

# WWI-RELATED VAUDEVILLE JOKES, SKETCH MATERIAL, SONGS, POETRY and MISCELLANEOUS STAGE-CRAFT

## 1915



**Tivoli Follies, Sydney (ca. Dec. 1914 – Jan. 1915)**

Top Row: "Culture again, but not the German Kind.

Bottom Row: Patience shows the effect of the aesthetic pose on military men.

Cartoon by Harry Julius

## JOKES, PATER and COMEDY ROUTINES

- ▶ Some of J. W. Rickaby's patter in "P. C. Forty-Nine":-

I was standing at the corner of the street the other day when a recruit came up. As he did so he saluted me. "Why, I asked, "do you salute me? I'm not a captain." "I know that," he said; "but anything's good enough to practice on."

- **J. W. Rickaby** TT: Feb. (1915), 40.

- ▶ Fred Swift, in talking about one of his musical turns: "It is an imitation of one of those bands you heard before the war. They have now gone back to Germany. The Kaiser needs them all. Their music makes his soldiers brave. They would just as soon die as listen to it.

- **Fred Swift** TT: Mar. (1915), 39

- ▶ It was rather crude – and scarcely worthy – of Mr Vernon, when brought back for a third time, to lamely remark that he didn't think he knew anything more. Audiences do not want this quiver. He wound up, however, by recalling a Murphy-O'Brien incident in the South African War:-

O'Brien was shot in the leg and got Murphy to carry him away on his back. As Murphy was proceeding along with his burden a further shot from the enemy took O'Brien's head off. Murphy went on in blissful ignorance of the fact that he was now carrying a headless body. Later he was asked by an officer what he was doing. He replied that O'Brien had been shot in the leg. "Why," said the officer correctly [sic]: "The man has no head." Murphy put down the body. "Well," he declared looking at O'Brien's remains: "He's a dirty liar, sir!" He told me it was his leg."

- **Lou Vernon** TT Apr. (1915), 43. [""The Magpies' – At the Princess"]

- ▶ "What is the German drink?"  
"Beer!"  
"No; it's wine"  
"Why wine?"  
"Because all the world knows how their navy sticks to port."

• TT: Apr. (1915), 43.

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- ▶ Lincoln Plumer tells a war story:-

The talk round the luncheon table was upon European strategy. "How goes the war mit us?" said a stout man, looking up from his sauerkraut. "With the Germans?" said one of the lunchers, bluntly. "Not mit us – der Allies." "But you are a German, aren't you?" demanded the interrogated one. "Nein," answered the fat man, beaming on the gathering; "I vos a Belgian!"

• **Lincoln Plummer** TT: June (1915), 32 ["Behind the Trombone" section]

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- ▶ Another of Lincoln Plumer's war stories tells of two American negroes discussing the situation.:-

"Did yuh heah, Rastus, 'bout them German submaroons?" "No I never did hear 'bout any submaroons, George." Well, what those German submaroons am going to do, Rastus, is mos' awful. Deys goin' to go to France and blow de place right up. Then deys goin' to go to Ingran' an' blow that little islan' right out ob de water. Dat's what deys goin' t'doo. Rastus, sure as yuh's a livin' man. Den dem German submaroon's comin' right cross to 'Murka. Now Rastus, are yoh goin' to be a nootral 'Murkin citizen?" "No, I'm jest not, George," said Rastus, his eyes bulging; I'm goin' t' be a German!"

• **Lincoln Plummer** TT: June (1915), 32. ["Behind the Trombone" section]

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- ▶ What passes with The Three Lascalles as a joke: -

"Take care! If the soldiers find you here they will chop your head off."  
"They can't."  
"How is that?"  
"I've got my fingers crossed."

• **Three Lascalles** TT: June (1915)m 46.

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- ▶ In *The Blue Moon* [staged] by the Petersham Choral Society:-

- Private Charlie Taylor (Richard Twohill): I am a better soldier than Napoleon. He's dead.  
- Millicent Leroy (Gladys Parady): Have you got the Victoria Cross?  
- Private Charlie Taylor: Yes, and the Charing Cross, too.

• TT: June (1915), n. pag.

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- ▶ Molly Preston (Lizette Parkes) to Percival Pennicuit, a recruit in *The Man Who Stayed at Home* by Lechmore Worrall and E. Harold Terry. Theatre Royal (Sydney). 1 May 1915. Produced by J. C. Williamson.

- Molly Preston: (to Percival) Why are you not in uniform?  
- John Preston: Never mind, Molly. It's not the coat that makes the man.  
- Percival Pennicuit: No; it's the trousers.

• TT: June (1915), 14.

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- ▶ Overheard during a performance of *Under Cover*:-

- She: Why is Lincoln Plummer so anxious to secure the smuggled necklace?  
- He: He probably wants to auction it for the Belgian Fund!

• TT: June (1915), n. pag.

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▶ As the "boat" is coming through the Heads into the harbour:-

- The Dame: Oh steward! I can see an island.
- Steward: That's Cocos Island.
- The Dame: Don't swear at me!
- Steward: I didn't swear at you. That's where the Sydney got the Germans 'Emmed-in."
- The Dame: Oh steward! Poison is too good for you. You ought to change places with Chidley.

• **Arthur Stignant** (The Dame) and **Rupert Darrell** (Steward) TT: July (1915), 12.

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▶ They were speaking of the Australian in the Dardenelles who, having lost a hand, sunk his teeth into the ear of a Turk, and thus held on to him. "Great Scott!" remarked a somewhat eager listener: "I didn't know Jack Cosgrove had gone to the front."

• TT: July (1915), 26.

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▶ A Russian Jew, says Mr Britt, was taken prisoner by the Germans. In a letter he said:

Dear Mother, I am in the hands of the Germans. They're a lovely race of people. Everything is good. The food is good – the beds are good. Just like home. I do love the Germans! Your loving son.

PS: I forgot to mention that brother Abie was shot yesterday morning for complaining.

• **Jimmy Brit** TT: Aug. (1915), 34.

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▶ In "I'm Glad My Wife's In Europe," Jack Cannot says he was once in the army. "I was," he explains, "in the canteen for six weeks. They couldn't get me out."

• **Jack Cannot** TT: Aug. (1915), 36.

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▶ "When I marry I shall want a hero – a soldier or a sailor."  
"Soldiers and sailors do not make good husbands."  
"Why?"  
"Because they're not home long enough to be a father to their children."

• TT: Sept. (1915), 43.

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"Soldiers and sailors do not make good husbands."  
"Why?"  
"Because they're not home long enough to be a father to their children."

• TT: Sept. (1915), 43.

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▶ "Does your wife show any interest in the war?"  
"Yes, indeed. She talks about it."  
"What does she say?"  
"Why she says that she wishes I could go."

• TT: Oct. (1915), 41.

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▶ Al Ripon's dummy explains that one night after enlisting he got back to the barracks. "Who goes there?" asked the sentry. "Lord Kitchener!" said the dummy, in the hope of throwing the sentry off the scent. "Come on!" declared the sentry. "If you don't tell me who you are I'll shoot." "Lord Kitchener!" repeated the dummy. Thereupon the sentry struck him with his rifle and knocked him senseless. "Well," inquires Mr Ripon. "Why didn't you tell him what your name was." "I was only thinking," says the dummy reflectively, "if he'd do that to Lord Kitchener what would he have done to me."

• **Al Rippon** TT: Oct. (1915), 39.

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▶ Norman Lilley, for the *Theatre* magazine:-

"The Germans have destroyed many hamlets, and bad actors many Hamlets."

• **Norman Lilley** TT: Oct. (1915), 6.

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▶ At the National Amphitheatre:-

"Does your wife show any interest in the war?"

"Yes, indeed. She talks about it.

"What does she say?"

"Why she says that she wishes I could go."

• TT: Oct. (1915), 41.

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▶ Terry and Lambert at the Tivoli (Sydney):-

- "Why aren't you fighting for your country?"

- "Because the War Office wouldn't have me."

- "Why?"

- "Because my chest isn't big enough to wear the medals I'd win."

• **Terry and Lambert** TT: Oct. (1915), 43.

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▶ "Germ," explains Morris and Meeker, "is what it now is for 'German."

• **Morris and Meeker** TT: Oct. (1915), 39

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▶ Vaude says that since Italy declared war on Bulgaria the Kaiser insists upon going to bed before sundown. "yes," he adds; "he can't bear to see a day-go."

• **Charlie Vaude** TT: Nov. (1915), 27.

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▶ - Vaude says that as regards the North Sea, the Kaiser put his foot in it all right.

- Yes?" inquires Verne.

- "He must have done," Vaude explains. "He left a Blucher there."

• **Vaude and Verne** TT: Nov. (1915), 35.

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▶ - Vaude expresses surprise that Jack Wren, in going to the front, and being a practical man, doesn't take all his weapons with him."

- "His weapons?" inquires Verne.

- "Yes," says Vaude, "he's leaving a lot of his racecourse guns behind him. But they're quite safe."

- "How – quite safe?" Verne wants to know.

- "Oh," adds Vaude, "they won't go off."

• **Vaude and Verne** TT: Nov. (1915), 38.

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▶ - Vaude: "I believe they're sending a lot of benzine to the Balkans."

- Verne: "Yes?"

- Vaude: "Yes; to move Greece."

• **Vaude and Verne** TT: Dec. (1915), 43.

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▶ Vaude and Verne at the Tivoli (Sydney):-

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• **Vaude and Verne** TT: Dec. (1915), 43.

## SONG LYRICS / POETRY

- Sung by Amy Blackie on the Tivoli circuit.

The sons of dear Australia  
Worship England all above  
They're with her on the battlefield -  
Proof of Australia's love.  
When danger threatens England  
Australia's staunch and true.

For those who would the lion beard  
Must fight the Kangaroo  
John Bull junior stands no nonsense  
With the foes who'd dare attack  
The honour of England  
And beloved Union Jack

Australia! That's the little son - John Bull, Junior!  
Name and fame the lad has won - John Bull, Junior!  
That he's successful; there is no doubt;  
Full well he knows his way about;  
The world could hardly do without -  
Young John Bull.

- **Amy Blackie** *Tivoli Annual 37* (1915), 2. Patriotic Edition
- 

- In the time of peace prepare for war, the maxim is old and true,  
Admit 'tis very good advice;  
But in time of war old England makes the pace so hot and strong.  
That they're glad to welcome peace at any price.  
We're always very willing, tho' we're never quite prepared  
But there's always one or two to man the guns;  
And when Atkins, Pat and Sandy, no longer can be spared,  
We can fall back on our stout Colonial sons.

*Chorus:*

Then give three cheers for the man behind the gun  
He leaves his world or play, he hasn't a word to say,  
But shoulder arms when duty points the way,  
To fight for his country and his King. \*

There are heroes on the ocean, and far upon the mountain's brow,  
Whose deed have filled the annals of our time  
They have stood behind the engine, and have walked behind the plough,  
And their duty has been done in every clime;  
But when war has spread its pinions, and we hear the rolling drum,  
Then they throw aside their implements of trade.  
From Canada, New Zealand and Australia they come,  
And every man's a soldier ready made.

Chorus

Then give three cheers etc

- *Tivoli Annual 37* (1915), 9. Patriotic Edition [NB: \* The word "home" can be substituted for "King."]
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- "The entertainment opened with a song, "**We're All Under the Same Old Flag**," which was spiritedly rendered by Mr Bert Corrie.

- **Bert Corrie** MB: Jan. (1915), 48.
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This is not a Ghurka verifying the highly coloured descriptions in the cables of the slaughter of a German in the trenches in France:-

I seized him by his bulbous nose,  
And on his knees fell he,  
As he squirmed and struggled,  
And gurgled and guggled,  
I drew my snickersnee!  
Oh never shall I  
Forget the cry  
Or shriek that shrieked he,  
As I gnashed my teeth,  
When from its sheath,  
I drew my snickersnee!

- TT: Jan. (1915), 35.
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► Vaude and Verne invariably bring down the house with "The Death of the Poor Old Kaiser," sung to the tune of "**Who Killed Cock Robin?**" In the lines relating to Bill's funeral V. and V. sing: -

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust  
Your partner won't have you  
So the devil must!

- **Vaude and Verne** TT: Feb. (1915), 43.
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► Courtney and Shaw are a fine double; they work their turn well and have good numbers. Their song, "**Our Flag Will Never Come Down**," is about the best of its kind now on the halls, and if published, ought to bring in good profits for the composer.

- **Courtney and Shaw** AV: 10 Feb. (1915), n. pag.
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► Jack McArdle sings:

Sister Susie's sowing shirts for soldiers  
Such skill at sewing shirts our shy young sister Susie shows!  
Some soldiers send epistles, say they'd rather sleep in thistles  
Than the saucy, soft, short shirts for soldiers sister Susie sows.

A boy in the audience answers Mr McArdle's challenge by trying to sing back the comedian. After a terrible muddle he ends with:-

Than the shorcy, shoft, sort sirts for shouldiers shister Shusie shews

- TT: Apr. (1915), 17. [See also Nat Phillips Collection (UQFL9), Fryer Library UQ - Undated Years (Song Lyrics) regarding this song]
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► Even Jack Cannot can't do anything with "**The Watch on the Rhine**." Two of the lines run:-

When we've wound up the watch on the Rhine,  
Everything will be Potsdam and fine.

And again:-

Then the Kaiser will have time to repline,  
And his days will be ground out in Hel-igoland!

- **Jack Cannot** TT: July (1915), 32.
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● "**Belgium Put the Kibosh on the Kaiser**"

- Performed by Henry Graham and Harry Walton, Edward Branscombe's Green Dandies (Coliseum, North Sydney)
  - TT: Aug. (1915), 10. "From a Spectator's Point of View."
  - Note: "For their comedy duet, "Belgium Put the Kibosh on the Kaiser," Henry Graham and Harry Walton were enthusiastically recalled.
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- **"Our Flag Shall Never Come Down"**

- Performed by Courtney and Shaw
  - Clay's Bridge Theatre Co; Bridge Theatre, Newtown (Syd)
  - AV: 10 Feb. 1915, n. pag.
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- **"The Death of the Poor Old Kaiser"**

- Performed by Vaude and Verne. Written by Charlie Vaude
- Tivoli Theatres Ltd (Tivoli Theatre, Sydney)
- TT: Feb. (1915), 43.
- Note: "Vaude and Verne invariably bring down the house with "The Death of the Poor Old Kaiser," sung to the tune of "Who Killed Cock Robin?" In the lines relating to Bill's funeral V. and V. sing:-

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.  
Your partner won't have you,  
So the devil must

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## MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- ▶ "Ber-in" - the new way of spelling Berlin because Kitchener is about to knock "L" out of it - is an overworked gag these days. In Melbourne we heard it at the Williamson pantomime, at the Tivoli, Fullers' and the Dandies.

• TT: Feb. (1915), 44.

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- ▶ Seeing that they have long since mobilised in Bohemia, how comes it that John Cosgrove, Henry Lawson, Fred Bloomfield, Nelson Illingworth and the rest of the Sydney Bohemians are not with the colours.

• "Why Indeed" TT: Feb. (1915), 47.

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- ▶ "The Austrians have captured several Russian bases" (news headline). If they could secure a few Belgian tenors, a brace of English contraltos and some French sopranos, Europe's concert possibly might rediscover it's former harmonious ensemble. (New York "Musical Courier").

• "The Concert of Europe" TT: Feb. (1915), 47. ["Behind the Trombone" section]

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- ▶ [The following extract is from a letter written to the *Theatre* magazine from Egypt by "the one-time popular Sydney amateur, Harley Cohen." The magazine's editor records that Mr Cohen, who was then "scarcely out of his teens" was serving with A Company, Fourth Battalion, A.I.F., Egypt.]

You can imagine the cheer that the troops gave when the Brigadier read out "Emden beached and done for." Gee, the lads did cheer! It was a real, true Australian cheer - the sort of cheer we'll give when we reach Ber'in. The lads always pronounce it this way, as they say by the time the "Horstralians" get there "hell" will be knocked out of it - worse luck!...

It's no use sleeping in at reveille, for one misses beautiful music. Just as the last refrains of the joyful bugle float away, fully four bands strike up "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary" - which intermingled with our own bagpipes gives rather a strange medley that has the effect of waking everyone up. I can tell you it's better than Wolfe's Schnapps for the tired feeling. Well, Lochy [Macpherson, "a Scotchman with a thorough Irish accent"] wakes up, and cannot see the pyramids for the thick fogs that we have early in the morning. "Shure those bastes of Germans have got away with those pyramids again." he always says regularly as clockwork. Lochy's witty sometimes.

It is very very sandy here, and every meal we have I'm sure we rid the Libyan Desert of a few hundred grains of its sand. Lochy says we'll have 'grit' enough to fit the whole German nation....

At 8.15 we are marching across Libyan Desert to the strains of the bagpipes. Fancy an Israelite like me marching to the strains of the bagpipes! Never mind. If I return I'll be a thorough Scotch-Jew. We march about four miles over the sand, with our weighty equipment, and then we have skirmishes, extended order drill, and platoon drill. (The boys call it spittoon drill)....

Am enclosing a parody written by one of the troops on "It's a Long Long Way to Tipperary."...

"It's a Long Long Way Back to Sydney"

by Driver W. Deveril

Over in Australia there is a big gum tree.  
With six great branches spreading, she guards the Southern Sea:  
One is called Victoria, another New South Wales;  
And thro' South and West Australia loyalty prevails.

Chorus:

It's a long long way back to Sydney,  
Near as far to Melbourne, too;  
We have said farewell to Australia,  
To stand by the red, white and blue.  
We'll win fame and glory,  
For our country o'er the seas;  
It's a long way back to dear Australia,  
And the big blue gum trees.

Queensland and Tasmania both have helped you well before,  
So Australia's always ready when it really comes to war;  
The kangaroos and emus and the good old native bears  
All join in together when our Empire war declares.

Chorus:

Assisted by New Zealand we're a pretty solid lot,  
And we'll leave it to old England if we're the goods or not;  
Away beneath the Southern Cross our homes out there you'll find,  
And our boys all sing this chorus to the girls they left behind.

Chorus

- **Harley Cohen** TT: Mar. (1915), 55.
- 

Sydney newspapers have been publishing war anagrams, which argue rather an occupation for feeble minds. It began with: -

JOF / FRE  
FRE / NCH

The latest is: -

Jap A nese  
Be L gians  
Eng L ish  
Serb I ans  
Fr E nch  
Rus S ians

- TT: Apr. (1915), 30.
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- ▶ [Maud Fanning returned to the stage] this time she had with her three children, in cream silk rompers; and whilst providing a sort of hand-clapping accompaniment for them she entertained the audience with such remarks as "Ain't they lovely specimens?" and "they're not made in Germany, either."

- **Maud Fanning** TT: May (1915), 36.
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- ▶ "After giving "This is Your Life" [Maud Fanning] was again brought back [for an encore]. This time she had with her her three children; and whilst providing a sort of hand-clapping accompaniment for them she entertained the audience with such remarks as "Ain't they lovely specimens?" and "They're not made in Germany, either."

- **Maud Fanning** TT: May (1915), 41.
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- ▶ In Sydney the old minstrel circle has disappeared to the point of extinction... Even Harry Clay at the Newtown Bridge Theatre before closing down on vaudeville [c Apr/May 1915] had substituted something of a topical character for the nigger business - the men being in naval uniforms and the girls in blue jackets, white skirts and navy caps. As admiral of the fleet – for that in his company is what he appeared as - Harry would have been the hit of the Belgium Day procession, if he could only have been lassoed into it.

- **Harry Clay** TT: June (1915), 48.
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- ▶ [The following is an extract from a letter sent to the *Theatre* magazine by George Sorlie in response to an article published in the previous month's edition, "Belgian Day in New South Wales," and the role played by Hugh J. Ward in putting it together. Sorlie also refers to a letter published earlier by a reader called "Dentalis."]

"... I agree that little, if any notice, has been taken of the part the theatrical profession has played in helping the great cause. I hope that your article will be the means of soothing the feelings of "Dentalis" and many others, and causing the press and public to recognise more fully the good that has been done by the profession.

We all try to do our best in this great national crisis. I know several vaudeville people who have gone to the front, and many more who are going there. The man who stays at home likes to help as best he can. Australian Day, I believe, promises to be another great day, when a lot of credit should fall to the theatrical profession - not forgetting the vaudeville people, who are doing all they can to help make the desired success. The A.V.A., I believe, are organising something that will enable them to hand over a substantial sum as their share towards the wounded heroes of Australia."

- **George Sorlie** TT: July (1915), 31.
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- "Lantern" puts in a night at the Lyceum (Sydney) with "The Fighting Forces of Europe," with this result: -

The lecturer, Horace Hook, always gets a good laugh with the remark, "It is well known that the German soldiers march well; but we are confident that they will soon run better. As a matter of fact the pictures show that the French troops march more smartly than the Germans. Mr Hook alludes to the "Crown Prince" as now being known as the "Clown Prince of Germany." The Kaiser himself is referred to as a "certain European monarch." In another of his humorous efforts Mr Hook speaks of pictures of "all the civilised nations of Europe – also of Germany."

- "The Lighter Side." TT: July (1915), 2
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- "At present the biggest running success [for J. C. Williamson's] is *The Man Who Stayed at Home*, now at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne... Frank Harvey and Cyril Mackay, as the Englishmen and the German spies working at cross purposes, are happy contrasts in temperament and physique. If one said Mr Mackay looked like a German it would probably cost us a shilling in the law courts. Shall it be said, therefore, that he conveys by subtle histrionic art the offensive characteristics of the Teutons?"

- "J.C. Williamson Plays and Players." TT: July (1915), n. pag.
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- The boys at Gallipoli are a jolly lot as has been shown by a letter received from them. They decline to take the job seriously and are always ready for a joke. They even give imitations of turns they saw before they left for the front. One of these is Mr Jack Cannot in his burlesque drill. In this Mr Cannot gives a little instruction to the boys to be used against the Turks. "Bayonet exercise!" he roars out. "Fix bayonets. There's a Turk! He's bending. Sw-h-s-s-s" he yells as he makes a vicious dive at an imaginary enemy. As the story runs, this formula is very popular with the sharp shooters amongst the Australian, only instead of a bayonet, they catch the Turk bending with a bullet.

- **Jack Cannot** Tivoli Theatre program 7 Aug. (1915), n. pag.
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- In an article published in the August 1915 edition of the *Theatre*, and titled "Song-writers and Song-pinchers," Charlie Vaude explains how he came to write "Who Killed the Kaiser," a parody on "Who Killed Cock Robin." Vaude was at the time being accused by comic/singer Sydney Jones of performing the same song that he was currently presenting on stage. Vaude writes:

I think I am safe in saying that I sang and wrote the particular version of "Cock Robin" before Barclay Gammon had his written. I may be wrong; and anyway, he could not have been very long before me as I don't think the song would have been much good before the war started; and remember I wrote this in the early part of October 1914; and - a funny thing - according to your report, you say Mr Jones used "I will said Mr Fisher" - no doubt meaning our Andy, the booster of the Baby Bonus etc. Now I don't think Barclay Gammon would get much humour out of Andy Fisher in London. Why they don't even know of Chidley over there....

Well I hope I have explained how "Who Killed the Kaiser" was not sent to me from England; and since writing the above I have met Mr Jones and the song he is singing here is "Who Smashed the Kaiser." You see in England they are smashing him, whilst we are killing. So there is a difference. The night I heard Mr Jones he certainly did not sing any of my verses; and my lines on Andy Fisher were as follows: -

Who found it out?

"I did," said Mr Andy Fisher -

"Drank to the motherland and wished the best that I could wish her."

*Chorus:*

When Andy found that the Germans couldn't own us,

He promised every father a share in the baby bonus -

When he heard of the death of the Kaiser.

I might say the version Mr Jones is singing was also sung in New Zealand; but it did not do s\much harm to ours according to the way it used to go. Of course I localised it in every town, having different verses each night in some places. Now trusting this awful scandal will never again be brought up, as taking up all this valuable space somebody will be writing "Who Killed the *Theatre Magazine*?" And I can hear someone say - "Charlie Vaude!"

- **Charlie Vaude** TT: Aug. (1915), 38.
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- ▶ A perfect stage costume was that worn by [Miss Trevenyon] in her later number. She appeared as an officer, with natty, almost thigh-high white suede boots, laced with black; a white tunic, beautifully braided in black and gold; a military cloak, with corners braided in black; a small three-cornered white suede hat, with a rosette of black and gold braid; and soft black silk trouserettes, merely a glimpse of which is got between the smart finish of the white tunic and tabbed tops of the military boots...

• **Violet Trevenyon** "Violet Trevenyon – An Uneven Act." TT: Sept. (1915), 36.

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- ▶ "When the war had been raging just long enough for Germany to have become very unpopular, a civic affair, at which an orchestra was to brighten proceedings, was held at Ballarat. The orchestra had rehearsed a set piece called 'Sehusucht nach Wein,' composed by Erik Meyer-Helmund. As such names wouldn't have looked well on the programme some genius got to work and the music was produced as 'Britannia Overture en.' Next day the *Ballarat Courier* said: 'The overture simply teemed with patriotic fervor.' Hoch!

• B: 17 Sept. (1915), 9.

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- ▶ The following is an extract from a letter from Captain D. White, of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces (Egypt):-

I have been fighting alongside Australians all the time. Good fellows! Steal your booze, and share it with you. Fight like hell. We had a Turkish trench in front of us, about 20 yards away. We had taken it, had been driven out, and retaken it six times. The last time we were bombed out. Eighty New Zealanders, about a hundred Australians, and about as many Turks were all left in a mixed-up conglomerate. After this, instead of feeling sad about our mauling, a wag of an Australian christened the place, "The Sydney Abattoirs."

• "The Sydney Abattoirs" TT: Nov. (1915), 24-27.

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- ▶ [Below is the *Theatre* magazine's response in December 1915 to the Sydney *Sun's* negative criticism of the revue *Are We Downhearted?* It includes part of the *Sun's* review, the *Theatre's* critical response, and an extract of the revue's German scene.]

*Theatre*: "The revue, *Are We Downhearted?* was staged at the Little Theatre (Sydney) on October 30. The *Sun* objected to the production, in these terms:-

*Sun*: Unhappily there are worse things in it than dullness. It has a political party complexion, thickly stuck on. They say that its topical allusions will vary from night to night; but last night too many of them were the renewal of a particularly vile party cry against Mr Holman. The premier may have few friends in the State just now, and the critics who approve his actions as wise or tactful may be rare; but it is an evil thing in a theatrical production to display a cartoon Mr Holman shaking hands with a German..."

*Theatre*: Precisely what was the extent or gravity of the offence in this respect perpetrated in the revue? I propose to let the public judge for themselves... the scene – "Getting Out "The Evening Moon" is what in the programme it is called – in which the heinous offence of showing a German saying, "I am employed by Mr Holman":-

(The characters are:- Editor, social-writer, reporter, press agent, copy boy, poetess and German. The editor is discovered sitting at a table in the centre of the stage, surrounded by "copy" paper, books etc. He is wielding a huge blue pencil and writing furiously. He rings a bell. A reporter enters.)

Reporter: Yes Sir?

Editor: (*Taking up proof*) Here, what's this? "Debate in parliament on the war loan. Fisher's financial statement. Joe Cook's caustic criticism. Hughes in reply." Cut it all down to two lines. "Les Darcy holds middleweight championship" – four columns. Not enough. Go and get Darcy's views on eugenics. Then interview "Snowy" Baker, and ask him if he believes in closing the Stadium.

Reporter: (*Withdrawing*) Yes Sir.

Boy: (*Entering*) The advertising manager says you'd better cut out the war news as he's just got a page advertisement for Pimp's Pills for Pink Pimples.

Editor: Will you kindly tell the advertising manager to – (*Whispers savagely in the boy's ear*). Send me in the religious editor.

Boy: Can't – he's on the drink again.

Editor: The tell the musical critic I want him

Boy: Sorry; but he wrote an article on the Musician's Union and he's been taken to hospital.

Editor: Well ask the Photographer to come here.

Boy: Impossible. He's gone to try and take a picture of Mr Wade with a pleasant smile and won't be back in a month.

Editor: Then tell the financial editor I want him.

Boy: Sorry; but since he finished covering questions about the wealth ????? he's been at Callan Park.

Editor: (*Exasperated*) Well, tell the whole blooming staff to go to the devil.

Boy: Too late sir! They've gone....  
*(Social Writer enters)*

S Worker: Are you the editor? I'm looking for a position as a social writer.  
Editor: Indeed! What are your qualifications?  
S Writer: Well in the first place I have no literary ability what-so-ever.  
Editor: Good!  
S Writer: In the second place my grammar is shocking.  
Editor: Excellent!  
S Writer: In fact I have no education at all.  
Editor: Better still!  
S Writer: You see, my one hobby in life has been collecting scandals. I know all the gossip of society.  
Editor: Why, you must be ubiquitous.  
S Writer: Oh no! I get it all from the Winter Garden at the Hotel Australia.  
Editor: Say, you'll do. You can start work tomorrow.  
S Writer: Thank you so much. What salary did you say.  
Editor: A penny-farthing a line. If you work hard you'll earn 4 ½ d a week.  
S Writer: And could you kindly tell me where I can find lodgings?  
Editor: Why yes. Our dramatic critic has taken a flat at Darlington, and wants someone to share it.  
S Writer: Sir, I'm a lady!  
Editor: Well, that's all right. So is the dramatic critic.  
*[Enter Poetess, bouncing in]*

Poetess: So you are the editor? Oh I so adore editors. You see I've just written a patriotic poem. Such a beautiful poem...

Editor: Excuse me; but I only receive patriotic poems on Wednesday mornings at half-past five.  
Poetess: Oh! But you must let me read this to you. It is entitled "A Hero from the Haymarket." It starts "Hark!" [*"Hark" is uttered very emphatically*]

Editor: [*Jumping up*] Yes! Who's there?  
Poetess: It's all right. That's only the poem. [*Editor wipes his forehead and sits down dolefully*] "Hark! I hear a sudden cheer. The hero rises from his bier."

Editor: Did you say "beer?"  
Poetess: "He cried, 'Alas, that I have lost her; Through all these I've tried to foster."  
Editor: "Foster" beer? Thank you. I'll take a pint. I mean I'll see what I can do about it.  
Poetess: Ah! But you must listen to these lines:- "He said you are a lot of wowsers. She cried 'Not I! I'd wear your –"  
Editor: Hush! There are elderly gentlemen present. Look out, be careful. Don't drop that poem in the waste basket.  
Poetess: Why, it's so hot it would set the place on fire.  
Editor: Oh I can see you don't appreciate poetry.  
Editor: You're quite right. Take that divine inspiration of yours to the editor of the Evening Booze. I've been wanting to poison him for a long time.  
*[Enter German – a crank, excited and menacing]*

German: Ish dis der office of der editors?  
Editor: [*rising and fearful*] Yah.  
German: [*drawing long knife*] Den I haf der supreme honour to information you dot I haf come der cut your throat.  
Editor: Thank you! Won't you take a seat?  
German: No danks. I wouldn't take nodding from a miserable vorm like you.  
Editor: [*agitated*] My dear sir, by the polite way you address me I'd take you to be a suburban correspondent.  
German: No, sir! I am a co-respondent. I am a respectable British subject.  
Editor: Judging by your accent you must be a government servant.  
German: Dat is correct. I am in der employ of Mr Holman, and you – you son of a dachshund – you want to lose me my job. You say I vos a Sherman, and dot I ought to be kept me inside barbed wire; and now I haf come to kill you wherefore.

Editor: That's very thoughtful of you.  
German: [*Menacing him with knife*] Yah. You say I a Sherman, do you – me vot has been naturalised for six weeks; me vot has to pay der rent of a furnished cottage at Kirrybilly; me vot contributes to der income dax of the country; me vot draws my salary from His Majesty King George.

Editor: Excuse me; but may I have the pleasure of knowing the name of the gentleman by whom I will have the honour of being killed?  
German: My name is Max Millan de Vanderhiemer – egguse me; but I shanged it last week to Patrick Murphy.  
Editor: You found it was such a long way to Tipperary?  
German: [*Flourishing knife*] Vots dat you say – Tibberary? Dot vos another insults. For dat I will cut me off your hands as well as your throat.

Editor: [*Jumping on the table*] Get back to your trench, or I'll knock you down with this leading article.  
German: Coward, to threaten me mit asphyxiating gas. For dat I will cut up your body into garlic sausages [*Which – as a climax – the German proceeds to do.*]

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*Theatre:* Of course there isn't a person in New South Wales who doesn't know that in Sydney a German business man had his windows broken, that to this man Holman personally expressed his sympathy, that the incident was brought up in

Parliament, that there were debates there night after night on the employment of Germans by the Government, and that to what was said in Parliament the widest publicity was given by the daily papers in the shape of (1) reports of the proceedings, and (2) articles dealing adversely with Holman's attitude with regard to the German's so employed. Yet for doing lightly and humorously from the stage what the daily papers of Sydney had been doing for weeks, ponderously and laboriously, the writer of the revue is charged with raising "a particularly vile party cry, with "degrading the stage," and with being the provoker of "infamous sneers!" A pretty political prude is the Sun man. Some might think a much stronger word than this is needed to describe him – a word in which is suggested something of the wowser or humbug."

- TT: Dec. (1915), 7, 9-11. [See Spotlight. "From a Spectator's Point of View: Performers On and Off the Stage"]



*Theatre June (1915), 17.*