

## British Gossip

**T**HE vegetarian has been the object of much cheap ridicule but he has succeeded in becoming fashionable and even aristocratic. Mr. Eustace Miles, the proprietor of a restaurant where pumpkins are a poem and pickled cabbage a dream, has had the distinction of entertaining Duchesses and lesser ladies at his hostelry in Chandos Street. Everyone who knows the ways and works of Mr. George Bernard Shaw is aware of his vegetarian practices. By the way, Mr. Shaw must saturate his unoffending fare with vinegar if we may reason from his dramas to his diet. The "By-stander" gives a formidable list of "people in Debrett" who have become converted to corn and protose cutlets. But to most of us there is something forlorn about a dinner from which roast beef and stuffed veal are utterly banished. The spell of Dickens is too strong for the average Englishman whose ideal meal is such a repast as Martin Chuzzlewit and Mark Tapley came home to be served with at the Blue Dragon. But the whirligig of Time brings many changes and the roast beef of England may finally disappear from the scene, leaving daintier but drearier fare in its place. War, it is said, must vanish and beef-eaters are proverbially war-like. However, the vegetarian is not always placid, as the scrappiness of Mr. Shaw abundantly manifests.

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The Boer War and the automobile craze have been a boon to the writer of fiction. It was becoming difficult to dispose of the hero unless one sent him to the West Coast of Africa to die of fever or to Johannesburg to make a fortune. But in 1899 President Kruger and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain began to exchange personal paragraphs and the first thing the novelists knew they were provided with a harrowing war to which dozens of heroes have been despatched during the last five years. The automobile fashion has been almost equally useful. Even such a master of his craft as Mr. Robert Hichens was not above tumbling his heroine out of an auto and scratching her face shamefully when he wished her to become perfect through having her beauty spoiled. But the auto novelists who are easily first in the race, whether from Pekin to Paris or Syracuse to St. Petersburg, are the Williamsons. Collaboration on the part of husband and wife has been a popular success in the case of the Castles and the Williamsons. The latter have certainly made the motor yarn their own and their latest work, "The Botor Chaperon," concerns itself amusingly with a motor boat in Holland and its strangely-assorted passengers. It is more fragrant than most of their novels and Cupid is given a prominent part instead of being an understudy for the petrol.

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The cold summer has not been altogether comfortable for Canada but it has been much worse for England where the merchants have suffered extremely on account of the slim orders for the goods which are usually sold in July and August. Muslins and chiffons have disappeared from the scene, while substantial tweeds have taken the place of fluffy gowns, such as usually make glad the heart of man in the days when the river is the resort of the holiday-maker. Even the pageants have failed to warm the season and the vendors of influenza remedies have been the only cheerful citizens. But saddest of all is the lot of the fruit-grower whose memory is unequal to the task of recalling a worse season. Plums and apples are likely to be of poor quality and the pear is a vanishing product. The lemon has been practically ignored, whereas July and August have generally meant a harvest of lemons. The public has probably been drinking long draughts of tea.

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A year ago, on the withdrawal of troops from the Island of St. Helena, a committee was formed for the purpose of watching the interests of the lonely little island which played so important a part nearly a cen-

tury ago. This committee held its first annual dinner in London last month, when Mr. M. H. Hicks Beach presided and the chief guests were Sir Gilbert Parker, M.P. and Mr. C. J. Fulton, the New Zealand flax expert whose services have been lent by his Government to set the flax industry on a permanent basis in St. Helena. The president paid Sir Gilbert Parker a high compliment, declaring that it was the energy of the ex-Canadian which had directed the Government's attention to the unfortunate condition of the Islanders, to whom the withdrawal of the troops meant a great change in industrial conditions. Sir Gilbert Parker, in replying, said that it was absolutely necessary to make a further grant to the inhabitants of the island, to tide over the period which must elapse before the new flax industry has placed them in an independent position. The committee in charge of this affair seems to have acted with more celerity than most organisations of the kind which too often spend the most important period of their existence in tying red tape into fancy knots.

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The gift of fifty thousand pounds to Lord Cromer for his great services in Egypt was sanctioned by both Houses of Parliament and is probably regarded with approval in all parts of the Empire. Of course, certain of the ultra-Radicals won a few moments' notoriety by opposing in violent terms any recognition of a man who has spent his best years in imperial service, but their oratorical spasms were unappreciated. Even Mr. William Redmond failed to effect anything more than boredom in his audience. The strictures of some of these professional agitators who have probably never accomplished a day of real work in the course of their turbulent lives are amusing when they are not irritating. One cannot conceive of a much more ungracious act on the part of a public man than depreciation of such genuine and practical achievement as that of Lord Cromer in the land which was all but bankrupt when he took the British Agency. The grant of the British Government is the least part of "Baring's" reward.

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This is an age in which expletives are thin and weak in comparison with the round oaths which were used in the days of Strenuous Queen Bess, who called the Cecils and the Walsinghams by weird names and whose exclamations were brief and very much to the point. But even such mild ejaculations as are left to us are in danger of suppression. The Speaker of the British House of Commons has ruled that the word "Nonsense" which is Mr. McKenna's favourite outbreak at the enemy's expense, is not a Parliamentary expression. It will be necessary to go back to the chronicles of the Fairchild Family or Sandford and Merton in order to secure expressions that will decorously formulate the wrath of Honourable Gentlemen when the other side makes itself positively ridiculous.

## England's Lost Land

**E**NGLAND has surrendered 524 square miles of her territory to the waves within the last thousand years. More recently the advance of the waters has been much more rapid, averaging for the last forty years 1523 acres a year. The ravages of the sea in 1903 were almost unprecedented. Many historical towns, such as Ravensburgh, where Henry IV. landed in 1339, have been submerged. Off the Yorkshire coast alone there are twelve submerged towns and villages. Between Flamborough Head and Kilnsea an area equal to that of London has been devoured by the waves since the Roman invasion. The erosion here is so continuous that the outline of the coast is never the same on two consecutive days. There is an anchorage off Selsey, Sussex, still called "The Park" because it was a royal deer park in the reign of Henry VIII. The Goodwin sands, so much dreaded by navigators, was the 4,000-acre estate of Earl Goodwin, until it was inundated by a great wave in 1099. In June, 1898, the sea advanced inland two hundred yards at Cromer during a single gale.