CURRENT COMMENT

A MYSTERY MAN OF THE EAST.

People who have not read Marion Crawford's "Mr. Isaacs" or Rudyard Kipling's "Kim" have two great treats in store from them, and it may enhance their pleasure to know that Mr. Isaacs in the first named story and Lungan Sahib in the second were portrayals more or less accurate of a real man. He was A. M. Jacob and he died recently in Bombay. His career was in fact more wonderful than either novelist dared to suggest, because truth is so much stranger than fiction that the reality in a novel would seem far-fetched and too improbable to be artistic or credible. Mr. Jacob belonged to the realm of the "Arabian Nights," and he was born in Constantinople, though some said he was a Pole or Armenian. He said himself he was a Turk. He was a little slave boy at ten whom his master took a fancy to, giving him an opportunity for education, encourage his studies, and eventually set him free. He dealt in jewels and precious stones, and amassed wondrous wealth, some believing he had the secret of the philosopher's stone. He went to law with a delinquent purchaser, and accused of fraud, cleared himself, but at such great expense he became embarrassed. He appears to have lost his secret or the power it imparted, and the legal expenses of his trial having dissipated his fortune he became a poor man, and apparently lost the power he had exercized previously. Students of occultism consider the possession of wealth such as this as merely a means to an end, and that end must be entirely selfless and humanitarian, otherwise the power automatically ceases. When he appeared first in the pages of Marion Crawford's romance interest was just being aroused in questions of supernormal power. It was stated at the time that these powers were held by men of the same race as the rest of us, who had evolved somewhat further or developed gifts beyond the ordinary. This idea has been taken up by the spiritualists and these powers have been alleged to be possessed by mediums of their controls. While this issue is forgotten by most and overlooked by some who should be familiar with it, it remains as one of the most important in anthropology. The whole East declares not only its belief but its direct knowledge in the existence of men with powers such as are attributed to the ancient prophets. The West is generally incredulous, striving to believe that such men lived prior to 1900 years ago. Jacob seems to have been one who fell away, like Gehazi, from the straight path, through covetousness.

NEW ZEALAND WANTS BETTER PICTURES.

It has remained for New Zealand to make the much-needed protest against the crime-suggesting moving pictures with which some agencies have been flooding the world. After May 1 New Zealand declares they will no longer be tolerated in the southern Dominion. It is an illuminating commentary on the minds and mental and moral standards of the producers that so much of that sort of thing has been permitted in the picture plays. Melodrama is not necessarily criminal. It can be heroic. History can be thrilling and our great fiction is full of scenes as dramatic as anything that has been put on the screen. Canada is very much under the dictation of New York in this respect, and it has not been to her advantage. A little education, and similar pains spent with dramas as on the screen as are spent on the dime dreadfuls, and the difference would soon be noted and appreciated. Probably the most popular classics in the English language are "Robinson Crusoe" and Buyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Both would make astonishlyy rich and spectacular pictures, but who has seen them? The tropical beauty of Crusoe's Island and all his adventures there, are only a part of the immortal tale, from his escape with Xury and his adventure with the Lion, down to the later adventures in Russia, and Friday's encounter with the bear. The Pilgrim's Progress, with the City of Destruction, the Slough of Despond, the Burning Mountain, the Wicket Gate, the Arbour, the Interpreter's House, the Lions in the path, the House Beautiful Vanity Fair, Doubting Costets, and a score of other scenes would make th most successful picture ever was screened. But our producers have no imagination for these things when gun-play and sex-problems can pass the censors.

PUNCH'S JOKE ON UNCLE SAM.

"Punch" is supposed by some American critics not to be really funny, and the points of the British jokes are alleged to be so blunt or broken that they cannot penetrate any ordinary sense of humor. British jokes—and it must be remembered that "Punch" draws on the three kingdoms and the principality—represent something more than the work of the professional jokesmith who sits down with a dictionary and tries to torture words into wit or waggery or evolve a new slander against his mother-in-law. The British humor arises out of character, out of experience, out of knowledge of life, and it represents an attitude of mind flavored with a national consciousness and set in a racial environment. Unless some faamiliarity with these things exists the subtlety and essence of the joke is lost. Many of "Punch's" cartoons are saturated in this way with centuries of history and tradition. Unless one knows the background the point is lost. One of the best of the recent cartoons shows Uncle Sam as a musical hall artist singing the popular success of 1873 and thereabout as "The Great Vance" delivered it: "We don't want to fight." Uncle Sam's version is slightly modified: "We don't want to fight but, by Daniels, if we do, We're getting the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money, too!" And John Bull, rather bored, sits in a stage box and declares "Very quaint, these old-world songs; they take me back thirty years and more before the war." Mr. Punch adds in a note that he is very glad to hear the report that this "turn" is likely to be cut out. Proposals are said to be under debate which would bring the United States, Japan and Britain into accord on a programme of naval retrenchment, and if these three powers undertook to rule the sea in harmony the world would be nearer the millenium than at any time since Noah's Ark was the sole naval strength of the nations.

A WAY OUT FOR IRELAND.

It appears probable that the Irish situation is reaching a settlement. The outrages are very slightly less than they were, but there is a difference even in this respect. The process of elimination and exhaustion must have its effect even upon the supply of New York and Chicago gunmen. The Irish people, as such, have no mind to the devilries that have been committed, though they are no worse than the deeds of 1798. De Valera, however, has at last stated the conditions on which he would abandon the idea of a republic for Ireland. Had he not introduced this idea at the instance of American subsidizers the tragedies of the past year or more might have been avoided. His demand now is for the same measure of independence granted to South Africa, Australia, Canada. It is said that he proposed this to Lloyd George and that the British Premier refused it. But this must be taken with reservation. If De Valera has South Africa in view under a General Hertzog he may be sure that he is on the wrong track. If he is willing to take up the burden of empire as Canada and Australia have done, he will have to make some explanation as to why this view did not appeal to him before he committed Ireland to the period of infamous murder and assassination which we trust is now drawing to a close. It would appear not to be unreasonable, considering the Sinn Fein record, to ask that they fall in for the present with the operation of the "Government of Ireland." Act, and set up the Southern Parliament with the same willingness displayed by the Northern. The Sinn Feiners could be making no more of a concession in accepting the Southern Parliament than the Ulster men are in accepting a Northern Parliament. It is surely obvious that compromises are necessary. The institution and operation of the two parliaments would afford a basis of co-operation and eventual union. If a united Ireland asked for Dominion Status it could scarcely be refused. If De Valera is in earnest he will take the road that is open and show his good faith by doing so.

Canada produces only about 7 per cent. of the sugar she uses, and pays out yearly about $90,000,000 for raw supplies.

In Ontario last year 19,000 acres were sown to sugar beets. The total yield was 178,000 tons or about 9 1-4 tons per acre, valued at $1,780,000.

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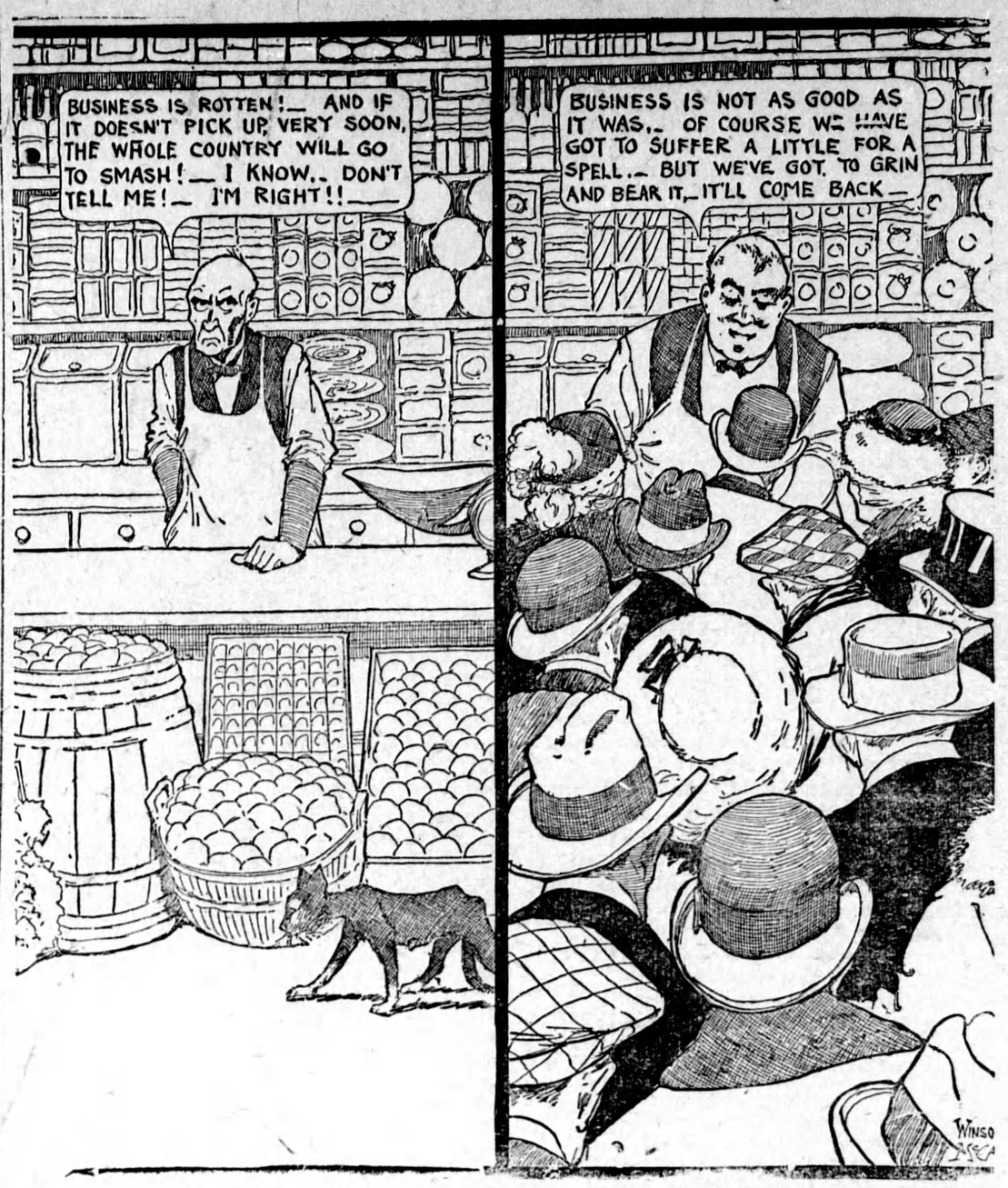

THE SPICE BOX

HOT STUFF GLEANED FROM EVERYWHERE.

A school boy describes a green grocer as being one who gives credit to anybody who asks for it.—St. Thomas Times-Journal.

A New York commuter fell in front of a tube train. One car passed over him, and he came out alive. That was the time he was glad he missed the train.—Victoria Colonist.

Packers probably make very small profits, but know how to make both ends meat.—Winnipeg Tribune.

The Globe quotes Dr. Jowett: "In the long run we turn our feet in the direction of our gaze." This dictum is recommended as a line of defence to cross-eyed people arrested on charges of drunkenness.—Toronto Telegram.

A Huntsville, Ala., mule kicked a man on the head and broke its leg in two places. The man is recovering and there is some talk of sending him to congress.—Kingston Whig.

It is suspected that the expedition being fitted out in New York to search for the missing link is financed by the sausage trust.—Vancouver Province.

There are now nine "vacancies" in the Canadian Senate, but the despatch doesn't say who they are.—Toronto Star.

Reference is made to what designers of women's wear "have up their sleeve." One of next summer's bathing suits perhaps.—Montreal Herald.

Friction makes heat, all right, but this does not apply to friction between the landlord and the tenant.—Cobalt Nugget.

It is yet to be explained whether that bill introduced in the California legislature, prohibiting hip pockets, is aimed at revolvers or pocket flasks.—Hamilton Herald.

One of the natural reasons why Canadians object to Chinese eggs is that they are not going to permit even a semblance to China imposing her yolk upon this country—Guelph Herald.

Premier Drury should beware. If he broadens out much more he may not be able to get through the door of the farmers' hall of fame.—Toronto Telegram.

United States' prohibitionists would seize all liquor in private cellars. Carting it away should help materially to solve the unemployment problem.—Peterboro Examiner.

The level of Lake Ontario, it appears, is below the ten year average, but what would you expect? A lot of folks who seldom drank Lake Ontario water now have to consume large quantities of it, being unable to get anything with more of a kick.—Toronto Star.

A Woodstock man died at the age of 108. Time is no object in that quiet little city.—Kitchener Record.

The Warden of Sing Sing Prison says his prisoners are better behaved than the same number of college boys. If this saying much for the prisoners?—Lethbridge Herald.

We laughed the first time we heard that joke about the rich man having a twin six and the poor man having six twins.—Winnipeg Tribune.

A man in Wisconsin bought the town jail for thirty dollars. We will probably rent the cells as flats and clear up a pot of money.—Montreal Star.

So many people dislike this country that the government may have to appoint a special body of policemen to keep them from getting out of it.—Winnipeg Free Press.

Seamstresses say that you can only get one skirt out of three yards, but a clothesline thief got five out of one yard in Seattle the other night.—Kitchener Record.

Truck gardeners in the east doubled their orders for cabbage plants when they herd the Kentucky tobacco growers had decided to make no crop this year—Winnipeg Tribune.

Toronto, the City of Churches, but there is only one established Church—Tommy.—Kincardine Review.

One thing this year's June bride need not fear—there'll be no old shoes thrown at her. They'll all be at the repair shop—Calgarary Herald.

From the increase in juvenile crime we're inclined to believe that there hasn't been enough of the old fashioned back-to-the-woodshed movement hereabouts.—Regina Post.

MEN WANTED--$6-$10 PER DAY

Special 4 Weeks' Gas Tractor Course, $50. Special 4 Weeks' Auto Mechanics' course, $50. Now on, at Hemphill's Auto & Gas Tractor Schools, 163 King Street West, Toronto. Write for particulars or come at once. 10

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GET INTO THIS BIG PAYING BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF.

The supply of skilled motor mechanics, chauffeurs and garage men is always far below the demand. Next spring this business will offer more opportunities than ever. As usual trained men will command the highest wages. You can be one of these and earn big money all year round by preparing yourself for the job this winter. The International Automobile School has fitted scores of men to make big success. Some are earning as high as fifteen dollars a day. We can do the same for you by giving you a complete practical course in every branch of automobile work. Our course consists of two to three months' practical garage instruction, with individual attention and help which will enable you to take any responsible position. Not mere book learning, but sound teaching and experience under actual working conditions. We are the largest school in Canada and the only automobile school in Toronto which allows the prospective student joining to go through the school and talk with the man taking the course. Call or write

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ISSUE NO. 9, 1921

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GENERAL FOR SMALL FAMILY. no washing. Wages $35 per month. Mrs. Geo. Carscallen, 50 Arkledun Ave., Hamilton. 9

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GRAMOPHONE MANUFACTURER wants agents. Sample gramophone and records at factory price. Catalogue free. Voice-O-Phone Co., 1 Adelaide Street East, Toronto. 12

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I WILL PAY YOU 24 CENTS A pound for live hens, any size, F.O.B. your station. You can ship C.O.D. for full amount if you live within 200 miles of Toronto. Crates loaned free. Eggs wanted. Albert Lewis, 666 Dundas West, Toronto. 9

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