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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI,  
MAY 13, 1914 \*\*\*

# **PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.**

**Vol. 146.**

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**May 13, 1914.**

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## **CHARIVARIA.**

Some idea of the amount of distress there is among Stock Exchange men, owing to the continued depression, may be gathered from the fact that a number of members, anxious to get to Brighton on their recent holiday on the 1st inst., walked all the way.

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While there would seem to be no "Picture of the Year," the canvas which appears to attract anyhow most feminine attention is the Hon. JOHN COLLIER'S "Clytemnestra," with its guess at the fashion of to-morrow—the low-neck blouse carried a little bit further.

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A publication entitled *Pictures and the Picturegoer* has made its appearance, and, please, we want to know what a Picturegoer is. Suffragettes, it is true, are apt to go *for* pictures, but we have never known anyone merely go pictures.

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Sculptors submitting designs for a statue of PETER THE GREAT, to be set up at the Winter Palace, St. Petersburg, are required by the conditions not only to produce a statue which will be recognized by the man in the street as that of the monarch, but it must also convey the idea that he spent his last days in the Palace. Possibly this might be effected by his wearing his linen collar inside out, plainly showing the marking, "PETER THE GT. WINTER PALACE."

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In the duel which took place last week between M. CAILLAUX and M. D'ALLIÈRES the ex-Finance Minister fired in the air. As a result, we hear, aviation societies all over France are protesting against what they consider may develop into an exceedingly dangerous practice.

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As regards the result of the duel, M. D'ALLIÈRES was certainly the more successful of the two. He fired at the ground and hit it. M. CAILLAUX aimed at the sky and missed it.

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The House of Commons has passed the second reading of a Bill to enable Health Resorts and Watering Places to spend a portion of their rates on advertising. The urgent necessity for such a measure would appear to be proved by the fact that newspapers of every shade of political opinion approve it.

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"Democracy," says Lord HALDANE, "is rapidly finding its feet." But it will not gain much if at the same time it loses its head.

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"A rector," we read, "has written to his bishop and to his wife announcing his elopement with the wife of one of his parishioners." This is a little act of courtesy which some men would not have thought of.

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The London County Council proposes to allow on the Aldwych site a circular experimental railway on the Kearney high-speed mono-rail system. It seems strange that what is undoubtedly the most rugged and wildest tract of forest land in London should for so long have been without railway facilities. To nature-lovers, however, the proposal is as distasteful as the idea of a railway up Borrowdale.

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We had thought that races between omnibuses had, owing to an entire lack of encouragement on the part of the police, died out, but we see that the L.C.O.C. is now advertising "ANOTHER MOTOR-BUS DERBY."

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The police are said to be viewing with some apprehension the spread of habits of cleanliness among our house-breakers. Last week, for instance, some burglars who paid a visit to a Birmingham firm, after opening a safe and removing its contents, obtained a bucket of water and carefully removed all finger-marks.

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At a recent smoking-match at Brighton the winner kept an eighth of an ounce of tobacco alight for 103 minutes. The tobacco trade, we understand, is strongly opposed to the holding of competitions of this nature, "which serve no useful purpose whatever."

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"There are 'vintage years' for babies," says Dr. JAMES KERR. These must be the years when they take most readily to the bottle.

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Extract from an account in *The Birmingham News* of a meeting at Solihull:—"The next business was the presentation of a handsome breakfast egg to the Rev. Courtney Smith, B.A." Once upon a time such gifts were confined to political gatherings.

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In the course of his exploring expedition Mr. ROOSEVELT lost nearly four stone in weight, and it is rumoured that Mr. TAFT may once again follow in his footsteps.

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A vulgar person with no respect for wealth has suggested that the Royal Automobile Club shall change its name to the Hotel Nouveau Ritz.

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"I SAY, I'VE A BONE TO PICK WITH YOU."

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Another Mysterious Disappearance.

From a catalogue:—

"20 Dozens Bottles Excellent Old Tawny Port, sold without reserve by the Port of London Authority to pay for charges, the owner having been lost sight of, and bottled by us last year."

We hope that, after this callous confession, Scotland Yard will now take action.

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Musical Candour.

"The singing of the Bradshaw choirs broke up a happy evening."—*Local Paper*.

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We understand that the famous Presidential biography, *From Log-Cabin to White House*, is to be followed by another, entitled, *From White House to Semi-attached VILLA*.

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"'Reflection,' a picture of an elderly gentleman lost in thought after a lonely dinner, not only suggests a story, but how effective Mr. Jack is with interiors."

*Cork Constitution*.

In this picture, however, the gentleman's interior is wisely left to the imagination.

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## THE UNHAPPY MEAN.

**(How the Budget strikes a Brain-Worker.)**

Would I were poor (but not too poor),  
A working plumber, say, by trade,  
One of the class for whom the lure  
Of Liberal Chancellors is laid;  
For then no single sou from my revénue  
Should go to swell the Treasury's bin,  
Save indirectly through my breakfast-menu,  
My pipe, my beer, my gin.

Would I were rich (O passing rich),  
One of the idlers, softly bred,  
From whom the hands of DAVID itch  
To pluck their plumage, quick or dead;  
For then, a super-man, I'd scorn to grudge it—  
This super-tax on my estate,  
But like a bird contribute to his Budget  
The paltry two-and-eight.

Alas, not being this nor that,  
But just a middling type of man,  
Neither a bloated plutocrat  
Nor yet a pampered artisan,  
I am not spared, nay, I am hardest smitten,  
Although 'tis held (and I agree)  
That half the backbone of these Isles of Britain  
Is made of stuff like me.

O brothers, ye who follow Art,  
Shunning the crowds that strive and pant  
Indifferent how you please the mart  
So you may keep your souls extant,  
LLOYD none the less is down upon your earnings,  
And from the increment that flows  
(With blood and tears) from your poetic yearnings  
You pay him through the nose.

These very lines, in which I couch  
My plaint of him and all his works—  
Even from these he means to pouch,  
Roughly, his six per cent. of perks;  
This thought has left me singularly moody;

I fail to join in GEORGE'S joke;  
So strongly I resent the extra 2*d.*  
Pinched from my modest poke.

O. S.

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## MR. ROOSEVELT'S DISCOVERIES.

### SCRAPPING THE MAP IN BRAZIL.

We are glad to be able to supplement with some further interesting details the meagre accounts of Mr. ROOSEVELT'S explorations in Brazil which have appeared in the daily papers.

Not only did Mr. ROOSEVELT add to the map a new river nearly a thousand miles long, but he has discovered a gigantic mountain, hitherto undreamt of even by Dr. COOK, to which he has attached the picturesque name of Mount Skyscraper. The lower slopes were thickly infested with cannibals, whom Mr. ROOSEVELT converted from anthropophagy by a sermon lasting six hours and containing 300,000 words—almost exactly as many as are contained in Mr. DE MORGAN'S new novel.

The middle regions are densely covered with an impenetrable forest inhabited by rhomboidal armadillos and gigantic crabs, to which Mr. ROOSEVELT has given the name of Kermit crabs, to commemorate the escape of his son, who was carried off by one of these monsters and rescued by a troglodyte guide after a desperate struggle. On emerging from the forest the travellers were faced by perpendicular granite crags, which they ascended on the backs of some friendly condors.... The summit proved to be an extensive plateau, the site of a prehistoric city, built of pedunculated wood-pulp. Lying among the ruins was a gigantic mastodon in excellent preservation, which Mr. ROOSEVELT brought down on his shoulders.

It was after the descent from Mount Skyscraper, which was accomplished in parachutes, that Mr. ROOSEVELT struck the new river, the upper parts of which were utterly unknown except to some wild rubber-necked Indians. In consequence of its character and size Mr. ROOSEVELT originally thought of calling it the Taft, but finally decided on the Rio Encyclopædia in virtue of its volume.

The journey was made in canoes and was full of incident. Descending the great Golliwog Falls Mr. ROOSEVELT'S canoe was smashed to atoms, but the EX-PRESIDENT escaped with only slight injury to his eyeglasses, after a desperate conflict with a pliocene crocodile. The Encyclopædia River, as described by Mr. ROOSEVELT, resembles the Volga, the Hoang-ho and the Mississippi; but it is richer in snags and of a deeper and more luscious purple than any of them. Near its junction with the Mandragora it runs uphill for several miles, with the result that the canoes were constantly capsizing. The waters of Mandragora are of a curiously soporific character, while those of the River Madeira have a toxic quality which renders them dangerous when drunk in large quantities.

Mr. ROOSEVELT, it may be added, is shortly expected in London, when he will lecture before the Royal Geographical Society, Master ANTHONY ASQUITH having kindly consented to preside.

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## TO MY HUSBAND'S BANKER.

FLORENCE, *May 2nd.*

DEAR MR. S.,—We have been here a week, and I feel I really must write and thank you for what I can see is going to be the most lovely holiday.

It was ripping of you to let us come—for *sending* us, in fact. I can't think why more people don't do it—I mean travel when they can't afford it. Perhaps it is that all bankers aren't so good-natured as you are. I shall tell all my friends to come to you in future. Of course I shall only recommend the conscientious ones. *We* are being frightfully conscientious. For instance, when we arrived we purposely didn't go to a hotel some friends of ours were at because it was two francs a day dearer than one we found in *Baedeker*—though as I told Fred I don't believe you'd have grudged us the two francs a bit. The only thing I have on my conscience a little is that in Paris, where we stayed three days on our way out, we *did* go to rather good restaurants. But I had never been to Paris before, and I thought, when you knew that, you would quite approve, because first impressions are everything, aren't they? It is rather as if you were an invisible host everywhere we go. "Of course you will have a liqueur with your coffee, Mrs. Merrison?" I hear you say after dinner; and really, Grand Marnier (*cordons jaunes*) is heavenly, isn't it?

Then we came on here, and, do you know, "The Birth of Venus" nearly made me cry when I first saw it, it's so beautiful. I shall never forget that it was you who introduced me to it, so to speak.

And isn't Pisa jolly?

Oh, there's just one other thing I wanted to tell you. Before we came away we gave a little

farewell dinner to one or two of our most intimate friends. It came out of the travelling money; and I do feel you ought to have been asked too, when you were really our host. But you see I don't know you *very* well (except through your actions), and I thought that just possibly you might have felt a little out of it. But I want you very much to come and dine with us one night when we are home again. I think it is time we knew each other ever so much better.

Well, no more now as we are off to lunch. (How ridiculously cheap food is in Italy, isn't it?) We shall be home in three weeks, I expect. I wish we could stay longer, especially as it's really cheaper to stay here than to come home, now we *are* here. But we mustn't put too much strain on your hospitality.

Yours always gratefully, ISABEL MERRISON.

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### THE SWASHBUCKLERS.



TORY DIE-HARD. "DOWN WITH HOME RULE!"

RADICAL EXTREMIST. "DOWN WITH ULSTER!"

JOHN BULL. "THIS SORT OF THING MAY AMUSE YOU, GENTLEMEN, BUT I'VE NO USE FOR IT. I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE CIVIL WAR TO PLEASE EITHER OF YOU!"

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### HIGH ART.



*Our very busiest Society Portrait Painter (who has rushed back to his studio after a luncheon in Park Lane). "I'M LATE, MRS. FAULKNER. ANYBODY COME?"*

*Studio Caretaker. "YES, SIR. I'VE ALREADY SHOWN A LADY UP TO THE DRESSING-ROOM."*

*Portrait Painter. "IS IT THE COUNTESS OF WEST MIDDLESEX OR LADY VERA VALTRAVERS?"*

*Studio Caretaker. "I'M SURE I CAN'T SAY, SIR. THEY'RE THAT COVERED UP WITH POWDER AND PAINT I CAN'T TELL ONE FROM T'OTHER."*

## THE NOBLEST WORK OF MAN.

[In an article on Animal Training it has been stated that "wolves are so stupid it is a waste of time trying to do anything with them," and that "it is a wonderful tribute to the trainer's skill that he has succeeded in evolving so faithful a companion as the dog from this unpromising material."]

Full many a time when I've been overwrought,  
 And all has seemed beset by doubts and fogs,  
 I have gleaned ample comfort from the thought,  
 "Nature is kindly; she has given us dogs  
 To share our griefs with sympathetic eyes  
 And force us out for healthy exercise."

But, Carlo, I was wrong to take that view;  
 Nature, though wonderful, does not (I find)  
 Deserve the credit of evolving you;  
 A trainer did it, just by being kind;  
 Your rise from wolfish ancestors you owe  
 To some primæval impresario.

One sees the scene: how in the bygone days  
 Our forbears, fresh from bludgeoning their foes,  
 Would gather round to watch with glad amaze  
 A wolf who balanced rocks upon his nose.  
 "How quaint! How human!" thus their praises flowed;  
 "Look at his ikey way of wearing woad!"

And ever as the long years took their course  
 The trainer's skill came farther to the front,  
 Until, through gentleness and moral force,  
 One wolf achieved the "trust-and-paid-for" stunt.  
 Topical, this produced unbounded fun,  
 Coming when commerce had but just begun.

Then cleverer grew the wolfings year by year,  
 And greater yearly grew the "spot-cash" boon  
 Given to trainers summoned to appear  
 And charm a cave-man's idle afternoon,  
 Till came the whisper, "This is not the least  
 Bit like a wolf's cub; 'tis a nobler beast."

And thus the dog was born; the gathered crowd  
 Cheered their approval of this wise remark;  
 A glad tail wagged its pride, and clear and loud  
 Rang out the music of the earliest bark,  
 While envious Nature sighed, "O parlous miss!



*Maid at Country Hotel.* "Please, sir, will you use the hot water soon as there's an 'ole on the can?"

## A SILVER JUBILEE.

"ANOTHER!" said George, flinging down the card. "I have had just about ENOUGH OF IT!" He spoke vehemently, with an intonation that I have tried to convey by the employment of capitals. It was obvious that he was deeply moved.

"Do you mind explaining?" I asked.

"It explains itself," he answered disgustedly, referring to the card. I picked it up. It was a printed communication, in which somebody, whose name I forget, requested the pleasure of George's presence at the marriage of his daughter Something to Mr. Somebodyelse.

I read it aloud. "What's wrong with that?" I asked. "Were you in love with her yourself?"

"I was not," said George shortly. "To the best of my knowledge I have never even set eyes on the wretched girl, and never want to. My implication in the affair rests solely on my having once been at school with the bridegroom."

"Then what more touching than that he should desire the presence of his old comrade at such a crisis?"

"*Presence!*" began George bitterly. "If they'd said——"

I stopped him. "I know the pun," I said quickly, "and am no longer capable of being amused at it. So that is the ground of your complaint. I must say, George, that I regard this as a little mean of you."

"You may," answered George. "That shows you don't realise the facts. If you were in my position

you wouldn't talk like that. Why, look at it," he went on, warming to his subject, "here am I, a bachelor nearing fifty, with an income, secure certainly, but by no means lavish; and what do we find? Scarcely a day goes by without my receiving some more or less veiled demand from persons without a shadow of claim!

"Relatives," pursued George, "one, of course, expects. I have myself five elder sisters, all of them comfortably married with my assistance. Pianos or dinner-sets or whatever it happened to be," explained George. "I make no complaint there. Not even though in these cases the initial outlay was only the beginning. I am by now seventeen times an uncle. A pleasant position at first, but repetition stales it. The expense of that alone is becoming appalling. Why on earth didn't HENRY VIII. or somebody institute a bounty for uncles?"

"It can't be so bad as all that."

"It would not be, if, as I say, the matter was kept within one's own family. But you see it isn't. I have now reached that time of life in which the rush of weddings appears to be heaviest. Everybody I ever met seems to be doing it, and using the fact as an excuse for blackmail. I am a poor man, and I have had enough of it!"

I made a sympathetic noise. As a matter of fact, George's friends agree that he is very comfortably off, but I let that pass. "What are you going to do about it?" I asked.

"This," answered George unexpectedly. He opened his pocket-book and produced a half-sheet of note-paper. "This is going in *The Morning Post* to-morrow. I wrote it some time ago, but the hour has now come when I must make a stand and endeavour to get a little of my own back. So in she goes!"

I took the paper and read as follows: "1839-1914. Mr. George Pennywise, of 1096, Upper Brook Street, having remained a bachelor during twenty-five years of eligibility, invites his numerous friends to join with him in celebrating his silver celibacy."

"The idea is not original," I said coldly, "but I am interested to know why you should select this particular moment rather than any other. What happened in '89?"

George looked faintly conscious. "Nothing," he answered. "That's just the point. It's what might have happened. I think you've never heard me speak of a girl called Emeline? Anyhow, I was rather struck at that time; we were staying in the same house that autumn, and I believe everybody expected me to propose. Only, somehow I didn't. But it was the closest shave I've ever had, and, as that was just twenty-five years ago, I began counting from then."

"Did Miss—er Emeline share the general expectation?"

"To be candid, I rather fancy she did. Several of her set were quite nasty about it afterwards, though it was obviously no business of theirs. She married somebody else later on, and lives in Ireland." George sighed reflectively.

As it was apparent that he would shortly become sentimental, a condition for which he is unfitted, I took my leave. "You're not really going to put that nonsense in the paper?" I asked.

"I am," said George, recovering abruptly. "If there is any way in which a put-upon bachelor can get equal with the world, I mean to take it. I regard it as a public duty. Look in again next week, and you'll see the result."

Curiosity brought me on my next visit to George with more anticipation than usual. The advertisement had duly appeared. But my inquiries found him oddly reticent.

"Look here, George," I said at length, "what did that paragraph produce?"

"I got stacks of letters, mostly humorous, that will require answering."

"No presents?"

"One," answered George reluctantly, "from Emeline."

This was intriguing. George's manner with regard to it was discouraging, not to say morose. But I am not easily put off.

"What sort of present?" I persisted.

"Oh, handsome enough. A silver frame, quite good in its way, with a family group of herself and her husband and three kids inside it. I shall take that out."

"Any inscription?"

The moment I had said it I saw that I had found the trouble.

"Only three words," answered George evasively. He hesitated. "But there, Emeline never did know how to express herself."



"George," I demanded sternly, "what were those three words?"

"*A Thank Offering*," said George.

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## GLEANINGS FROM GRUB STREET.

*(By our Special Parasite.)*

A brilliant reception is being prepared for Professor Hjalmar Stormbarner, the Finnish novelist, on the occasion of his first visit to England in June. An address of welcome, composed by Mr. C. K. SHORTER and Sir ROBERTSON NICOLL, with lyrics by Mr. MAX PEMBERTON and Lord BURNHAM, will be presented to him at the Grafton Gallery, and Dr. CLIFFORD is arranging what he happily calls a "pious orgy of congratulation" at the Caxton Hall, at which Sir ALFRED MOND, Baron DE FOREST, and Mr. THORNTON, the new manager of the Great Eastern Railway, will deliver addresses. A demonstration in Hyde Park in honour of our guest is also being organised by his English publishers, Messrs. Dodder and Dodder, at which their principal authors will speak at thirteen different platforms, and a resolution will be simultaneously moved by blast of trumpet that Professor Stormbarner is the greatest novelist in the world.

Professor Stormbarner is of course best known in this country as the author of the famous romances, *Letters from Limbo*, *The Devil's Ducats*, *Narcotic Nelly* and *The Sarcophagus*, but his versatility and accomplishments in other departments of mental activity will come as a surprise to his English admirers. He has penetrated the Arctic circle in a bath-chair drawn by reindeer; he plays with great skill on the balalaika, and he has translated most of the works of Mr. EDMUND GOSSE into Mæso-Gothic. At the present moment he is undoubtedly the first favourite for the NOBEL Prize, though WILLIE FERRERO runs him close in virtue of the patronage of Mr. ANDREW CARNEGIE and the Dowager-Empress of RUSSIA.

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Perhaps the finest and most convincing tribute to the overwhelming genius of the great Finnish romancer is the quatrain recently written in his honour by Mr. EDMUND GOSSE:—

GEORGE ELIOT, greatest of blue stockings,  
JOSEPH and SILAS K. (the HOCKINGS),  
WATTS-DUNTON and Professor GARNER—  
Are all united in Stormbarner.

We understand that during his visit to London Professor Stormbarner will stay with Mr. David Dodder at Hampstead, but will spend a week-end with Mr. LLOYD GEORGE at Walton Heath.

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Mrs. Ray Clammer, whose novels in praise of Blackpool, written at the commission of the municipal council, have gained her equal cash and kudos, has gone to Australia for a visit, but hopes to return in time to spend August at the famous health resort which her genius has done so much to adorn. Her only regret is that she has had to leave at home her Persian cat Abracadabra, called "Abe" for short. "Abe," by the way, figures prominently in a bright personal article about Mrs. Ray Clammer which Miss Marjorie Moulton contributes to *The Penwiper* for May.

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*Lady Canvasser.* "I'VE CALLED TO ASK YOU TO GIVE US SOMETHING FOR THE O.P.Q.S. THE—"

*Old Gentleman.* "MY DEAR LADY, I ALREADY GIVE AWAY ONE-TENTH OF MY INCOME."

*Lady Canvasser.* "OH, JUST THIS YEAR, COULDN'T YOU MAKE IT AN ELEVENTH?"

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### Another Impending Apology.

"Meanwhile Dick Smith is matched with Carpentier, and will receive £200 as the loser's end of a £1,200 purse offered by the Liverpool Stadium."—*Daily Mail.*

If it is as certain as this we shall put our money on CARPENTIER.

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"FALLEN BY THE WAY.  
Making a Deep Impression."

*Advt. in "Era."*

Evidently an accident to the heavy tragedians.

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"Nurse, superior, or Help wanted, immediately: go to seaside: experienced infant."

*Advt. in "The Manchester Guardian."*

The infant: "Let her come. I think I shall know how to deal with her."

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## "WRONGLY ATTRIBUTED."

You've heard of WILLY FERRERO, the Boy Conductor? A musical prodigy, seven years old, who will order the fifth oboe out of the Albert Hall as soon as look at him. Well, he has a rival.

WILLY, as perhaps you know, does not play any instrument himself; he only conducts. His rival (Johnny, as I think of him) does not conduct as yet; at least, not audibly. His line is the actual manipulation of the pianoforte—the Paderewski touch. Johnny lives in the flat below, and I hear him touching.

On certain mornings in the week—no need to specify them—I enter my library and give myself up to literary composition. On the same mornings little Johnny enters his music-room (underneath) and gives himself up to musical composition. Thus we are at work together.

The worst of literary composition is this: that when you have got hold of what you feel is a really powerful idea you find suddenly that you have been forestalled by some earlier writer—SOPHOCLES OR SHAKSPEARE OR GEORGE R. SIMS. Then you have to think again. This frequently happens to me upstairs; and downstairs poor Johnny will find to his horror one day that his great work has already been given to the world by another—a certain Dr. JOHN BULL.

Johnny, in fact, is discovering "God Save the King" with one finger.

As I dip my pen in the ink and begin to write, Johnny strikes up. On the first day when this happened, some three months ago, I rose from my chair and stood stiffly through the performance—an affair of some minutes, owing to a little difficulty with "Send him victorious," a line which always bothers Johnny. However, he got right through it at last, after harking back no more than twice, and I sat down to my work again. Generally speaking, "God Save the King" ends a show; it would be disloyal to play any other tune after that. Johnny quite saw this ... and so began to play "God Save the King" again.

I hope that HIS MAJESTY, the LORD CHAMBERLAIN, the late Dr. BULL, or whoever is most concerned, will sympathise with me when I say that this time I remained seated. I have my living to earn.

From that day Johnny has interpreted Dr. JOHN BULL'S favourite composition nine times every morning. As this has been going on for three months, and as the line I mentioned has two special rehearsals to itself before coming out right, you can easily work out how many send-him-victoriouses Johnny and I have collaborated in. About two thousand.

Very well. Now, you ask yourself, why did I not send a polite note to Johnny's father asking him to restrain his little boy from over-composition, begging him not to force the child's musical genius too quickly, imploring him (in short) to lock up the piano and lose the key? What kept me from this course? The answer is "Patriotism." Those deep feelings for his country which one man will express glibly by rising nine times during the morning at the sound of the National Anthem, another will direct to more solid uses. It was my duty, I felt, not to discourage Johnny. He was showing qualities which could not fail, when he grew up, to be of value to the nation. Loyalty, musical genius, determination, patience, industry—never before have these qualities been so finely united in a child of six. Was I to say a single word to disturb the delicate balance of such a boy's mind? At six one is extraordinarily susceptible to outside influence. A word from his father to the effect that the gentleman above was getting sick of it, and Johnny's whole life might be altered.

No, I would bear it grimly.

And then, yesterday, who should write to me but Johnny's father himself. This was the letter:—

"DEAR SIR,—I do not wish to interfere unduly in the affairs of the other occupants of these flats, but I feel bound to call your attention to the fact that for many weeks now there has been a flow of water from your bathroom which has penetrated through the ceiling of my bathroom, particularly after you have been using the room in the mornings. May I therefore beg you to be more careful in future not to splash or spill water on your floor, seeing that it causes inconvenience to the tenants beneath you?

Yours faithfully, JNO. McANDREW."

You can understand how I felt about this. For months I had been suffering Johnny in silence; yet, at the first little drop of water, from above, Johnny's father must break out into violent abuse of me. A fine reward! Well, Johnny's future could look after itself now; anyhow, he was doomed with a selfish father like that.

"DEAR SIR," I answered defiantly,— "Now that we are writing to each other I wish to call your attention to the fact that for many months past there has been a constant flow of one-fingered music from your little boy, which penetrates through the floor of my library and makes all work impossible. May I beg you therefore to see that your child is taught a new tune immediately, seeing that the National Anthem has lost its first freshness for the tenants above him?"

His reply to this came to-day.

"DEAR SIR,—I have no child.

Yours faithfully, JNO. McANDREW."

I was so staggered that I could only think of one adequate retort.

"DEAR SIR," I wrote,— "I never have a bath."

So that's the end of Johnny, my boy prodigy, for whom I have suffered so long. It is not Johnny but Jno. who struggles with the National Anthem. He will give up music now, for he knows I have the bulge on him; I can flood his bathroom whenever I like. Probably he will learn something quieter—like painting. Anyway, Dr. JOHN BULL'S masterpiece will rise no more through the ceiling of the flat below.

On referring to my encyclopædia, I see that, according to some authorities, "God Save the King" is "wrongly attributed" to Dr. BULL. Well, I wrongly attributed it to Johnny. It is easy to make these mistakes.

A. A. M.

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## WEST HIGHLAND.

With stern a-droop, a "dowie chiel,"  
I see him lugged at Beauty's heel,  
A captive bound on Fashion's wheel,  
    Down Bond Street's aisle,  
Far from his land of cairn and creel  
    In grey Argyle.

I wonder if in dreams he goes  
Afar from streets and kindred woes,  
A-rabbiting with eager nose  
    And strenuous paw  
In birch-woods where the west wind blows  
    By banks of Awe;

And if his slumbers take him back  
To trail the mountain-fox's track,  
In corries of the shifting wrack  
    Where one may spy  
Old Cruachan's twin Titan stack  
    Heaved to the sky;

Or, boudoir-bred degenerate,  
If ne'er he knew the nobler state,  
The birk-clad brae, the roaring spate,  
    The tod's dark lair,  
Too spiritless to grin at Fate  
    Or greatly care.

And better this, perhaps you'd say,  
Than break his heart for yesterday,  
Uneasy in the dreams that stray  
    Where lost trails stretch—  
Well, he's my pity either way,  
    Poor little wretch!

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## HOW TO IMPROVE LONDON.

We were discussing London's needs. Each of us was suggesting some long-felt want which most appealed to him or her.

Some had declared that what London chiefly wanted was a tube from Victoria to Chelsea. Someone else said that what it chiefly wanted was a glass roof over Bond Street and the chief shopping area. Someone else said that what it chiefly wanted was perforated pavements to let the rain through at once—and so on.

"What I want," said a pretty girl—so pretty that I almost got up and set about providing her with it—"is a guide to the cinemas. I adore cinemas, but there is no means of knowing what is on unless you go to the place itself. Then very likely it's some stupid long play, with more printed descriptions than deeds and more letters to read than people to see. Now there ought to be a list of all the cinema programmes on sale at the bookstalls, like *The Times* and *Spectator*."

"Wouldn't you have a cinema critic too," someone asked, "like Mr. WALKLEY, to say how the films amused him, and so on?"

"No, I don't want that," she said. "But I should like information as to how long they were, and if they were American or Italian or French or English, and I should like a star to be put against those which Mr. REDFORD had not thought splendid."

When it came to my turn I said that London's most crying need was a tailors' clearing-house.

"What on earth is that?" they asked.

"Well," I said, "I'll tell you. All men have tailors, and for the most part they stick to them, because they find them all right, or fear to go further afield to begin all over again. But every now and then it happens, no matter how good the tailor, that a coat is stubborn. It goes on being wrong.

Fitting after fitting leaves it even worse than before; and the result is that one either loses one's temper and bangs out of the place and never enters it again, or, not wishing to hurt the tailor's feelings, one accepts defeat and gives the coat away the next day at considerable personal loss. In other words, a time comes when one either cannot, through disgust, bring oneself to visit one's tailor again on that matter, or when one cannot, through sympathy, bring oneself to ask him to do any more. Don't you know that?"

They agreed.

"Very well then. This is where the clearing-house comes in. The tailor there is prepared to tackle such cases as those I have described. He will come to the coat with an open mind and put it right. You can ask him, without any false delicacy, to do so because it is his business. That's what London most needs," I concluded.

"I daresay you're right," said another of the party; "but in my opinion what London most needs is a good restaurant which has pork-pie on its bill of fare."

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### THE MILITANT SCANDAL.



I.—THE SEX PAYS THE PENALTY.

*Algernon (suddenly to his aunt and cousin).* "LOOK HERE, I HOPE YOU BOTH UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN WE GET TO THE ACADEMY I DON'T KNOW YOU. I CAN'T BE SEEN THERE WITH WOMEN AFTER THIS SARGENT BUSINESS!"

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"An extraordinary amount of destruction and annoyance is annually perpetrated by the somewhat unsociable creatures known as wasps."—*Amateur Gardening.*

They are still more annoying when they are sociable.

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"Masterman jumped out of the conveyance, which also contained several ladies, and, overtaking the animals, succeeded in turning them into a telegraph pole."

*Lincolnshire Echo.*

This trick is a favourite one with all good conjurers, but rarely comes in so opportunely. The second part of it—in which the telegraph pole is turned into a couple of rabbits—is rather in the nature of an anti-climax.

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*The Pall Mall Gazette* on JOHN BURNS:—

We, too, always hoped at school, and then wished afterwards we had looked it up in our Latin Grammar.

[pg 370]

## THE MILITANT SCANDAL.



II.—THE SKIED ARTIST COMES INTO HIS OWN.

## PERFECTION.

### *(An Up-to-date Romance of Studio Life.)*

Spaghetti, the prince of Futurists, stood  
And gazed at his work with a thoughtful eye;  
"It is good," he murmured, "yet not quite good,"  
He had labelled it *Midsummer Eve in a Wood*,  
But the gods knew why.

A lady's eyes and a calf-topped boot,  
And a ticket (punched) for the Highgate Tube,  
He had painted there, with some crimson fruit  
And a couple of uptorn elms, each root  
A perfect cube.

"It is better than all those beastly Dutch  
And the old Italian frauds," he said;  
"But the little something that means so much  
Still waits;" and he gave an anguished clutch  
At his mop-crowned head.

He went to the further side of the room  
And flecked the canvas with daubs of mud;  
He wiped it down with a housemaid's broom,  
And gummed in the middle a jackdaw's plume  
And a ha'penny stud.

He put on his motor-bicycling mask,  
And prayed to his Muse; and whilst he prayed  
(So Heaven is kind to those that ask)  
Like a mænad flushed from the wine-god's flask,  
Behold, a maid!

Her skirt was draggled, her hair was down,  
As though she had walked by woodland tracks  
Or come on an omnibus through the town,  
And suddenly forth from her loosened gown  
She pulled an axe.

And "Thus!" and "Thus!" she observed, and dealt  
The painted fantasy blow on blow;

"Thou tyrannous man, thy doom is spelt!"  
She gave it another frightful welt,  
Then turned to go.

But the master, rolling upon the floor,  
Leapt up to his feet like a mountain kid,  
And "Swipe it," he said, "sweet maid, once more  
Just here where the axe hit not before;"  
And swipe she did.

He pressed his bosom, his eyes were wet,  
He knelt and fawned at the damsel's feet;  
"Be mine," he bellowed, "O Suffragette,  
For the noblest work I have painted yet  
Is now complete!"

EVOE.

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### Fair Warning.

"Any wedding, singing party, dance, concerts, dramas, social gatherings, friendly companion, jolly trips, pleasure enjoyments etc. Cannot be performed without at least a Bottle of ——. This is simple in price but gives lasting odours."

*Advt. in "United India and Native States."*

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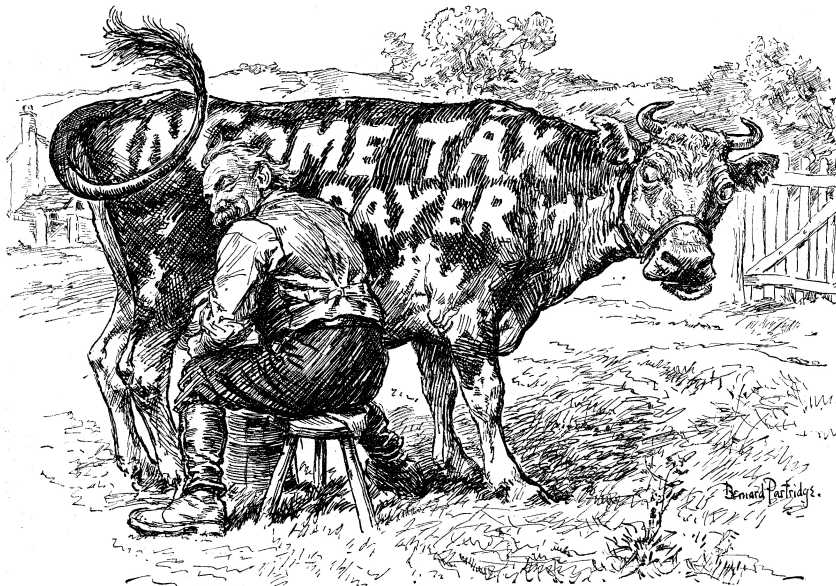
"Again I was welcomed by my cheery hostess, and once more partook of her simple yet palatable face."—*Buenos Aires Standard.*

The next time he kisses her he must try not to tell us about it.

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### CRESCENDO; OR, THE TUNE THE OLD COW'S LIKELY TO DIE OF.



THE COW. "STOP! STOP! THIS ISN'T MILKING; IT'S MURDER!"

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### ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

(EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.)

*House of Commons, Monday, May 4.*—Not since epoch-making night four years ago has House been so densely crowded in anticipation of Budget statement. Amongst most honourable traditions of English public life is absolute secrecy in which Budgets are wrapped till veil is lifted by Chancellor of Exchequer. Somehow it gets known in advance when a particular one will prove to be of exceptional public and personal interest. Thus it was to-night. Hence the crowd that filled every bench on floor, every nook and cranny of the galleries.

Expectation fully realised. LLOYD GEORGE, Atlas in miniature, lightly bore on his shoulders weight of biggest Budget ever presented to House of Commons. Total expenditure £210,203,000. Total revenue £210,455,000. Balance in hand, £252,000.

How *Mr. Micawber's* heart would have glowed over this realisation in colossal figures of his cherished principle! You remember his formula to young *Copperfield*: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen six; result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six; result misery."

LLOYD GEORGE, keeping this axiom steadily in view, after dallying with income and expenditure counted by the hundred million, came out triumphant with £252,000 in his pocket.

Spoke for two hours and forty minutes. Avoiding flights of eloquence that were wont to entrance GLADSTONE'S audience on Budget nights, resisting temptation to epigram that beset Mr. CHANCELLOR LOWE, was content with plain business statement. The massive figures dealt with, the millions lightly scattered there and sedulously picked up here, left some passages obscure. SON AUSTEN well advised in reserving criticism till he had opportunity of studying statement set forth in print.

A passage in speech followed with breathless interest below Gangway dealt with increase of super-tax. CHANCELLOR set forth how what he called a "£3,500 man" would, in addition to ordinary income-tax, pay 1.7*d.* in the £. Running up the gamut to "a £10,000 man" he mentioned that the affluent citizen would oblige with an additional 8.9*d.*

"I can," he blandly added, "go further if anybody specially wants me."

General expression of sympathy with HOUSTON when he asked what the £100,000 man would be called upon to pay.

"The hon. gentleman," said the CHANCELLOR, with encouraging smile bent on inquirer, "will be let off with an additional 15.3*d.*"

The Member for the Toxteth division of Liverpool didn't seem so pleased with this prospect as might have been expected.

*Business done.*—Budget brought in.

*Tuesday.*—LORD "BOB" CECIL, whose industry is equalled only by his ingenuousness, posed the PREMIER with awkward question. Wants to know "whether the Government propose to continue Sir NEVIL MACREADY'S appointment as resident magistrate; if so, whether he will be able in that capacity, in case of civil disturbance, to call upon himself as a military officer to give assistance to the civil power?"

Suggests difficulty at first sight appalling. On historic occasion JOHN BRIGHT found himself in analogous quandary. As he then protested in ear of sympathising House: "I cannot turn my back upon myself." True that in the last three years of his political career he achieved the apparently impossible. But exception does not make a rule.

More exact parallel found in case of eldest of *Dr. Blimber's* pupils. *Mr. Toots*, we know, occupied his time at school chiefly in writing long letters to himself from persons of distinction addressed "P. Toots, Esq., Brighton, Sussex," which with great care he preserved in his desk. Thus, in case of emergency, Sir NEVIL MACREADY, Resident Magistrate, might write to General Sir NEVIL MACREADY in command of troops in Ireland a note something to this effect:

"SIR,—From information received, I expect Ulster will be in a blaze before the end of the week. Please hold yourself in readiness to co-ordinate the action of your troops with that of the Royal Irish Constabulary.—Your obedient Servant, NEVIL MACREADY, Resident Magistrate. To Sir NEVIL MACREADY, General in command of troops in Ireland."

PREMIER tried to explain away the situation. Remembering recreation of *Mr. Toots*, it is not really so bad as LORD "BOB'S" earnest desire for preservation of law and order in Ulster leads him to fear.

*Business done.*—On motion of PRIME MINISTER new Standing Order dealing with blocking motions carried *nemine contradicente*.



Lloyd Charon (to Plutocratic Shades). "Your fares will cost you more!"



Mr. Chancellor Micawber. "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six; result, happiness."



*House of Lords, Thursday*.—The death of the Duke of ARGYLL leaves the House of Lords poorer by withdrawal of a quiet, gracious presence. I talked with him here a few days before the Easter recess. To-night the MACCAILEAN MHOR, on his way to his last resting-place in the Highlands, sleeps amid the stately silence of Westminster Abbey, unawakened by the noiseless footsteps of the ghosts of great men dead. Thus in Plantagenet times the coffined body of the wife of EDWARD I., brought from Lincoln to Westminster, halted by the way, Charing Cross being the last of the nine resting-places of her bier.

A happy marriage which brought him into close kinship with the Sovereign forbade the Duke's taking active part in political life. It gave him fuller opportunity for dallying with his dearly-loved foster-mother, Literature. Endowed with the highest honours birth could give or the Sovereign bestow, he bore them with a modesty that made others momentarily forget their existence. Circumstances precluding his living at Inveraray Castle and keeping up its feudal state, it was characteristic of him that he cheerily homed himself in a cottage some two miles down the loch-side, originally built for a factor. Little by little he enlarged the residence till Dalchenna House became a roomy mansion. Here, in company of a few choice companions, it was his delight to stay during the autumn months. He kept to his study in the morning, engaged in literary work or dealing with his vast correspondence. After luncheon he led his guests forth, usually on foot, to tread the Highland ways he knew since boyhood, when as Marquis of LORNE he presented the picture of manly beauty in Highland dress that to-day adorns the hall of Inveraray Castle.

In later years he built for himself a chalet set amid the pine-trees of the ancient French forest of Hardelet, within sight and sound and scent of the sea. Like Dalchenna this began in a small way. Enamoured with the peace and rest that brooded over the place, he went on year by year enlarging and embellishing it.

According to long-laid plans he was to have spent the Easter recess in his French retreat. Almost at the last moment duty called him elsewhere, and, as was his wont, he uncomplainingly obeyed. But he insisted that two old friends, whom he had bidden to keep Easter tryst with him, should not alter their plans. So the chalet, with its dainty appointments and its domestic establishment after the DUKE'S own heart—a French peasant and his wife, who acted as butler and cook—was placed at their disposal, he bestowing infinite pains upon arrangements for their comfort whilst under his roof.

This little episode, the most recent in a busy life, is a typical instance of his unselfishness and untiring thought for others.

A scholar of wide reading, a man of shrewd judgment, and, as his government of Canada disclosed, a statesman of high degree, he might have filled a part in public affairs at least as lofty as that commanded by his distinguished father. Debarred from such career he was content to live up to the highest standard of Christian conduct. If a line of commentary might be added to the inscription on the coffin which to-morrow journeys northward to lie beside those of the ten Dukes of ARGYLL at rest in the burial-place of the Campbells at Kilmun, here it is written in one of the oldest of Books: "He went about doing good."

*Business done*.—Commons resume debate on Budget.



"It was hardly a tactful way of trying to convert him to the movement to place a bomb under his throne at St. Paul's."—*The Bishop of LONDON in the Debate on Lord SELBORNE'S Bill for Female Enfranchisement.*

## FLORAL DANGERS.

Dear, I do not send you flowers,  
Though I notice day by day  
That, 'neath Spring's recurring powers,  
All the shops are perfect bowers  
With the floral wealth of May;  
I could get you quite a heap,  
Fresh and reasonably cheap.

Here is many a fragrant rose  
Mingling with the scented pea,  
Hyacinths whose odour flows  
Fondly to the grateful nose,  
These, and many more, there be;  
You should have them like a shot,  
But I think you'd bettor not.

Science 'tis that bids me pause;  
'Tis by her the tale is told  
That, by Nature's mystic laws,

Blossoms are a frequent cause  
Of a lady catching cold;  
Their aroma, so she says,  
Irritates the passages.

Whether this is quite exact  
May be food for questioning;  
But, as it's a painful fact  
That your membrane is attacked  
Thus about the prime of Spring,  
I, who hold your welfare dear,  
May not leave it with a sneer.

Wherefore, much though I aspire  
You, and you alone, to please,  
I refrain from this desire,  
For 'twould set my heart on fire  
If I made my lady wheeze;  
I should well-nigh perish if  
Aught from me should rouse a sniff.

DUM-DUM.

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"In connection with the daily service at St. Enoch's Parish Church, it would be possible to have marriage celebrated at two o'clock on any particular week-day. That meant that in ordinary circumstances it would be possible to have marriage celebrated in St. Enoch's Church at two o'clock on any week day."—*Glasgow Evening Times*.

Left to ourselves, we were just arriving at the same conclusion.

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"Captain W. M. Turner joined Freeman, and played the best cricket of the day. He bit hard on the off-side."—*Daily Telegraph*.

We always move to the leg side of the field when Captain TURNER comes in.

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## AT THE PLAY.

### "THE DANGEROUS AGE."



*Distracted Mother (at the top of her voice, outside sick son's room).*

"He won't die! Tell me he won't die!"

*Author of Play.* "No, he won't die, because this is a 'happy ending' play, but the noise that goes on outside his room would kill him in ordinary life."

*Betty Dunbar:* MISS EVA MOORE.

*Sir Egbert Englefield:* MR. H. V. ESMOND.

When there is a good deal of talk on the stage about a certain character, who however remains "off" throughout the play and gives you no chance to discover for yourself what he is like, then I have an instinctive distrust of him. If his name is as bad as *Cecil* he is practically doomed. *Betty Dunbar*, widow, ran away from her rich sister's house and spent a night in London with such a *Cecil*. *Betty* had arrived at the dangerous age of forty, and was temporarily and ridiculously in love with this young bounder (as I felt him to be) of twenty-two. But the fact that, at the very time when she was thus making a fool of herself in London, her younger son, *Jack*, was falling off a tree and nearly killing himself in the country brought her to her senses. When she returned to the country to find *Jack* at death's door, her love for *Cecil* died and she could only think of him with hatred.

Now I can remember wondering, when I read *The Vicar of Wakefield* at an early and innocent age, why *Dr. Primrose* was so anxious that his daughter *Olivia* should be married to the beast with whom she had eloped, when it would be so much better for her if *Thornhill* left her (as he was willing to do) and she returned unmarried to her father. I am older now, and I know that in the good Vicar's opinion only thus could his daughter's "honour" be "preserved." But the world is also older now, and perhaps the oldest person in it is the woman suffragist—such a one, for instance, as *Betty's* elder sister, *Ethel*, who carried copies of *Votes for Women* about with her when she strolled through the home park. That *Ethel* should share *Dr. Primrose's* ingenuous views on this matter is unbelievable—by me, but not by the author. For she insisted, under threat of cutting off supplies, that *Betty* should marry *Cecil*, and (so to speak) become a lady again. *Betty* wisely refused, which left the way clear for *Sir Egbert Englefield*, and so brought down the curtain. I haven't mentioned *Sir Egbert* before, but he was there or thereabouts all the time, and being in the flesh Mr. H. V. ESMOND, author of the play, it was obvious that he would have the pull over any unseen *Cecil* in the final arrangement of partners.

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Although *Ethel* appears to be impossible, and the other characters mostly conventional, *The Dangerous Age* makes a very charming entertainment at the Vaudeville, a patchwork of humour and pathos ingeniously woven together; of which the humour was as fresh and jolly as anything I have heard on the stage, and the pathos put me in greater danger of being caught "blubbing like a seal" than I have ever been before. It is to Masters REGINALD GRASDORFF and ROY ROYSTON that I owe my special thanks. Two more delightful boys on the stage cannot be imagined. Indeed I was at least as sorry as *Betty* when *Jack* fell off his tree, for I knew then that I should not see Master ROY again that evening. Fortunately REGINALD remained, and acted with great skill a part which suddenly became serious. But I wish Osborne boys on the stage wouldn't wear their uniforms in the holidays when they climb trees. It emphasizes their Osbirth (if I may use the word) at the expense of their boyishness. Miss EVA MOORE and Mr. ESMOND were excellent, the latter playing a perfect WYNDHAM part without the WYNDHAM mannerisms. Mr. LESLIE BANKS, representing an entirely incredible person, was exactly like somebody I knew; a feat, it seems to me, of some skill.

M.

### "THE WYNMARTENS."

When a young widow wants to commit a flagrant outrage on the proprieties in order to scandalise a detested mother-in-law, and selects the first likely man for her accomplice, she will probably not be deterred by fear of any damage that may occur to his reputation. When *Lady Wymarten* engaged the services of *Bill Carrington* she had the less compunction because he was only over from India for a week and might rely upon the fresh air of the high seas to repair the damage and displace the breath of scandal. Unfortunately, his very limited time in England had been carefully scheduled for the execution of several important contracts; and when his firm heard of his escapade and found him twenty minutes late for a business appointment, he was briefly booted.

It was at this point that the critics began to think of taking notes on their cuffs about BROWNING'S views on the danger of "playing with souls," but found on reflection that the case was not so serious as that. For we knew all the time (by the splendour of her frocks) that the lady was rich, and we had gathered half-way



BLACK TRIES TO CHECK WHITE.

*Lady Wymarten:* MISS MARIE TEMPEST.

*Dowager Lady Wymarten:* MISS AGNES THOMAS.

through that she was prepared to accept *Bill* in marriage and make an honest man of him. Not that their joint adventure had actually achieved immorality. She had simply dined with him, done a play, had supper at the Savoy, gone on to a Covent Garden ball, failed to effect an entrance into her house (having deliberately mislaid her latch-key and cut the bell-wire), and been taken a little before milk-time to her mother-in-law's, where her appearance had caused the greatest confusion and scandal, which was indeed the ultimate purpose of the scheme. But the fatal devotion of her French maid, who telephoned next morning to all her mistress's friends to say that her bed had not been slept in, and that a dark mystery brooded over her whereabouts, tended to promote a garrulous interest in her conduct.

It was a sad pity that we were not permitted to witness any phase of this adventure. One seemed to be assisting at a farce with the fun left out. I should have greatly enjoyed being present at the moment when her ladyship claimed the hospitality of her mother-in-law's roof. But perhaps this experience would have left me in a frame of mind too frivolous for the right reception of the grave things that were to follow.

Yet the play was mixed of all moods, from gay to earnest, and offered excellent scope for the versatility of Miss MARIE TEMPEST. Mr. CLARENCE'S humour, on the other hand, was not so well served; and there were frequent *longueurs* during the episodes in which the *Dowager Lady Wynmarton* figured. She was meant to be a terror, and had some very vicious things to say; but Miss AGNES THOMAS delivered them with superfluously well-bred restraint, and the level tone of her bitter suavety tended to become a little tedious.

Mr. GRAHAM BROWNE showed a very nice self-repression as the widow's dummy. But he let himself go with his cigarettes which in moments of emotion he threw away with an appalling recklessness after the first two whiffs.

The rest of the cast did ample justice to a play which, if it is Mr. POWELL'S first, must be commended for its promise. But the next time he writes a Four-Act Comedy he must try and give us more than one Act without any tea in it.

O. S.

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## "MILESTONES."

*(Ladies of the coloured hair school are reported to be painting dragons on their cheeks in place of complexion spots.)*

When the world was very young  
And agog with derring-do,  
Knights went courting maids who hung  
Chained, for dragons' teeth to chew;  
Found their lass, and set her free,  
Having duly on the spot  
Slain the dragon (or, maybe,  
Having failed to slay, did not).

Later, when your maid demure,  
Long of lash and coy of mien,  
Seemed a conquest swift and sure,  
Fiercer monsters stepped between:  
Mrs. Grundies, grey and grim,  
Kept Miss Proper closely tied;  
Beaus dissolved before the prim  
Portly dragon at her side.

Now there dawns a lighter day;  
Chaperons are nearly dead;  
Undefended lies the way  
For your amorous wight to tread,  
Yet we still must pay our toll,  
We who woo the guarded rose:  
Frightful at the very goal  
Lurks the dragon *by her nose*.

Modern maidens, if upon  
Cheeks that court the curious stare  
Voluntarily you don  
This insane pictorial wear,  
Know your tricks intrigue us not,  
Frankly, ladies, they appal;  
Out, I say, out, damnéd spot!  
We don't like your cheek at all.

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## THE SULTAN OF MOROCCO.

"It was here yesterday," I said. "I am quite sure I saw it."

"Saw what?" said the lady of the house.

"A letter," I said, "that required an answer."

"Well," she said, "there are about fifty letters of that kind on your table there. Why don't you answer some of those? You can take your pick of them."

"Those are different," I said. "They've waited a long time, and it won't hurt them to wait a little longer. The one I want came yesterday, and required an immediate answer. I remember it quite distinctly."

"Why not answer it, then, without finding it? I'll dictate to you:—'Dear Sir or Madam,—In answer to your obliging letter, I beg to say that I much regret I shall be unable to attend the meeting of the blank committee on the blank of blank, owing to a previous engagement to be present at the meeting of the blank association for the blank blank blank. I enclose herewith my subscription of blank, and remain, with apologies for my delay, yours blankly, etc., etc.' Fire away; you can't go wrong."

"I am not sure," I said, "that I like all those blanks. It's a good model, of course, but it's just a bit too sketchy."

"If you remember the letter so perfectly you can fill in the blanks as you go along."

"I didn't say I remembered it so perfectly as all that. I remember getting it. I remember it was marked 'Urgent and confidential' or 'Private and immediate,' or something of that kind, and I remember putting it down on this writing-table and making up my mind to answer it at once, but I don't remember who it was from——"

"*Whom* it was from."

"Amiable pedant! I don't remember who my importunate correspondent was, or what address he or she wrote from, or what it was about. It was one of those letters that produce a general sense of discomfort, the sort you want to forget but can't."

"Oh, but *you* can. I never heard of anything so completely forgotten as this unfortunate letter."

"Really," I said, "you drive me to despair. Can't you see that a man may remember the *existence* of a letter without remembering all its petty details? For instance, I know there's a Sultan of MOROCCO, but I don't know what he's like, or what his name is, or how he's dressed, or what his exact colour is. Still, there he is, you know."

"Where?"

"Oh, I don't know. Morocco, I suppose, would find him."

"Then all you've got to do is to write him a respectful letter, saying that you can't accept his Majesty's kind invitation to the small and early dance at the Palace."

"I am not," I said, "in a humour for frivolity. I want to write a letter."

"And I," she said proudly, "am doing my best to help you."

"I put it down on this writing-table, and one of you has moved it. Possibly it looked untidy, and one of you has tidied it—you yourself, for choice. In that case I shall never, never find it. To think that there is some one in the world who is eagerly expecting a letter from me, who is watching for the postman as he comes on his rounds, who is constantly disappointed, who lapses finally into a sullen acquiescence, who considers me unbusinesslike—and all because you saw a letter which didn't please you, and so you tidied it away. After all, it's my writing-table, and in future I won't have anyone at it except myself."

"Don't be harsh," she said. "How do you know any of us have been at what you call your table?"

"How do I know?" I said bitterly. "Look at these neat little packets of papers all put carefully one on top of the other. Look at my pens, look at my bills, look at my cheque-book, look at my notepaper and envelopes—I mean, don't look at them, because if you did you wouldn't see them. They're tucked away out of sight, and all that is left to me is a blotting pad, on which you have done several interesting money addition sums, and Peggy has drawn four Red Indians in crayons, and Helen has tentatively written in ink the words 'alright' and 'allright.' Oh yes, some of you have invaded my private domain and sat at my table, and have first scattered and then re-asserted my papers."

At this moment John entered the room, came and stood beside me, and abstracted from the table

a pencil and a sheet of foolscap.

"There," I said, "you can see the result of your dreadful example. Even this innocent child has learnt to pilfer my writing materials."

"John," said his mother, "would you like to search your father?"

"What's 'search'?" said John.

"Feel in his coat pockets and see if you can find a letter."

John was quite willing. He inserted a pudgy hand into one pocket after another, and finally extracted a rather crumpled letter.

"Hurrah!" I said. "He's got it."

"What is it?" she said.

"It is a courteous communication from Messrs. Wilfer and Wontner, highly commending the virtues of their renowned Hygeia tabloids, two to be taken daily after dinner."

"It's the most private and urgent letter I ever heard of. And now, I suppose, you'll withdraw your most unjust decree against our using the writing-table."

"Not at all," I said; "I make it stricter than ever. If you hadn't used my table I should have looked in my coat pocket and found the letter long ago."

"Anyhow," she said, "it's a comfort to think you won't have to write to the Sultan of Morocco."

R. C. L.

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## THE LORD OF THE LEVIATHANS.

There harbours somewhere in our midst to-day  
A visionary whom I long to meet;  
He shuns publicity, and yet his sway  
Is felt in many a teeming London street,  
From staid Stoke Newington to sylvan Sheen,  
From gay Mile End to high-browed Golder's Green.

'Tis he who planned the routes for motor-bi,  
Who set them in the way that they should go,  
That Maida Vale might wot of Peckham Rye,  
That Walham Green might fraternise with Bow,  
For him a Norwood bus stormed Notting Hill,  
'Erb at the helm, Augustus at the till.

"Tooting is fair," he mused, "but what of Kew?  
Shall Cricklewood and Balham be forgot?"  
Mindful of regions Barking never knew,  
He linked them up with that idyllic spot;,  
And then, his wild imaginings to crown,  
He ran a bus from Barnes to Camden Town.

Dreamer of dreams! above the city's strife  
I picture him, in some lone eyrie pent,  
What time the crash and roar of London's life  
Drone deep-mouthed up in sullen music blent,  
And, hearkening, he weaves with lonely glee  
A wondrous web of bus-routes yet to be.

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*Farmer's Wife* (to visitor). "Now, JOHNNY, WILL YOU GO AND COLLECT THE EGGS, AND DON'T TAKE THE CHINA ONES. I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE FOR?"

*Johnny*. "OH, YES; THEY'RE FOR A PATTERN TO SHOW 'EM HOW TO MAKE THE OTHERS."

## OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

MR. BERESFORD is most warmly to be congratulated upon his new book, *The House in Demetrius Road* (HEINEMANN). MR. BERESFORD'S work has had from the first remarkable qualities that place him beyond question amongst the first half-dozen of the younger English novelists; but never before, I think, have his talents had a subject so exactly suited to their best display. It would be difficult to praise too highly the grim and relentless effect of the author's treatment of his subject. *Robin Gregg* is a drunkard, and everyone about him—his secretary, his sister-in-law, his little girl—is caught into the dingy cloud of his vice. The house also is caught; and very fine indeed is the way in which MR. BERESFORD has presented his atmosphere—the rooms, the dirty strip of garden, the shabby suburb, the London rain—but beyond all these things is the central figure of *Gregg* himself. Here is a character entirely new to English fiction—a man who in spite of his degradation has his brilliance, his humour and, above all, his mystery. It is in this implication that, at the very heart of the man, there are fine things too degraded and degraded things too fine for any human record of them to be possible that the exceptional merit of MR. BERESFORD'S work lies. In his desire to avoid any possible cheapness or weak indulgence he misses, perhaps, some effects of colour and pathos that might, a little, have heightened the contrasts of his study; and I do not feel that the woman is as vivid as she should be. These things, however, affect very slightly a story that its author may indeed be proud to have written.

*Penelope* was the heroine. She was in what are called reduced circumstances, and was moreover encumbered by sisters who were not quite all that could have been wished in the way of niceness. One day *Penelope*, looking through an iron gate, saw a beautiful garden, full of flowers; and the master of the garden, himself unseen, saw *Penelope*, and loved her. So she accepted the invitation of his voice and went into the garden and found that the master was a young man so disfigured by a recent accident that he had to wear blue spectacles and a shade. However, he loved her and she didn't mind him, so that after a time they became engaged, which was pleasant enough for *Penelope*, who had henceforth the run of the garden and leave to take home roses and things to the not-nice sisters. Do you want to be told how presently these began to tempt *Penelope*, urging her to insist that her lover should unmask, and what happened when she yielded? Or have you seen already that the story here called *A Garden of the Gods* (ALSTON RIVERS) is just a modern version of one that we all used to be told in the nursery? Moreover, Beauty and the Beast had been used once at least in this fashion before Miss EDITH M. KEATE happened on the idea. But that does not make the present any the less an amiable, quietly entertaining story, if a little obvious. The characters have never anything but a very distant resemblance to life; and their speech is for the most part that of a lady novelist's creations rather than of human beings. But those who demand "a good tale," with beauty properly distressed till the last page, and there beatified with the knowledge that "the darkness that surrounded her was scattered for ever," will find some highly agreeable pasturage in *A Garden of the Gods*.

considerable and partially-justified prejudice. In the first place, I generally dislike stories told in epistolary form; in the second, I almost always detest books that their publishers advertise by selected "smart sayings." But I must honestly admit that *The Modern Chesterfield* conquered me—chiefly, I think, by its good-nature. The writer of these very up-to-date paternal admonitions is supposed to be one *Sir Benjamin Budgen, Bart.*, "of Budgen House, Fleet Street, E.C. and Cedar Court, Twickenham, Middlesex." The addresses tell you what to expect—a satire on the methods of popular journalism. This in fact is what you get, but the satire is so neat (and withal so genial) and Mr. MAX RITTENBERG has so happy a knack of conveying character in a few lines that you are simply bound to enjoy reading him. One other facility he has that deserves the highest praise: he tells his story, in letters that emanate from one side only, without wearisome repetition. There is, I mean, hardly any of that "You say in your last that—and ask me whether—etc.," which in similar volumes always bores me to ill-temper by its unlikeness to the letter-writing customs of real life. An explanatory line or two at the head of each epistle puts you in possession of the facts—that *Norman*, the son to whom they are written, has left Cambridge, is proving unsatisfactory, has married an Earl's daughter, and so on. That known, the letters tell their own tale. They reveal the writer too (I refer to *Sir Benjamin*): shrewd, clear-headed, vulgar and of bull-dog courage. The disasters that overwhelm him in the end do not leave his readers unmoved; bankrupt and beaten he goes down fighting with the final characteristic wire, in response to a suggestion of compromise by his chief enemy, "Surrender be damned." A little book to enjoy.

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The village priest of Clogher, as depicted in two colours on the paper wrapper of *Father O'Flynn* (HUTCHINSON), is a man of plethoric habit and sanguine countenance engaged in brandishing a large horsewhip. The book is dedicated by Mr. H. DE VERE STACPOOLE, to Sir E. CARSON and Mr. REDMOND, and in a short preface he says: "The Irish Roman Catholic priest is the main factor in present-day Irish affairs. I have attempted to catch him at his best in the butterfly net of this trivial story...." I am anxious not to do Mr. STACPOOLE an injustice, but I do feel that (as an entomologist) he gets easily tired. In the 250 pages of *Father O'Flynn* there is a good deal of very tolerable Irish "atmosphere"; a very tepid love affair between *Miss Eileen Pope* and a gentleman from England "over for the hunting;" a lot about old *Mr. Pope*—a moody maniac who owned an illicit still at Clon Beg House, incurred the enmity of the United Patriots, was in the habit of keeping followers away from his beautiful step-daughter with a duck-gun, and finally (after locking up his brother who came to recover a debt) set fire to his own mansion—but practically nothing at all about the reverend gentleman outside. Beyond a few conversations with the "boys" and some rescue work at the end, *Father O'Flynn* scarcely comes into the plot. There is humour in the book and some good description in patches, but towards understanding the Irish priest it will probably assist Sir EDWARD CARSON and Mr. JOHN REDMOND very little more than it will assist a settlement of the problems of Ulster. However, it may give them an agreeable hour or so in a railway train, and the announcement (also made on the cover) that it is "an entirely new novel, now published for the first time," may call their attention to the value, in art as well as politics, of emphatic tautology.

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I could wish that *The Escape of Mr. Trimm, His Plight and Other Plights* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) had been one continuous whole, instead of a number of separate items, for though Mr. IRVIN S. COBB tells a tale well he has not such a genius for the short story that he needs must express himself through that medium. Moreover, the people of his imagination are too interesting to be readily parted with; I should, for instance, have liked to see how that gentleman convict, *Mr. Trimm*, fared when, after his odd vicissitudes, he was restored to the clutches of the Law and was set on to do his time with the worst of them. There was plenty of criminal company available, for Mr. COBB makes some speciality of perpetrators of dark deeds, and I feel that all the characters and events of the subsequent stories could, with a little ingenuity, have been worked into the one plot with our fraudulent financier as the centrepiece. That wrong-headed but chivalrous relic of the Southern Confederacy, *Major Putnam Stone*, would fit in as the virtuous or comic relief, his inborn lust for battle and his chance employment as a newspaper reporter being just the things to combat these felonious activities. There is certainly a lack of lovable women in the book, yet I have always been led to suppose that the U.S.A., the *locus in quo*, overflows with feminine charm, and our author is obviously man enough to appreciate and reproduce it for us. However, even a critic must take things as they are, and it is a collection of short stories that I have to complain about. My complaint, then, reduces itself to this, that in the case of each of them I regret their shortness.

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*Jovial Person (to sweep).* "HULLO, CHAWLIE ME BOY. GLAD TER SEE YER LOOKIN' SO WELL."

*MR. LLOYD GEORGE (to shade of PITT).* "Peace hath her income-tax no less renowned than War."

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