

Anonymous (1908) *Essence of Parliament* - Punch, July 15, 1908
 A satirical sketch of Parliamentary proceedings.

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ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.
 EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TONY, M.P.



MARK LOCKWOOD STALKS THE ALIEN IN EPPING FOREST.

House of Commons, Monday, July 6.—Colonel MARK LOCKWOOD, V.C., back on duty; his countenance has taken on a manlier bronze, his hat is tipped a little further towards back of head, carnation in his button-hole nearer than ever to circumference of a sunflower. Excited some attention on entering the Lobby by carrying a telescope under his arm.

"What's that for?" WALTER LONG asked him. "A new way of catching the SPEAKER'S eye?"

Beneath the bronze a blush mantled MARK'S ingenuous countenance.

"Beg your pardon," he said; "force of habit."

Rushed off to locker, deposited spy-glass. Back in time to put a question which explained everything. For the past ten days, during which Lobby, House and Terrace have lamented his absence, MARK has been down in Epping Forest, stalking a couple of foreigners. By various

strategic movements, such as climbing trees, crawling on all fours through the long grass (on one occasion hiding in an outhouse, the door of which the owner casually locked in passing, imprisoning the unsuspected Colonel for the space of five hours), he accumulated evidence revealing the true character of the self-styled tourists. They were, in brief, German spies, charged with mission of securing photographs of Epping Forest and water-colour sketches of the more picturesque views, with intent that the German Army, having sunk the Channel Fleet and gobbled up the Territorial Forces, should march by nearest route on London.


This afternoon brought subject to notice of House in form of question addressed to SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR. With that hide-bound contempt which Ministers commonly show for information reaching them through any but official sources, NAPOLEON B.

HALDANE made light of the affair. Told a little story relating to what he described as similar incident. Report made to War Office of three foreign officers taking observations in a rural district. Specially mentioned as conclusive evidence of guilty intent that they "drank champagne and drove about in motors." Investigation made, it turned out that they were innocent, even commonplace, visitors, wholly unconnected with military matters.

"This is the kind of thing," said N.B.H., casting a look of scorn at the cauliflower in MARK'S button-hole, "that is constantly coming up."

Thus is patriotism encouraged by the present so-called Government. After spending five hours in an outhouse, breaking his watch-chain in forcing his way through inadequate outlet provided by a partly-shuttered window, and carrying out the other strategic movements cited, for MARK to be put off by ill-timed

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THE "SEA-GREEN" INSATIABLE; OR, "IT'S YOUR MONEY WE WANT!"

"They would accept this paltry measure for what it was worth, and use it as a lever for getting more . . . Money was staring them in the face. Look at the huge sums spent on ladies' frocks and fur coats for pet dogs."
(Mr. Phil Se-w-d-a on the Old Age Pensions Bill.)

badinage is not encouraging to further effort for the public weal.

Business done. — Eight Hours (Mines) Bill read a second time. Old Age Pensions Bill passed through final stage of Committee.

Tuesday. — Like that other renowned warrior, General Trochu, Captain KINCAID-SMITH has his "plan." It is more comprehensive even than the original one for the deliverance of beleaguered Paris. Having carefully considered the Territorial Army scheme, an eye trained in warfare perceives its weak point. As, many years ago, the late Mr. BIGGAR, criticising a Bill brought in by Mr. CHAPLIN relating to the breed of horses, observed, "It's too barrer, Mr. SPEAKER, much too narrrer." It provides excellent machinery, but lacks the force to work it. In brief, it does not make provision for raw material of an army — men, to wit.

This KINCAID-SMITH is prepared to do. Has drafted a scheme, elaborating plan of national military training, making it compulsory. This afternoon moves for leave to introduce his Bill. Avails himself of privilege of Ten Minutes Rule to explain it clause by clause with reiterated formula. "Clause 1 lays down—" he said. "Clause 2 lays down—" and so on to the end, as if the Bill were a hen laying eggs for families. House began to show signs of im-

patience at the quaint reiteration. KINCAID-SMITH took no notice of the restless movement, the increasing buzz of conversation, the murmur of "Time! Time!" He had, so to speak, a hen up his sleeve that would "lay down" something sure to please Members, safe to secure a first reading of the Bill.

"Clause 11," he said, in due course, "lays down that exemption from compulsory training shall be accorded to habitual drunkards, persons of weak intellect, and Members of both Houses of Parliament."

A roar of cheers and laughter greeted this happy grouping. When it subsided, KINCAID-SMITH started off again. "Clause 12 lays down—" This brought up the SPEAKER with significant reminder that the allotted time had expired. KINCAID-SMITH quite surprised. Was getting on so nicely. Process of laying down carried on with unvarying punctuality and dispatch. Though there might be no appeal from ruling of the Chair, he was not disposed to forego delivery of his peroration, carefully prepared after close study of Joux BUGHY's masterpieces.

In solemn voice, with impressive manner, he began to "lay down" one of the longest sentences ever worked off in debate. Members, placated by the artful bribe of remission of compulsory training, listened in silence to the first furlong or so.


As he went on, laying it down as if it were an Atlantic cable, the long unfamiliar cry of "Vide! Vide!" broke forth, drowning orator's voice. This bad enough; mild compared with what followed on a division, when leave to introduce the Bill was refused by 250 votes against 34.

Business done. — Old Age Pensions Bill passes Report stage.

Friday. To the joy of his friends and the delight of the Labour Members, to whom he is of never-failing interest, Earl WINTERTON has come back, bringing his sheaves with him in the shape of an honourable scar or two earned in the polo field. He finds the Government at their old game, suspending Eleven o'Clock Rule, closing everybody, forcing obnoxious Bills through at the blade of the guillotine.

"I think," Mr. SPEAKER, he said, looking gloomy for one of his tender years, "the time has come when some kind of League should be formed for the protection of Private Members."

There is about the inception of the idea that misty vagueness that invests with grandeur distant mountain peaks. WINTERTON doesn't descend to detail. The proposed combination is to be what Lord HALSBURY would call "a sort of" a League. In throwing out suggestion he doubtless had in his well-



KINCAID-SMITH, THE CONJURER.

"A hen up his sleeve that would 'lay down' something sure to please Members."

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