear—  
Malignant air at sixty miles an hour  
That rakes the carriage fore and aft,  
Wherein we cower;  
Not air at all, but sheer revengeful draught!  
How canst thou like it? Say! How canst thou do it?

Thou even read'st a paper through it!

Know'st thou no pain?  
Sciatica or rheumatism  
Leading to balm or sinapism?  
Doth influenza pass thee by?  
Hast never cold or bloodshot eye  
Like ordinary Christian folk  
Who sit in draughts against their will  
And pray they'll not be ill?  
Even in tunnels (this is past a joke)  
Thou car'st no rap  
Nor, as a decent man would, pull'st the strap,  
But lett'st the carriage fill with smoke  
Till all but thou must choke.

Why art thou anti-social thus,  
Why dost thou differ so from us?  
Thou pig! thou hippopotamus!

I don't pretend to be satisfied with these lines. They are not strong, not complete. Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS would have done it more fittingly. Still they might do a little good somewhere, and every little helps.

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### Overtime.

"The evidence was that defendants employed six young persons for more than seven days a week."—*Provincial Paper*.

"The organist played as opening voluntaries the 'Bridal March' from 'Lohengrin,' Barnaby's 'Bridal March' from 'Lohengrin,' and Barnaby's 'Bridal March.'"

*Provincial Paper*.

It was evidently BARNABY'S. Still, we think WAGNER might have been mentioned as his collaborator.

"In the current number of the *Commonwealth* Canon Scott Holland in his own inimical manner endorses all that Mr. Carey has been writing in our columns recently."

*Clerical Paper*.

The Canon appears to be one of those jolly people who slap you on the back as if they would knock you down.

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### AT THE FRONT.

Of recent days we have almost stopped pretending to be soldiers and owned up to being civilian labourers lodged in the War zone. This is felt so acutely that several leading privates have quite discarded that absolute attribute of the infantryman, the rifle. They return from working parties completely unarmed, discover the fact with a mild and but half-regretful astonishment and report the circumstance to section-commanders as if they had lost one round of small arms ammunition or the last cube from an iron ration.

The hobby of the civilian labourer is obstacle-racing. To do this you require a dark night, the assistance of some Royal Engineers, an appointment just behind the front line with some supervisor of labour whom you don't know and don't specially want to, and a four-mile stretch across country to the rendezvous.

You start out at nightfall and do good time over the first hundred yards. The field consists of forty to eighty labourers, and one of the idle rich (formerly styled officers). At the hundred yards' mark the Royal Engineers begin to come in. Obstacle 1 is a model trench, built for instructional purposes and now being turned to obstruational account. There's one place where you can get on to the parades without swimming, and if we started by daylight we might strike it. We do not start by daylight.

Beyond the trench is a wire entanglement, also a fine specimen of early 1915 R.E. work. We may note in passing the trip wire eight yards beyond. We're getting pretty good with it now, but in our early days the R.E. used to get a lot of marks for it.

You go on towards a couple of moated hedges, whimsically barbed in odd spots, and emerge into a park or open space leading into an unhealthy-looking road. It seems all plain sailing to the road—unless you know the R.E., in which case you will not be surprised to find your neck nearly bisected by a horizontal wire designed to encourage telephonic communication.

Eventually you all reach an area known for some obscure reason—if for any at all—as "The Brigade." Here the R.E. have a new game waiting for you. We call it "Hunt the Shovels." You have been instructed to draw shovels from the Brigade. The term covers a space of some thousand square metres intersected with hedges, bridges, rivers, dugouts, horseponds (natural and adventitious), any square metre of which may contain your shovels.

If you are not behind time so far this is where you drop a quarter of an hour. Of course you may just get fed up and go home. But in that case you aren't allowed to play again, and as a matter of fact the game is rather *de rigueur* out here. So you hide your party behind a sign-post, which tells you—if it were not too dark to read—INFANTRY MUST NOT HALT HERE, and then a lance-corporal with a good nose for shovels looks through the more likely hiding-places. The search is rendered pleasant as well as interesting by the fact that all the Brigade has been trodden into a morass by months of shovel-hunting.

Beyond the Brigade the obstacles really begin. But if you use a revolver freely for wire-cutting and rope your party together—this prevents anyone sitting down by the wayside to take his boots off "because they draws that bad"—you will reach the rendezvous assigned to you within an hour of the time assigned to you. At this point you will learn that no guide has been seen or heard of there, and, subsequently, that the guide was warned for another square that certainly looks very similar on the map. But again, if you know guides, you will guess that he went straight to the spot where the job was to be done without bothering about anything so intricate or superfluous as a rendezvous. Anyhow you will probably end by getting some sort of casual labour somewhere, some time or other, and no questions asked so long as you don't inadvertently dig through from a main drain into a C.O.'s dugout.

There is a new joke too, a Red Book, out of which we are gradually becoming millionaires. It is full of comfortable claims and allowances for gentlemen serving the KING overseas. The only thing is it takes a bit of working out. There are so many channels of enrichment. Thus in June—I forget the exact date—I spent a night in the train. Although I had a bed and beer in bottles all the way from England, not to mention usual meals and part use of doctor, I became entitled to one franc ten centimes in lieu of something which I have now forgotten. (Authority, W.O. Letter 2719.) Then a broken revolver is worth no less than seventy-two shillings, but I have to collect autographs to get that Unclaimed groom's allowance—I don't think my groom has claimed it—comes to nearly four-and-sixpence; and I find I have been quite needlessly getting my hair cut at my own expense these many months.

And yet I am afraid that when have made it all out and got a chartered accountant to account for it—that ought to mean a few pounds Chartered Accountant allowance—my application will be returned to me because the envelope is not that shade of mauve officially ordained for the enclosure of Overseas Officers' Claims.

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## TO "LIFE" OF NEW YORK.

(In acknowledgment of its "John Bull Number.")

In earlier peaceful days your attitude  
Was witty and satirical and shrewd,  
But, whether you were serious or skittish,  
Always a candid critic of things British,  
Though, when you were unable to admire us,  
*Life's* "little ironies" were free from virus.  
But since the War began your English readers  
Have welcomed MARTIN's admirable leaders—  
Which prove that all that's honest, clean and wise  
In the United States is pro-Allies—  
And learned to recognise in *Life* a friend  
On whom to reckon to the bitter end.  
But these good services you now have crowned  
By something finer, braver, more profound—  
Your "John Bull Number," where we gladly trace  
Pride in the common glories of our race,  
Goodwill, good fellowship, kind words of cheer,  
So frank, so unmistakably sincere,  
That we can find (in ARTEMUS's phrase)  
No "slopping over" of the pap of praise,  
But just the sort of message that one brother  
Would send in time of trial to another.  
And thus, whatever comes of WILSON's Notes,  
Of Neutral claims or of the tug for votes,  
Nothing that happens henceforth can detract



From your fraternal and endearing act,  
Which fills your cup of kindness brimming full,  
And signals *Sursum corda* to John Bull.

(*The War Week by Week, as seen from New York. Being Observations from "Life."* By E.S. MARTIN.)

"The Chairman said he should like to appeal to the good sense of the inhabitants of Duffield, through the Press, to do all they could to darken their windows not only at the front of the houses, but also at the back.

The Clerk said the Council had no power to take action in this matter only by persuasion, and it was decided that 500 leaflets should be distributed by the lamplighters to each house."—*Derbyshire Advertiser*.

And with pulp so expensive, too!

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## MR. PUNCH'S POTTED FILMS. THE PLAY WITH A MORAL.



*Characters in the Play.*  
NANCY PRIMROSE. RICHARD GRENFIELD. VERA VAVASOUR.



RICHARD GRENFIELD, LEAVING HIS NATIVE VILLAGE TO SEEK HIS FORTUNE IN LONDON, BIDS ADIEU TO NANCY PRIMROSE, HIS RUSTIC SWEETHEART. HE SWEARS TO BE TRUE TO HER.



ARRIVED IN LONDON, RICHARD SPEEDILY PLUNGES INTO THE GAY LIFE OF THE GREAT METROPOLIS. HE MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF VERA VAVASOUR, THE FAMOUS ACTRESS AND LEADER OF THE SMART SET. HE ENTERTAINS HER TO TEA AT THE FITZ HOTEL.



IN THE MEANTIME, ALL NANCY'S RELATIONS HAVING DIED, SHE IS THROWN UPON HER OWN RESOURCES, AND OBTAINS A SITUATION AS KITCHENMAID AT THE FITZ. FROM A PLACE OF CONCEALMENT SHE WATCHES, WITH DISMAY, THE FALSE BEHAVIOUR OF HER FORMER LOVER.



RICHARD, WHOSE PREVIOUS INCURSIONS INTO SOCIETY HAD NOT LED HIM HIGHER THAN A.B.C. SHOPS, IS UNABLE TO MEET THE BILL. VERA REVEALS HERSELF IN HER TRUE COLOURS AND REFUSES TO OFFER MONETARY ASSISTANCE. THE IRATE MANAGER THREATENS TO CALL IN THE POLICE. NANCY TO THE RESCUE!



NANCY, HAVING WITH HER HARD-EARNED SAVINGS DISCHARGED THE BILL, IS CLASPED TO HIS BREAST BY RICHARD, WHO THEN AND THERE ABJURES THE SMART SET AND MAKES STERN RESOLVE NEVER AGAIN TO FALL A VICTIM TO "THE LURE OF LONDON."

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Lieutenant. "NOBODY HURT? THEN WHAT THE DEUCE ARE YOU KICKING UP SUCH A ROW FOR?"

Tommy. "WELL, SIR, LOOK AT THE MESS THEY BLOOMIN' 'UNS 'AVE MADE IN THE TRENCH JUST AFTER I'VE SWEP' IT UP!"

## MUSICAL JUMBOMANIA.

"The piano with a thirty-foot keyboard, forty-five octaves, and five hundred and twenty-two keys, which Mr. Alfred Butt will 'present' in 'Follow the Crowd' at the Empire Theatre, is now in course of construction. Six pianists will play it, and Mr. Irving Berlin, the composer of 'Watch Your Step,' is composing some special melodies for them."—*Sunday Paper*.

The new Bombastophone which the Titanola Company are constructing for Mr. Boomer, the famous War lecturer, is approaching completion. This remarkable instrument, which roughly resembles a double-bassoon, stands about 45 feet high, and has a compass of 500 octaves, from the low B flat *in profundissimo* to the high G on the Doncaster St. Leger line. The use that Mr. Boomer makes of the Bombastophone is very original and effective. Whenever he sees that the attention of his audience is flagging he introduces an interlude of "bombination," which renders lethargy impossible and exercises an indescribably stimulating effect on the tympanum. The current of air is supplied by a bellows operated by an eight-cylinder Brome engine, but Mr. Boomer works the keys himself, climbing up and down them with a rapidity which must be seen to be appreciated.

Another instrument which is expected to work a revolution in the realm of sonority is the Clumbungo Drum, on which Mr. Wackford Bumpus will shortly give a recital at the Albert Hall. The drum, which is made of teak and rhinoceros hide, is three hundred feet in circumference, but only twenty feet high, and the drumsticks are of proportionate length. As Dr. Blamphin, the eminent aurist, remarks, "The merit of the notes of this momentous instrument is their profound sincerity. They cannot be disregarded even by the most absent-minded auditor."

## HINTS FOR AIR RAIDS.

The War Office have issued a notice reminding the public that they are greatly inconvenienced by persons who telephone for information during the progress of an air raid. To avoid a repetition of the trouble the attention of the public is called to the following information:—

(1) Elderly ladies may deposit their lap dogs in the bomb-proof shelter erected for that purpose in the basement of the War Office buildings at Whitehall, a charge of one penny per dog per raid being made.

(2) Persons removed from the interior of motor omnibuses by the explosion of bombs dropped by airships cannot claim from the Government a refund of the fares paid by them.

(3) Persons having reason to believe that an air raid is in progress are requested to put on their hats before leaving the house, as it has been ascertained that a hard hat is a substantial protection against falling Zeppelins.

(4) For the benefit of editors and others who are dissatisfied with the precautions taken to cope with the Zeppelin peril, Messrs. Selfgrove & Co. announce that their new Strafing Room will shortly be open to the public.

(5) As the force of a bomb explosion is largely in an upward direction, those in the immediate vicinity of a dropping bomb are advised to assume a recumbent position, in which they will enjoy the added advantage of being indistinguishable from the pavement.

(6) As theatre audiences are notoriously subject to panic, actor-managers are earnestly requested to prepare beforehand some suitable jest with which, in the event of a bomb entering the theatre, the attention of the audience may be distracted.

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### A BLOW FOR THE CRESCENT.



SULTAN OF TURKEY. "ALL-HIGHEST, ERZERUM HAS FALLEN!"  
KAISER. "GOTT—I SHOULD SAY, ALLAH—STRAFE RUSSLAND!"

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### UNDERGROUND GAME.

It was four o'clock on a wet wintry morning.

Captain Blank executed an inadvertent double-shuffle on a greasy trench plank and wondered vaguely why the rain should *always* come from the north-east. Presently a figure squelched up to him and halted.

"'Tis Sergeant O'Hagan, Sorr," it whispered hoarsely.

"Well, Sergeant, what is it?"

"'Tis the sintry at Fosse 19, Sorr. He's reported quare noises in that inimy sap beyant."

"Been dreaming, I expect," muttered the Captain, and then added briskly, "I think I'll have a listen myself. Go ahead, Sergeant."

They made their way slowly along the uneven trench, past silent figures reclining in various attitudes of ease or discomfort; past emplacements where machine-guns and trench-mortars were innocently sleeping (with one eye always open) or being overhauled by an expert night-nurse. Eventually, by that instinct common to trench-dwellers and professional poachers, they found themselves at Fosse 19, and with superlative caution crept up to the sentry.

"What's wrong?" whispered the Captain tersely.

"Well, Sir," replied Private Blobbs, "I was standin' 'ere on listenin' duty, when I 'ears somethink movin' very contagious, so I pops up me 'ead to 'ave a peep. Didn't see nothink, but I 'ears a peccoliar noise like— There y'are, Sir."

He broke off abruptly, and, borne upon the wind, came a series of guttural murmurs.

"Now wouldn't ut give one a quare shtart, that?" remarked Sergeant O'Hagan, *sotto voce*.

"Um-m," said the Captain thoughtfully. "I think Mr. Hamilton had better have a look round."

A few minutes later, having invaded the privacy of "Whortleberry Villa," he was relentlessly prodding a bundle of waterproofs.

"Come on, young fella!" he exclaimed when the bundle showed signs of life; "bombin' party forward. Brother Bosch is playin' the piccolo just outside Fosse 19."

The Subaltern scrambled out of his wraps and, with incredible dispatch, gathered together the Davids of his section. "All guaranteed," so he boasted, "to hit the cocoanut every time."

Accoutred with their infernal machines, the little band of hope passed along the trench as silently as a party of Fenimore Cooper's North-American Indians.

"Yes, they're at home right enough," muttered the Subaltern, after a cramped interval of breathless attention, "and fairly asking for it."

He proceeded to make his dispositions with the skill and assurance of an old hand. He was nearly nineteen.

"We're going to stalk 'em this time," he whispered to the men; "you keep on crawling till I say 'Go!' Then drop it on them quick."

He slid over the parapet like an eel and disappeared into the night. In a few moments the sentry was alone in the trench. His state of mind was, from sheer excitement, almost insupportable.

After what seemed interminable hours, at last he heard the clear word of command, the clatter of things falling and the immediate roar of the explosions. In reply, rifle fire began to break out along the German first trenches, whilst, overhead, a star-shell burst into blossom; then the stutter of machine-guns joined in the chorus. The sentry flattened himself like a poultice against the side of the trench. Fosse 19 had, among other disadvantages, the reputation of being open to enfilading by machine-gun fire.

The disturbance died away as quickly as it had arisen, but there were no indications that the bombing party was returning. Private Blobbs danced with futile impatience and bent his head to the approved angle of the expert listener. Suddenly a heavy body took him in the nape of the neck.

"Ow!" he exclaimed, floundering in mud and water with an unseen and inconceivable presence. He clutched the nightmare of an ear and kicked violently.

"Look aht, Percy," enjoined a hollow but reassuring voice, "'ere comes another!"

Private Blobbs removed himself with remarkable agility.....

"Good!" exclaimed the Subaltern when he finally slid into the trench. "This expedition hasn't quite come up to expectations, but it's the nicest family of pigs I've seen for some time."

He flashed an electric torch on to the disordered carcasses.

"Corporal Leary," he added incisively, "will you kindly see that the officers' mess is served with fresh pork?"

He snapped out the torch and, complete master of the situation, started on the return journey to "Whortleberry Villa."

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## BRINGING THE WAR HOME TO US.

HOUSEHOLD ORDERS.

By Mrs. EMMA PIPP, Commanding 3rd (Home Service) Battalion, The Fire Guards. February 21st, 1916.

*Detail.* Orderly Officer .... *Mary Ann.* Next for duty.... *Sarah Jane.* Charwoman of the day. . *Mrs. Susanna Sudds.*

*Parade.* 9.30 Shopping march under the Commanding Officer. Haversacks (for rations) will be carried.

*Inspection.* 12.0 O.C. Pantry will inspect all beetle-traps in her charge, and report if No. 13 (Kitchener pattern) has been found.

*Decrease Strength.* No. 4 Master T. Pipp, attached to Sea View House School, Boyton, for discipline.

*Promotion.* The Commanding Officer is pleased to approve of the following promotions:—Under-housemaid Mary Jane, to be Acting-Sergeant Housemaid; Miss Jones, Lady Nurse, to be Nursery Governess.

*Leave.* No. 1 Father Pipp granted six days' leave, inclusive of two days for travelling. Credit with six days' ration allowance at 1s. 9d. per diem.

*Baths.* Baths will be available for the nursery on Saturday evening from 6 to 7. O.C. Nursery will

report that they have been taken.

*Signalling.* The Commanding Officer is pleased to announce that at the Fortnightly Course of Glad Eye Signalling, No. 2 Gertie Pipp gained a Flapper's Certificate.

*Enquiry.* A Court of Enquiry will assemble on the 25th inst. for the purpose of enquiring into the circumstances whereby the wheel of No. 3 Perambulator became buckled on the 12th inst.

O.C. Nursery will arrange for the presence of the necessary witnesses, with the exception of No. 9 Baby Pipp, now teething.

*General Inspection.* On the 1st prox., Uncle-General Towzer, L.S.D., will hold an inspection of nephews and nieces at 5 o'clock on the front parade lawn.

*Dress:* Best bibs and tuckers, with smiles.

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### A Hint for Slackers.

"Drilling versus Broad-Casting Oats."

*Scotsman.*

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"The British Tropical Committee for War Films exhibited a further series of pictures of the British Army in France at the West-end Cinema House, Coventry-street, yesterday."

*The Times.*

Very hot stuff, no doubt!

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From a description of Sir SAMUEL EVANS' "*lit de justice*":—

"Sir Samuel first heard one summons in camera, and then took two months of a formal nature, the time occupied being less than half an hour."—*Morning Paper.*

How time does fly when one's happy.

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"WANTED, Rehearse March 20, Comedian and Chambermaid. Light Comedy (Refined Part, capable Good Drunken Scene)."

*The Stage.*

This is what is meant, no doubt, when people talk of "elevating" the drama.

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## ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.



FIRST STEPS TO VICTORY: A LEAD FROM OUR LEADERS.  
STRIKING EXAMPLE OF WAR-TIME ECONOMY: MR. ASQUITH AND MR. MCKENNA SPLIT A CIGAR.

*Tuesday, February 15th.*—To the regret of all loyal citizens, the curtain rang up at Westminster to-day without the now customary Royal Overture. In the absence of HIS MAJESTY, the LORD CHANCELLOR delivered the brief Speech from the Throne, expressing the unalterable determination of the British people and their Allies to defeat the Power (name not given but possibly conjecturable) "which mistakes force for right and expediency for honour." To emphasise the unity of the nation the Address was moved by the Unionist Earl of CLARENDON and seconded by the Liberal Lord MUIR-MACKENZIE. It was agreed to in good time for dinner.

The Commons are not so economical of time. Mr. IAN MACPHERSON, who moved the Address, made quite a long speech. Like *Hamlet*, it was chiefly composed of quotations, but they were all quite apt, and as they ranged from THUCYDIDES to BURKE, with BOLINGBROKE'S *Patriot King* thrown in, they pleased the House, which likes these tributes to its erudition. The seconder, in khaki, was Col. F. S. JACKSON, a new Member, who, like the still-lamented ALFRED LYTTELTON, had made a reputation at Lord's ere ever he essayed the Commons. "Jacker" found the new wicket not quite to his liking at first, but afterwards scored freely. In congratulating

the outgoing batsman the PRIME MINISTER discovered unexpected knowledge of cricket. "The Hon. Member," he said, "was making his maiden speech; but I doubt if he has ever encountered a maiden over—except, perhaps, when he was bowling."

In the regretted absence of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. STUART-WORTLEY as Acting-CHAPLIN referred to the disintegration of parties under the stress of war. Now they had only groups, some designed to help the Government, some to "ginger" them. Mr. ASQUITH dwelt upon the growing unity of control among the Allies, which would counteract the advantage in this respect hitherto enjoyed by our foes; and noted the amazing growth of the once "contemptible little" British Army. He further reminded us that we had already incurred liabilities which it would take us a generation to wipe out; and it was the first duty of every patriotic citizen to practise rigid economy.

All very well, said, in effect, Mr. WARDLE, the new leader of the Labour Party; but, if the working classes are to save, the other classes must set them the example. All very well, said Sir MARK SYKES, but if we are going to win the war we must co-ordinate at home as well as abroad, and abandon the idea of "muddling through." With experience of G.H.Q. and four public departments, he asserted that the men were all right, but the system all wrong; and that the proper thing was to adopt SULTAN OMAR'S plan, and give the supreme control of the War to a Cabinet of not more than four members, who with no administrative details to distract them might be able to "teach the doubtful battle where to rage."

The PRIME MINISTER listened with interest but without enthusiasm to this suggestion. Probably he remembered that an essential part of OMAR'S scheme was that if the Four failed to agree they were to be promptly hanged, and had himself no ambition to take part in a String Quartett.

*Wednesday, February 16th.*—The Trustees of the British Museum are for the most part grave and reverend seniors. But they harbour at least one humourist among them, in Captain HARRY GRAHAM. I suspect him of having conceived the notion of choosing this moment, of all others, to frame a petition to the House of Commons praying for more money to enable them to fulfil their trust, and of getting Mr. LULU HARCOURT, himself a member of the Government which is closing their galleries, to present it.

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Sir HENRY DALZIEL is the leader of one of the "ginger groups" above referred to. His first exploit in this capacity was to resist the proposal of the Government to take all the time of the House. In his demand that private Members should still be allowed the privilege of introducing Bills and having them printed at the public expense, he had the support of Mr. HOGGE, Mr. KING, Mr. PRINGLE, Mr. BOOTH, Sir WILLIAM BYLES, and other statesmen of similar eminence; but the PRIME MINISTER was obdurate. He accused the malcontents of lacking a sense of perspective—and expressed the poorest opinion of their efforts at legislation.

Some of the private Members got their own back when the first amendment to the Address was moved by Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS. The Member for Brentford, who knows the alphabet of aviation from Aeroplane to Zeppelin, complained that the air-service, like his own constituency in legendary times, was under Dual Control, and urged that it should be placed under a single competent chief.

Neither the UNDER-SECRETARY FOR WAR nor the FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY was at all happy in reply. They resembled a couple of flying pilots who, having gone up to attack a hostile airship in the dark, search in vain for an adequate landing-place. Heckled as to the exact status of Sir PERCY SCOTT, for example, Mr. TENNANT could only say that he "is still in the position he was in." When Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH ventured the remark that a personal knowledge of flying would be a useful qualification for officers advising the Government on this subject, Mr. BALFOUR was as painfully surprised as if he himself had been called upon to navigate a.t.b.d. in heavy weather.

In the absence of any definite sign of repentance the critics of the Government threatened a division, which would have been awkward and might have been disastrous. In similar circumstances Mr. GLADSTONE used to "send for the sledge-hammer"—meaning Mr. ASQUITH. The present PRIME MINISTER, when hard pressed, sends for BONAR. Thus summoned to ride the whirlwind the COLONIAL SECRETARY executed a graceful volplane. In a few frank sentences he admitted that the Government were very far from being satisfied with the Air Service, though it had achieved great things. Further, they were willing to give another day for its discussion when they had got through their financial business. With this confession and promise the critics were for the time being appeased.

*Thursday, February 17th.*—This being the first day for which Questions could be put down, Members took full advantage of the opportunity, and propounded ninety-nine of them. Ministers displayed less enthusiasm, and some of them were so late in arriving that the SPEAKER had to dodge about all over the paper before the list was disposed of. Mr. GINNELL was, as usual, well to the fore with silly rumours. There is perhaps a subtle connection between cattle-driving and hunting for mare's nests.

The pleasantest feature of Question time was the tribute paid (with hint of more substantial rewards to come after the War) to the gallantry and self-sacrifice of the officers and men of our mercantile marine. This furnished an appropriate prelude to the subject of the ensuing debate. Mr. PETO and others sought to press upon the Government the more economical use of our merchant shipping. Here they were forcing an open door. Steps have already been taken to restrict the imports of luxuries. Ministers are unanimous, I believe, in regarding "ginger," for instance, as an article whose importation might profitably be curtailed.



HIGHLANDER AND ZOUAVE (*simultaneously*): "!!!"

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## ECONOMY AT THE CINEMA DE LUXE.



*Mrs. Jones (completing her fourth Hour).* "I USED TO STAY ONLY TWO HOURS; BUT ONE 'AS TO MAKE THREEPENCE GO FURTHER THESE DAYS."

## HIGHLAND HOSPITALITY.

It happened in Scotland—it couldn't have happened anywhere else.

I had been visiting the MacNeils. They sympathised over my wound; they rallied round with tea and toast; they provided Scotch whisky. My one objection to the family was their supreme confidence in these new-fledged lads of the Home Defence, whom I—as a Subaltern of the old school who had done my time at Sandhurst before the War—scorned with a dogged contempt which no degree of argument could kill.

It was when I reached the street that I realised that fervid fire in the soul of Scotch hospitality—a fire which brands it as unique in our island story. In my coat pocket reposed a bottle of Heather Dew.

The convalescent home where I was being wooed back to brisk health was situated along the sea-front. Chuckling at the MacNeils' efforts to modify my views of our Home Defenders and their inefficiency, and brooding on the folks' kind hearts, I paused to light a cigarette. The wind blew out the fluttering flame. It also set me sneezing, for I had a bad cold in the head. I struck another match.

"Hey!" said a voice suddenly behind me. I swerved, choking back a sneeze. "Hey, hey, hey!" some broad Doric tongue continued.

A heavy hand came plump on my shoulder; a large Highland face was pushed into mine; a kilt flapped round long bare shanks. I sneezed again.



"Got ye this time, lad!" announced the son of the North, who now appeared to be a brawny lance-corporal. "Signallin' ye are. Oot to sea. Ah saw ye blinkin' wi' a licht."

I sneezed again. "I was'd!" I declared as well as the cold in my head would allow. "It was a batch. I've deaver sigdalled id by life. You're wrog—quite wrog!"

He gripped me firmly by the arm.

"Dinna tell me!" he announced in conclusive tones. "Ah ken better! Ye're the second spy Ah've cotched. Come along, ma freend Fritz! Ye'll hae the job o' explainin' to the Colonel whaur ye got that second-lootenant's uniform."

Hunching his rifle over his shoulder, he marched me back the way I had come.

"Where are you takig be to?" I enquired thickly. "Take be to your Cobbadig Officer at wudce. I wad to egsploid!"

"Ah'll hae nane o' your clavers," he said shortly. "Ye're for the gaird-room. Dinna tell ma ye're no a German wi' a tongue like yon!"

"I've god a gold id by head!" I shouted at him. "I'b dot a Gerbud! I'b Lieutedad Dobsod—"

"Haud yer tongue. Ye're a Chooton. An' ye're cotched. That's flat."

I was bundled into a draughty cattle-shed. The door was slammed. I sneezed. It was a bright prospect. I changed my views on the inefficiency of our Home Defenders. They now appealed to me as violently efficient. A night in a tumble-down cow-house! Desolation! Then I brightened up: the MacNeils' whisky. The cork popped in the silence of the night.

The door opened. A sentry's head was poked round. Disregarding him, I raised the bottle to my chattering teeth. Then the lance-corporal appeared. With a sudden thought I offered him the bottle. A strange look crept across his face. Gingerly he took the bottle. Then there was a comfortable sound. He drew a hand across his mouth.

"That's ggrand," he said. "Beg pardon, Sir. It's been ma mistake. Jock, the prisoner is a Scottish officer. Let him gang.... Thank ye, Sir; thank ye for the whisky."

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"The Germans ... a whole company being decimated, the only survivors, a captain and seventy men, surrendering."

*Pall Mall Gazette.*

This indication that the normal strength of a German company is now only 79 is welcome news.

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"The air defence of London is now practically under the control of the home forces, of which Lord French is Commander-in-Chief, and Admiral Lord French is Commander-in Chief, and Admiral the gunnery defences of London."—*Provincial Paper.*

So now we're all right.

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"The spectacle of the snow-clad trees on the London Road, and in other suburban districts, was pleasant to the eye, although it made walking a trifle difficult."—*Leicester Mail.*

It is our habit to discourage the dangerous practice of tree-gazing while in motion.

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## ONCE UPON A TIME.

### The Miracle.

Once upon a time there was one Herbert. The doctor being unwilling to pass him so that there was no chance that he, in the words of the great joke, would "march too," he had taken a situation as a waiter.

Englishmen (it is an axiom) do not make good waiters; nor was he an exception. But he was conscientious and painstaking, although clumsy and of short memory. Still, this was war-time, and Hans had gone to Germany and might now be dead, and Fritz very properly was interned, and Josef had sought Vienna once more, and Pasquale and Giuseppe had rejoined the Italian flag, and the only foreigners left were a few nondescripts, very volubly, indeed almost passionately, of Swiss nationality. In fact, if this War has done nothing else it has at least established the fact that the male population of Switzerland is far greater than any one had supposed. Gallant little Switzerland!

So you see this was Herbert's chance, and the manager was glad to get him; and Herbert, who, owing to the slump in games, had lost his job at an athletic sports factory and had certain financial liabilities which he had long since abandoned any hope of meeting, was glad to come. Only, by infinite self-denial and sacrifice did he get together the necessary capital for his clothes and the deposit demanded from waiters against breakages, theft and so forth.

On his first day as one in charge of three or four tables Herbert made some very serious mistakes. He was complained of for slowness, he turned over a sauce-boat, he broke a glass, and he forgot to charge for the cigar which the portly gentleman in the corner had taken after his lunch. And this cigar was a half-crown Corona, for the portly gentleman either had not yet grasped the full meaning of War economy or was enjoying one of those periodical orgies to which even rigid economist think themselves to be entitled.

Already Herbert had, like *Alnaschar* in the Eastern tale, spent imagination far more than he could make all the week, and this blow, with the manager's abuse to serve as salt in the wound, sent him home in misery. Nor was it as if the portly gentleman was a regular customer who could be reminded of the error (little as such reminding is to the taste of regular customers); on the contrary, he had never been known to visit the restaurant before. You see, then, how unhappily Herbert viewed life as he lay awake in his attic that night, and very heavy were his feet on his way to work the next day, with an overcoat buttoned up to his neck to hide his evening dress.

It was a cold rainy morning; the wind raged; and the very indifferent soles of Herbert's boots absorbed moisture like blotting-paper. Everything was against him. There was not a gleam of hope in the future, not a ray of light. His companions were surly, the manager was venomous, the bitter rain fell on. He was in debt and would get the sack.

It was then that the miracle happened. Suddenly Herbert, who was gazing forlornly through the window at this disconsolate world, waiting, napkin on his arm, to begin to wait, heard a voice saying, "I'm afraid you forgot to charge me for my cigar yesterday." It was the portly gentleman. Life was not utterly hopeless any more.



*Old Lady*, "Ah, IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN PREACHING TO MAKE THEM ZEPPELINS REPENT!"

## THE BEST AIR "MINISTER."

Who shall be Lord of the Air,  
Now N. has seen fit to declare,  
To his followers' deep despair,  
That he can't conscientiously sit  
In a Cabinet void of grit?  
For CHURCHILL is tied to the Front,  
And MARKHAM is out of the hunt,  
And eloquent BERNARD VAUGHAN  
From his pulpit can't be withdrawn.

Who shall be Lord of the Air  
And take us all under his care?  
Why, ROBERTSON NICOLL, of course—  
A man of colossal force,  
With a perfectly splendid gift  
For soaring and moral uplift.  
For, though nobody so uniquely  
Can hearten *The British Weekly*,  
His readers will cheerfully spare  
Him to go and remain in the air,  
Careering along the inane  
In a Nicoll-plated plane  
With, to lend him additional fervour,  
Mr. G\*RV\*N as his "Observer."

Mr. Gibson Bowles, at the City blockade meeting, on the Coalition: "The Government did not swop horses. They made an alliance with another animal; and the result is a mule without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity."—*Evening News*.

Incidentally the unkindest thing that has yet been said of the Unionists who joined the late Ministry.

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"There were further indications at the meeting of the Salop County Council on Saturday of the Council's desire to economise where possible. Dr. McCarthy drew attention to figures given in the report of the County Medical Officer of Health showing a diminution in the birth-rate of the county for the quarter to the extent of 14 per cent."

*Wellington Journal*.

Economy of any kind is praiseworthy, but we think they might have begun with one of the other rates.

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"The domestic income of a more or less typical three-roomed cottage near the docks is at present £17 per week. Among the recent purchases of the family, a pianoforte, costing £50, may be enumerated, although no one in the house can play a note. This looks more wasteful than the common outlay on gramophones, which at least give pleasure. The idea of sound investment is slow in penetration among the suddenly affluent in wages."

*Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*.

We dislike carping, but surely a piano is always a sound investment.

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## OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

In fiction it is certainly true that nothing succeeds like success. There is a sure and very understandable charm in a story of climbing fortunes. Therefore it may be that part of my pleasure in *Tasker Jevons* (HUTCHINSON) was due to sympathy with the upward progress of its hero. But much more was certainly due to the art with which Miss MAY SINCLAIR has written about it. *Tasker Jevons* is a book, and a character, that will linger pleasantly in my memory. He was a little man with a great personality, or rather I will say a great purpose, and that was to approve himself in the eyes of the wife whom he worshipped, and her perplexed, slightly contemptuous family. The trouble was that *Tasker* was in the beginning a hack journalist, socially and personally impossible; and that *Viola Thesiger*, whom he married, belonged by birth to the rigidest circle of Cathedral society (Miss SINCLAIR, scorning subterfuge, calls it quite openly Canterbury). So you see the difficulties that beset the *Jevons* pair. Their story is told here, very effectively, through the mouth of a third person, a fellow-journalist and admirer of *Jevons*—but quite respectable—the rejected suitor of *Viola*, and eventually the husband of her sister. Through his clever and observant eyes we watch the progress of *Jevons*, see him prospering materially, becoming famous and rich and vulgarized. It is an unusually close and rather subtle study of the development of such a man. Eventually there happens that for which the date, Midsummer 1914, will have prepared you, even if you had forgotten that Miss SINCLAIR had herself served in Belgium with a field ambulance. So the end of the book gives us some vivid War pictures. Taking it all round, I am inclined to consider *Tasker Jevons* the best of the 1916 novels that has yet come my way.

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When, in the first chapter of *Moll Davis* (ALLEN AND UNWIN), you find the heroine having a very pretty dispute with the landlord of the Mischief Inn, and a gallant blade of a fellow coming to her rescue, you will guess what fare is to follow. And, provided that your taste is for diet of the lightest, you will not be disappointed, for no one is more capable than Mr. BERNARD CAPES of making it palatable. Here we are then back in the year 1661, and in a maze of intrigue. Wit, if we are to believe the novelist, was as plentiful in those days as morals were scarce, and Mr. CAPES is not the man to spoil tradition for lack of colour. He calls his book a comedy, but he should have called it a comedy with an interlude; and the part I like best is the interlude. Possibly because he was weary of plots and counterplots he suddenly breaks loose, and with a warning to those who have "an unconquerable repugnance to sentiment" tells a moving tale that has nothing to do with the main narrative. I can thank him unreservedly for this, and for the crop of words which he has added to my vocabulary. "Bingawast," "gingumbobs," and "fubbs" have the right ring, and after a little training I hope to use them with telling effect on my platoon.

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*Edith Ottley* cherished a passion for *Aylmer Ross*; to such an extent indeed that she came within an ace of eloping with him. However, the ace wasn't played; and in due course *Aylmer* went to the War and became a captain. Unfortunately he also became much more interesting by reason of a wound; and, when this brought him back to England, the passion also returned, stronger than ever. This, of course, is why their story is called *Love at Second Sight* (GRANT RICHARDS). I have now a small surprise for you, namely that *Edith* was already married, and owned a charming house, a valetudinarian husband and two pleasant children. So I quite expected that *Aylmer*, in the fulness of time, would either (1) be removed by the enemy, or (2) marry a delightful little Red-Cross nurse who adored him. But the author, Mrs. LEVERSON, had other views. Instead therefore of ending her heroine in the expected mood of conventional reconciliation she sends the objectionable husband off with somebody else, and leaves us to a prospect of wedding-bells with the divorce court as a preliminary. Which is at least original. But throughout I had the feeling that a great deal of bright and clever writing was being wasted on a poor theme. The characters are brilliantly suggested, but—with perhaps one exception, forgetful *Lady Conroy*, who is an entire delight—they seem altogether unworthy of it. In fact I came away from the book with the impression of having attended a gathering of somewhat shoddily smart people, and sat next to a clever woman who had been witty about them. The worst of the matter is that they are all so real. This is a tribute to the author, but a most unpleasant reflection for everyone else.



THE RECTOR. "WELL, WILLIAM, YOU OUGHT TO BE PROUD AND HAPPY TO KNOW YOU HAVE FOUR SONS SERVING THEIR COUNTRY WITH HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES."

WILLIAM. "I AM PROUD AND HAPPY, SIR, BUT THE OLD WOMAN SHE DO FRET SOMETHIN' TERRIBLE BECAUSE NONE OF 'EM AIN'T GOT NO VICTORIA CROSS YET."

My attention was first attracted to *The New Dawn* (LONG) by the fact that the plot starts at Euston Station. That interesting, not to say romantic, line, the L. & N. W. R., is usually shunned by our novelists. But although "GEORGE WOVIL" takes his characters to the furthest North, even beyond Glasgow, their sympathies, like, I think, those of their creator, remain behind in fair and false and fickle Wimbledon. This at least was where *Halvey Brown* wished himself as the train glided over the best laid track in Europe towards dour Bartocher. And *Brown*, though he knew the natural drabness of his destination already, had at that time no information as to all the unpleasing events that were to happen there; that, for example, the minister's new wife would turn out to be a lady with a past that he himself had shared, or that the fair-haired young man in the same compartment was the assistant minister, who would fall in love with the said wife and eventually slay her, the minister, and himself. I find I have been led into betraying for you the outline of the story. Perhaps, however, this does not greatly matter. The value of the book lies in its very natural and human characters. All four of them—there are only four who really matter—are admirably drawn, so that the tragedy of their lives holds and convinces you. My complaints against the author are, first, the excess of emphasis that he gives to the physical unpleasantry of his background; secondly, the loose construction that allows the tale to be continually turning back to look behind it. He would keep a lover in the act of embracing the lady of his heart while he explains what the parents of each died of, and all that has happened since. Still, *The New Dawn* remains an unconventional and strongly written story, which will certainly interest though perhaps hardly enliven you.

There is something very soothing in the peeps into dusty family papers and the faint echoes of departed gossip which Mrs. STIRLING provides in *A Painter of Dreams* (LANE). These pleasantly amateurish historical studies go back a century and a half. A commonplace book from which are quoted many diverting and incredible things; a chapter in which those queer Radicals, HORNE TOOKE, COBBETT, SIR FRANCIS BURDETT and bluff Squire BOSVILLE, are chiefly concerned; a sketch of the fourth Earl of ALBEMARLE, keen farmer and friend of COKE of Norfolk, Master of the Horse to WILLIAM IV. and QUEEN VICTORIA (it is to ALBEMARLE in this capacity that the IRON DUKE said: "The Queen can make you go inside the coach, or outside the coach, or run behind it like a d—d tinker's dog"), winner of the Ascot Gold Cup three years running and stiff-backed autocrat; an account of the beautiful Misses CATON of Baltimore and their matrimonial adventures—the American invasion of brides bringing money and beauty in exchange for titles thus dating back to 1816; some details of the lives of two artists, JOHN HERRING, animal painter, and RODDAM SPENCER STANHOPE, one of the lesser pre-Raphaelites and the painter of dreams referred to in the title—these all make up an agreeable pot-pourri with an old-world fragrance which ought to be able to charm you out of the preposterous nightmare of the present. But it makes one feel old to see that the conscientious author thinks that DICKY DOYLE now needs a footnote to let the present generation know who he was.

### From the Catalogue of a V.T.C. Tailor.

"'I am,' a V.T.C. Secretary writes, 'in correspondence with the undertaker, and hope at last to induce the War Office to recognise us by sending a representative to attend our funeral rites.'"

"One man of four who escaped the bombs."—*Morning Paper*.

A little too old for the baby-killers.

"LORD SUMNER ON THE NEED FOR SELF-SACRIFICE.

'If the House of Lords and the House of Commons could be taken and thrown into a volcano every day the loss represented would be less than the daily cost of the campaign.'—*The Times*.

It sounds a drastic remedy, but might be worth trying.

"Lemons, used largely for making demonade, have a medicinal value."—*Daily Paper*.

We know nothing of the drinks popular in the lower regions, but have always heard that the nectarines used for making nectar have a strong tonic effect.

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