

## Irish Bill Early Before Autumn Session Of The British Parliament

That Is Belief In London—Some Stories About  
the Late Lord Murray—A Plague of Mosquitoes  
—News Topics In Empire Metropolis.

(From our own Correspondent.)

London, Sept. 23.—We are told that one of the earliest measures to be dealt with when the house of commons re-assembles for its autumn sittings will be the government's Irish government bill. This is very likely correct, but from what one hears whispered in London, it may be not quite on the expected lines. It is a secret pretty well known in political circles that there are at this time most important negotiations proceeding over in Ireland—with something more than a liaison with Downing Street, I fancy—with the object of arriving at a genuine settlement of Ireland's century-old tragedy.

Whether these efforts will succeed depends on many factors, but none of them seem hopeless at the moment.

Lord Murray

One who knew him well enables me to supplement what I wrote last week about the late Lord Murray. He was a much greater man than most people knew, and had he devoted to diplomacy the talents which he gave to political management and afterwards to business he might have been a very great European figure. What marred his talent was an altogether too cynical de-

votion to flattery on a large scale. Indeed with him flattery became a synonym for "leg-pulling," and he hesitated at no piece of fulsome, however monstrous, if he thought that his victim would take it in. There was one incident where an eminent Liberal newspaper owner had asked the Chief Whip, as the custom is, to tell the speaker that he would like, if possible, to be called upon in a certain debate. The Master of Elibank duly put the member's name on the Speaker's list, and went away for a few days, during which he did not read Hansard. On his return to town, he met the eminent politician in the street, and rushing up to him, seized him with both hands, informing him that he had just come from the prime minister, who had said that, without exception, the speech was the most remarkable one of the member's career. Unfortunately, the member, having had a cold, had not spoken at all.

An Offer to Asquith.

The services he rendered to Mr. Asquith in his government before the war have never been properly recognized. With an outward appearance of being composed of men of the same party,

that government was nearly as much a coalition as the present, and it was held together by the persuasive talents of Lord Murray. The prime minister was Mr. Asquith, but the operative part of the government was Lord Murray, with his active policy of his budget, his insurance, and his fight with the House of Lords. The formula by which the government was sustained was the morning breakfast interview or walk in St. James' Park between Lord Murray and Mr. George, and the subsequent brief but none the less insistent injection of the ideas there elaborated, into the prime minister.

When the war came, Lord Murray had been way on business for some time. It said much for his patriotism and also for his knowledge of Mr. Asquith and his devotion to him, that he went straight to Downing Street and offered to go there as private secretary to the prime minister. If Mr. Asquith had been wise enough to accept this offer, it is quite possible that the political history of the war might have been somewhat different.

Political Diaries.

The ethics of publishing one's diary, to which I referred last week in the case of Colonel Repington, is still creating a very great deal of discussion and really warm feeling are being aroused on the subject. One eminent friend of mine, who is specially indignant, said to me that he thought the only way in which the practice could be put a stop to would be the revival of duelling, which, I suppose in its turn, will mean that publishers' contracts will have to contain a life insurance clause before any author could complete the deal and get the money to buy his house with. Everybody is asking now who will be the next person to follow Colonel Repington's example.

I do not know what other politicians or statesmen may keep diaries, but it has long been known that one of the members of the Asquith cabinet were in the habit of keeping very precise ones. Of these, Mr. Churchill is sure to be a work of art, and with his habit of journalism I have no doubt he is already straining at the leash. The one which I should like to see more than any other, however, would be the diary of Lord Harcourt, which goes back to the earlier days when he was helping his father before he entered parliament, and which must be a first-rate historical document. I am afraid publishers would tempt Lord Harcourt in vain, but they might have better luck with John Burns, who has kept very careful records of the inner side of politics during the reign of the Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith cabinets. Among authors, the most notable and industrious journal-keeper is Arnold Bennett, who keeps a carefully-compiled diary which, with characteristic care, he writes in special handwriting which he acquires for the purpose, almost like the writing in manuscripts of pre-printing days, and which he has bound in leather as each section is completed. Some years ago, Mr. Bennett published one or two extracts from his diary privately, and these are much prized by his friends. When, if ever, he publishes the whole of it, it will certainly be a very remarkable book.

Seeing Them Off.

Being old-fashioned enough to be still a cricket enthusiast and having one friend at least among the Australian team, I went up to St. Pancras Station to see them off. It was a glad occasion. An immense crowd of assorted sportsmen, high and low, was assembled to greet the cricketers, and nearly everybody had the same idea—while heather, the members of the team arrived casually and separately, strolling up the shaking crowd to the special saloon. Plum Warner came with his charming little wife to wish Douglas and his comrades the best of good luck and a jolly time, and traveled with them as far as Tilbury. Mrs. Warner presented to Captain Douglas a fine bit of the

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prevailing white heather, as a guard. Hobbs was one of the team who did not travel with the rest, having on his own private business. He said for his friendly attention afterwards by being hemmed in by schoolboys, each of whom demanded, and got, a sure autograph. The members of the team mostly wore caps and macks, except Rhodes, the captain from Yorkshire, who braved the barometer with a smile, wearing a straw hat as a set-off to his light lounge suit.

Mosquito Plague in London.

London has been experiencing a remarkable and most unusual visitation of poison stinging gnats and full-fledged mosquitoes. The visitation has been most severe in the southwest suburbs for some reason and, what is perhaps more explicable, along the Thames-side places, but it has been pretty bad all over, and at Streatham in particular has reached almost alarming proportions. People have been most savagely bitten by these pests, and particularly women and children who have been spending much time in their gardens or the public commons. Many doctors report an extraordinary rush of patients suffering from the effects of such insects attacks, sometimes with the most painful and even disquieting results.

It is rather curious that, at a time where we are boasting that British scientific research and energy are making habitable the deadly areas of the world by campaigning against the disease-carrying mosquito, the capital of the empire should experience a sudden invasion of this sort. The mosquito is ordinarily quite outside the pale of London's attention, and the attack has been causing the more discomfort because few people at first ever dream of attributing their strange symptoms to that source. If things continue like this another year, we may have the mosquito net added to our London domestic outfit.

Fashion and The Plumage Bill.

A lady correspondent who has been spending her afternoons in the saloons of fashionable modistes assures me that the hats which are coming over from Paris for Autumn and early Winter wear are all strangely similar in type. They are to be worn right over the eyes and are fluffily bedecked with every conceivable kind and color of feather as though every farmyard had been ransacked to find decoration for the headgear of the coming months. It looks, she says, as though there would have to be revolution in hair-dressing to suit these hats, as every hat she saw would demand that the hair should be worn high on the head in the style of several years ago. She herself has just returned from Paris, and comparing the dresses and frocks which she has seen this week with those seen in the French capital, she is not enthusiastic about the British efforts. They are, she said, a sad compromise of the fashions of Paris and the gentility of England. Tight skirts that are not tight enough and short skirts that are too long to be short and too short to be long, prove how impossible it is to affect a compromise without boredom.

Business by Air.

Of all the air services, says a business friend, the one to Copenhagen is the most valuable to commerce and the one with the biggest future before it. At present the journey takes twenty-three hours, which includes a night spent in Amsterdam, against the forty hours by land and sea. The stop in Amsterdam is quite twelve hours, so that it is clear that, when this service is run during the day, the man with business to transact in Copenhagen will be able to do the double journey, and see his man in the time now taken on the single journey by the older route. Copenhagen is now a capital of very great importance and the centre of an enormous amount of international

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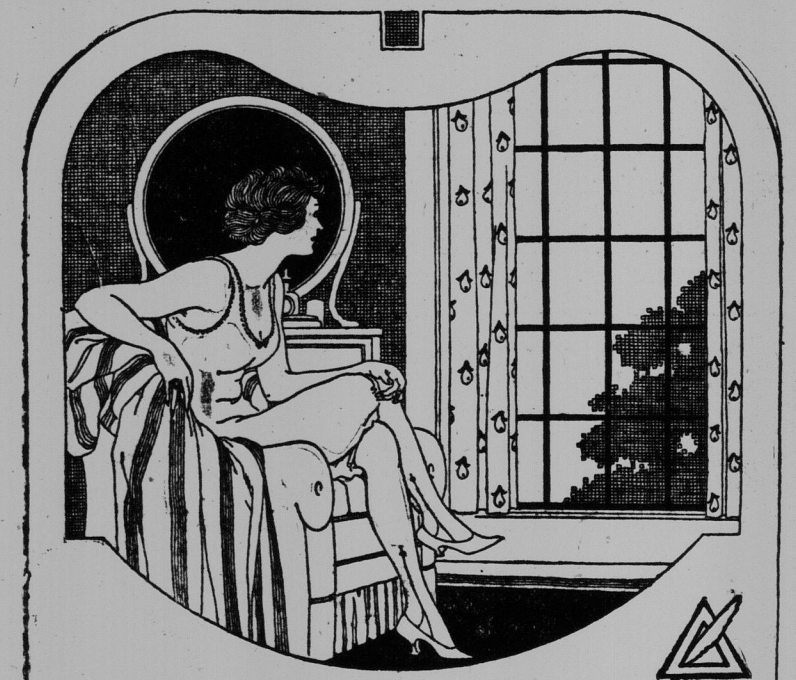
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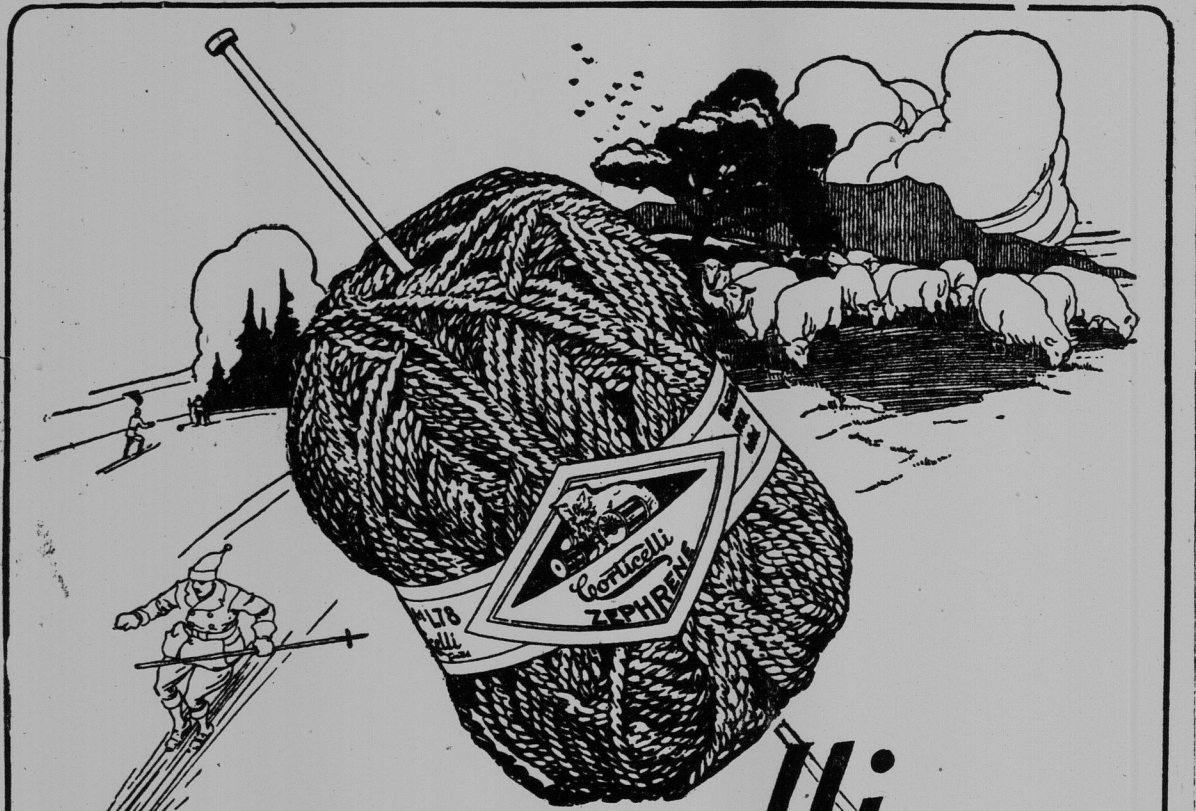
season for the Rugby football enthusiasts. Most of the London clubs have high hopes this year. Any amount of promising talent has been discovered at the practice games, besides the fine recruits who made their debut last year. The London clubs will soon reap the advantage of the public school Rugby conversion. It is fully expected that this season will see the full pre-war standard attended in the game. Blackheath will have a very fine side, with especially strong backs, under the captaincy probably of Pilman, an international wing forward who, in his best days, was without a compen. The services will not have the gaudy Harrison, facetiously known as "The Tank," with them this season, but the stalwart and brilliant MacIwaine, quite recovered from the injury he got towards the close of last year's games, will be a fine captain, and they have abundant material to choose from. Wakefield, an English forward, will be captaining the Harlequins, but Adair Stoop, a famous international half whose genius built up the club into the premier combination in the country before the war, will act as tutor and adviser. The Harlequins should do great this year, under such able control, and with such splendid material to draw upon. Amongst their players is a youthful three-quarter back, of whom the best critics predict that he will be as great a player as the immortal Poulton.



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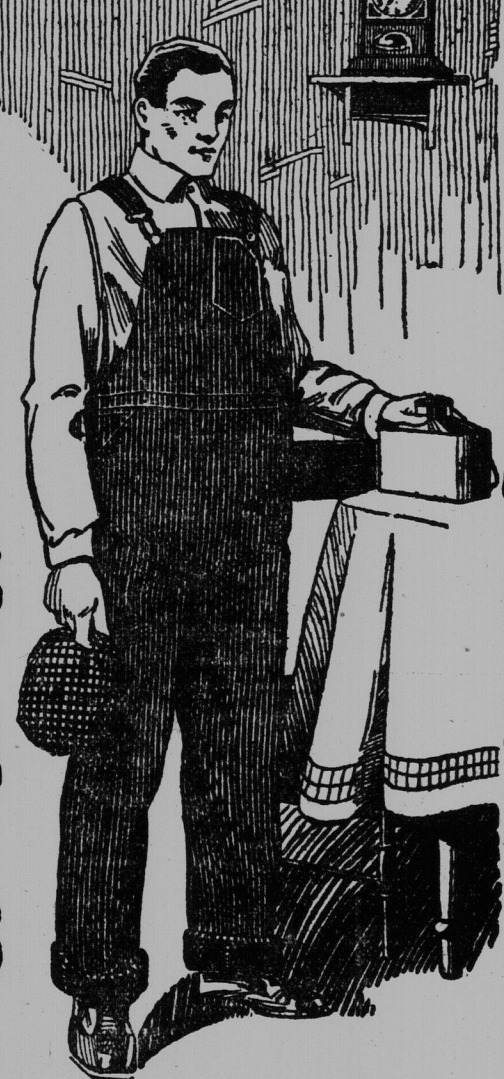
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