

At The House-Boat On The Styx

Reported by Wireless to JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

SETTLING A BURNING QUESTION

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It was shortly before midnight at the House-Boat on the Styx, and the Associated Shades were out in full force. Napoleon Bonaparte had been unusually restless all the evening and was now to be seen running his eye eagerly over the list of names in the Hades Interurban Telephone Book.

"I wonder," said he, as he anxiously scanned the pages devoted to T. "If old Pop Time has a phoner."

"Sure he has," said Hercules, tossing off a foaming beaker of freshly brewed nectar. "He's down under O-

where, do we?" sighed Napoleon. "Everybody has a different plan to propose, and no sooner is one suggestion advanced than some knocker rises up and slams it."

"Well," said Solomon, with a grin, "let's because you are not consistent. You all practically decided a while ago that Bill is nothing more than a disease that the world is suffering from; a disorder of the germ species; and yet you propose to stab him with remedies you would apply to the abatement of mere men. The result of that is obvious. Since previous suggestions of any kind of an imposed penalty is bound to object, whatever suggestion



WHERE JUNGLE LAWS, JUNGLE THOUGHT AND JUNGLE WAYS PREVAIL.

in your day, and we had a hard time making you down to that special form of inebriated domesticity we thought best suited to your peculiar talents—as what the Greeks used to call a manumission. But had you were, you were mumps to cholera along side of this bacilli-billy that has just broken loose over all. If you want to get up a petition to the Allies begging them out of consideration for your reputation as a soldier and a

is made along the old lines. If you suggest running him through a fiery furnace, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will put up a holier; if you suggest drowning him in grape juice, the Duke of Clarence will rear up on his hind legs and protest; if you suggest tying him to a rock down by the sea, where some hungry octopus will come along and make a lunch of him, Perseus and Andromeda will threaten you for infringement of copyright; if

"He'll never hurry for you, Boney," said Joshua. "He stood still for me once, but he never hurries for anyone. He's mighty conservative, old skeezicks, and having chosen his pace several million years ago he has stuck to it ever since, except that once when he put the emergency brakes on the sun for a few minutes so that a little daylight I had on hand could be put through on schedule time."

"Your stunt, Nappy," said Priam, "if you can't wait for the sporting extra of the Gethenna Gazette, is to consult one of the prophets. The woods are full of 'em down here. I didn't use to think much of the prophets when I was a young fellow, but I can tell you right now, Boney, old man, it would have been money in the Primmose trousers if I had listened to old lady Cassandra that day when she told me that the only thing ahead for Troy to be proud of was that she wasn't Albany or Binghamton. If you are crazy for advance information on what's coming to Bill, get her on the line, and she'll give you any kind of information you want for a dollar."

"I believe her rates are two dollars a proph, or three for five," put in Amalthea. "I went to her the other day to ask her if this war was going to produce any prevaricators that Beron Munchausen and I need worry about, and for a V she gave me three corks. The first prophesied that it would; the second that it wouldn't; and the third left the question undecided."



CUT OFF HIS HEAD WITH THAT DINKY LITTLE HATCHET?

comparative gentleman, not to send Bill to St. Helena, I'll sign it with the greatest of pleasure."

"Same here," said Washington. "Ditto here," said Caesar. "Fact is, the noble Roman added, 'I think it's high time we got up a Warrior's Union to protest against classifying the Terrible Test as a soldier at all. As Napoleon suggests, the man is not a warrior, but an ailment. He may wear ninety-seven different kinds of uniform between breakfast and lunch, but that does not alter the fact that he is a disorder. He is the supreme manifestation of Furor Germanicus, the Demonic Testonics."

"Righto," said Napoleon. "I'll have the petition drawn up at once. But in order to make it more effective, I think we should suggest some kind of constructive scheme for handling him when the time comes."

you shoot him in the heel, Achilles will go out on the warpath, and so on. The fact is, Bill is an entirely new proposition in the universe of ours, and it's going to take some wizard to invent a new prescription to fit his case."

"And you, of course," said Socrates, sarcastically, "are the only wizard now vying to do it, is that equal to the ridiculous task."

"Spoken like a true son of wisdom," rejoined Solomon. "Yes, Socrates is right; I am the man, and my germ Bill must be fought with germs. And since a punishment to be effective should punish, I think I know what ought to be done."

"Stop sparring, for dramatic effect," said Napoleon, "and get down to brass tacks. Give us the solution, and well do the verbal embroidery later."

"Why don't you volunteer to cut off his head with that dinky little hatchet of yours, George?" suggested Huxtable, addressing Washington.

"Because, Hann, old man, I never had no dinky little hatchet. That cherry-tree story was only a little campaign invention to injure me with the farmer vote; but it won the Sunday school vote, so there was no harm done," said Washington.

"'Twouldn't be any good anyhow," said Alexander. "You couldn't cut off a head as big as Bill's with anything short of a sawmill."

"Moreover," said Sir Walter Raleigh, "you don't want to humiliate Charles I and Louis XVI and your humble servant by intimating that what was proper for us is sufficient for little Willie."

"Hear! Hear!" cried Robespierre. "Your suggestion shows that you have not lost your head altogether, my dear Sir Walter."

"It wouldn't do to suggest hanging him in chains, would it?" put in Shem, somewhat timidly.

"Not in my presence!" growled Captain Kidd, ostentatiously sharpening his dirk on the side of his boot and glowering at the speaker, who immediately took refuge behind his great great grandfather, Cain, who returned the pirate's glower with interest.

"Well, if you want to know what I think," said Noah, "in honor of his submarine achievements, it's my opinion that he ought to be fed to the fishes."

"No use, Noah," said Richard Coeur de Leon. "That wouldn't rid us of him. If a whale couldn't keep a Moly-coddle like Jonah down, what is a thresher do you suppose he could do with a dose like the Kaiser?"

"No use, Noah," said Richard Coeur de Leon. "That wouldn't rid us of him. If a whale couldn't keep a Moly-coddle like Jonah down, what is a thresher do you suppose he could do with a dose like the Kaiser?"

betray the growth within of Simian domination, and the world merely laughed at his audacious behavior, finding him merely amusing, just as children are amused by some absurdity always grinning. Time continued to pass and the watchers of this notable case of reversion found him showing his teeth less amiably, and developing a yellow tinge or two that made them uneasy, and the nails in his hairy paw grew long and sharp, and seemed ever reaching out as if to grasp or scar something, and finally these came Der Tag, and with a snarl that terrified the world, his jaws drooling the froth of madness and jehery, he sprang into the arena, and underneath the fair outward seeming of the habits of civilization and

"We don't seem to be getting any-

"We don't seem to be getting any-

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An Englishman's Version of Life.

This life's a hollow bubble, don't you know.
Just a piece of painted trouble, don't you know.
We come to cry.
Grow older and we sigh.
Older still, and then we die, don't you know!

Oh, it's all a horrid fix don't you know.
Business, love and politics,
Chairs and parties, cliques and sets,
Fashion and—then—cigarettes, don't you know!

So we worry through the day, don't you know.
In a kind of sort of way, don't you know.
Some few things are done and said.
We are hungry and are fed.

Tired and go to bed, don't you know!
Business, it's a beastly trade, don't you know.
Something lost, something made, don't you know.
You worry, fret and moan.
And you hang your highest hope
On the price of soap, don't you know!

Society—society is dress, don't you know.
And a score of much distress, don't you know.
To determine what to wear,
Where to go and the proper way to comb your hair, don't you know!

There's really nothing in it, don't you know.
We live just for the minute, don't you know.
We're one conscience, and that's all.
We've one stomach, and it's small.

We care in only one way, one life.
One eye glass in the eye.
And one coffin when we die.
Don't you know, don't you know!

Culture lay the raw fact, clearly visible
to the penetrating eye of science
that the world had a Monumental
personality, a being, a highly
organized body of lesser glorious
standing behind it ready to murder,
to burn, to pillage, and to rape at its
command."

"Gosh!" ejaculated Adam. "I never
cared for old Doc Darwin's patter
before, but it looks to me as if he had
the goods on this thing."

"Bill is not to blame," Darwin continued.
"He is merely fulfilling his destiny.
He is a danger signal put
upon the path of Civilization to warn
mankind of the dangers of reversion.
Too many of the peoples of the world
have been having back to the animal
and Bill has been set up as a warning
sign."

"We must therefore not punish
him, but speed him on to the supreme
achievement of his return to his type—
reversion. My friends, let him and all
his hairy tribe be transferred to their
natural environment, where, jungle
law, jungle thought, and jungle ways,
prevail. Let the Crown Prince chat-
er in the trees as he pelts the passer-
by with the lascivious coconuts. Let
the restless son of Von Bissing wan-
der in sweet melancholy through the
languid thickets of despair, such as
he turned Belgium into. Let Von
Hindenburg woe, and the soiling of
what there passes for the home
among those who look with respect
upon the power of brutish force, and
among these let Wilhelm, Lord of the
Jungle, rule supreme."

Darwin arose and left the gathering
at this point, thereby using the thrill
of satisfaction he would have derived
from the nearly unanimous approval
of his plan. Frederick the Great and
Hitler were strenuously opposed
to the acceptance of Darwin's theory
but they were silenced when they
overheard Martin Luther and
William Shakespeare that they thought
the eminent scientist had rendered
the Fatherland a great service by his
eloquent revelations of an hitherto
unpected fact.

"'Vot less more," added Goethe, pas-
sionately. "I think it is time dot
Hunkey plemies voss put a stop to
society yet!"

Great Headwork.
A Yorkshire farmer who had been
on a jury quite a number of times,
was asked who influenced him most
the lawyers, the witnesses, or the

Just Folks

Edgar A. Guest

A CHRISTMAS WISH.

If you have loved and grieved and lost,
I pray that you will bear the cost
Which you have paid in sacrifice
As Freedom's necessary price
And find in God's sweet after while
The courage and the strength to smile.
When peace the tearful all has dried
May you be happy in your pride
And count each glorious Christmas day
The gift of him who went away.

This happiest Christmas since the time
The bells of Heaven began to chime,
Brings peace on earth, and so today
For you the days of peace I pray,
God send to you life's finest charms—
The fruits of our victorious arms.
A home from hate and pain secure,
With happiness that shall endure.
May love and laughter light your way
And joy be yours from day to day.

I pray you'll reap the precious things
Which Freedom's glorious triumph brings.
May all the joy with you abide
For which have counted thousands died.
May you be rich in love and friends
Until your earthly journey ends,
And never more know grief or pain
Or lack again war's mad refrain.
May you possess all precious things
Which Freedom's glorious victory brings.

RIPPLING RHYMES

By WALT MASON.

FREEDOM'S DAY.

Now Freedom on her mountain height is feeling gay and wearing
bella; her bosom have the highest light of which the page of his-
try tells. We've seen the tyrant's scepter drop, the tyrant sinking in
despair; our previous boons are still on top, our bulwarks right side
up with care. We've heard the hour of justice strike, we've seen right
triumph over wrong, so let us, for the love of Mike, be happy as the day
is long. I hear men say, "We're face to face with problems that will
sear our souls; how shall we teach the Russian race to strive for better,
higher goals? The flag of anarchy will fly, we fear us much, in every
breath; how can we throw our hats on high, and face conundrums
such as these?" I say, "One problem at a time; we'll solve them all,
or break a slat; we've stopped the Prussian course of crime, and par-
alyzed the autocrat. This is the hour of our delight; our cause is gained,
the battle's won! And Freedom on her mountain height is shooting fire-
works by the ton." And Freedom's eyes are bright as stars as from
her mountain she looks down, for in the crimson glare of Mars she won
the jewels in her crown. Oh, may her course be calm and sweet in
all the fateful years to come! So let us, for the love of Pete, take off
the lid and make things hum.

RANDOM REELS

By HOWARD L. RANN.

THE MUFFLER CUT-OUT.

The Muffler Cut-out is an attach-
ment which enables the automobile
talk out loud.

Until the Muffler Cut-out was in-
vented the only thing about an au-
tomobile that would talk was money,
mules with the strike halt.

If it became necessary to get up some-
thing that would take the owner's
mind off the cost of upkeep, the
Cut-out was introduced, with the
result that its raucous snort may be
heard on every country road from coast
to coast.

The Cut-out has a number of de-
cided advantages, however. When a
strong gust of wind is coming
around a sharp corner with its
mouth wide open it is not necessary
to sound the horn, as its language
can be heard with perfect ease by
anybody who is driving in the next
township. By the judicious use of
this device the life of man, a joy
which could be spared as well as
not has been saved to the community,
and the speed maniac who drives on
the left side of the road has also been
entirely preserved, including his ar-
row-shaped headpiece.

The Muffler Cut-out is also useful
as a means of informing the driver
whether his engine is still in the
car or has dropped out through the
crank case. Thousands of men
drive along in fancied security and
society jail.

stable is hired to suppress its con-
versation. Various attempts have
been made to silence the operation
of this device, but the only one that
has been found effective is a fine of
\$100 and costs and thirty days in the
county jail.

judge. This was his reply: "I'll tell
witnesses say; no, nor by what the
you, sir, 'ow I makes up my mind,
I'm a plain man, and a reasonable man,
in the dock and I sees, if you ain't
and I ain't infuenced by anything
the lawyers say, nor by what the
brings 'em all in guilty."

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