

# Topics of the Day.

By Our London Correspondent.

## HECKLING A LORD.

LONDON, December 10.

THE Earl of Dunmore is a gallant soldier, who has won the Victoria Cross, but politically he is a "backwoodsman." Possibly that was the reason he essayed to do a little political pioneering on behalf of the Lords at Barking the other night. Now, the inhabitants of Barking are no doubt very estimable people in their way, but if they "dearly love a lord"—well, they have a most peculiar way of showing it. A more merciless heckling politician never had than the Earl received at Barking when he essayed to explain how the Lords were the people's friends and protectors. No soldier ever led a forlorn hope than did Dunmore.

His appearance on the platform in a huge fur coat was the signal for mock-cries of awe, interspersed with remarks concerning the dearness of rabbit skins, and when he rose to speak, his opening words were drowned with cat calls, yells and hooting.

"I want to tell you why I supported Lord Lansdowne," said his Lordship. But the answer came from the audience, "To further your own interests."

"We wished to refer the Budget to the people—" "Because it touched your pockets," replied the audience as one man.

The Earl tried another tack and mentioned the name of Rosebery. But that name only brought forth cries of "traitor," "gibber," and cheers for Lloyd George.

The Chairman intervened, "If you don't want to hear Lord Dunmore, say

of the noble Lord's lack of knowledge of the subjects whereon he had attempted to speak.

One could not help pitying the helpless peer, who, long before his torturers had done with him, was a picture of helpless misery. He will certainly never forget his visit to Barking. Like a good many other gentlemen with handles to their names, he has made a valuable discovery, namely, that it is very unsafe to presume ignorance on the part of your audience because it happens to be composed of East End workers.

## CONFOUNDING THE PROPHETS.

We are still looking for the "financial chaos" so confidently predicted by Lord Welby and other authorities as the first result of the Lords' rejection of the Budget. The fact of the matter is that the Peers' action in flouting the Commons has had much the same effect as the Cardinal's curse, which resulted in nobody being a penny the worse—save the jackdaw.

The Budget curse of the House of Lords may have affected some person or persons unknown, but so far as the general public is concerned, it is much in the same position as the "gobillies" of the Rheims feast. Customs dues, income tax, and the like are being collected practically as though the Budget had survived the ordeal of the "Gilded Chamber."

Attempts to evade payment of the taxes imposed by Mr. Lloyd George's Finance Bill are, indeed, few and far between, in spite of the suggestions made to the people to the effect that they can lawfully refuse to pay taxes imposed by the Budget rejected of the Lords. But common-sense tells the average Englishman that

dictions to the contrary, and one can only describe the "financial chaos," which we were told must ensue as a result of the rejection of the Budget, in the language of the schoolboy, who, being called upon to define "chaos," wrote it down as "A lump of nothing stuck against nowhere."

## "OF YOUR PITY PRAY"

The news received from St. Petersburg this week to the effect that the Czarina is standing on the brink of the grave has caused no surprise to those who know the conditions under which her Majesty has lived ever since her marriage. There is no more pitiful tragedy in the history of any royal house than the story of the unhappy Empress, who has for years been dying of terror.

The Empress of Russia is the youngest daughter of the Grand Duchess Aliee of Hesse, and after her mother's death she was cared for by Queen Victoria. She was so happy and bright as a child that her mother called her "Sunny."

Married at twenty-two, the rigorous etiquette of the Russian Court changed the entire course of her life. She missed the freedom and simplicity of Balmoral and Darmstadt, and the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust which pervaded even the innermost circles of Russian Court life did much to embitter her.

She has been a devoted wife and mother—but even her domestic life brought her sorrow. For years the Czar longed for a son, but the Czar's family of daughters increased, and the Czarina grew more and more melancholy.

At last, when the hopes of the Czar were realised, and the Czarevitch Alexis was born, the Empress's joy was followed by even more profound dejection, for attempts were made to kidnap the child, and the precautions taken to protect the Imperial family from anarchical attacks had to be redoubled.

The Czar's life was one long nightmare. She was constantly oppressed by the fear that something might happen to her little

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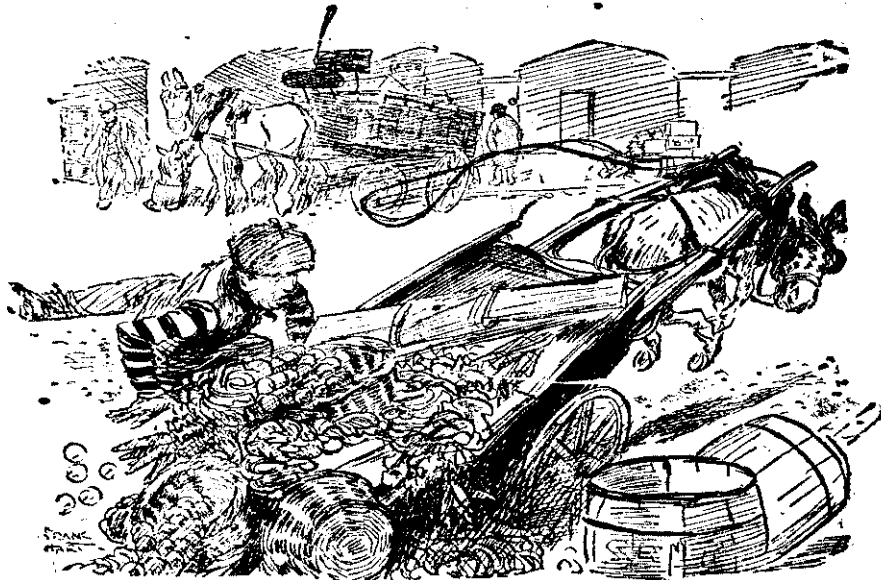
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Poster: "Ere! not so much of yer bloomin' haviating!"

The audience gave an emphatic intimation that they didn't, and invited his Lordship to retire to the backwood.

But Lord Dunmore refused to accept his dismissal, and ploughed bravely on, though almost every sentence he uttered was drowned with pointed contradictions and hilarious laughter.

He tried the Licensing Bill and the Land Taxes, only to be hopelessly howled out in his "facts" at every turn, for his hecklers proved conclusively that they were far more familiar with the provisions of those measures than the speaker. They inquired with tender sarcasm why he didn't talk about some thing he knew something about. "Tell us how to keep trousers from bagging at the knee," was one wag's suggestion.

On the subject of unemployment, education, and indeed, every topic he tried to touch, his Lordship came to grief. And when he had concluded his speech, he was called upon to answer a rain of questions. Everybody in the hall seemed to have come armed with queries especially designed to plumb the depths

of the money earmarked by the Government for specific purposes must be found somewhere, and commonsense tells them that refusal to pay those taxes will precipitate what we are all most anxious to avoid, namely, a marked disturbance of the normal conditions of finance and trade, which will be bad for almost everybody.

Compared with Mr. Lloyd George's estimate, there will, it is probable, be some shortage in the revenue collected during the present and the next three months, and to meet this the Government will have to borrow upon short currency bills. Opinions differ naturally as to the amount that may have to be raised to meet the needs of the State, but the best financial authorities do not place the total above £6,000,000. This amount will be no trouble to raise. On the contrary, the money market would, it seems, welcome even a much larger amount, for the simple reason that there is at present a great scarcity of first class bills in the market, whilst there is a very strong demand for them.

The financial sky, indeed, is at present practically colourless, in spite of all pro-

son. Even the most trusted servants of the Imperial entourage came under her suspicion, and during the first three years of the infant Czarevitch's life, she could hardly be persuaded to abandon custody of her son's person for an hour. All the food given him was prepared under her own supervision, and the child partook of nothing until his mother had first tasted it.

After the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergius at Moscow, her Majesty could not sleep without the aid of opiates, for a week, and after the funeral of the Grand Duke Alexis, to attend which she took a long railway journey, she collapsed, and for a time it was feared her reason had gone. The recent visit of the Russian Royal family to Italy reduced the Czarina to the verge of imbecility, so great was her terror of bomb outrages by the way. From the effects of that journey, with its constant menace the Czarina has never recovered, and apparently the only release from the reign of terror beneath which she has lived must come through hopeless imbecility or death.

# WOMEN WHO SUFFER

Confinement indoors, hard work, lack of fresh air, and home worries, renders the women-folk more prone to indifferent health than any other member of the household. Both her nervous and physical systems get out of order; she becomes "nervy" and irritable, and suffers from biliousness, headache, digestive disorders, stomach trouble, loss of appetite, constipation, anaemia, blood impurities, and other ailments that owe their origin to deranged liver action. For such troubles, Bile Beans are unequalled. Being purely vegetable, they work hand in hand with nature, regulate the stomach, liver, and bowels, strengthen the enfeebled organs, tone up the nerves, and purify the blood.

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