

General Roberts is amongst us again, no longer "lord," but "earl," nevertheless always "Bobs." His work of reorganization has begun, and I hear he has commenced with the War Office.

The Princess of Wales has again sent forth an appeal in aid of the families of our soldiers at the front. She says: "I cannot contemplate the effect, not only upon the families but upon the men themselves, of the withdrawal of our aid." But, as a contemporary truly says, "When Mr. Brodrick asked the other day for sixteen millions to carry on the war, why did he not ask for an extra million for the soldiers and sailors' wives and families?"

If what is said concerning the latest war ship be true, then the Admiralty must come in for a share of the greatest blame. This ship, which it has cost the nation three-quarters of a million to build, needs re-building, so they say, from stem to stern. Our old friend, Harry Furniss, has hit the nail on the head in two most delightful caricatures, the one in which "Dr. Bobs" gives his cure to the War Office officials for swelled head, and the other wherein "Daddy Neptune" has somewhat to say on the subject of "figure heads."

The suggestion that Lipton or Whiteley or one or other of the great representatives of flourishing firms should bring the business head to deal with the unbusiness-like state of affairs generally, seems worth consideration, and it is to be hoped that the newly belted earl will not consider the feelings of those whose sluggishness has cost too much already both in blood and bullion.

Canada to the fore again! It had been broiling hot indeed but for the welcome shade of the maple tree. In a charming account of Canadian life headed "Our Western Chivalry," the writer says: "To live for a year or two in Western Canada is to learn the essential meaning of a man's manhood." And if the army has benefited so much by the help of the Canadians abroad, why should not the navy feel the advantage at home.

Speaking of the Navy, the Duke of York has just been raised to the dignity of Rear-Admiral; he had possessed his captaincy for eight years.

Business is depressingly dull, owing to the illness of our beloved Queen, and even hard-headed members of the Stock Exchange seem to have turned their attention away for the time being from the all-absorbing theme of £ s. d.

Contemporary with the illness of the head of the greatest of all earthly empires is that of the King of modern Italian opera, the venerable Giuseppe Verdi. It is said that the Wagnerian school has latterly influenced the musician's style and many prefer the later works of the maestro in consequence, but to my mind, Verdi will always be Verdi, just as Mozart will always be Mozart.

There has been a sensational case just concluded in one of the London law courts in the affair of Benjamin Lake, an aged solicitor of high position in his profession. This was a serious charge of misappropriating certain trusts. The judge himself was so overcome that he delivered the sentence in husky tones, imposing a term of penal servitude for twelve years. The prisoner still adhered to his declaration of innocence, while his unhappy son sat in court with drawn face and compressed lips.

One of the two convicts, Soar and King, who escaped two months ago, from Bristol prison, has been re-captured in London in the person of the latter. He has given no account of Soar, who is still at large. King treats the matter as a huge joke, and relates with gusto how he and Soar dined off rump-steaks in a restaurant, and heard themselves discussed. It is supposed that they were assisted in their eluding the detectives by a dangerous gang of burglars known to the police as the "Forty Thieves."

I have just heard that, owing to Her Majesty's illness, the Duchess of York has stopped the work on her colonial outfit which was being prepared for her trip to Australia.

There are, evidently, to be many revisions in minor matters in the Army. At Calcutta, the men are no longer to be allowed to wear "fringes or forelocks" as they are considered unmilitary appendages. One London regiment has had the lives of its members made almost unbearable by a fussy little adjutant, too conscientious to be comfortable, who has failed to discover the perpendicular crease of the tailor's goose in the men's nether garments. I also understand that military trimmings are no longer to be looked upon as "perks" by the bandsmen, but when discarded must be delivered up. This law (though I do not know how this can be) is to be retrospective. Possibly the band-sergeants have something to do with it.

Since writing the above few lines the mournful news has reached me "The Queen is dead." Is it possible? Will the sun that sank beneath the sea, while the most loved being in all the Empire slept, never rise upon her more? Stay! We are not infidels. From the inanimate form the spirit has arisen, and is brooding even now in loving watchfulness o'er those, who, guided by her lived and died to make her empire great. Had our Mother Queen left us without an heir we might indeed have mourned more than we are mourning now, but in the person of her illustrious son and his beloved consort, we may feel assured Her Majesty will continue to reign.

The public loyalty is indeed both steadfast and universal, and nothing can give a better instance than what I heard this morning: "Your Queen is dead," said a gentleman in foreign accents to a stalwart soldier. "Who will you now serve?" The English man bent for an instant over the little foreigner, then baring his head, with a look of mingled reverence and pride he answered "I serve the King!"

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