

one of the participants. Pardon my Academy English. To resume—what was I saying? Oh, yes—about Christmas. Well, just about the time you are reading these words of wit and wisdom I was be doing my utmost to raise a gentle smile by placing ludicrous clothes upon my carcass, and adding a touch of red to the end of my proboscis—that touch of red that makes the whole house grin!

Pantomime sees me getting busy this festive season, at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, and, boys—I am to play Will Atkins in Robinson Crusoe!

Now, I've been hunting up the history of Mr. William Atkins—fourth cousin to Thomas of that ilk—and I find he was a bit of a devil. One of those bright sparks who squeeze under the door, after lights out, *you* know the type of thing I mean. What I'm going to do with him I don't quite know, yet. But this much I will say—let Manchester beware! And, if you're not careful, you'll have me coming bobbing across the Channel, and letting loose some of Mr. Atkins' superfluous history as near the trenches as I'm allowed to get.

So long as pantomime doesn't interfere with football—well and good. But once it starts getting haughty, and puts a stopper on fresh air and exercise the fighting blood of the Robeys is up—and that's no laughing matter. Why, even in feminine garb I'm a holy terror; as my dear mother used to say to me—'A girl with a left and a right like yours is wasted in domestic life.'—She called me Cynthia, too. Pretty name—is *not* it?

Here—where have I got to? The way you lead me on is positively disgusting—it is, really. I'm writing this utter nonsense on an old laundry bill, using my dresser's back as a writing table—we're driving from hall to hall, you see; and my private bus doesn't happen to include the usual club appointments. So you'll have to excuse the slips—if there are any.

I've had a few in my time. One happened not long ago. I was appearing at a London Hall of Music—what's that? Certainly not! Aitch-A-double l, I said! I'm surprised at you, Algernon—the pride of "D" Company, too. . . . Well, I was appearing at a London Variety Theatre; and somebody said—'Robey, will you please endeavour to be funny!' I endeavoured—to such an extent that a lady, seated in the front row of the stalls—she was with her husband, too, at the time—dashed off into hysterics. Yes. Hysterics—what did you think? No! She had a cough, too, poor soul: and the hysterics made it worse. She coughed and coughed: and wept and laughed, till I was nearly driven crazy.

When I reached my dressing room imagine my amazement at receiving a pencilled note from the front—'Sir,—In your attempt at a comic song you have sent my wife into

hysterics, and greatly aggravated her cough. Kindly send round one shilling to purchase cough lozenges—and oblige—yours disgustedly —'

Well, what would *you* have done? I sent round a box of lozenges—and a picture postcard. That must have done the trick—for I heard no more of 'mine disgustedly.' How's that for a mouldy insult?

Boys—I've written a lot of rot, because I know you don't want anything serious. But, joking apart, I'd just like to tell you all how deeply grateful we, over here, are to you, over there—all of you. Anything we can do to amuse or cheer you we regard as a privilege. Thank you—every single man of you: and may next Christmas find the world at peace."

We should have printed the autographs of our correspondents in this issue, but, unfortunately, time forbids. We hope in the next *Gazette* to have the autographs and also the photographs of all of them, as we know they would be much appreciated.

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The Sick Parade.

In the cellar of a brewery, where the kegs now empty stand
Sits the regimental doctor and his valiant little band
For the brewery has seen changes and its tenants all are new,
And they satisfy their patrons with a different kind of brew.
Outside a surge of voices rolls upon the morning air,
'Tis the regimental sick parade, the ill and lame are there.
The corporal sternly calls the names; they file in one by one,
To tell about their aches and pains; the sick parade's begun.

CHORUS:

"Doctor, I have awful aches in the back,
I think I have trench feet as well,
I cough all the night; I'm in terrible pain
For my ankle was sprained when I fell,
I haven't been able to eat for a week,
My dug-out is muddy and wet,
When we first came to France, I'd a pain in my heart
And I haven't got rid of it yet.
Those pills that you gave me have done me no good,
I've been having some terrible times,
(We had run short of pills, so I gave him a *four*
And a *five*, as we'd no number *nines*).
And so the tale of woe goes on; each victim makes his plea
And for reward receives his share of treatment, duty free.
But most of all the throng enjoys a sip from out the cup
That holds our brand of cough syrup; they drink it down and up.
So when the rum has fallen short, the issue cut in half
They come in hordes, and troops and swarms
Our special brew to quaff.
No anti-treating edicts here—we treat both day and night,
And favoured most of all we have the syrup with the "bite."

Now when the war is finished up, and when we're in Berlin,
Our syrup we will introduce in place of beer and gin.

Another campaign will be on, another victory won,
For cough syrup will supersede the evil demon, "Rum,"
And every brewery in the land will turn its back on beer,
Will turn our syrup out in tons and sell it far and near
And when the battle's over, and alcohol is gone,
We'll have William Jennings Bryan here to pin our medals on.

H. M. N.,
M.O.

Extracts from (expected) Brigade Orders.

Commanders of submarines plying in the communication trenches are requested to see that these vessels are not used by pleasure parties between the lines.

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N.C.O.'s and men are not allowed to use the bathing beach at XZ 50 trench. This is for officers only.

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Men on duty must not fire at the periscopes of submarines plying between the redoubts and the firing line.

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Ration and fatigue parties must not participate in swimming races to firing line, owing to the presence of hostile submarines. These events will be swum off during the six days' leave under the supervision of the Battalion swimming instructor.

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Owing to the scarcity of material for filling sandbags, any man who consumes more than 10 lbs. of mud per day will be severely dealt with.

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In the Trenches.

A contributor sends us the following:

The Huns were sending over an evening hate some short time ago and our bull-cook was heard to remark anxiously:

"I do hope they knock that old tree down; we need some firewood."
Just then, a shell brought down a tree about a hundred and fifty feet from the one pointed out.

"There, I told you," wailed the anxious watcher, "they couldn't hit the right one after all, and that other one is too far away."

Oh! why don't they aim at some place about two miles from here when they do have these guns that shoot round corners, and then they might be able to hit the right tree.

When the Huns start strafing, everyone rushes to where a good view of the explosions can be obtained. The shells usually drop behind "our" ditch, and to see the line up of "shell-fans" reminds us of the baseball days in Canada. It is said that a grand-stand is to be erected at certain points in the trenches and an admission of five centimes will be charged for a *sitting* view of the