

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

1918

JOKES, PATTTER and COMEDY ROUTINES

- ▶ - "But isn't your son rather young to join the army?"
- "Well, he is very young; but the he's going to join the infantry."

• TT: Jan (1918), 40.

- ▶ Mr Corrie tells [Miss Baker] that there's no going to the front as far as he is concerned. "If all the men in the world were like you," she asks, "what would happen?" "No fight!" he replies.

• **Bert Corrie** TT: Jan. (1918), 39.

- ▶ - Vaude: "... have you heard of the "Battle of Warwick?"
- Verne: "No; tell it to me Charlie."
- Vaude: "You've seen Billy Hughes?"
- Verne: "No; I've never seen him. What's he like?"
- Vaude: "A fine, big, upstanding, broad-shouldered looking -"
- Verne: "What are you talking about? What's the matter with you?"
- Vaude: "I beg your pardon! I was thinking of Peter Felix. I suppose if there was a strike on he would be declared black."
- Verne: "Get on with the battle."
- Vaude: "Well, Billy held the main line, and he was struck in the chest"
- Verne: "With what?"
- Vaude: "An egg; and that was the first time he showed his yellow streak. I suppose in years to come the casualty list will read that Billy suffered."
- Verne: "With what?"
- Vaude: "Shell-shock."

• **Vaude and Verne** TT: Jan. (1918), 47.

- ▶ The Delevales at the National (Sydney):-

- "Did you hear that the Kaiser has just received a shock?"
- "A shock! How's that?"
- "Well, you see he sat on a bun, and the current ran up his back."

• **Delevale Brothers** TT: Mar. (1918), 31.

- ▶ Bert Bailey in *Aladdin*:-

Kaiser Bill went up the hill
To have a shot at France
Kaiser Bill came down the hill
With bullets in his pants

• **Bert Bailey** TT: Apr. (1918), 47.

- ▶ - "What would you say if Al should tell you that the German powers will win the war?"
- "I'd say 'Al – lied!'"

• TT: May (1918), 47

► Ethel Morrison in *A Pair of Silk Stockings* at the Criterion Theatre (Sydney):-

"We know what you military people are. And sailors, too! A wife in every port – invariably.

- **Ethel Morrison** TT: May (1918), 17.
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► At the Tivoli (Sydney):-

- Miss O'Neill: You're fat!
- Miss Shattuck: But I'm good natured.
- Miss O'Neill: You have to be. All fat people have to be good natured.
- Miss Shattuck: Why?
- Miss O'Neill: Because they can neither fight nor run.

- **Truly Shattuck** and **Emma O'Neill** TT: May. (1918), 10.
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► - "Why are there no sailors on the destroyer outside the Commonwealth Bank (Sydney)?"
- "Because it was made two float a-loan."

- **Truly Shattuck** and **Emma O'Neill Al Johnson** TT: Dec. (1918), 32.
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► The following lines have been extracted from the original manuscript, a character part, which is two pages in length. Character parts contain the dialogue for that character (B) and the last few words of whichever character speaks beforehand (A). Lines within brackets [] have been added by the editor to aid meaning for character B's part.

- A: {I} outrank you.
- B: That's right, you're the rankest thing in the army... What's this?
- A: That is a trench.
- B: A trench?
- A: A trench is a place where they bury the dead, and for you I have a nice quiet little place....
- B: {I don't want} to get shot.
- A: The only place you'll get shot is in the canteen.

- From *Soldiers* (aka *Two Stipes*) A revusical by **Nat Phillips** (1918) Nat Phillips Collection, UQFL9, U of Qld.
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► - "Did you hear that the Kaiser has just received a shock?"
- "A shock! How's that?"
- "Well, you see he sat on a bun and the currant ran up his back."

- **The Delevales** TT: ? (1918), n. pag.
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► Lew James and Reima Selma at the National (Sydney):-

- She: What's the surest way to the hospital?
- He: Stand in the middle of the road and call for three cheers for the Kaiser.

- **Lew James** and **Reima Selma** TT: ? (1918), n. pag.
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SONG LYRICS / POETRY

- ▶ Jolly John Larkin, with his infectious happy style and a full share of the melody that seems peculiar to his race proved a favourite from the jump at the Princess (Syd). As a recall item Mr Larkin recites these lines with considerable dramatic effect:-

There's a vision that always haunts me,
Of the day that I long to see,
When hearts that are sad will be glad -
On this wonderful day to be!

When the flowers bloom on No Man's Land,
Bringing us a message of peace and love;
When the cannon's roar is heard no more -
With a blessing from above!

When the sun shines through the clouds of war,
And peace covers the earth and sea;
When each mother's son has laid down his gun -
What a wonderful day that will be.

- **Jolly John Larkin** TT: July (1918), 27
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- ▶ Some of the lines in one of Belle Sylvia's war songs:

When the bells of peace are ringing,
And the boys come marching home -
Back to dear old Blighty,
And the girls they left across the foam;
Parsons will be working overtime,
Making two hearts into one;
There'll be some fun,
When the fighting's done -
And the boys come marching home!

- **Belle Sylvia** TT: July (1918), 27.
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▶ **"Tommy on Furlough"**

- Performed by Nellie Kollie in *Robinson Crusoe*
- Fullers Theatres Ltd (Grand Opera House, Sydney)
- *Theatre* Feb. (1918), 19. "*Robinson Crusoe*."
- Note: Written/directed by Victor Prince.
- Note: "Nellie Kollie's best received song is "Tommy on Furlough." Some of the lines in the chorus:-

Every single girlie must find a boy
And kiss him as she's never done before
For England expects every beauty to do her duty
When Tommy's on Furlough and Jack's ashore

MISCELLANEOUS

- ▶ Joe Charles was talking in Sydney to a fellow actor who believes in the transmigration of souls. Apropos of his forthcoming departure for the front he dolefully remarked to Mr Charles, "I suppose in the next world I'll be a donkey." But Mr Charles proved as cheerful as ever. "You can't," he replied, "be the same thing twice over."

• Joe Charles TT Jan. (1918), 37.



FRENCH WAR-TIME HUMOROSITIES – 1

- A voice (from the boat): Ginnette, are you going mad? They can see your legs from England.
- Ginnette: (not in the least perturbed) Don't be jealous, my friend! It's up to us to do something for our allies.

"Have You Heard This One? The New and the Old." TT: June (1918), 47.



- Cosette: You're giving the glad-eye to Max, carrying on with Paul, and more or less entangled with half-a-dozen others. What does your husband think of it all?
- Fifi: Fiddlesticks! Don't you know that in these days the right hand should never know what the left hand gives?

"Seaside Confidences"

The second in a series of "French War-Time Humorosities"

TT: July 1918, 47

► "The Austrian Czech":-

We were discussing the Austrian army and renumeration of its elements. Someone mentioned that the Czechs seemed to be going over to the Italians on the Piave. "Um," said Hugh Ward, "you might call them pass-out Czechs!"

- "Behind the Trombone." TT: July (1918), 22

► Frank Crossley sends Philip Lytton from France a programme of *Dick Whittington* given by the Anzac Coves, "for the first time on any battlefield"... The following hints in the programme are addressed to the performers' patrons:-

- If any stray shells should hit anyone in the middle of the show don't shout out. It upsets the actors.
- We would ask all the gentlemen to have their top hats adjacent. When we say top hats we mean gas regulators.

- "Theatrical Topics: Correspondent's Comments," TT: July (1918), 6.

► **SOCK THE KAISER:** A revusical by Art Slavin

Art Slavin and company re-opened the Eden Gardens for Harry Clay on 5 October. Harry Kitching writes that it "made a decided hit and the writer (Art Slavin) is to be congratulated on his effort: it has many funny situations, while some excellent musical numbers are introduced which make the show one of the most entertaining the management have on their circuit" (n. pag.).

- Kitching, Harry. AV: 11 Oct. (1918), n. pag.

► Following the end of the war in 1918, while Jim Gerald was still in Egypt, he received a cable from the Fullers offering him the dame role in their Christmas pantomime, *Bluebeard*, which he accepted, and so returned to the Australian stage where he had left off. The transition to civilian life was not entirely smooth, however. While attending a production of *Time Please* at the Melbourne Tivoli, Gerald's shell-shocked nerves went awry during a comedy-realistic trench scene and he, along with several other returned servicemen, had to be taken away from the theatre in an ambulance. Gerald remained in hospital for some six weeks.

By the end of 1919 his health had returned to near normal and he began to concentrate his energies as much on writing and producing new works as he did on performing. Not surprisingly Gerald found a great deal of material in his war experiences, beginning with sketches such as his immensely popular turn with Essie Jennings "*The New Recruit*" (1919). "Originality and cleverness mark the sketch," wrote the *Theatre* reviewer in response to their performance at the Fullers New Theatre prior to the second part revue by Nat Phillips and Roy Rene (Stiffy and Mo). At times "exceptionally funny," particularly when Jennings played the military officer to her husband's raw recruit. The sketch also contained a moment of pathos when Gerald gave an account of how he lost his pal in the war. "High art indeed is his work in this monologue," noted the reviewer. (July 1919, 23).

- **Jim Gerald** See Gerald's AVTA entry

► *Bluebeard* begins in Toyland, where the arrival of Father Christmas heralds the traditional quest for a pantomime story. The second scene, set in the Square of Aleppo, sees the forces of evil, led by Demon Discord, and the forces of good, led by Queen Felicity, draw their battles lines prior to the arrival of Bluebeard. One of the scenes in the first act is set aboard the H.M.S. Melbourne.

- Frank Neill's *Bluebeard* pantomime. See 1918 AVTA entry

► *Soldiers* (aka **Two Stripes**), a Stiffy and Mo revusical by Nat Phillips.

In the Army sees Stiffy and Mo as orderlies assigned to American army captains, Fred and Harry.

- See 1918 AVTA entry. A manuscript extract is also held in the Nat Phillips Collection, UQFL9, U of Qld.