

Funny Things Do Happen In This Solemn World

They Have Not All Been Associated with the War, but Many of Them Do Suggest That the World Has Become Hysterical.



This Is Not a Hun. It Is a Potato, Dressed to Accentuate Its Strangely Human Resemblance.

By Clive Marshall

WHEN people say, "The world will never be the same again," they are thinking of the awful upheaval of the war, the wrench the conflict has given to all sorts of traditions, and the strange physical as well as spiritual changes brought about by the unprecedented unpleasantness.

The fact is that the changes in the world have already reached out far beyond any points having contact with the war. Life has been transformed. Much of the transformation is temporary. Much of it will be permanent. We have become accustomed to all sorts of queer conditions, none of them more perplexing at times than the new per-



How a German Shell Near the Fighting Front in France Dropped the Top Floor of a House Unbroken Into the Street.

sonal relations to the world occupied by men and by women who once led humdrum lives.

A Time of Queer Happenings

But while the world is earnestly pursuing a great enterprise and all the duties growing out of it, and while it seems at times to be a dreadfully solemn world, odd things are happening which, while they often have no connection with the general upheaval, somehow seem in key with it. One expects to hear in any quarter that a queer thing has happened.

I have no doubt that the fishermen on Long Island sound who saw a full-rigged summer cottage, a sizeable 22-room cottage with all its windows shining, comfortably sailing over the smooth water the other day, may have decided that it was just what you might expect nowadays. It turned out that the house had been floated on two monster flatboats, supported by which it made a safe voyage from Bell Haven to an island near the mainland, without a scratch or a started seam.

The engineering effort with regard to the house recalls the fact that engineering is accom-

plishing astonishing feats. In loading vessels, for example, huge cranes are lifting guns heavier than ever were lifted before, transporting heavy automobiles, sections of locomotives and other enormously difficult freight. As a spectacle these air journeys of objects that belong on the ground constitute a real challenge to the imagination of the artist.

Probably the farmer who dug up that potato that looked like a Hun—or at least so he described it—and the other agriculturalist who found a carrot that looked like a human hand—you can call them fingers of fate if you like, pointing to Berlin—thought that Nature understood well enough that nothing need be expected to grow quite as usual.

Of course, food changes have introduced oddities into life. There are funny new tricks in restaurants—sugar allotted in paper bags, or put in the tea or coffee whether you ask for it or not. Paper napkins multiply, and wait-on-yourself devices multiply. Conservation has its humors as well as its high purposes.

For example, take the crustless pie. Although so reverently regarded as an American institution, even pie has come under scrutiny. Even though

Showing How a Modern Country House Took a Water Trip on Long Island Sound.



Hoisting Engines Now Lift All Sorts of Things That Belong on the Ground High in the Air.



Showing How a Modern Country House Took a Water Trip on Long Island Sound.



Crustless Pies Are the Latest Invention, and a Statistician Has Figured Out That the Elimination Would Save the Country a Pie Crust Equal to a Strip Nine Yards Wide and Circling the Globe at the Equator.

some pie—pumpkin, for example—has only one crust, crusts have been called to account as not indispensable. They are marked as luxuries. Why not, then, the crustless pie? This means a dish, but the dish is not wasted, and it is pointed out that no spiritual satisfaction is lost by letting a dish do what once had to be done by the lower crust whether it had a supporting upper crust or not.

Perhaps the Pacific coast must get the credit of the crustless pie. Los Angeles residents bite into 21,000 big pies daily, or 7,500,000 a year. "Two-thirds of the crust of these is unnecessary," according to estimates, and this has resulted in the making and serving of "one man" pies at the Los Angeles Athletic Club restaurant. John E. Fencel, manager of the club—former banker—figured out the excess and invented a new bottomless pie, with a thin top crust, which is served in the dish in which it is baked, eliminating all waste—and even the upper crust has been banished in a spirit of daring innovation.

Mr. Fencel has figured that each week in Los Angeles, pie crust sufficient to cover four acres of ground is unnecessarily made. On the basis of 4,000,000 big pies bitten into by the nation daily, it is estimated that there is an annual over-production of a strip of pie crust nine yards wide and long enough to begrudge the globe at the equator.

The innovation at the Athletic Club restaurant is being extensively emulated in other eating houses in California.

Queer Tricks of War

The war itself performs some grim tricks. The things that shells do make up a familiar horror. The things they won't do often constitute a kind of jokes. "Luck!" exclaims a man who just escaped the action of a frightful explosive. Well, there is

sometimes a droll side to luck. Men learn to laugh at it. It is well for them that they should occasionally have the vent of a laugh.

Take that case of the house in the little French village. The picture on this page shows what happened. A shell blew out the whole lower part of the house and simply dropped into the street the upper story with the roof intact. How would you feel if after a convulsion under your feet you suddenly found that you didn't need to go down stairs to reach the ground—that your window sill led directly to the street?

If you were in France you would have learned to shrug your shoulders and say, "It is the war!"

It wasn't the war that stopped that long train on the Canadian Pacific. It was just caterpillars. Millions of them started a summer drive—they had all their reserves with them—and their line of movement was on the Canadian Pacific tracks. Then came an eleven-car train. The caterpillars had the initiative and they won the first onslaught—with immense loss of life to their forces, but they won. The train stopped. Couldn't move. Help was sent for, additional engineers came and all of an afternoon and evening was spent in getting that train up a grade from Schols to Brownsville. It was funny. At least, it seemed so at first. But the engineers were swearing before the counter-offensive succeeded.

The psychologists like to tell of amazing things that happen to the human mind in war time. Naturally war injuries and diseases, shell shock and the like produce extraordinary mental reactions that belong to the terrors of the period. Yet there is a freak side to mental reaction that has shown itself far from the war zones, yet often connected with war-time influences. These have had an element of the comic—the rather sad humor of hysteria.

Strange Freak of Carrot Growth.



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