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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI

VOL. 150.

February 16, 1916.

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V.A.D. wardmaid, M.A. (to kitchen-maid). "I'm really a University lecturer; but at a time like this we are *all* human beings."

CHARIVARIA.

Many early nestings are recorded as the result of the mild weather, and at least one occasional visitor (*Polonius bombifer*) has laid eggs in various parts of the country.

Says a learned correspondent of *The Observer*: "There may be fundamental differences between observed phenomena without affecting the validity of a strict analogy; and after all an analogy is based upon presented similarities. It is sufficient if the sameness should apply to particular attributes or occurrences found by induction to have similar relationships or consequences." It looks, after all, as if some of our Museums wanted closing.

The "popular parts" of the Natural History Museum are to remain open, though it is still felt by the Government that, at a time when the practice of frugality is incumbent upon everybody, the spectacle of stuffed animals may tend to have a demoralising effect upon the young.

From *The Evening News*:—

"Our Daily War-time Menu.

Fish Pie.
Salt Beef. Turnips or Carrots.
Baked Potatoes.
Banana Pancake.
Coffee."

This will gratify those who believed that our contemporary's diet consisted largely of brimstone.

It is reported from Holland that Germans there are refusing German notes. In the United States however they are still accepted at their face value.

It is understood that the Government recruiting authorities, with whose *jeu d'esprit* all Trafalgar Square is ringing, have definitely rejected a proposed placard that says—

"WILL YOU 'ATE NOW
OR WAIT TILL MARCH 8?"

The Admiralty has announced that sea-fishing is included among the certified occupations exempted from the provisions of the Military Service Act. The suggestion that the other kind of fishermen should be rejected for psychopathic reasons has been bitterly resented by some of our most persistent anglers.

"Many of the men," writes a correspondent at one of the Fronts, "have apparently been without shirts for some time, and consequently the Army authorities, with that kindly consideration which always distinguishes them, have issued to the men a new pair of pants all round."

A bird-eating spider has just arrived at the Zoo. While its diet is commonly confined to quite small birds the animal is understood to have expressed extreme confidence in its ability to eat eagles, if only to show that its heart is in the right place.

"Germany's sea dogs," says the *Berliner Tageblatt*, "cannot content themselves much longer with merely showing their teeth." This is obviously unfair to Tirpitz's tars, most of whom have not hesitated to show their tails also.

The Kaiser at Headquarters lifted his glass to King Ferdinand, this being the kindest way of intimating that he has Bulgaria on toast.

It is rumoured that the Government has offered the control of our anti-aircraft defences to the Office of Works, but that

Mr. Lulu Harcourt has declined the responsibility, adding, however, that he will gladly repair any damage done by Zeppelins to the flower-beds in his department.

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THE WORD OF A GERMAN.

Your troth was broken ere the trumpets blew;
Into the fight with unclean hands you rode;
Your spurs were sullied and the sword you drew
Bore stain of outrage done to honour's code.
And you have played your game as you began.
Witness the white flag raised by shattered ranks,
The cry for mercy, answered, man to man—
And the swift stroke of traitor steel for thanks.
Once bitten we were twice a little shy,
And then forgot; but with the mounting score
Our old good-nature, tried a shade too high,
Stiffens its lip and means to stand no more.
So now, when you protest with bleating throat,
And broider round your wrongs a piteous tale,
Urging the Neutral Ones to take a note
That we have passed outside the human pale;
The world (no fool) will know where lies the blame
If England lets your pleadings go unheard;
To grace of chivalry you've lost your claim;
We've grown too wise to trust a Bosch's word.
O. S.

THE BILLETING CAPTAIN.

My job is to ride on ahead of the regiment, whenever we leave the trenches, and secure accommodation for men and horses in the place allotted to us. For billeting purposes there are four kinds of villages behind our front: the good, the indifferent, the positively bad, and the village of R—. It was to R— that I was ordered on my first errand of this kind. On the road I met a friend who holds the same post in his regiment as I do in mine. I told him where I was going, and he grinned. "You'll find all the doors locked when you arrive," he said. "The Mayor is away on service and you won't get any help from his wife. She's the most disagreeable woman I ever met, and is known for miles round as a holy terror." When at length I reached my destination I sent the rest of the party in search of barns and stables, proceeding myself towards the village pump, which I had been told was always a good place to work from. But there was little sign of life here. The *place* was deserted, except for one old man who was supporting himself by the pump handle, while with a stick in his other hand he tried to strafe a hen that had inadvertently run between his legs.

"Bon jour, M'sieur," I said by way of a start.

"Cigarette anglaise!" replied the patriarch.

I offered my case and was presently being entertained with reminiscences of the war of *soixante-dix*. By the time that he had finished his cigarette he had gone further back into history and was vividly describing the retreat from Moscow under the First Napoleon, on which occasion I gathered that he had caught a severe cold. There was evidently little help to be gained here, so leaving my venerable friend amid the Russian snows I went to the nearest house and knocked. Presently a key turned and the door was opened for about three inches by an old woman.

"*Bon jour, Madame*," I said in my best French; "I seek a bedroom, if possible one with a bed in it."

She looked me up and down for a moment, then with a "*Pas compris*" shut and locked the door again.

In the next house they were more obliging. A stout gentleman opened the door and informed me that unfortunately he possessed only one bed, which was shared by himself and his family of six children. But as M'sieu was a member of the *entente*, and if he could find no other accommodation—— But here I fled. Thus it was from house to house, and when later my N.C.O. reported his arrangements for men and horses satisfactory I had only managed to secure one miserable little room. So desperate had I become by this time that I determined to face the Mayor's wife, in spite of my friend's advice. Accordingly I turned towards a house labelled *Mairie*, and entered the garden, where a small child was playing. I think without exception he was the ugliest little boy I have ever seen, but I am a father when home on leave, and he smiled at me in such a nice friendly way that I stopped and pecked at his cheek as I passed.

When I looked up I saw a grim face regarding me over a pot of geraniums in the window. "Now for it!" I thought, and was presently face to face with the formidable lady, who asked me in broken English what my business might be. "Madame," I said, "you see a ruined captain before you. I have been sent to this village to find twelve bedrooms for my Colonel and brother-officers. Also a mess-room and an office. In one hour I have secured one room, and even now the regiment is arriving," for as I spoke the O.C. and some of the others came riding up. On seeing me they dismounted, and before Madame could say anything she and I were the centre of a little group of officers.

"Well," said the O.C., "what luck? We're looking forward to real beds again, I can tell you!"

I felt myself growing red. "The men and horses are arranged for, Sir," I stammered, and then suddenly a voice at my side took up the tale: "And if you will come wiz me I shall 'elp ze Captain to show to you ze rooms 'e 'as found." Unable to utter a word, I bowed, and we followed Madame to the first house at which I had earlier tried so unsuccessfully. She knocked at the door like a fury, and no sooner was it opened than she went in without more ado, and we after her. "I have come to show M'sieu the Colonel the room that you have prepared for him," she said in her own language to the old woman, who stood bowing and smiling as hard as she could. Then she opened a door and took us into the nicest room imaginable.

"'Ere I 'ope you will be 'appy, my Colonel," she continued. "Zis is ze best room ze Captain could find for you. Also I 'ope you will find Madame aimable;" and here she looked at the old woman, who started bowing again harder than ever. It was the same at all the other houses. Passing from one to another she commandeered room after room, even managing to wrest a bed from the father of six; and I verily believe that the inhabitants would have burned their dwellings to warm us had the little lady ordered it. All the while she maintained the fiction that I had arranged things previously.

"I 'ave just come wiz ze Captain to see everyting ees what you call spick," she said on leaving us.

"And a very good business you have made of it," said the O.C. to me approvingly. Still greatly puzzled, I returned to thank my benefactress. After expressing my gratitude I ventured to tell her that she had been much kinder to me than I had been led to expect.

"But 'ave I not see you kees my little son?" she said gravely.

"Ah," I said to myself, "*that's* it!" and, stooping down to where he was playing, I did it again with added warmth.

From the transactions of the Royal Dublin Society:—

"Professor Hugh Ryan, M.A., D.Sc., and Mr. M. J. Walsh, M.Sc.—'On Desoxyhydrocatechintetramethylether.'"

We are not surprised that it took two of them to tackle it.



SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY IN THE FATHERLAND.

It chanced that on the fourteenth day of February the boy Cupid strayed into the precincts of Potsdam, and came all unawares upon the War Lord; who deeming him to be an alien babe essayed to make a characteristic end of him.

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Disgusted Instructor. "Now then, none o' them peace tactics! 'Ere I'm trying to teach yer 'ow to kill the enemy, and yer goes and kisses 'im!"

BLANCHE'S LETTERS.

War Fashions.

Park Lane.

Dearest Daphne,—People are going to the theatre a good deal, but not in the old way. We wait in the queue now, and work our way up into the gallery. We leave the stalls and boxes to *ces autres*. "Olga" has created a simply charming queue-coat, heavy grey frieze, with plenty of pockets and a cap to match with ear-pieces. You take a parcel of sandwiches to eat while you're waiting (the *dernier cri* is to wrap the parcel in a spotted handkerchief), and, if you want to be immensely and utterly right, you'll *walk* home and buy a piece of fried fish on the way for your supper.

À propos, there's quite a good little story being told about Lady Goreazure and these topsy-turvy times. She was in the gallery at the Incandescent the other night, and, on coming down, the gallery people, finding it was pouring in torrents, crowded into the chief entrance for shelter, to the enormous disgust of the stalls and boxes, who were just coming out. A rose-coloured satin gown with ante-war bare arms and shoulders, an ermine wrap, and a paste hair-bandeau was particularly furious, and announced loudly that it was "an abominable shame to mix us up with the gallery people in this way." Lady Goreazure thought she knew the voice, and, turning, recognised in the angry pink-satin person her maid, Dawkins, who left her some months ago to go into munition work. She's a skilled hand now and simply coining money, as she told Lady G. in a hurried furtive whisper, adding, "Please don't talk to me any more. I shouldn't like my friends to see that I know anyone from the gallery."

One of the *literally* burning questions of the moment has been how to dispose of the little lanterns one's obliged to carry after dark now that so many people have given their motors to the country and stump it or bus it everywhere. Your Blanche has solved the difficulty and at the same time set a fashion. My evening boots (what a different meaning that phrase has from what it once had, my Daphne!) have darling little teeny-weeny lamps fixed to their toes, so that one can see exactly where one's stepping. With these boots is worn a toque with a small lamp fastened in a velvet or ribbon *chou* in front. The *boots* are for *one's own guidance*; the *toque illuminante* is to show *other* gropers in the darkness that one's coming. Some people add a chic little hooter, which clears the way quite nicely and is simply *precious* in crossing roads.

Speaking of those who've given all their motors to the State and those who haven't, a new social danger has bobbed up for the latter—the chauffeuse. She's got to be reckoned with, dearest. In threatening the single lives of people's eldest sons she's leaving even the eternal chorus-girl down the course, and in releasing *one* man for the Front she's quite likely to capture *another who counts considerably more!*

The Ramsgates thought they'd got a perfect jewel of a chauffeuse—smart, businesslike, knew town well, knew when she might exceed the speed limit and when she mightn't, thoroughly understood her car and so on. And then one day Pegwell came back from the Front on sick leave. As soon as he was well enough he went for a drive every day. Someone said to his mother, "I wonder you trust your boy out alone with that chauffeuse of yours." And Elizabeth Ramsgate *laughed* at the caution. "I only wish Thompson were more dangerous," she said. "There's safety in numbers, and if she were younger and prettier perhaps she'd [Pg. 117] switch Peggy's thoughts off that fearful Dolly de Colty of the Incandescent."



"I say, old girl, do let me carry something."

And so Pegwell went on with his drives, and one day they were out so long that his mother was anxious, and when at last they came back she said, "Oh, Thompson, you've been driving Lord Pegwell too far; he's not strong enough for such long drives; it was very inconsiderate of you, Thompson." And the chauffeuse tossed up her chin and cried, "Not so much 'Thompson,' please!" And Pegwell chipped in with, "This is Lady Pegwell, mother, and in future she'll drive no one but me!"

Popsy, Lady Ramsgate, is even more furious about it than his parents. "Ramsgate and Elizabeth have behaved like fools," she said to me yesterday; "they don't know their world in the least, though they've lived in it nearly half a century. What if the minx *wasn't* particularly young and pretty. A chauffeuse is a novelty, and when you've said that you've said everything."

Your Blanche is enormously busy just now editing a book that's going to be the sensation of the Spring crop of volumes.

You're aware, of course, *m'amie*, that if a book's even to be *looked* at now it must be either Somebody's Memories of Everybody Else or Somebody's Experiences in an Enemy Country. Well, and so Stella Clackmannan and I, in the hostel we run for poor dears who've lost their situations abroad and have no friends to go to on coming back here, found among our guests a bright little Cockney who's been what she calls an up-and-down girl in the Royal Palace at Bashbang, the capital of Rowdydaria. My dearest, the things that girl has climbed over and crawled under, and the weather she's come through, in escaping from the Rowdydarians and getting back here! And the things she's seen and heard in the Palace! It will throw a flood of light on all sorts of things, and will certainly make our F.O. sit up.

With the help of a clever photographer and some imagination we've reconstructed the up-and-down girl's adventures quite nicely. There are photos of the King of Rowdydaria as head of his own army; in his uniform as Colonel of the Hun Rauberundmorder Regiment; and in the Arab burnous in which he is to lead an attack on Egypt. There's a photo of the up-and-down girl sweeping a passage and listening through a key-hole to a wonderful conversation between the King of R. and an Emperor who'd come to see him (luckily it was in English and she remembers every word): "You've got to say *you* did it." "But I haven't got any navy—I *couldn't* have done it." "I'll give you the submarine that did it—or *lend* it to you. There! now it's yours—for a time. *You* don't depend on the Neutralians for any supplies. So you can afford to tell them you did it—and be quick about it." "But you can't expect even the *Neutralians* to swallow that!" "Why, you fool, they'd swallow anything! That's the meaning of their phrase 'rubber-neck.'" There's a photo of the Queen of Rowdydaria coming up at this point, snatching the broom away, and beating the up-and-down girl with it, and calling her "Spying English Pig." Altogether, my dear, it's positively enthralling! Order your copy early, for people will be slaying each other for this book. *Astounding Disclosures of an Up-and-down Girl in the Royal Palace at Bashbang* will certainly quite *quite* eclipse those two other sensations, *What a Buttons Overheard in the Imperial Pickelhaube Schloss* and *Amazing Revelations of a Tweeny in the Perhapsburg Hof*.

Ever thine,
Blanche.

How to put People at their Ease.

"The officer in command, Lieut. Berg, was exceedingly pleasant, and did all in his power to put the passengers at their ease and make them feel comfortable.... He had a large bomb placed in the engine-room, and another on the bridge, which could be exploded easily by electricity."—*Daily News*.

"AMERICA'S LAST WORD FOR
THE HUN.
SIXTEEN PAGES TO-DAY."

Daily Mirror Poster.

These American last words!

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THE WATCH DOGS.

XXXV.

My dear Charles,—Things go on here from day to day in a businesslike and orderly fashion, the comic relief being supplied by a temporary, very temporary, man from overseas, who has operated for a while at our telephone exchange. Most people, myself included, are overawed by the dignity and significance of our environment here; not so this Canadian. One of our very greatest was having words with his instrument the other evening. He supposed, wrongly, that his antagonist was a hundred kilometres away, and he adjusted his remarks and voice accordingly. Imagine his pain on being informed, from the exchange, in quite a cheerful and friendly tone, "I guess you're on the wrong string this time, Mister."

There is also, of course, that never-failing source of satisfaction, the military mess waiter. I think ours, the other night, excelled all starters in the art of ellipsis. Our meal was interrupted by a loud bump, crash, cataclysm and bang. We took it that two at least of the enemy's great offensives had begun, centralising on us and opening with the destruction of all our mess machinery, personnel and platter. Shortly afterwards Alfred, slightly flushed, came into the room. We asked him to let us know the worst. All we could get out of him was, "I must 'a' trod on a bit o' fat, Sir."

You will be touched, I am sure, by the pretty story now current concerning the earnest young subaltern and the Brigadier. The former was responsible for the training of an expert section, in no matter what particular black art; the latter called in person one morning to witness an experimental display. The apparatus was produced, the Brigadier inspected it delicately, and the section was fallen in, standing near by in an attitude of modest pride. From them the Brigadier eventually singled out a private to do a star turn; silence was enjoined while the subaltern should give the private the necessary detail orders. Now the subaltern was one of the many of us civilians who have a burning ambition not only to achieve perfection always, but also to maintain on all occasions a superlatively military bearing. Confronted by the private and expected to order him about, he hesitated, blushed and at last made it clear that he simply must, before beginning, have a few words apart in the General's private ear. With kindly toleration the General eventually conceded this, and it was then made more than apparent to him why it was that the earnest young subaltern was reluctant to give his orders to the private without some explanation in advance to the Brigadier. "The man's *surname* is Bhyll, Sir," he whispered.

Red-hats may not always know much about life in the trenches, but they can tell you at first hand what strafing was like when there were no trenches to live in. You will perhaps care to hear of an adventure of the good old days, when men wandered about Flanders on their own, sometimes attaching themselves to English units, sometimes to French, and sometimes marching inadvertently with the Central Powers. Maps in those days didn't show you clearly which was your bit and which was the other fellow's, and many a time different parties, meeting in the dark, would be quite affable in passing, little knowing it was each other's blood they were after. My man, at the moment when we take up the narrative, was walking about in a wood, looking for a job. Half an hour earlier he had been busily engaged in a brisk battle, but, owing to his not keeping his mind on it, he'd got detached and now found himself in one of those peculiarly peaceful solitudes which only exist in the heart of the war zone. Whether the battle was over and, if so, who'd won it, he couldn't say. In fact, those being the early confused days, he didn't rightly know whether it had been a battle at all or just a little personal unpleasantness between himself and his private enemies. Everything appeared to be exactly as it should not be; he felt that he ought to be exhilarated with victory or depressed with defeat, exhausted or maimed, and not merely covered from top to toe with mud. He found himself walking along in a wood, just as he might do at home, smoking a cigarette and thinking that this would be a most convenient moment for a wash and a cup of tea. As he said, the very last thing he seemed to be at was war, when suddenly, climbing over a small ridge, he discovered himself face to face with a hostile sentry, and near him were, at repose, a knot of other equally repulsive Bosches.

It has struck everyone out here, sooner or later, that it is easy enough to do the thing if only one could know at the moment what is the thing to do. Here was a sentry whose whole recent education had been devoted to learning exactly how to deal with new and unwelcome arrivals. He was furnished for that very purpose with a rifle having a carefully sharpened bayonet at one end of it and a nice new bullet at the other. There he was, all prepared to deal with an emergency, and there was the emergency confronting him. Having had a good look at it, he contented himself with saying "*Halt! wer da?*" adding as an afterthought a threatening move forward.

On the other hand, here was our friend, young and vigorous, in full possession of all his faculties, too surprised to be even alarmed. His first tendency was to pass haughtily on or, at the most, to stop and tell the man to be more respectful when addressing an officer. His second was to call to mind, in a confused mess, all the brilliant and dashing things a hero of fiction would, without a moment's hesitation, have done in the circumstances. Lastly, it was borne in on him that this was indeed a German; that all Germans were, under the new arrangement, sworn to do in all Englishmen at sight, and that he himself was, beneath his mud, one of the last-named. Being rather the quicker-witted of the two, he had put in three thoughts to the other fellow's one; but the position showed no improvement in the result, and the enemy's second thought, slowly dawning, was obviously of a more practical and drastic nature. His undecided fidgeting with his rifle made this abundantly clear. No time was to be lost. Our friend realised dimly that at all costs he must conceal his nationality. This promised to be a matter of languages, never his strong point. But, there again, he was carefully prepared with a series of useful phrases in various tongues, which he had learnt up in small and inexpensive hand-books. The difficulty was to get on to the right one; his mind, having got him thus far, refused further assistance. Instead of furnishing him with the appropriate remark, it merely suggested to him a clearly defined picture of the outside of the text-book, particularly emphasizing the elegant but inept phrase, "One Shilling net at all Booksellers." And what was the use of that with the sentry's bayonet rapidly coming to the "On guard" position?

It's a long story, Charles, and it ended by our friend ingenuously stating by way of a seasonable ruse, "*Pardon, monsieur, je suis français.*"

I'd prefer to leave it at that, but you are one of those detestable people who insist on going on after the climax. So I may as well tell you that at this point our friend's legs took to action on their own, no doubt remarking to themselves as they did so that this was but another instance of damned bad Staff work. I sometimes wonder whether possibly it isn't easier to be a limb than a brain.

Yours ever,
Henry.

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MR. PUNCH'S POTTED FILMS. THE PASSIONATE DRAMA.

THE DEMON OF JEALOUSY.



"Wretched woman! Who is this?"

Henceforth you are no wife of mine!"



A woman's anguish.



"Die, scoundrel!"



A strong man's rage.



"He is my brother from Australia. You should not be so hasty."



Grannie (dragged out of bed at 1.30 A.M. and being hurriedly dressed as the bombs begin to fall). "Nancy, these stockings are not a pair."

LITERARY PITFALLS.

The Chronicle publishes a most interesting letter received from Mr. G. B. Burgin, who lately, if our memory serves us right, completed his fiftieth novel. He writes:—

"A hitch has arisen about the publication of my novel, *The Rubber Princess*. It deals with an air raid on London, etc., and it has been pointed out to me that if it appears before the War is over it will probably be suppressed, and that I shall be mulcted in pains and penalties. I have therefore withdrawn it and substituted (for the Spring), with Hutchinsons, *The Hut by the River*, of which I have great hopes. It is a Canadian romance, with a pretty love story and a nice little mystery at the end."

It will, we are sure, be a consolation to Mr. Burgin, to whose agility and versatility we desire to render our homage, to learn that he is not singular in his experience.

Only a few days ago we received a letter from Mr. Bimbo Posh, the famous Suffolk realist, recounting the circumstances which have led to the postponement of his eagerly-expected romance, *The Synthetic Sovereign*.

It appears that Mr. Posh, a man of a most scientific imagination, assigned the rôle of hero in his story to a marvellous automaton. Unfortunately for him he was not content with generalities, but described the process by which this artificial superman was produced in such minute detail that his publishers realised that it might be positively prejudicial to our safety to make it known. The sequel had best be told in Mr. Posh's own pathetic words:—

"At first I was fearfully upset, though convinced by the arguments of my publishers (Messrs. Longbow and Green-i'-th'-Eye). But a happy inspiration seized me as I was ascending the escalator at Charing Cross, and in exactly a fortnight I had finished another novel, entirely divorced from the present, entitled, *In Dear Old Daffy-land*. It is an idyllic story of Suffolk in the days of the Heptarchy, founded on an ancestral tradition of the Posh family. It runs to about 60,000 words, and Mr. Longbow, who read it at a sitting, thinks it the finest thing I have done."

Curiously enough, just as we go to press comes a letter from Miss Miriam Eldritch, apologising for the withdrawal of her volume of poems, *Attar of Roses*, in view of the fact that one of the leading establishments for the distilling of this perfume is in Bulgaria. Miss Eldritch, however, has proved fully equal to the occasion, for by a great effort she has composed, in little over one hundred hours, a cycle of one hundred lyrics, to which she has given the title, at once alluring and innocuous, of *Love in Lavender*.

"Perturbabantur Constantinopolitani Innumerabilibus sollicitudinibus."

["Constantinople is much perturbed."

Daily Press.]

In flouting Zeus and Themis,
his

Heart set on cheating
Nemesis,

The Constantinopolitan

Now rues his impious
blunders,

And fears approaching
thunders

Trinitrotoluolitan.

"Gentleman's dark grey fur lined motor coat, fit fairly big man, lined with about 150 selected natural musquash skins, real Persian lamb collar, the property of a peer, in the pink of condition."—*The Bazaar*.

We trust his lordship will remain so in spite of the inclemency of the weather.

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JOB'S DISCOMFORTER.

Uncle Sam (*to Job*). "SAY, PATRIARCH, THEY TELL ME YOU HOLD THE WORLD'S RECORD FOR PATIENCE. WAL, WE CLAIM TO HAVE GOT A MAN HERE THAT CAN KNOCK SPOTS OFF YOU!"

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ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

(Extracted from the Diary of Toby, M.P.)

The Last Chapter.

House of Commons, Tuesday, 15th February.—After, on nomination of my revered master, Mr. Punch, representing Barkshire in the Commons during three reigns, under nine Parliaments, captained in succession by six Premiers, come to conclusion that I have earned the right to retire. Two ways of voluntarily vacating a seat. One by a call to the Lords. The other by application for Chiltern Hundreds. Not having heard anything about the Peerage, have adopted latter course. The Member for Sark, loyal to the last, insists on following my example.

Accordingly, when House meets to-morrow, writs will be moved for elections to fill two vacancies. In ordinary times this

would lead to interesting episode. Customary for the Chief Party Whip to move for writ to fill casual vacancies in his ranks. Would the Ministerial Whip or the Opposition Whip come forward to take preliminary step for elections consequent on retirement of the Member for Barks and the Member for Sark?

The closest observer of Parliamentary procedure or comment is not sure whether in Party politics they are Liberals or Conservatives. Cannot indeed say on which side of the House they sit. As it happens there is at this doubly memorable date no division of parties, consequently no contending Whips. Writs for Barks and Sark will accordingly be appropriately moved by Whip representing united House.

Thirty-five years ago Barks first sent me to Westminster. Of Cabinet Ministers then seated on Treasury Bench none are alive to-day. Gladstone, just returned by overwhelming majority, was Premier; Granville, with consummate skill and dainty humour, led minority supporting Government in House of Lords; Harcourt was at the Home Office; Hartington, Secretary of State for War; Childers at the Treasury; Kimberley at the India Office; at the Irish Office Forster, with his rumpled hair, his rugged speech and his gruff manner, "the best Stage Yorkshireman of his time."

Much history has been made since that time. Procedure in the Commons has been revolutionised, with the result not only of accelerating ordinary business and leading to final issue controversies futilely raging for years, but radically altering personal tone and manner of Mother of Parliaments.

That is another story, too lengthy to be told here. Glad to know I was intimately acquainted with the House and, with rare exceptions, with the principal personages in either political camp through a long stretch of older, more picturesque time.

I close the Diary here, not because I am tired of writing it, nor, as continuous testimony indicates, because a generous public is tired of reading. But I am not disposed to linger superfluous on the stage. So I withdraw, carrying with me my little bag of tricks, the sententious Dog, the cynical Sark and the rest of the contents.

Henceforward some new form will be given to the "Essence of Parliament" which was created by Shirley Brooks, and enlivened by the hand of Tom Taylor.

Business done.—Toby, M.P.'s.

A DIRTY NIGHT.

The night is starless, with a darkness so enveloping that it seems to possess palpability. As we reel westward in a smother of water the miracle of how any human being equipped with but five senses can find and keep his course in the chartless void that envelops us smites me afresh.

A longing for an atmosphere unimpregnated with petrol eventually sends me stumbling up the companion-way to the deck. Gripping the rail, I make my way forward, and, peering through the mirk, distinguish a huddled figure in a sou'wester. Aloof, detached, he steers the shrewdest, swiftest path ever carved through a wall of blackness on behalf of dependent fellow-creatures.

"A wild night," I shout.

He turns slightly and answers in a hoarse bellow, "The better for us, mister. Keeps the track clear. Ought to get in ahead o' time."

The yellow glare from our lights glances in broken splashes of colour over the waters, as the squat craft heaves and rolls with rhythmic regularity. From somewhere below comes the monotonous throb of the protesting engines. A red light gleams suddenly on our starboard, and I catch my breath. Æons pass, it seems, before a panther-like clutch at the wheel carries us aside in time to let the offender plunge drunkenly past. We were near enough to throw a biscuit on her deck. A swift exchange of badinage follows.

"Lost yer job o' puntin' coal-barges?"

"Yuss—they're usin' donkey-power instead. I give in your name 'fore I left, but they 'adn't a spare stable." After which, the immediate danger past, we plough our way down a blurred track on either side of which lurks Peril in a hundred grim and invisible shapes.

The temperature, already low, has begun to drop steadily, and a fine drizzle yields to a penetrating chilliness which finds its way to one's very marrow. I am glad of my heavy wraps, and inclined, indeed, to envy the huddled figure, whose coverings are still heavier. Inwardly I wonder what this clashing of the Nations has meant to him: whether he has wife and children; whether he keeps their portraits in some deep-buried pocket beneath that accumulation of clothing which engulfs him to the ear-tips.

I am still speculating when a second figure, moving with the easy gait of one whose feet have trodden many decks, climbs the companion-way and comes forward in leisurely fashion. The fellow is no stranger; already, as I came on board, I had a glimpse of that grizzled, masterful jaw and keen eyes. He peers past me towards his mate.

"Elf!"

"Yuss?"

"Seed anyfink o' young 'Arry lately?"

"Not me!"

"Well, I 'ear 'e done a bit in the lead-slingin' line at a place called Wipers, an' they've been an' stuck some sort o' French medal on 'is chest."

"Blighter owes me fourpence, anyway," roars Elf; and I infer that neither of them has a high opinion of 'Arry's character from the civilian point of view.

Follows an interval filled with small confused sounds—the staccato note of a bell, the soft thud of a passenger's body as he is jerked unexpectedly against the rail, the picturesque ripple of his expostulations with Providence.

A lamp, burning with unusual and illegal garishness, gives me light enough to examine my watch. It indicates the proximity of midnight. I realize that I am incredibly stiff and cold, and am tormented by visions of unattainable comforts.

At last I am conscious of a line of dimmed lights, of a distant roar of escaping steam, of a violent quivering motion that indicates the slackening of speed. We come to a sudden halt. The voice of Elf rises triumphant.

"Bill!"

"Yuss?"

"Two minutes arter!"

"Knowed we'd do it!"

And as I stumble blindly forth it is borne upon me that the last Ealing motor-bus has ended her journey with five minutes to spare.

"Egypt is placidly awaiting the event, with the absolute conviction that the Turks and Germans will get the boating of their lives in the Sinai Desert."—*Civil and Military Gazette*.

They certainly won't get it on the Suez Canal.

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Nervous Young Officer (to 'bus conductor).
"First Single to Oxford Circus."

[The authorities have recommended that officers should travel first-class.]

A MODEST SUGGESTION FOR A NEW HUNNISH CANTICLE.

"Kaiser Wants New National Hymn."

"Westminster Gazette" Heading.

"He shall have it."—*Mr. Punch.*

God of our Fathers, God of old,

Who hast for us such sympathy,

Cast as Thou art in German mould,

Again we raise our voice to Thee:

Omnipotence, we need Thy hand

In air, on sea, canal and land!

The English (who, Thou knowest, hide

Contemptibly upon an isle)

No doubt on Thee have also cried,

According to their native guile;

Presumption could no further go

In those who plunged the world in woe.

Thou wouldst not hearken to a race

Possessed of that inhuman Fleet,

So cruel, arrogant and base,

So steeped in rancour and deceit.

'Twas they, remember, they alone,

Who forced this Burden on Thine own!

Bless, rather, us! our arms! our cause!

Pour on us Thy protecting love!

Sanction our fractures of Thy laws,

By U,s beneath, by Zeps above!

Relieve us in this dark impasse;

Bless all our efforts; bless our gas!

Deal gently with us should we tend—

Presuming as Thy favoured Race,

All flushed to own so great a Friend—

To dereliction into grace!

Deal gently with us, Lord, should we

Once deviate to decency!

And Him, from Whom such blessings flow,

Our Wilhelm, first of Sons of Light,

Whose one ambition is to show

Mankind the rightfulness of Might;

Bless Him, and forward His device

To make an Earthly Paradise!

And should some other star up there

(For all the stellar space is Thine)

Demand Thy more immediate care,
And thus divert Thee from the Rhine,
Thou need'st but mention it, and He
Thy Viceroy hero will gladly be!

"WANT OF FOOD.

Salonika.

On returning to Salonika after an absence of a month, I find the situation much relieved as a result of the deportation of the enemy Consuls and the energetic measures adopted to clear the town of the numerous pies previously infesting it."—*Provincial Paper*.

The headline seems justified.

"I bought a brochure, which explained that the Emperor was not physically ill, but his metal condition was upset owing to the war."

Evening Paper.

Another allusion, we suppose, to the depreciation of the Mark.

"Lord Crewe and Lord Lansdowne have addressed the following Whip to the members of the House of Lords: On February 15 an address will be moved in the House of Lords in answer to His Majesty's Speech. We venture to express the hope that Your Majesty will find it possible to attend in your place on that day."—*Yorkshire Evening Post*.

We have heard of the Sovereign People, but the Sovereign Peers are new to us.

"In the course of the match, Brelsford, the United half-back, and Glennon, the Wednesday forward, were ordered off the field for fighting. Upwards of 16,000 spectators witnessed the match."—*Birmingham Post*.

Mr. Punch will gladly furnish any of the players, or eligibles amongst the 16,000 spectators, with the address of a field where fighters will certainly not be "ordered off."

"ANIMALS AND ZEPPELIN NOISES.

Sir,—The dat is affected by all sounds, according to its weakness or its strength."

Morning Paper.

We have often noticed the same thing about the cog.

"Typist and Shorthand Clerk.—Required at once for invoicing a young lady, accustomed to the drapery trade preferred."

Daily Chronicle.

Not an easy post. Some young ladies are so unaccountable.

"Washington, Jany. 17.—Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst the suffragette leader now under parole in New York will be formally admitted to the United States soon after her papers reach Washington. President Wilson is opposed to her execution."—*Bermuda Colonist*.

A merciful man, this Wilson.

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A CONTROVERSY.

(*From Our Own Correspondent in America.*)

I.

Yesterday President Wilson addressed a monster gathering of business men at Ponkapog. He said that it was a cruel misconception to hold that Americans were without ideals. As a matter of fact they cherished their ideals far beyond

any question of making money and would die rather than submit to acts which were an outrage on our common humanity. In declaring that there was such a thing as being too proud to fight he had, of course, meant that there was such a thing as being only too proud to fight for what was just and right. This was the American attitude, and he therefore advocated national preparedness which might possibly imply such an increase in America's naval and military forces as few people except himself had yet dreamt of. At this point the audience rose *en masse* and cheered for ten minutes. Nothing could show more clearly than this speech how intensely critical are the relations between America and Germany over the *Lusitania* case. There has been a wild panic on the New York Stock Exchange. A prominent banker has expressed the opinion that Count Bernstorff will receive his passports to-morrow

II.

Count Bernstorff has not called on Mr. Lansing to-day. This is considered a symptom of the utmost gravity, and the exchange value of the German mark has receded ten points.

III.

Count Bernstorff was closeted with Mr. Lansing for two hours this afternoon. Relations are evidently strained to a very dangerous point, and the worst is feared.

IV.

The situation has appreciably improved, and the controversy has been narrowed down to the use or omission of the word "illegality." The American Government insist that Germany should admit the illegality of the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*, but for this Germany is not yet prepared, though she is willing to make a formal expression of regret at the death of American citizens, whom, she is ready to declare, she did not intend to destroy. Colonel Roosevelt spoke last night at the dinner of the Associated Progressive Manufacturers. He said no touch of infancy or feebleness had been omitted by the present Administration in their conduct of negotiations with Germany. They had performed the miracle of causing every true American to blush for his country. When you met a rattlesnake you didn't waste time in arguing with it or flattering it. Your duty was to shoot it or knock it on the head, or, preferably, to employ both methods in order to rid the world of a danger. At this vigorous denunciation the whole audience rose and cheered for a quarter of an hour.

V.

The situation is easier. Count Bernstorff has declared in an interview that the German Government is prepared to accept the American formula if the word "legality" be substituted for the word "illegality." Germany would thus admit the legality of the torpedoing of the *Lusitania* and express regret at the death of American citizens. Count Bernstorff points out that Germany has thus gone very far towards meeting the American demand. He hopes and believes that two great civilized nations will not fall out over so small a matter as the use or omission of the two letters *i,l*, at the beginning of a long word.

VI.

Mr. Lansing has in a polite note expressed himself unable to accept Count Bernstorff's offer as a full satisfaction of America's demands. The sands are evidently running out, and there is serious danger of the negotiations proving abortive. In the meantime a sharp Note has been addressed to England in regard to her interference with American commerce. Six munition works were yesterday blown up. The outrage is attributed to Germans. President Wilson is carefully considering his action.



THE ARMLET IN BORRIBODABOO.

The Old Man. "This hot spell makes me glad that I'm too old to attest."

The "Lusitania" Crisis.

"The Vienna Correspondence Bureau emphasises the gravity of the situation, and says that the negotiations are interrupted. This interruption, it is added, is as it came from the cow."

Yorkshire Post.

Not, as you might have expected, from the Wolff.

"To prevent the eyes watering when peeling onions, let the tap drip on them. This keeps the fumes from rising, and if wanted for frying they can easily be dried in a cloth afterwards." — *The Matron.*

Thanks, but we hardly ever want to fry our eyes.

"The Primate had the novel and undesirable experience of being shelled by the enemy, one shell in fact bursting within twenty-five yards of him. The arrangements for this part of his visit were mostly made by the Rev. —, C.F."—*Northern Whig.*

Humorous fellows, these Army chaplains.

"For Sale.—Imported, fresh arrival of Japanese Poodles, very handsome, with a long silken hair, smart, and pick up anything taught. Rs. 200 per pair."—*Times of India.*

"And beauty draws us with a single hair."

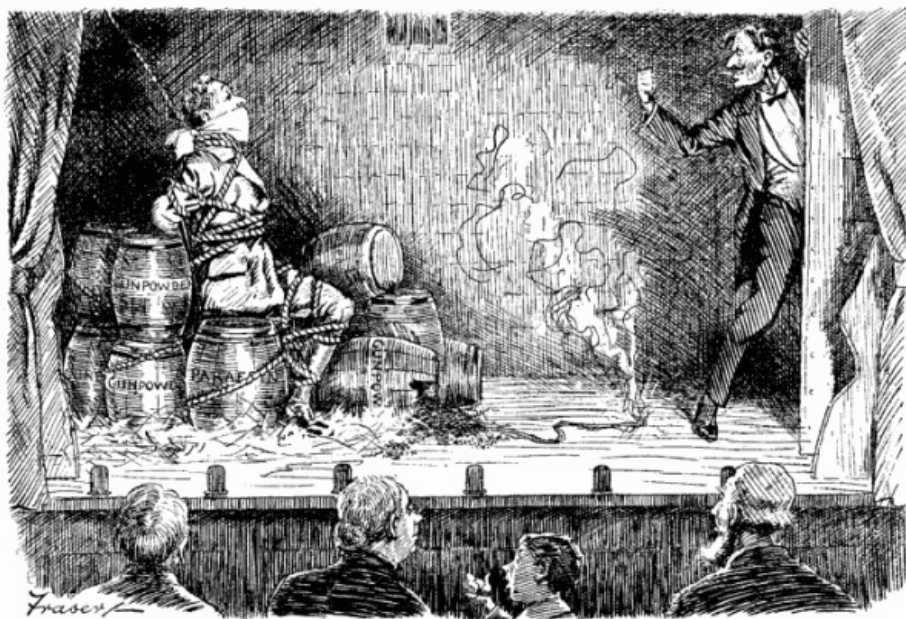
"What would he say to a chemist who could not translate a common tag—for example, *rem tetigisti acer?*"—*Morning Paper.*

We give it up, like the chemist.

"General (good, refined) for modern non-basement clergyman's house."—*Daily Chronicle.*

The reverend gentleman does not mention his ecclesiastical views; but we gather that he is not an Arian.

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OUR VILLAGE ENTERTAINMENT.

Boy (explaining). "You see, Auntie, the feller that's going out has got a grudge against the other chap."

RAILWAY RHYMES.

When books are pow'rless to beguile

And papers only stir my bile,
For solace and relief I flee
To *Bradshaw* or the *A. B. C.*,
And find the best of recreations
In studying the names of stations.
There is not much among the *A*'s
To prompt enthusiastic praise,
But *B* is infinitely better,
And there are gems in ev'ry letter.
The only fault I have with Barnack
Is that it rhymes with Dr. Harnack;
Barbon, Beluncle Halt, Bodorgan
Resound like chords upon the organ,
And there's a spirit blithe and merry
In Evercreech and Egloskerry.
Park Drain and Counter Drain, I'm sure,
Are hygienically pure,
But when æsthetically viewed
They seem to me a little crude.
I often long to visit Frant,
Hose, Little Kimble and Lelant;
And, if I had sufficient dollars,
Sibley's (for Chickney) and Neen Sollars;
Shustoke and Smeeth my soul arride
And likewise Sholing, Sole Street, Shide,
But I'm afraid my speech might go
Awry on reaching Spooner Row.
In serious mood I often bend
My thoughts to Ponder and his End,
And when I'm feeling dull and down
The very name of Tibshelf Town
Rejoices me, while Par and Praze
And Pylle and Quy promote amaze.
Of all the Straths, a numerous host,
Strathbungo pleases me the most,
While I can court reluctant slumber
By murmuring thy name, Stogumber.
Were I beginning life anew
From Swadlincote I'd take my cue,
But shun as I would shun the scurvy
The perilous atmosphere of Turvey.

But though the tuneful name of Horbling
Incites to further doggerel warbling,
And Gallions, Goonbell, Gamlingay
Are each deserving of a lay,
No railway bard is worth his salt
Who cannot bear to call a "Halt."

Encouraging.

"Wanted, Girl; farmhouse; last lived two years."—*Devon and Exeter Gazette*.

The Pinch of War.

"Mr. — is having his first show of well-known English Corsets, made specially for him."—*Provincial Paper*.

Getting Off Cheaply.

"Mark then explained to the police that they had been 'had.' He was promptly arrested for falsely representing himself as a deserter and to-day was fined 0s."

Evening Paper.

Judging by the small value attached to him he might have been the German mark.

"Lost, in Annfield, Newhaven, boy's bicycle (three-wheeled); if found in any person's possession after this date will be prosecuted."

Edinburgh Evening News.

For unlawful acquisition of the extra wheel, we presume.

From a shop-girl's account of the great War:—

"I shall never forget the Saturday before that Bank Holiday if I live till I draw my last breath."—*Daily Mirror*.

She ought to have a fair chance of this.

"Sir Edward Grey has all manner of fine and beautiful ideals to which we lay no claim. But the fairy step-mother who was so prodigal over his cradle yet denied him one gift."

Morning Paper.

Still, it takes an exceptional man to have a step-mother at birth, fairy or other.

[Pg. 126]

AT THE PLAY.

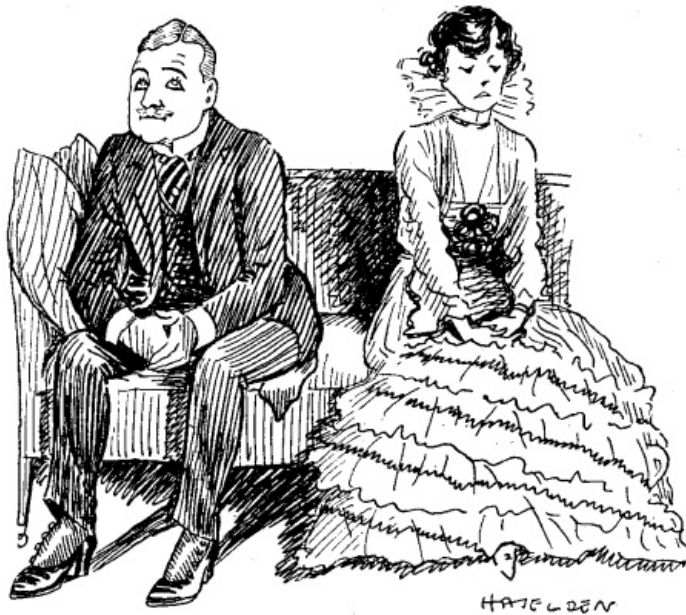
"Caroline."

A baby, did he but know it, is only happy reaching out from the bath for the soap. When he gets it, lo! it is mere froth and bitterness. That, roughly, is Mr. Maugham's idea in *Caroline*.

If you are to love a woman, for heaven's sake, says he, take care that she be safe bound beyond your reach. All attainment is dead-sea fruit. But how is anyone to believe this depressing sort of doctrine when the woman in question is such an engaging divinity as his *Caroline Ashley*, interpreted by Miss Irene Vanbrugh at the very top of her form? The doctrine, indeed, may be hanged for the nefarious half-truth it is; but this would still leave you free to appreciate one of the most brilliant and finished pieces of work which Mr. Maugham has yet done for the stage. True, it is merely an airy trifle; but it is almost perfect of its kind.

The action opens on the morning of the announcement in *The Times* of the death of *Caroline's* extremely difficult husband, who has long been a wanderer seeking spirituous consolations in out-of-the-way places of the earth. *Robert Oldham*, a quite delightful barrister (Mr. Leonard Boyne; so you will understand the "delightful"), has worshipped *Caroline* with an honourable fidelity for ten years, waiting patiently for the day on which she shall be free. Well, here is the long-desired day. Affectionate, officious friends come to congratulate each of the pair before they meet, and each

confesses to a curious chilling sense of dread. When the embarrassing moment of the *tête-à-tête* arrives, *Robert*, obviously ill-at-ease and apparently more as a matter of duty than of eager conviction, suggests that *Caroline* shall name the day. She gives him a blank refusal. Both affect dismay at this queer ending of their long-deferred hopes, but eventually confess, mid peals of their own happy laughter, their actual relief. So ends the first chapter.



BLIGHTED TROTH.

Caroline Ashley Miss Irene Vanbrugh.
Robert Oldham Mr. Leonard Boyne.

A later hour of the same day finds our heroine on her sofa, languid from the morning's emotions, and indulging in the luxury of not feeling at all well. Her world is crumbling. She cannot do without a slave, and *Robert* can no longer fill quite the old rôle. Clearly a matter for counsel with her physician and friend, *Dr. Cornish* (Mr. Dion Boucicault), who pleasantly diagnoses middle-age and prescribes a young adorer, than which no advice could be more nicely calculated to restore her lost feeling of queenly complacency. She sends for young *Rex Cunningham* (Mr. Martin Lewis), a morbid egoist, who nourishes a hopeless passion for her (and others), being well aware of the paramount claims of *Robert*. She contrives to let him know that she is free, and the youth, whose pet hobby is hopeless passion, at once sheers off in alarm. *Caroline* is learning—is beginning to understand the dark philosophy of Mr. Somerset Maugham. In despair she again turns to *Robert*. They become engaged and promptly begin quarrelling about their houses. He objects to her Futurist bathroom; she to his, which is so like a tube station that she would bathe in constant apprehension of the sudden appearance of a young man demanding tickets. *Robert* begins to assert his masculine rights to control these and sundry matters. She realises (oh, venerable gag of the cynics!) that the fetters which would unite their bodies would put a barrier between their souls. The engagement is by mutual consent declared off.

Realising, however, in Chapter III., that she needs *Robert's* devotion more than anything else, she conceives a plot. *Dr. Cornish* makes an opportune call, not this time as a doctor, but as a whole-hearted admirer. With just such an one for my husband, thinks *Caroline*, *Robert* could again assume his accustomed part of loyal friend and incense-bearer. She accordingly proposes. Appreciating the difficulty of directly refusing without discourtesy, he temporises and appears to fall in with her suggestion that he shall announce their engagement to *Robert* and her interfering friends, who are promptly telephoned for to hear an interesting statement. But *Cornish* proves himself a Wolff in sheep's clothing. Instead of announcing the engagement he asserts that he has just seen *Stephen Ashley*, the husband: a lie which obtains credence with the others because of the dead man's amiable habit of occasionally putting about a rumour of his decease. *Caroline*, with superb presence of mind, seeing a glorious way out of a dilemma, adopts the lie, contrives a more or less plausible explanation, and thus establishes the *status quo ante*—the grass widow with the faithful and contented adorer.

The play, whose only flaw was a certain rather upsetting ambiguity (whether accidental or designed I could not quite gather) in the last few sentences before the curtain fell, was interpreted with a very fine intelligence. Miss Irene Vanbrugh's superbly trained talent showed itself in an astonishing range of moods tethered in a plausible unity of conception. Mr. Boyne, who is just coming into his own, scored bull after bull. Perhaps he didn't make *Oldham* quite the Englishman that the author (I should say) designed, but rather an Irishman of that delightfully faint flavour which is so entirely attractive. Miss Lillah Macarthy, as *Maude Fulton*, a well-preserved bachelor in the most bizarre modern mode, also a dexterous liar and officious matchmaker, played with her head in her most accomplished manner and gave full value in the general scheme to a character which the author made a person when he might have been content with a peg. Mr. Dion Boucicault's physician was as bland a humbug as ever coined guineas in Mayfair. Mr. Martin Lewis, as a profoundly silly ass, played a difficult hand without fault. Miss Nina Sevensing, as a consoler of handsome men in trouble, and Miss Florence Lloyd, as *Caroline's* maid, competently rounded off in subsidiary rôles the work of the principals.

Yes, undoubtedly a brilliant performance.



Huntsman. "Give us a bit o' room! You was nearly in my pocket that time."

Flat-race Jockey. "Room? Why, I was nearly half a length behind you."

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

The evolution of the long novel appears to be following that of the human race. Instead of the individual, the family now threatens to become the central unit. I confess that this prospect, as evidenced by *Three Pretty Men* (Methuen), fills me with some just apprehension. Mr. Gilbert Cannan has set out to tell how a Scotch family, three brothers, a mother, and some sisters in the background, determines to make its fortune in a South Lancashire city (very recognisable under the name of *Thrigsby*), and how eventually all but one of them succeed. It is a long book and a close; and the dialogue (which of its kind is good dialogue, crisp and illuminating), being printed without the usual spacing, produces an indigestible-looking page that might well alarm a reader out for enjoyment. The book, in its record of the progress of the three, *Jamie* and *Tom* and *John*, is really more a study of social conditions in mid-Victorian Manchester than a work of imagination. But there is clever character-drawing in it, especially in *Jamie*, who from a worldly point of view is the failure of the group, making no money, and drifting through journalism to emigration; and in the finely suggested figure of *Tibby*, the ill-favoured kitchen drudge, who is his real centre of inspiration. But first and last it remains a dull business, partly from an entire lack of humour, partly from the absence of any settled plan that might help one to endure the dreariness of the setting. Mr. Cannan certainly knows his subject, and few novels indeed have given me, rightly or wrongly, a greater suggestion of autobiography. But for once the art of being exhaustive without being exhausting seems to have eluded him.

If you want really to get a picture of war as she is waged by an obscure unit in the thick of the dirtiest, dampest and most depressing part, read Patrick MacGill's *The Red Horizon* (Jenkins). Here we meet the author of *The Children of the Dead End* and *The Rat Pit* as Rifleman 3008 of the London Irish, involved in the grim routine of the firing line—reliefs, diggings and repairs, sentry-go's, stand-to's, reserves, working and covering parties, billets; and so *da capo*. With a rare artistic intuition, instead of diffusing his effects in a riot of general impressions, he has confined himself to a record of the doings of his section, and I have read nothing that gives anything near so convincing an impression of the truth, at once splendid and bitter. It is a privilege to be shown, through the medium of an imaginative temperament, the fine comradeship of the trenches, the heroism that shines through the haunting fear of death, mostly conquered with a laugh, but sometimes frankly expressed in the pathetic desire for a "blighty" wound—a wound just serious enough to send the envied hero home. You won't get much of the Romance of War out of this strong piece of work, except the jolly sort of romance of the little Cockney, *Bill*, who, when the regiment in reserve was crouching in the trench under heavy shelling, cheered it by delivering himself characteristically as follows: "If I kick the bucket don't put a cross with 'E died for 'is King and Country' over me. A bully beef tin at my 'ead will do, and—' 'E died doin' fatigues on an empty stomach."

If you were the hero of a novel, the only possible mate for the heroine, and, in short, taking you all round, an important sort of person, would you not consider yourself hardly treated if you were not allowed to make the girl's acquaintance

till page 311, when you knew there were to be only three hundred and thirty-two pages in the book? I disagree entirely with *Roger Quinn*, in Miss Beatrice Kelston's *The Blows of Circumstance* (Long), when, reviewing the affair, he writes to a friend: "It's amazing that we fell short of perfect understanding." My opinion is that *Roger* did extremely well in the little time he was given. Of course he had conducted the case for the Crown when she was in the dock, charged with murder, and that formed a sort of bond between them; but even so I don't see how he could have got much nearer to a complete understanding, considering that the girl dashed off and committed suicide almost before he could get a word in. If my enjoyment of *The Blows of Circumstance* waned towards the end and the book seemed to me to lose grip, it was because the sudden discovery on the part of *Quinn* and *Amalie Gayne* that they were soul-mates was too sudden to convince me. Up to the beginning of the trial the story has vigour and an air of probability, with its careful building-up of *Amalie's* curious character and the vivid description of her life on the stage and off it in the society of a drug-taking husband; but from that point on it seemed to me to fail. In real life all might have happened just as it is set down, but real life is sloppily constructed. A novel must obey more rigid rules. Miss Kelston writes extremely well, if a trifle too gloomily for my personal taste, but she cannot afford to ignore the laws of construction and hurl her big situation at the reader with an abrupt "Take it or leave it!"

For *Thirteen Stories* I've nought but praise,
Although you'll find when you overhaul them
They're best described, in the author's phrase,
As "sketches, studies or what do you call them?"
Per Duckworth forward and back you trek;
You may book right through or choose between
a
Peep at Perim or Chapultepec,
Sahara, Hampstead or Argentina.
You may halt, if you will, at phalansteries,
Where Mescaleros on maturangos
Eat or drink (whichever it is)
Baked tortillas and twang changangos.
Suchlike things come easy as pie
To the author, Mr. Cunninghame Graham,
And I quite like 'em so long as I
Have only to read and not to say 'em.

If 'tis love that makes the world go round, it is certainly the same force that maintains the circulation of the libraries. So it is safe to assume that such a title as *The Little Blind God* (Melrose) is itself enough to preserve the volume that bears it from any wallflower existence on the less frequented shelves. But as for the story to which Miss Anne Weaver has given this attractive name I find it very difficult to say anything, good or bad. Only once did its placid unfolding cause me any emotion, even the mildest. Old *Lady Conyers* had adopted as companion one *Mistress Barbara Cardeen* (need I interpolate that the time is the eighteenth century? O brocade and lavender! O swords and candle-light and general tushery!), whom she found playing a violin in the streets of Bath—I should say *the* Bath; let us above all things be atmospheric! As her ladyship had a most eligible son, and as *Barbara*—the chit!—naturally hadn't a guinea, I own I was slightly astonished to find the dowager positively hurling the young couple at each other's heads. However, doubtless *Lady Conyers*, as herself a novel-reader, knew that the thing was inevitable anyway. But before this there were of course the misunderstandings. *Mistress Barbara* had, in the violin days, a half-brother and this gentleman very obligingly turns up *incognito* at Conyers End, and even goes to the expense of hiring rooms in a cottage on the estate, for no other purpose in life than that his conspicuously clandestine meetings with the fair *Barbara* should be misconstrued as an assignation. Ha! out, rapiers! and let us be ready for the moment when *Barbara*, rushing between the combatants, receives in her own bosom the blade intended for—, etc. But of course not enough blade to endanger the happy ending. So there you are. A placid, undistinguished tale, that may be commended as nourishment or soporific according to the taste and fancy of the reader.



ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF PRUSSIAN EFFRONTERY.

Officer of Zeppelin (in perfect English.) "Would you kindly direct me to the War Office?"

An Optimist.

"Gentlewoman, bright, owing to War, offers Companionship in Return for hospitality, laundry, and travelling expenses."

Morning Paper.

"An attack on the compulsory vice bill now before the House of Lords was made by the president of the conference, William C. Anderson."—*New York Globe.*

Our American contemporary is misinformed. The measure in question seeks to make virtue compulsory—the virtue of patriotism.

"The following French official communiqué was issued this afternoon:—3.25.—Bouton Rouge 1, Dordogne 2, Kitch 3. Eight ran."— *Evening Times and Echo.*

We are sorry that K. of K. didn't do better.

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