Punch, or the London Charivari, Vol. 159, September 1st, 1920 eBook

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BOOKRAGS

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Page 1

CHARIVARIA.

A Newcastle miner who was stated to be earning a pound a day has been fined ten pounds for neglecting his children. The idea of waiting till September 20th and letting Mr. *Smillie* neglect them does not seem to have occurred to him.

* * *

"Beyond gardening," says a gossip writer, "Mr. *Smillie* has few hobbies." At the same time there is no doubt he is busy getting together a fine collection of strikes.

* * *

It is said that *Amundsen* will not return to civilisation this year. If he was thinking of Ireland he isn't missing any civilisation worth mentioning.

* * *

"The *Poet laureate*," says a weekly paper, "has not written an ode to British weather." So that can't be the cause of it.

* * *

A Wolverhampton man weighing seventeen stone, in charging another with assault, said he heard somebody laughing at him, so he looked round. A man of that weight naturally would.

* * *

"There is work for everybody who likes to work," says Mr. N. *Grattan Doyle*, M.P. It is this tactless way of rubbing it in which annoys so many people.

* * *

A contemporary has a letter from a correspondent who signs himself "Tube Traveller of Twenty Years' Standing." Somebody ought to offer the poor fellow a seat.

* * *

In connection with the case of a missing railway-porter one railway line has decided to issue notices warning travellers against touching porters while they are in motion.

* * *

“The United States,” declares the proprietor of a leading New York hotel, “is on the eve of going wet again.” A subtle move of this kind, with the object of depriving drink of its present popularity, is said to be making a strong appeal to the Prohibitionists.

* * *

One London firm is advertising thirty thousand alarum-clocks for sale at reduced prices. There is now no excuse for any workman being late at a strike.

* * *

A centenarian in the Shetlands, says a news agency, has never heard of Mr. *Lloyd George*. We have no wish to brag, but we have often seen his name mentioned.

* * *

Professor PETRIE’S statement that the world will only last another two hundred thousand years is a sorry blow to those who thought that *Chu Chin Chow* was in for a long run. Otherwise the news has been received quietly.

* * *

“Nothing useful is ever done in the House of Commons,” says a Labour speaker. He forgets that the cleaners are at work in the building just now.

* * *

We are informed that at the Bricklaying contest at the Olympic Games a British bricklayer lost easily.

* * *

“A dress designer,” says a Camomile Street dressmaker in *The Evening News*, “must be born.” We always think this is an advantage.

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* * *

A gossip-writer points out that Mr. *Winston* CHURCHILL'S earliest ambition was to be an actor. Our contemporary is wise not to disclose the name of the man who talked him out of it.

* * *

"Whatever price is fixed it is impossible to get stone in any quantity," says a building trade journal. They have evidently not heard of our coal-dealer.

* * *

"Nothing of any value has been gained by the War," complains a daily paper. This slur on the O.B.E. is in shocking taste.

* * *

A Sunday newspaper deplores that there seems to be no means of checking the crime-wave which is still spreading throughout the country. If only the Government would publish the amount of American bacon recently purchased by the Prisons' Department things might tend to improve.

* * *

"There is still a great shortage of gold in the country," announces a weekly paper. It certainly seems as if our profiteers will soon have to be content with having their teeth stopped with bank-notes.

* * *

We regret to learn that the amateur gardener whose marrows were awarded the second prize for cooking-apples at a horticultural show is still confined to his bed.

* * *

A neck-ruffle originally worn by *Queen Elizabeth* has been stolen from a house in Manchester and has not yet been recovered. Any reader noticing a suspicious-looking person wearing such an article over her *decollete* should immediately communicate with the nearest police-station.

* * *

Hair tonic, declares the Washington Chief of Police, is growing in popularity as a beverage. The danger of this habit has been widely advertised by the sad case of a

Chicago man who drank three shampoo cocktails and afterwards swallowed a hair in his soup.

* * *

The mystery of the City gentleman who has been noticed lately going up to public telephones and getting immediate answers is now solved. It appears that he is a well-known ventriloquist with a weakness for practical jokes.

* * * * *

[Illustration: "I *never ordered it—and* I *won't pay for it*."]

* * * * *

> "According to the latest census returns, the population of New York City is now L5,621,000."—*Indian Paper.*

In dollars, of course, it would be considerably more.

* * * * *

> "The Royal Dutch Mail steamer Stuyvesant will leave on Monday at 5 a.m. for Havre and Amsterdam. The tender leaves the Lighthouse Jetty at 8 a.m. punctually with passengers."—*West Indian Paper.*

Rather a mean trick to play on them.

* * * * *

> "The Chairman said the Council had never paid one penny for the oiling and washing of the fire brigade."—*Local Paper.*

Page 3

It is understood that while the noble fellows do not object to washing at reasonable intervals, they strongly deprecate oiling as unnecessarily adding to the risks of their dangerous calling.

* * * * *

Mr. SMILLIE'S *little Armageddon*.

Shall she, the England unafraid,
  That came by steady courage through
The toughest war was ever made
  And wiped the earth with *William two*
(Who, though it strikes us now as odd,
Was, in his way, a sort of little god)—

Shall she that stood serene and firm,
  Sure of her will to stay and win,
Cry "Comrade!" on her knees and squirm
  To lesser gods of cheaper tin,
Spreading herself, a *corpus vile*,
Under the prancing heels of Mr. *Smillie*?

Humour forbids! And even they
  Who toil beneath the so-called sun,
Yet often in an eight-hours' day
  Indulge a quiet sense of fun—
These too can see, however dim,
The joke of starving just for SMILLIE'S whim.

And here I note what looks to be
  A rent in Labour's sacred fane;
The priestly oracles disagree,
  And, when a house is split in twain,
Ruin occurs—ay! there's the rub
Alike for Labour and Beelzebub.

And anyhow I hope that, where
  At red of dawn on Rigi's height
He jodels to the astonished air,
  Lloyd George is bent on sitting tight;
Nor, as he did in *Thomas*' case,
Nurses a scheme for saving SMILLIE'S face.

Why should his face be saved? indeed,
  Why should he have a face at all?
But, if he *must* have one to feed
  And smell with, let the man install
A better kind, and thank his luck
That *all* his headpiece hasn't come unstuck.

O.S.

* * * * *

A *whiff of the briny*.

As I entered the D.E.F. Company's depot, Melancholy marked me for her own. Business reasons—not my own but the more cogent business reasons of an upperling—had just postponed my summer holiday; postponed it with a lofty vagueness to "possibly November. We might be able to let you go by then, my boy." November! What would Shrimpton-on-Sea be like even at the beginning of November? Lovely sea-bathing, delicious boating, enchanting picnics on the sand? I didn't think. Melancholy tatooed me all over with anchors and pierced hearts, to show that I was her very own, not to be taken away.

I clasped my head in my hands and gazed in dumb agony at the menu card. A kind waitress listened with one ear.

"Poached egg and bacon—two rashers," I murmured.

While I waited I crooned softly to myself:—

"Poor disappointed Georgie. Life seems so terribly sad.
All the bacon and eggs in the world, dear, won't make you a happy lad."

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When the dish was brought I eyed it sadly. Sadly I raised a mouthful of bacon to my lips....

Swish!!! The exclamation-marks signify the suddenness with which the train swept into the station. I leapt down on to the platform and drew a long breath. The sea! In huge whiffs the ozone rolled into my nostrils. I gurgled with delight. Everything smelt of the dear old briny: the little boys running about with spades and pails; the great basketsful of fish; the blue jerseys of the red-faced men who, at rare intervals, toiled upon the deep. At the far end of the platform I saw the reddest face of all, that of my dear old landlord. I rushed to meet him....

Ah me, ah me! The incrusted-papered walls of the depot girt me in again. I took another mouthful of bacon—a larger one....

Bang! Someone was thumping on the door of my bathing-machine. What a glorious scent of salt rose from the sea-washed floor! “Are you coming out?” asked a persuasive voice. “No, no, no!” I shouted joyously. “I am going in.” What a dive! I never knew before how superlatively graceful my dives could be. Away through the breakers with a racing stroke. Over on my back, kicking fountains at the sun. In this warm water I should stay in for hours and hours and....

Pah! That horrible incrusted paper back again! I bolted the remaining rasher....

The boat rocked gently in a glassy sea. They were almost climbing over the gunwale in their eagerness to be caught. Lovely wet shining wriggly fellows; all the varieties of the fishmonger’s slab and more. In season or out, they didn’t care; they thought only of doing honour to my line. No need in future for me to envy the little boys on the river-bank who pulled in fish after fish when I never got a bite. How delightfully salt the fish smelt! And the sun drew out the scent of salt from the gently lapping waves. It was all so quiet and restful. Almost could I have slumbered, even as I pulled them in and in and....

The waitress must have giggled. Once again the incrusted paper leered at me in ail its horrible pink incrustiness. There was no bacon left on my plate. But the delicious scent of salt still lingered. Alas, my holiday was over! I must speed me or I should miss the train to town.

“Good-bye!” I shouted to the manageress and shook her by the hand. She seemed surprised. “Such a happy time,” I assured her. “I wish I could have it all over again.”

She said something which I could not hear. Sea-bathing tends to make me a little deaf.

“If I have forgotten anything—my pyjamas or my shaving strop—would you be so kind as to send them on? Good-bye again.”

Something fluttered to the floor. The manageress stooped. I was just passing through the portals.

“You have forgotten this,” she called.

It was the dear little square piece of paper which contained my bill. I looked at it in amazement.

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“What!” I exclaimed—“only one-and-twopence for a poached egg and bacon and all that salt flavour thrown in?”

* * * * *

Our Modest advertisers.

> “European lady (widow), rather lovely, would like to hear from Army Officer or Civilian in a similar position, with a view to keeping up a congenial correspondence.”—*Indian Paper.*

* * * * *

> “A correspondent in the Air Force writes from Bangalore:—
>
> ’It is rather amusing to notice the number of people in the English community who have never before seen an aeroplane coming up to the aerodrome and gazing in wonder at the old buses.’”—*Evening Standard.*

Even in England this spectacle is still the object of remark.

* * * * *

> “We really feel inclined to parody Kipling and say—
>
> ’One hand stuck in your dress shirt from to show heart is cline,
> The other held behind your back, to signal, tax again.’”

Singapore Free Press.

We can only hope our esteemed contemporary will not feel this way again.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *The road to Ruin*.

Labour. “*What’s your game*?”

Mr. *Smillie*. “*I’m out for nationalisation*.”

Labour. “*Ah*! *And you’re going to begin by nationalising starvation*?”]

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Mrs. Smithson-Jones* (*to her husband, who WILL garden in his pyjamas before breakfast*). “*DO* COME IN, ADOLPHUS; YOU’RE DELAYING THE HARVEST.”]

* * * * *

THE ART OF POETRY.

IV.

Good morning, gentlemen. Before I pass to the subject of my lecture today I must deal briefly with a personal matter of some delicacy. Since I began this series of lectures on the Art of Poetry I notice that the new Professor of Poetry at Oxford, Mr. W.P. KER, in what I think is questionable taste, has delivered an inaugural lecture on the *same* subject under the *same* title. On the question of good taste I do not wish to say much, except that I should have thought that any colleague of mine, even an entirely new Professor in a provincial university, would have recognised the propriety of at least communicating to me his intention before committing this monstrous plagiarism.

However, as I say, on that aspect of the matter I do not propose to dwell, though it does seem to me that decency imposes certain limits to that kind of academic piracy, and that those limits the Professor has overstepped. In these fermenting days of licence and indiscipline persons in responsible positions at our seats of learning have a great burden of example to bear before the world, and if it were to go forth that actions of this type may be taken with impunity by highly-paid Professors then indeed we are not far from Bimetallism and the breaking-up of laws.

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Now let us glance for a moment at the substance of the lecture. I should have been glad if Professor KER had had the courtesy to show it to me before it was delivered, instead of my having to wait till it was printed and buy it in a shop, because I might have induced him to repair the more serious errors and omissions in his work. For really, when you come to analyse the lecture, what thin and bodyless stuff it is. Let me at once pay tribute to my colleague's scholarship and learning, to the variety of his citations. But, after all, anyone can buy a Quotation Dictionary and quote bits out of SWINBURNE. That surely—(see FREIDRICH'S *Crime and Quotation*, pp. 246-9)—is not the whole task of a Professor of Poetry.

Such a man, if he is to earn his pay, must be able—

(*a*) to show how poetry is written;

(*b*) to write poetry;

and it is no good his attempting (*a*) in the absence of (*b*). It is no good teaching a man to slope arms if you are unable to slope arms yourself, because a moment will come when he says, "Well, how the dickens *do* you slope them?" It is no good professing lawn-tennis and saying, "Top-spin is imparted by drawing the racquet up and over," and so on, if, when you try to impart top-spin yourself, the ball disappears on to the District Railway. Still less is it useful if you deliver a long address to the student, saying, "H.L. DOHERTY was a good player, and so was RENSHAW, and I well remember the game between MCLOUGHLIN and WILDING, because WILDING hit the ball over the net more often than MCLOUGHLIN did."

Those students who have attended my lectures more regularly than others— and I am sorry there are not more of them—will do me the justice to remember that I have put forward no theory of writing which I was not prepared to illustrate in practice from my own work. My colleague, so far as I can discover, makes one single attempt at practical assistance; and even that is a minor plagiarism from one of my own lectures. He makes a good deal of play with what he calls the principle and influence of the Italian Canzone, which simply means having a lot of ten-syllable lines and a few six-syllable ones. Students will remember that in our second lecture we wrote a poem on that principle, which finished:—

Toroodle—umti—oodle—umti—knife (or strife)
Where have they put my hat?

That lecture was prepared on May 27th; my colleague's lecture was delivered on June 5th. It is clear to me that in the interval—by what discreditable means I know not—he obtained access to my manuscript and borrowed the idea, thinking to cloak his guilt by specious talk about the Italian *Canzone*. The device of offering stolen goods under a new name is an old one, and will help him little; the jury will know what to think.

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Apart from this single piece of (second-hand) instruction, what contribution does he make to the student's knowledge of the Art of Poetry? He makes no reference to comic poetry at all; apparently he has never *heard* of the Limerick, and I have the gravest doubts whether he can write one, though that, I admit, is a severe test. I am prepared however to give him a public opportunity of establishing his fitness for his post, and with that end I propose to put to him the following problems, and if his answers are satisfactory I shall most willingly modify my criticisms; but he must write on one side of the paper only and number his pages in the top right-hand corner.

The Problems.

(1) What is the metre of:—

"And the other grasshopper jumped right over the other grasshopper's back."

(2) Finish the uncompleted Limerick given in my Second Lecture, beginning:

There was a young man who said "*Hell!*
I don't think I feel very well."

(3) In your inaugural lecture you ask, "Is it true, or not, that the great triumphs of poetical art often come suddenly?" The answer you give is most unsatisfactory; give a better one now, illustrating the answer from your own works.

(4) Write a Ballade of which the refrain is either—

(*a*) The situation is extremely grave;
or
(*b*) The Empire is not what it was;
or
(*c*) We lived to see Lord Birkenhead.

NOTE.—Extra marks will be given for an attempt at (*b*) because of the shortage of rhymes to *was*.

(5) What would you do in the following circumstances? In May you have sent a poem to an Editor, ending with the lines—

The soldiers cheered and cheered again—
It was the PRINCE OF WALES.

On July 20th the Editor writes and says that he likes the poem very much, and wishes to print it in his August number, but would be glad if you could make the poem refer to Mr. or Mrs. DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS instead of the PRINCE. He must have the proof by the

first post to-morrow as he is going to press. Show, how you would reconstruct your last verse.

(6) Consider the following passages—

(i) I love little pussy,
Her coat is so *warm*,
And if I don't hurt her
She'll do me no *harm*.

(ii) Who put her *in*?
Little Tommy *Green*.

(*a*) Carefully amend the above so that they rhyme properly.

(*b*) Do you as a matter of principle approve of these kinds of rhyme?

(*c*) If not, do you approve of them in (i) SHAKSPEARE, (ii) WORDSWORTH, (iii) SHELLEY, (iv) Any serious classic?

A.P.H.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Customer.* "AND I HAD ONE OF THOSE LITTLE ROUND BUN ARRANGEMENTS."

Waitress. "THAT'LL BE ANOTHER TUPPENCE."

Page 8

Customer. “ONE OF THOSE THAT ARE HOLLOW, YOU KNOW.”

Waitress. “OH—ONE OF *THEM*. THAT’LL BE FOURPENCE.”]

* * * * *

> “Four Volumes ‘The Great World War,’ pre-war price Rs. 40. What offers? Perfect.”—*Indian Paper.*

A clear case of propheteering.

* * * * *

From an Irish Labour manifesto:—

> “Impulsive cats, howsoever justifiable, may prove to be unwise.”—*Irish Paper.*

Remember what happened at Kilkenny.

* * * * *

THE PRIVILEGES OF MARGOTISM.

[Something was said in *Punch* last week about the advantage to the reminiscencer of being his (or her) own JOHNSON and BOSWELL too. Mrs. ASQUITH’S recent adventures with the descendants of some of her late friends, of whose fair fame they are not less jealous than she, suggest certain of the pitfalls incident to this double *role*, particularly when the autobiographer is remote from his (or her) journals. Since however an inaccuracy always has a day’s start and is never completely overtaken, while in course of time the pursuit ceases altogether, the greatest danger is not immediate but for the future. Let us imagine a case.]

FROM “THE MARGOTIST’S REMINISCENCES.”

By the Author of *Statesmen I Have Influenced*; *My Wonderful Life*; *The Souls’ Awakener*; *The Elusive Diary*, *etc., etc.*

One of my dearest friends in the early nineteen hundreds was Mr. Sadrock. I have known eleven Prime Ministers in my time and have assurances from all, signed and witnessed, that but for me and my vivacious encouragement they would never have pulled through; but with none was I on terms of such close communion as with Mr. Sadrock, who not only asked my advice on every occasion of importance, but spent many of his waking hours in finding rhymes to my name. Some of his four-lined couplets in my honour could not be either wittier or more charming as compliments.

He often averred that no one could amuse him as I did. He laughed once for half-an-hour on end when I said, “It takes a Liberal to be a Tory;” and on another occasion when I said, “The essence of Home Rule is, like charity, that it begins abroad.” Nothing but the circumstance that he was already happily married prevented him from proposing to me.

Mr. Sadrock is now to many people only a name; but in his day he was a force to compare with which we have at this moment only one statesman and he is temporarily out of office.

The odd thing is that if the ordinary person were to be asked what Mr. Sadrock was famous for, he would probably reply, For his devotion to HOMER and the Established Church. But the joke is that when I was with him in 1902 he was frivolous on both these subjects. It was, I remember, in the private room at the House of Commons set apart for Prime Ministers, to which, being notoriously so socially couth, I always had a private key—the only one ever given to a woman—and he was more than usually delightful.

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This is what was said:—

MR. SADROCK (*mixing himself an egg nogg*). Will you join me?

MYSELF. No, thank you. But I like to see you applying yourself to Subsidiary Studies to the Art of Butler.

MR. SADROCK (*roaring with laughter*). That's very good. Some day you must put your best things into a book.

MYSELF. You bet.

MR. SADROCK. I wonder why it is that you make me so frank. It is your wonderful sympathetic understanding, I suppose. I long to tell you something now.

MYSELF (*affecting not to care*). Do. I am secrecy itself.

MR. SADROCK. Would it surprise you to know that I am privily a Dissenter? Do you know that I often steal away in a false beard to attend the services of Hard-Shell Baptists and Plymouth Brethren?

MYSELF. I hope I am no longer capable of feeling anything so *demode* as surprise.

MR. SADROCK. And that I prefer *Robert Elsmere* to the *Iliad*?

MYSELF. May I print those declarations in my book?

MR. SADROCK. Some day, yes, but not yet, not yet.

* * * * *

MR. SADROCK AND NONCONFORMITY. *To the Editor of* "*The Monday Times*."

SIR,—I find it necessary, in the interests of truth and of respect for the memory of my uncle, Mr. Sadrock, to contest the accuracy of the Margotist's report of conversations with him in 1902. To begin with, my uncle died in 1898, four years before the alleged interview. She could therefore not have talked with him in 1902; and the *locale* of this meeting, the Prime Minister's room, becomes peculiarly fantastic. Secondly, no member of his family—and they saw him constantly—ever heard him utter anything resembling the sentiments which the Margotist attributes to him. Mr. Sadrock was both an undeviating Churchman and a devotee of HOMER to the end of his life.

I am, *etc*., THEOPHILUS SADROCK.

THE MARGOTIST'S REPLY.

SIR,—I have read Mr. Theophilus Sadrock's letter and am surprised by its tone. If Mr. Sadrock did not make use of the words that I attribute to him how could I have set them down? Because I was writing unobserved all the time he was talking, and I could produce the notes if they were, to others, legible enough for it to be worth while; surreptitious writing must necessarily be indistinct at times. As for the question of time and place, that is a mere quibble. Mr. Sadrock was alive when we had our talk, and I am sorry if I have misdated it. The talk remains. May I add that it is very astonishing to me to find people with the effrontery to suggest that they knew their illustrious relatives better than strangers could. Everyone is aware that the last place to go to for evidence as to a man is to his kith and kin. When my book appears there will be a few corrections; but in the main I stand by the motto which I invented for Chamberlain one evening: "What I have written I have written."

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I am, Yours, *etc*.,

THE MARGOTIST.

The Woop.

* * * * *

FROM “SADROCK: A DEFINITIVE BIOGRAPHY.”

Published in 1940.

Before leaving our consideration of Sadrock’s Homeric studies it is however necessary to point out that late in life he made a very curious recantation. In a book of memoirs, published in 1920, by one who was in a position to acquire special information, it is stated in his own words that Sadrock preferred *Robert Elsmere* to the *Iliad*; while during the same conversation he confessed to a passion for the services of Dissenters, which, he said, he often frequented *incognito*. No biographer can disregard such admissions, and we must revise our opinion of the great statesman accordingly.

E.V.L.

* * * * *

> “SALE, Gent’s Evening Suit, Tennis Trousers, Sweater, Black Silk Coat suit elderly lady.”—*Irish Paper.*

The revolutionary movement in Ireland seems to have reached even the fashions.

* * * * *

> “LONDON, JULY 16.
>
> It is reported on reliable authority that General Wrangel has refused to withdraw to the Cinema in compliance with the terms of the proposed armistice.—*Statesman* (*Calcutta*).

It is believed that “MARY” and “DOUG.” were greatly relieved to be rid of so dangerous a rival.

* * * * *

“When is the demoralisation at some of our great London hotels to give place to reasonable service and cleanliness? On every side I hear complaints of inefficient

attendance and dirty rooms. As for clean towels in the bathroom, they appear on the Ides of March."—*Sunday Paper.*

At one hotel, we understand, they failed to remember the Ides of March and are now waiting for the Greek Kalends.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE "DO-IT-YOURSELF" AGE.

FATHER'S HOME-MADE SWEATER.]

* * * * *

[Illustration: OUR SPORTING PURISTS.

Urchin. "COME AN' PLAY CRICKET, ALF."

Alf. "WOT! IN THE FOOTBALL SEASON?"]

* * * * *

THE REVOLT OF YOUTH.

We publish a few selected letters from the mass of correspondence which has reached us in connection with the controversy initiated by "A Bewildered Parent" in *The Morning Post*:

A LEGUMINOUS LAUDATION.

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SIR,—I confess I cannot share the anxiety of the “Bewildered Parent” who complains of the child of two and a half years who addressed her learned parent as “Old bean.” As a convinced Montessorian I recognise in the appellation a gratifying evidence of that self-expression which cannot begin too young. Moreover there is nothing derogatory in the phrase; on the contrary I am assured on the best authority that it is a term of endearment rather than reproach. But, above all, as a Vegetarian I welcome the choice of the term as an indication of the growth of the revolt against carnivorous brutality. If the child in question had called her parent a “saucy kipper” or “a silly old sausage” there would have been reasonable ground for resentment. But comparison with a bean involves no obloquy, but rather panegyric. The bean is one of the noblest of vegetables and is exceptionally rich in calories, protein, casein, carbo-hydrates, thymol, hexamyl, piperazine, salicylic dioxide, and permanganate of popocatapetl. This a learned parent, if his learning was real, ought to have recognised at once, instead of foolishly exploiting a fancied grievance.

Yours farinaceously,

JOSIAH VEDGELEY.

THE OLD COMPLAINT.

SIR,—Some sixty years ago I was rebuked by my father for addressing him as “Governor.” Thirty years later I was seriously offended with my own son for calling me an “old mug.” He in turn, though not by any means a learned man, has within the last few weeks been irritated by his school-boy son derisively addressing him as an “old dud.” The duel between fathers and sons is as old as the everlasting hills, and the rebels of one generation become the fogeys of the next. I have no doubt that in moments of expansion the young Marcellus alluded to his august parent as “*faba antiqua*.”

Yours faithfully,

SENEX.

A TRIPLE LIFE.

SIR,—As a middle-aged mother I do not appeal for your sympathy, I merely wish to describe my position, the difficulties of which might no doubt be paralleled in hundreds of other households. I have three children whose characteristics may be thus briefly summarised:—

(1) Pamela, aged nineteen, is an ultra-modern young woman. She hates politics of all shades, but adores SCRIABINE, STRAVINSKY and BENEDETTO CROCE. She

smokes cigars, wears male attire and has a perfect command of the art of ornamental objurgation.

(2) Gerald, aged twenty-three, is war-weary; resentful of all authority; “bored stiff” by any music save of the syncopated brand, and he divides his time between Jazz-dancing with the dismal fervour of a gloomy dean and attending meetings of pro-Bolshevist extremists.

(3) Anthony, aged twenty-six, is a soldier, a “regular”; restrained in speech, somewhat old-fashioned in his tastes. This summer he spent his leave fishing in Scotland and took with him two books—the *Life of Stonewall Jackson* and the *Bible*. It is hardly necessary to add that Gerald is not on speaking terms with him.

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As for myself, while anxious to keep in touch with my wayward brood, I find the strain of accommodating myself to their varied requirements almost more than I can stand. Pamela can only endure my companionship on the conditions that I smoke (which makes me ill); that I emulate the excesses of her lurid lingo (which makes me squirm), and that I paint my face (which makes me look like a modern Messalina, which I am not). Gerald is prepared to accept me as a "pal," provided that I play David to his Saul by regaling him on Sunday mornings with negroid melodies, which he punctuates with snorts on the trombone. If he knew that I went to early morning service all would be at an end between us. Finally, Anthony wants me to remain as I was and really am. So you see that I have to lead not a dual but a triple life, and am only spared the necessity of making it quadruple by the fact that my husband is fortunately dead. As Pamela gracefully remarked the other day, "It was a good thing for poor father that he went West to sing bass in the heavenly choir before we grew up." In conclusion I ought to admit that my future is not without prospects of alleviation. Pamela has just announced her engagement to an archdeacon of pronounced Evangelical views; Gerald is meditating a prolonged tour in New Guinea with a Bolshevist mission; Anthony contemplates neither matrimony nor expatriation.

I am, Sir, Yours respectfully,

A MIDDLE-AGED MOTHER.

THE CRY OF THE CHILD AUTHOR.

SIR,—As a novelist and dramatist whose work has met with high encomiums from Mr. J.L. GARVIN, Mr. C.K. SHORTER, Mr. JAMES DOUGLAS and Lord HOWARD DE WALDEN, I wish to impress upon you and your readers the hardships and restrictions which the tyranny of parental control still imposes on juvenile genius. Though I recently celebrated my seventh birthday, my father and mother have firmly refused to provide me with either a latch-key or a motor-bicycle. Owing to the lack of proper accommodation in my nursery my literary labours are carried on under the greatest difficulties and hampered by constant interruptions from my nurse, a vulgar woman with a limited vocabulary and no aspirates. I say nothing, though I might say much, of the jealousy of adult authors, the pusillanimity of unenterprising publishers, the senile indifference of Parliament. But I warn them that, unless the just claims of youth to economic and intellectual independence are speedily acknowledged, the children of England will enforce them by direct action of the most ruthless kind. The brain that rules the cradle rocks the world.

Yours indignantly,

PANSY BASHFORD.

A DOGGEREL SUMMARY.

SIR,—I have followed the *Youth* v. *Age* controversy with interest and venture to sum up its progress so far in ten of the worst lines in the world:—

There was an old don so engrossed
In maintaining his rule of the roast
    That he made quite a scene
    When addressed as “Old bean,”
And wrote to complain in *The Post*.

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Whereupon the disciples of WELLS
Emitted a chorus of yells,
And they fell upon Age
With unfilial rage
And gave it all manner of hells.

I am, Sir, Yours,

GALLIO JUNIOR.

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Meanest Member* (*seeking free advice, after driving out of bounds, from professional who is giving a lesson to another player*). "FUNNY THING, BUT EVERY TIME I DRIVE THIS MORNING I SLICE LIKE THAT. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE CAUSE?"

Professional (*after deep thought*). "WELL, SIR, MEBBE YE'RE NO' HITTIN' 'EM RIGHT."]

* * * * *

"SWITZERLAND AGAIN.

Fine weather has resigned with only brief interruptions since the season began."—*Times.*

Just as in England.

* * * * *

"Alice ——, a married woman, was charged with unlawfully wounding her husband, Charles ——, a labourer, by striking him with a pair of tongues."—*Local Paper.*

CHARLES has our sympathy. He might just as well have been a bigamist.

* * * * *

WESTWARD HO!

James, if from life's little worries and trouble you
Sigh to be wafted afar,
Meet me at Paddington Station, G.W.
R.

Thence, if our plans be not baulked by some latterday
  Railwayman-unionist freak,
We'll make a bold bid for freedom on Saturday
        Week.

Care may ride pillion or on the ship's deck set her
  Foot, but she'll hunt us in vain
Once we've set ours on the ten-thirty Exeter
        Train.

Ours no "resort" where you run up iniquitous
  Bills at the "Royal" or "Grand,"
Blatant with pier and parade and ubiquitous
        Band.

No "silver sea" where the gaudy and giddy come;
  We're for a peacefuller air
Breathing of *Uncle Tom Cobley* and Widdicombe
        Fair.

Warm as a welcome the red of the tillage is,
  Green are the pastures, and deep
Down in the combes little thatch-covered villages
        Sleep.

Far from society (praises to Allah be!),
  Wearing demobilised boots,
Clad in our countrified (Deeley-cum-Mallaby)
        Suits,

We'll o'er the moor where the ways never weary us,
  Lunch at a primitive pub,
Loaf till it's time to get back to more serious
        Grub.

Haply some neighbouring Dartymoor brooklet'll
  Tempt us at eve to set out,
Greenheart in hand, and endeavour to hook little
        Trout.

Well, there's a programme for three weeks of heaven, sheer
  Bliss, if you add to the scheme
Farm eggs and bacon and junket and Devonshire
        Cream.

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* * * * *

[Illustration: *Customer.* “I SAY—DO YOU EVER PLAY ANYTHING BY REQUEST?”

Delighted Musician. “CERTAINLY, SIR.”

Customer. “THEN I WONDER IF YOU’D BE SO GOOD AS TO PLAY A GAME OF DOMINOES UNTIL I’VE FINISHED MY LUNCH!”]

* * * * *

SAND SPORTS.

Two or three hundred yards behind the sandhills, which seem to be deserted but are really full of sudden hollows, with embarrassing little bathing tents in them, the village sports have just been held. They took place in a sloping grass field kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. Bates. This means that you paid a shilling to enter the field, whereas on other days you can picnic in it or play cricket in it without paying anything at all. Mr. Bates is a kind of absentee landlord so far as we are concerned, for he is the butcher at Framford, four miles away, and only brings the proceeds of his butchery to us on Tuesdays and Fridays, which is the reason why on Mondays and Thursdays one usually has eggs and bacon for dinner.

It was an interesting afternoon for many reasons, most of all perhaps because many of the visitors saw each other for the first time in clothes—in land clothes, I mean—and it is wonderful how much smarter some of them looked than when popping red or brown faces, with lank wisps of hair on them, out of the brine.

Some of the athletic events were open, like the Atlantic Sea, and some close, like the Conferences at Lympne, but very few of the visitors competed in any of them. I don’t think any of us fancied our chances overmuch, but personally I was a little bitter about the three-mile bicycle race, because there were three prizes and only three competitors. I am past my prime at this particular sport, but as it happened one of the three broke his gear-chain somewhere about the seventh lap, and it was a long time before he mended it and rode triumphantly past the finishing flag. I felt then that I had missed what was probably my first and last chance of securing an Olympic palm.

The whole affair struck me as being very well managed; dull events, like the high jump and putting the shot, being held quietly in a corner by the hedge, whilst the really interesting things, like the sack race and the egg and spoon race, went on in the middle. We used potatoes instead of eggs, but whether there was a system of handicapping according to the weight and age of the potatoes I was unable to determine. I do feel confident, however, that that girl with the yellow hair and the striped

skirt to whom the first prize was quite incorrectly awarded by the judges had put some treacle—But there, I will be magnanimous.

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The postman was a great success. He had acquired a light suit of overalls, on which he had painted three large red stars, using, I hope, Government red ink, and with black cheeks and a floured nose footed it solemnly to the music of the Framford Comrades' Band. He also ran underneath the lath at the high jump and tumbled down in trying to put the shot. All round the field children could be heard asking, "What *is* he doing, Mummy?" and, when they were told, "Hush, dears, he's doing it for a *joke*," their eyes danced and they tried for a moment to control their emotion and then broke into shrieks of laughter. All the difficult open events which were not won by a young man in puce-coloured shorts were won by a friend of his in a yellow shirt. I have an idea that these two young men came from Framford and go round doing this kind of thing and getting prizes for it, just as Mr. Bates goes round selling his beef.

Amidst all this fun and frolic, if you went up to the top of one of the sandhills and looked across the blue bay to the little seaport opposite, you saw that it was also emptied of its folk this pious afternoon and was in fact holding aquatic revels. Little fishing-boats with brown sails were turning about a given mark. There were rowing races and diving competitions and a greasy pole and very probably a comic man dressed up as a buoy.

I have pondered deeply over these twin feasts, and it has occurred to me that, whilst land sports and water sports are both of them very good things in their way, neither expresses the real genius of a maritime resort, and also that we visitors, if we are too shy to enter with gusto into the local games, ought to provide some suitable entertainment in return. I have compiled therefore a programme of a Grand Beach Gala for next week, and have had a notice put up in the post-office window inviting entries. Not many people buy stamps at the post-office, but, as you get bacon and spades and buckets and jam there, it is a pretty popular emporium, and I think my list of events should prove an attractive one. It runs as follows:—

1. *Pebble and Tent Competition.*—Fathers of families only. To be run if possible at low tide on a wet and windy day. Competitors to leave starting post in ordinary attire, enter tent, emerge in bathing costume, strike tents, sprint over shingle to the sea, swim to a given point, return, pitch tents, dress and run to winning-post.

FIRST PRIZE, a ham sandwich, with real sand.

2. *Sock Race.*—Under ten. Competitors to start barefooted in rock-pools and race at the sound of a dinner-bell to nurses, have feet dried, put on shoes and stockings and run to row of buns at top of beach. First bun down wins. Points deducted for sand in socks.

3. *Hundred Yards Paddle Dash.*—To be run along the edge of surf. Handicap by position. Tallest competitor to have deepest station. Open to all ages and sexes. Feet to be lifted clear of the water at every stride. Properly raced this is a fine frothy event, productive of the greatest enthusiasm, especially if the trousers come unrolled.

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4. *Sand Castle Contest.*—Open to all families of eight. Twenty minutes time limit. Largest castle wins. Moats must contain real sea-water.

5. *Impromptu Picnic.*—Ladies only. Materials must be collected from the village shops, brought down to beach and spread out at winning flag. For the purpose of this competition the sports must take place on a Thursday, when the weekly visit of the greengrocer coincides with one of the bi-weekly visits of the baker from Framford. Eggs and butter must be obtained at the Mill Farm, and you can do the rest at the post-office.

6. *Fifty Yards Hat Race.*—Under five. Fathers to be seated in a row on beach. Competitors to remove fathers' hats, run twenty-five yards, fill hats with sand, return and replace hats.

In order to prevent any ill-feeling that might arise from the thought that I had practised any of these races in private beforehand I have elected to be the judge.

EVOE.

* * * * *

[Illustration: A SESSION OF COMMON SENSE.

ERIN. "I'VE GREAT HOPES OF THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT; BUT OF COURSE IT'S NOT AN
OFFICIAL CONFERENCE."

PEACE. "WELL, TO JUDGE BY MY EXPERIENCE, IT'S NONE THE WORSE FOR THAT."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: MODERN BUSINESS METHODS.

Patron. "DIDN'T I GIVE YOU SOMETHING IN HIGH STREET THIS MORNING?"

Artist. "YES, MUM. I'VE A BRANCH THERE."]

* * * * *

[Illustration: "OH, MUMMY, WILL YOU GET THE TWOPENCE BACK?"]

* * * * *

THE ROOM AT THE BACK.

[A story of the supernatural, which should not be read late at night by persons of weak nerves.]

Outwardly, “Chatholme” was as all the other villas in Dunmoral Avenue, which were just detached enough to allow the butcher’s boy to squeeze himself and his basket—and perhaps the cook—between any two of them, and differed from each other in nothing but names, numbers and window-curtains.

And the interior of the house, when the Pottigrews took possession of it, seemed equally commonplace. There is no need to show you all over it, but if you intend to peruse this narrative, in spite of the warning above, it is desirable that you should at least inspect the ground-floor.

On one side of the hall, which was faintly illumined in the daytime by a fanlight, was the drawing-room; on the other side was the dining-room, and behind the dining-room was a smaller room with a French-window looking on to the back-garden, which probably was described by the house-agents as the “morning-room,” but was by Mr. Pottigrew designated his “study.”

Prosaic enough, you will say. And yet there was that about the ground-floor of “Chatholme” which was anything but matter-of-fact, as the Pottigrews began to discover before they had been in residence many days.

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Mrs. Pottigrew was the first to “sense” something out of the ordinary. She was of Manx origin, and therefore peculiarly sensitive to “influences;” one of those uncomfortable people who cannot visit such places as Hampton Court or the Tower without vibrating like harp-strings.

Mr. Pottigrew, however, was of the duller fibre of which cyclists rather than psychists are made; and when, on his return from the City one afternoon, his wife tried to get him to appreciate a certain eeriness in the atmosphere of the new home, he sniffed it dutifully, and declared that he could detect nothing but a confounded smell of onions.

“That’s because they *won’t* remember to shut the kitchen door,” Mrs. Pottigrew explained. “But—”

“Well, it can’t be the drains, because they’ve just been tested,” said Mr. Pottigrew impatiently. And, like a stout materialist, he muttered, “Imagination!” as he strolled away to the sanctuary of his study, little guessing how his own imagination was about to be stimulated.

(Look here—this is where the creepy business begins. If, on consideration, you feel you’d rather read about cricket or politics or something, I’ll excuse you.)

A little later, as Mrs. Pottigrew was crossing the hall, she was stopped short by a strange, gasping choky sound which came from the study. There followed the crash of a chair being overturned; the door opened and her husband staggered out with scared eyes in a face as white as marble, and beads of sweat on his brow.

When a stiff brandy had restored the power of speech to Mr. Pottigrew, he described the remarkable and alarming seizure he had just experienced.

He had turned his arm-chair to the French-window, he said, with the intention of enjoying a quiet smoke, and no sooner had he seated himself and leaned back than an indescribable feeling of suffocation had crept upon him, and at the same time he had been aware of a curious loss of control over his jaws, so that he had been unable to prevent his mouth opening to its widest extent. When he had tried to rise to his feet an invisible force had seemed to be holding him down, and it was only by a tremendous effort of will that he had managed to keep his senses and struggle to the door.

He resolutely refused to see a doctor, but, deciding that the attack was a warning that he had been overdoing it, he retired forthwith to bed. By the morning he felt so well that he prescribed for himself a few quiet days by the sea. And so he packed his bag and took himself off by an early train to Brighton.

That afternoon was marked by another disagreeable occurrence. After the way of her kind, Mrs. Pottigrew’s Aunt Charlotte was attracted by the idea of using a room from

which normally the female members of the household were excluded. So she took her needlework into the study and prepared to spend a quiet hour or so in the armchair facing the French-window.

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Hardly had she settled down when she too experienced the same feeling of suffocation and the same involuntary opening of the jaws which Mr. Pottigrew had described. She struggled against it, but, lacking the will-power of her robust nephew-by-marriage, she was overcome by unconsciousness. When she came to, a little dazed and faint, a few moments later, she was dismayed to discover that her expensive dental-plate—a full set—was lying on the floor, shattered beyond repair.

Not being a person of vivid imagination, she attributed her transient illness to intense sympathy with Mr. Pottigrew, and resigned herself to a diet of slops until she could be furnished with new means of mastication.

Next day, a Saturday, came the climax. Early in the evening an urgent telegram summoned Mr. Pottigrew back from Brighton. Hastening home, he was received by a wife distraught.

"What did I tell you?" she wailed. "Send for Sir CONAN DOYLE. Poor dear Aubrey! The doctor is upstairs with him."

Mr. Pottigrew hurriedly ascended to the bedroom of his son and heir, a fine healthy youth, just of an age to appreciate his father's cigars. (This, of course, is a pre-Budget story.)

The young fellow lying upon the bed smiled bravely as his father entered, but Mr. Pottigrew was shocked to see that he smiled with toothless gums. A grave professional-looking man rose from the bedside and beckoned Mr. Pottigrew out of the room.

"This extraordinary case, Sir," said the doctor as he closed the door behind him, "is the outcome of causes quite beyond the present scope of the medical profession. The sound, strong, firm teeth—a splendid set—of a healthy young man do not jump out of his head of their own accord, every one of them, for any natural reason."

He paused and lowered his voice as he continued: "I am afraid, Mr. Pottigrew, however reluctant we may be to admit the possibility, that there is no doubt that you have taken a haunted house. The previous tenant was a dentist—poor Mr. Acres. The room which is your study was his operating room. *He died in that room while administering gas to himself preparatory to extracting his own teeth.*"

* * * * *

[Illustration: *North-Country Farmer* (*to Profiteer fishing the Fell becks*). "CAUGHT OWT?"

Profiteer. "I'VE NOT ACTUALLY LANDED ANY, BUT THINK I HAD A RISE—UNLESS IT WAS THE SPLASH FROM MY MINNOW."]

* * * * *

MRS. GAMP REDIVIVA.

> “Nurse; 39; experienced bottle fed; L40 to L50.”—*Daily Paper.*

* * * * *

SPEEDING THE PARTING GUEST.

> “Oban is proving an attractive centre, for Lord ——, Lady —— and many others have departed thence during the last day or so.”—*Daily Paper.*

We think it only kind to suppress the names.

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* * * * *

> “All new demands for capital, whether for private or public purposes, had been met out of the sayings of the people.”—*Daily Paper.*

Mr. Punch may perhaps be permitted to mention that he has himself given currency to a number of capital stories.

* * * * *

“It is to be hoped that, now that their unhappy country is in the throes of the most ghastly terror of her history, the irreconcilable elements in the Irish nation will see an all-compelling reason for exercising the demon of strife.—*Indian Paper.*

Unfortunately they seem to be doing so only too freely.

* * * * *

ANOTHER WAR TO END WAR.

[An address to the League of Nations on learning that it is considering a scheme to tackle the rat plague.]

Not yours to lure the lands of Cross or Crescent
Back from Bellona where she bangs her drum,
Nor make this Hades, anyhow at present,
The New Elysium.

For still the sword gleams mightier than the pen in
Europe, you’ll notice, at the Bolshies’ beck;
Confess now that the case of Mr. LENIN
Gets you right in the neck.

So I have read with wondrous satisfaction,
Feeling in this your hands are far from tied,
That you propose to emulate the action
Of *Hamelin’s Piper (Pied)*.

And, though the task prove hard and ever harder,
From your crusade, I trust, you’ll never cease
Till you’ve restored good-will to every larder
And to each pantry peace.

Then, when the cocksure critic in his crudeness
Pops you the question while his back he pats,

“What have you done?” you’ll find at last, thank goodness,
One ready answer—“Rats!”

* * * * *

“Puccinni’s three one-act operas, erroneously described as a typtich....”—*Evening Paper.*

But what about the spelling of “Puccinni”? We fear our contemporary has, after all, been caught triptyching.

* * * * *

HOW TO BUILD A HOUSE.

The only way to build a house properly is to employ an architect to build it for you. All the best houses are built by architects—any architect will tell you that. But of course you will always be allowed to say that *you* built it, so it will come to the same thing.

The walls of an architect’s office are covered with drawings of enormous public buildings which the architect has erected in every capital of Europe. There are also a few of the statelier homes of England which he has put up in his spare time.

While you are waiting you compare these with your own scheme of the six-roomed villa you propose to build.

At last you are ushered into the presence and unless a stove-pipe protruding from your waistcoat pocket suggests that you are travelling in somebody’s radiators you will probably be asked to sit down, and may even be given a cigarette. There is no difficulty in opening your business. The architect can see at a glance what you have come for and says quite simply, “You want to build a house?”

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“I do,” you reply.

“How many reception rooms?”

This rather staggers you. You had not intended to have any reception rooms at all. You never give receptions. All you wanted was a dining-room and a drawing-room, and a study with a round window over the fire-place.

But it is evidently impossible to confide this to the architect. All you can do is to reply as naturally as you can:—

“About half-a-dozen.”

“Eight reception rooms,” says the architect. “And how many bedrooms?”

“I don’t really know; about one each.”

“Twenty bedrooms,” suggests the architect (there are three in your family). “And did you say a garage to hold two cars?”

By this time you realise that you are engaged in a game something like auction bridge and so far your opponent has done all the over-calling.

“Double two cars!” you cry excitedly.

“Five cars,” rejoins the Architect.

“Six cars!”

“Garage to hold six cars,” repeats the Architect, confessing defeat. “You are, of course, aware that a house on this scale will cost you at least twenty thousand pounds?”

“Of course,” you reply, and you honestly think it would be cheap at the price.

After this the only thing to do is to get away as quickly as possible. It would be pure bathos to suggest any of your wife’s labour-saving devices, or introduce the subject of that circular bath-room with a circular bath hanging by chains from the ceiling and a spirit-stove under it—your pet invention. Recall a pressing engagement, shake the architect firmly by the hand and promise to come and see him next Tuesday about details. In the interval you can compose a letter at your leisure, informing him that in view of the high cost of materials, *etc*., *etc*., you have decided to postpone the building of your house, but you desire to build *at once* a gardener’s cottage (so that the gardener can be getting the grounds into order) containing one dining-room, one drawing-room, one study (with one round window), three bedrooms, one circular bathroom (with one circular bath) and one tool-shed to hold one tool.

Even so you will probably have to make concessions. Your window will be hexagonal and your bath square. But your worries are over. The architect will choose a builder and between them they will build your house during the next six years, which you will spend in lodgings. It is a long time to wait, certainly, but you will find plenty of amusement in occasionally counting the number of bricks that have been laid since last time. And then in 1926, as you smoke your pipe in your study and gaze out of your hexagonal window, you will not covet the Paradise of ADAM, the first gardener.

* * * * *

RHYMES OF THE UNDERGROUND.

Adolphus Minns resides at Kew
And does what people ought to do.

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In boarding trains his instincts are
To “let ’em first get off the car,”
Then “hurry up” himself to enter,
And “pass along right down the centre.”

Though nigh his destination be
No selfish “door-obstructor” he:
Rather than bear such imputation
He’ll travel on beyond his station.

His unexceptionable ways
E’en liftmen have been known to praise—
A folk censorious and, as such,
Not given to praising over-much.

Small need have they to shout a grim
“No smoking in the lift” at him,
Or ask if he’s the only one
For whom the lift is being run.

Adolphus Minns, who lives at Kew,
Does all that people ought to do—
Retires to bed before eleven,
Is up and shaved by half-past seven—
And, when he dies, he’ll go to Heaven.

Perhaps he’s gone; I’ve never met
His like at Kew or elsewhere yet.

* * * * *

THE DISSIMULATION OF SUZANNE.

The telephone bell rang just as I was beginning breakfast.

“What is your number, please?” asked an imperious voice.

In an emergency I never can remember my own number.

“Just hold on a minute while I look it up,” I begged. Feverishly I turned over the leaves of the telephone directory and, cutting with a blunt finger the page containing the small advertisement that keeps my name before the public eye, at last found and transmitted the desired information.

“Don’t go away,” said the voice again, this time with a shade of weariness in its tone. “Chesterminster wants you.”

I wasn’t going away, because before Suzanne left me to visit her relatives in Middleshire I had vowed that nothing would induce me to do so. But Chesterminster wanted me. What should that portend?

“Tell them,” I declaimed into the mouthpiece while I instinctively posed for the camera, “that I feel greatly honoured by their invitation and in other circumstances I should have been delighted to come forward as their Candidate. The Parliamentary history of Chesterminster constitutes one of the most romantic chapters in the chronicles of England; but just now I am busy writing verses for next week’s *Back Chat*, so—”

“If you will keep on talking to yourself you won’t get connected,” interrupted the voice. “You’re thr-r-rough, Chesterminster.”

“Are you Chelsea niner-seven-double-seven?” inquired a new voice, a little more distant but not so haughty.

“No, nine I mean niner-double-seven-seven,” I replied.

“Same thing,” said the voice of Chesterminster. “Stokehampton wants you.”

“Tell them—” I began, but my oratory was drowned by a rapid succession of small explosions, and out of this unholy crepitation emerged a still small voice which said, “Is that you, darling?” Then I suddenly remembered that Stokehampton is Suzanne’s relatives’ nearest town of call.

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“They want you to come tomorrow for the week-end,” said Suzanne. “I lied to them and said you were busy working, but they said you can have the library to yourself whenever you want it, and spoke so nicely about you that I couldn’t refuse to ring you up. Besides, I want you to come, and the figs and the mulberries are in splendid form.”

Suzanne knows that my idea of Heaven is a garden full of fig-trees and mulberry-bushes at the appropriate season of the year. But it was raining hard, and I abominate week-ends; and Suzanne’s relatives are well-meaning folk who always want to arrange your day for you.

“No, Suzanne,” I said, “emphatically, no. I can’t think of a convincing excuse at the moment, so you’d better say I’ll be delighted to come. But tomorrow morning you’ll get a wire from me announcing that I’m sick of the palsy—no, malaria, which they know I sometimes get—and that’ll give you a good ground for returning yourself tomorrow. Your three minutes is up. Good-bye.”

With the inspiration still fresh upon me I wrote out the telegram and rang for Evangeline.

“Evangeline,” I said, “I may possibly be detained in bed tomorrow morning. In case that should happen”—she never betrayed even a flicker of the eye, although she could, an she would, tell Suzanne some damning tales of late rising during her absence—please send this telegram off before breakfast; that is, before *your* breakfast.”

Evangeline curtseyed and withdrew. I had spent my leisure moments during the week teaching her the trick, as a surprise for Suzanne on her return.

Next morning, as I lay in bed thinking out the subject of my next Message to the Nation, I was gratified to notice that the rain had ceased and the sun was shining genially. I thought of Suzanne and the refreshing fruit in Suzanne’s relatives’ attractive gardens. Should I go after all? I rang the bell.

“Has that wire gone yet?” I asked.

“Indeed I took it these two hours back,” replied Evangeline.

I looked at my watch and grunted.

“Bring me a telegram-form,” I commanded, “and some hotter hot water.”

So, having wired to Suzanne: “Malaria false alarm only passing effects of overwork coming by the one-thirty PERCIVAL,” I found myself at tea-time being nursed back to health on mulberries-and-cream administered by the solicitous hands of Aunt-by-acquisition Lucy.

“Well,” I said to Suzanne a little later as we strolled in the direction of the fig-trees, “how did it go off—my first wire, I mean?”

“Oh, I think I did it very well,” she replied; “I gave a most realistic exhibition of wifely concern, and the car had just come to take me to the station when your second wire arrived.”

“Then they didn’t spot anything?”

“No,” said Suzanne—“no, I don’t think so.”

After dinner that night I was playing billiards with Toby, who is Suzanne’s aunt’s nephew-by-marriage. We had the room to ourselves.

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“Dull part of the world this,” he remarked. “By the way, what about that malaria of yours?”

“What about it?” I observed shortly.

“Comes and goes rather suddenly, doesn’t it?”

“Very,” I agreed. “It’s one of the suddenest diseases ever invented.”

“‘Invented’ is a good word,” said Toby. “You’re a bit of an inventor, aren’t you?”

“What do you mean? Are you venturing to imply—”

“I imply nothing. I merely state that this morning Suzanne came down to breakfast in her travelling-clothes. And that wasn’t all.”

“Wasn’t it?” I inquired weakly. “Tell me the worst.”

“All through breakfast,” continued Toby with relish, “she was restless and off her feed, and appeared to be listening for something. Afterwards nothing could induce her to leave the house, and I myself caught her surreptitiously studying the time-table. Every time a step was heard coming up the drive she started to her feet. At last a telegraph-boy arrived. Before anybody could discover whom the wire was addressed to, Suzanne snatched it from the boy, tore it open, placed her hand in the region of her heart and exclaimed, ‘Oh, how provoking! Poor Percival’s—’ then she turned it the right way up, looked unutterably foolish and meekly handed it over to Aunt Lucy. It was from the old lady’s stockbroker and referred to some transaction or other in Housing Bonds.”

“And what did Aunt Lucy say?” I asked.

“Oh, she just looked the least little bit surprised,” replied Toby, “but she didn’t utter. Suzanne had to embrace the muddiest of all the cocker pups to hide her flaming cheeks.”

“Well, what happened then?”

“Then? Oh, then the telegraph-boy fished out another wire from his wallet. I took it, glanced at the envelope and handed it to Suzanne. This time she read it very gingerly before exclaiming in a highly unemotional voice: ’Oh, how provoking! Poor Percival’s got one of his sudden attacks of malaria and can’t come. So, if you don’t mind, Aunt Lucy, I’ll catch the eleven-fifteen back.’ Aunt Lucy was very sympathetic and went up to help her with her packing, which was accomplished in a surprisingly short time; as a matter of fact she had practically done it all before breakfast. Just as she was going to drive off to the station up came another telegraph-boy. That was your second wire, and

Suzanne didn't seem any too pleased to receive it. I'm not at all convinced," concluded Toby, "that your wife would make her fortune on the stage."

"Do you think Aunt Lucy suspects?" I asked.

"Bless you, no. The dear old thing has the heart of a child."

Maybe, but I have my doubts. Suzanne's aunt insisted on my staying a week as a preventive against a nervous breakdown, and the tonic with which she herself dosed me several times a day was the most repulsive beverage I had ever tasted, effectually ruining the savour of figs and mulberries. Can it be that Aunt Lucy is not only of a suspicious but also of a revengeful nature?

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Suzanne ridicules my doublings and declares that she could make her aunt swallow anything. I wish she could have made her swallow my tonic.

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[Illustration: THE QUESTION OF THE YACHTING CAP.

HE DIDN'T WANT TO LOOK LIKE EVERY TOM, DICK AND HARRY, HE SAID, SO HE DECIDED TO GO IN HIS YACHTING CAP.]

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[Illustration: BRITISH ASSOCIATION DELEGATES DISCUSSING ORIGIN OF STREET ARAB'S EJACULATION, "YAH-YAH-YAH-SHR-R-RUP!"]

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KAMENEFF to KRASSIN (on applying for passports): "*Cras ingens iterabimus aequor.*"

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[Illustration: *Host.* "HALF A MINUTE! I'LL LIGHT YOU TO THE GATE; IT'S VERY DARK."

Cheerful Guest. "THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I CAN SEE IN THE DARK. WHY, WHEN I WAS IN FLANDERS—"

Host. "YES, YES; BUT YOU'RE NOT IN FLANDERS NOW—YOU'RE IN MY CARNATION BED."]

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

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

It would certainly have been a thousand pities if the coming of Peace had deprived us of anything so cheerfully stimulating as the tales of "SAPPER" (CYRIL MCNEILE). His *Bull-Dog Drummond* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) shows all the old breathless invention as active as ever, while the pugnacity—to give it no stronger term—is wholly unrestrained, even by what might seem the unpromising atmosphere of Godalming in 1919. It would, of course, be utterly beyond my scope to give in barest outline any list of the wild and whirling events that begin when *Captain Hugh Drummond* selects the most encouraging of the answers to his "Bored ex-soldier" advertisement and meets the

writer, a cryptic but lovely lady, in the Carlton lounge. (Judging by contemporary fiction, what histories could those walls reveal!) After that the affair almost instantly develops into one lurid sequence of battle, murder, bluff and the kind of ten-minutes-here-for-courtship which proves that there is a gentler side even to the process of tracking crime. As usual, though less in this business than most, because of the engaging humour of the hero, I experienced a mild sympathy for the arch-villains; and indeed they might well feel some bitterness when, after being described as the master-intellects of the age, the author required them to conduct their most secret affairs in a lighted ground-floor room with the curtains undrawn. Most of them turn out to be Bolshevists, or at least in the receipt of Soviet subsidies—though I see a well-known Labour Daily reviewed the plot as unconvincing. Odd! Anyhow, a rattling story.

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I am aware that, in confessing to an entire ignorance of any one of the so-called *Books of Artemas*, I place myself in a minority so small as to be almost beneath notice. This certainly is how the publishers regard the matter if one may judge by their ecstatically jubilant, “Artemas has written a novel! 7s. 6d. net,” on the wrapper of *A Dear Fool* (WESTALL). Well, I have read the novel carefully, even I trust generously, with the unhappy result that (knowing how elusive and individual a thing is laughter) I can hardly bring myself to say how dull I found it. But the fact remains. It is all about nothing—a preposterous little plot for the identification, at a wildly inhuman reception, of an anonymous dramatist, revealed finally as the journalist hero who was nearly sacked for writing the play’s only bad notice. In my day I have met both editors and critics; even dramatists. I don’t say they were all pleasant people; many of them were not. But—-here is my point—practically every one of them had at least sufficient of our common humanity to prevent them from behaving for one instant as their representatives do in this book. Let us charitably leave it at that. Probably the next man I meet will have invited apoplexy over his enjoyment of the same pages that moved me only to an irritated bewilderment. You never can tell.

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I rather think that *The Man with the Rubber Soles* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON) is Sir ALEXANDER BANNERMAN’S firstling, at least as far as fiction is concerned. If so, many others will share my hope that it may prove to be the eldest of a large family. For the author has not merely the knack of telling a good mystery story in a way that keeps one interested until the last page is turned; he tells it in a curiously dry matter-of-fact way that makes really startling adventures seem the sort of thing that might happen to anybody. The story concerns the pursuit of a gang of men who are engaged in importing forged Treasury notes on a large scale and uttering them through skilfully organised agencies. The police and various civilians between them—there is no super-sleuth to weary us with his machine-like prowess—run the thing to earth, partly by skill and partly by good luck, and the civilians in particular have a stirring time doing it. Bombs, automatic pistols, even soldiers and a submarine, assist quite naturally in sustaining the interest. And a pleasant little romance is really woven into the plot, not just pushed in anyhow. Altogether *The Man with the Rubber Soles* is a most excellent story of its kind, a real novel because plot and treatment are alike new, and one can safely prophesy that when Sir ALEXANDER BANNERMAN produces his nextling he will find a large and appreciative circle of readers waiting to welcome it.

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Three things charmed me particularly about *Henry Elizabeth* (HURST AND BLACKETT), whose remarkable second name was due to the fact that he was born in the same year as the Virgin Queen and that his father had hoped that he too would be a girl. In the first place he became the greatest swordsman of his age and I was thus able to add him to my fine collection of Elizabethan heroes who have achieved this honour. What happens when two of these champions meet in those shadowy regions of romance where all costume novels are merged I do not know. It must be rather like the irresistible force and the immovable object. In the second place *H.E.* (no one could better deserve these formidable initials) was given the job of clearing Lundy Island of its piratical tenants, and I happened to have Lundy Island just opposite me as I read the book. It is not often that a reviewer has the chance of checking local colour with so little pains. And in the third place Mr. JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY informs me, on page 101, that his hero will "gaze one day upon rivers to which the Thames should seem little better than a pitiful rivulet." As *Henry* never gets further from his native Devon than London in the course of this novel I take it that this is a delicate allusion to the possibility of a sequel. I hope it is so, and that I shall hear of *Henry* in days to come, after a trip or two with RALEIGH or DRAKE, rebuilding his manor of Braginton, which was unfortunately burnt to the ground, and settling down to plant potatoes and tobacco in prosperity and peace.

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From the title, *Brute Gods* (HEINEMANN), you may guess that Mr. LOUIS WILKINSON'S new novel does not deal with homely topics in a vein of harmless frolic. In recommending this very serious work of an expert author and observer, I am bound to make some reservation. Unsophisticated youth, if such there be in these days, should be kept away from the affair between *Alec Glaive* and *Gillian Collett*. *Alec*, a mere boy, was in a dangerously unsettled condition when the lady crossed his path. His mother had upset a not too happy family by eloping with a literary *poseur*; the egoism of his father had been rendered even more oppressive and his sarcasm even more acid thereby; and a Roman Catholic priest, intent on securing a convert for his Order, had been plying his young mind with too exciting conversations and too refreshing wines. Apart from external circumstances, *Alec* was tending to quarrel with humanity at large, and so he went the whole hog, more in search of a desperate ideal than by way of impetuous sin. Mr. WILKINSON treats the affair with deliberate, cold-blooded, even cynical analysis; and his portrayal of the snobbery and humbug of the upper-middle class, social and intellectual, in which his creatures move is searching and disturbing. But, I ask myself, are people really like that?

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Or rather are there enough of these unnaturals, extremists, moral Bolshevists or whatever you like to call them, to justify their presentation as a modern type? Always an optimist, I think not; and I notice that the author gives a no less clever and a much more convincing impression of the normal, settled and pleasant characters who are incidental to the plot. Make for yourself the acquaintance of the charming *Wilfred Vail* and the most amusing and seductive Cockney artiste, *Betty Barnfield*, and you will admit, however pessimistic your views, that there may be something in mine.

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[Illustration: ROMANCE AND PROSE.

The Youth. “CAN YOU DIRECT ME TO THE CASTLE OF THE BLACK MOUNTAIN?”

The Old Man. “I CAN, YOUNG MAN. BUT PERCHANCE THOU GOEST TO SEEK THE HAND OF THE PRINCESS? BEWARE, RASH YOUTH! IT IS A PERILOUS ADVENTURE. THOU WILT BE REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE MANY DANGEROUS TASKS. HAST THOU THOUGHT OF THE RISK?”

The Youth. “NOT MUCH. I’M GOIN’ TO MEND THE KITCHEN BOILER.”]

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PALMAM QUI MERUIT FERAT.

“The Czecho-Slovaks were greeted this afternoon by a committee of Vancouver ladies, representing the Red Cross Society. The war-worn veterans were presented with a package containing cigarettes, an orange and a chocolate bar, in recognition of valuable services rendered the Allied cause.”—*Canadian Paper.*

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> “PRINCE GEORGE IN SWEDEN.
>
> Prince George has been enjoying the sights of Christiania and its beautiful surroundings.”—*Morning Paper.*

He should now visit Stockholm and give Norway a turn.

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> “Gentleman, no ties, will undertake any mission to anywhere.”—*Provincial Paper.*

But surely not where neck-wear is *de rigueur*.