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Canada exports over £50,000,000 worth of furs annually.

Silver is the earliest currency mentioned in the Scriptures.

As a result of war's ravages there are half-a-million orphans in Serbia.

Short-sightedness is quite common among monkeys.

Experts say that Victoria, in Australia, has at least 30,000 million tons of coal.

Great Britain has spent £140,000,000 on industrial housing since the war began. Mushrooms, a world-wide product, are as plentiful in Siberia as in tropical climates.

## Passing Notes

BY JACQUES.

Laugh where we must, be candid where we can.—Pope.

There is no topic so universal and interesting at the present moment as the "high cost of living." Who touches on this theme commands at any time an instant and sympathetic response. Everywhere is heard the same story of lamentations and woe. Fathers of families not with gloomy eyes the daily shrinkage of their bank balances, and wonder "what the devil things are coming to," while mothers whimper pathetically about the price of Tommy's latest shoes or Mary's new frock, and secretly deplore the irksome conventions that forbid feminine profanity—at least, in public. Almost everybody seems to share the opinion that the present dizzy altitude of prices is due entirely to the machinations of the profiteer, and he is cursed with much enthusiasm. So also are the authorities for suffering him. Press, platform, pulpit, and public alike condemn him for a thief, who should be blotted out, and look to the Government to do the blotting. But, who, and where, is the profiteer? And what single Government can deal effectively with him? Ask the average man to point out the villain, and he will stutter something incoherent about "J. and P. Coats," and the "White Star Shipping Company," with possibly a further vague reference to the "American Meat Trust" or something other equally remote and elusive horror. Ask him, then, how he would deal with these foreign reprobates, and he will jabble insanely for a minute or two, and then, most likely call you a cursed Bolshevik, as the shortest way out of the difficulty.

The plain fact is that the present high cost of living is a problem to baffle the wisest. The solution seems as far away as heaven, or the other side of Dee street. The causes are numerous and tangled. The chief of them are the enormous inflation of paper currencies, the disorganisation of industry through the late disagreement, and the fact of diminished supplies facing constant, or increasing demands. Other minor factors such as strikes, lock outs, the go-slow policy, etc., may be added to, or included in, the above. Profiteering has its place among them, of course. But if we expect a few instances so glaring as to make us blink, it is most difficult of discovery. Like the puzzle knots of sailors, it shows no profiteering ends to supply the clue to its own undoing. Its beginnings, in the case of any particular commodity, are usually so small and obscure as to escape detection, or so remote as to be beyond our reach; and it is built up by almost imperceptible accretions until it reaches such proportions as to knock the breath out of the wretched consumer. In self-defence he, then, if a tradesman, at once raises the prices of his own goods, or if a wage earner, secures an advance in his wages, so increasing the cost of living to others who do the same in their turn, and so on, ad infinitum. In short, we are all profiteers, each to the full extent of his opportunity, or of his necessity. We are all caught within a maelstrom of high prices and high wages, higher wages and higher prices, and are being drawn every moment nearer to disaster. The only things that promise a way out, so far as I can see, are the rapid extension of State Enterprise, increased production (with proper safeguards against the private appropriation of excess profits), and the simpler life. It is hard to tell how the two first are to be achieved, but the last lies entirely in our own hands.

"We are all profiteers." (I have said that before, but it will stand repetition.) A local case—one of the hundreds—in point. A lady complained fretfully to a friend of mine a few days ago of the extortionate price charged for a costume she was wearing, and, in almost the same breath, exultingly declared that she had sold a house for two hundred pounds in advance of its pre-war price. The tailor was a wretched, soul-less profiteer, but the lady was—well, an excellent business woman. As with every other rule, however, there are exceptions to that which I have so positively stated. As the best general is he who has never seen a battle, the kindest husband is the bachelor, the

model mother is the old maid, and the most generous man is the chronic "hard-up," so the only non-profitteer is he who has neither gods nor labour to sell. It is so easy to refrain from over-charging when you have nothing to charge for which reminds me of the story of Shau- baum, the pork butcher. "How much a pound is your sausages this morning?" enquired a sharp featured little woman of him. "Der brice vos gone upo," replied Shaubaum, "I vill haf to sharge you elfenpence."

"Nonsense," said the vinegary little woman. "Luch imposition! why, I can get them at Winkelbriet's for eightpence." "Vell, madam, vy don't you do so?" "Don't be impudent, my good man. Winkelbriet was out of them." "Ah, Vell," smiled Shaubaum, "if I vos out of dem I vood let you haf dem for eightpence doo, madam."

At a recent R.S.A. gathering up north one of the speakers waxed eloquent on the many merits of matrimony, chiefly stressing its excellence as a settling influence. "Get married boys," he said, "and you will soon settle down. Look at me! I married years ago, and have been well settled ever since." (Laughter and applause.) Fancy such a pathetic admission meeting "laughter and applause." Luck is the thoughtlessness of youth. For my own part, when I read his words, I longed to stretch out the hand of sympathy to a fellow sufferer. I had trodden the same stony path as himself, and—but let me sing it:

When Marion and I was wed,  
The future glowed with promise bright;  
The flying hours about us shed  
Their lavish largess of delight,  
Our lot was modest, but, content,  
I envied not the king his crown;  
For weary of the years mis-spent,  
I found it sweet to settle down.

Alas those halcyon days are o'er,  
A dozen kids my table share;  
My crew is small, and prices soar,  
While debts pursue me everywhere,  
No peace I know, but day and night  
I drain affliction's bitter cup;  
For though I'm settled down alright,  
My trouble now's to settle UP.

Most of us have laughed over the old story of the public court book that had done swearing service for many years before it was discovered to be, not a bible, but a dictionary. The story may be true or not, but here is a local one which at least, possesses that rare merit. A young lady clerk sought out a local J. P. at his place of business a few days ago for the purpose of making an affidavit. A difficulty arose, however, in that no bible could be found, though whether it was that that particular J.P. did not own one, or, owning one, had mislaid it, this deponent knoweth not. But our Justice was a resourceful man, and, after a momentary embarrassment, he suddenly lifted a small volume from his desk, and saying: "Here, this will do just as well," he pushed into the young lady's hands—a railway guide. It may be added that the young lady having some doubt as to the volume possessing the proper degree of sacredness for the purpose, declined to be sworn on it, the difficulty being finally settled by the J.P. taking her affirmation.

back to remote ages, is in the form of a pot of flowers, surmounted by an uncut ruby the size of a hen's egg.

The climbing catfish of Colombia can climb by means of suction apparatus, not only up the steeply-inclined bed of a mountain torrent, but even up a smooth vertical surface.

The Trafalgar medal was struck in pewter for the lower deck. The seamen were annoyed at its shoddy appearance, and most of the recipients threw their decorations into the sea.

Natural dyes, made mostly from vegetables, plants and wood, were practically the only dyes known for centuries. Their gradual disuse in the last hundred years has been due to the discovery that dyes could be made from coal tar.

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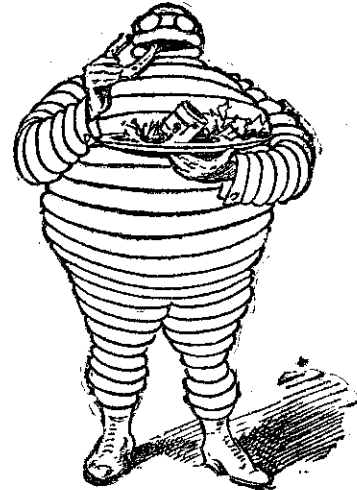
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