

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

## 1921

### JOKES

- ▶ An Australian soldier who had just arrived in England from the States entered a hotel, called for pen and paper, and wrote: - "Whisky and soda." [The barmaid] brought it. Later the paper was waived once more. The barmaid read: - "Again." Five minutes elapsed. She acceded to a third request and at last the Australian penned: - "How much?" "Oh," replied the girl, "we don't charge deaf and dumb soldiers." There were sundry strange noises and then came a voice full of indignation: - "I'm not deaf and dumb! I've just spent six weeks in New York, and felt so dry that I couldn't speak!"
- TT: June (1921), 18.
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- ▶ "There's only one place worse than the battlefield – that's the skating rink. You never know what's going to turn up."
- TT: Feb. (1921), 21. "The Lighter Side - and the Brighter" column
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- ▶ Two negro soldiers were stumbling along in a never-ending route march. "Say!" exclaimed one: "d'yr hear dat engine missin'?" "Dat ain't no engine," groaned the other: "dat's mah knees knockin' together!"
- TT: Oct. (1921), 17.
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- ▶ During wartime one Australian soldier set out to have a good time in Paris. He visited a restaurant and found a notice, "Officers' only." Later he met a girl and they decided to go to a dance that night. On arrival he found a notice, "officers only." That night he prayed, "I hope there will be no more wars; but if another war does happen I hope it's for officers only."
- TT: Oct. (1921), 17.
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- ▶ "A terrific bombardment was in progress. So I tried to get into the nearest dug-out. It was full of officers!"
- **Hal** TT: ? (1921), ?
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- ▶ Will it ever come to this?: -
- Ted Stanley drilling the chorus: - "Company 'shun! Fix chewing gum!" (Gummy bits from dainty mouths attached to heels). "Right turn! That girl there! Why don't you turn?" "Please sir, my heel is stuck to the floor."
- **Ted Stanley** TT: Aug. (1921), 22.

## MISCELLANEOUS

▶ The Ward-Sherman revue Co reopened at Fullers Theatre (Sydney) during the month with *Right Turns*. This farce-set-to-music" is as thin as boarding-house butter. Often tiresome, sometimes jovial. There are some bright moments. For example, eight girl "recruits" arrive from nowhere in particular (skirts short enough to flirt with their hips), go through squad drill that would end Duntroon delirious, and march away to a blaring, bragging Sousa march. Take a stride to the patter between the chief fun-makers: -

- "How much do I get for going away?"
- "On and fourpence a day."
- "What! One and fourpence for getting shot? Why I can get half shot for less!"
- "Don't you want to fight for your country?"
- "I don't care about the country – I live in the city" ...
- "Here are some extracts from the burlesque on sob drama: -
- "The enemy have taken Zam-Buk!"
- "Now they'll rub it in."
- "What now?"
- "The enemy told me to tell you sir, that they've lost both guns, and want to know whether you'll lend them some.

- **Ward-Sherman Revue Co** TT: Aug. (1921), 22.
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▶ Jim Romaine as a scarecrow-looking Digger spreads happiness. "Where did that one go?" introduces realistic whistlings of an approaching shell. Easily his best item.

- **Jim Romaine** TT: Apr. (1921), 17.
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▶ Opening inauspiciously the offering of Jennings and Gerald works to an eye-catching climax. The background is Liverpool Camp (via the scene painter), and the cross-talk has an A.I.F flavour. Gerald himself is a star dancer. He hurtles himself at the boards, makes a couple of revolutions, and cheerfully faces the audience – all in the space of a few clock-ticks.

- **Jim Gerald and Essie Jennings** TT: June (1921), 17.
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▶ *Right Turn* a revusical by George H. Ward and Charles L. Sherman

Billed in 1921 as a military burlesque (BC: 25 Apr. 1921, 9) *Right Turn* is described in *Fullers News* two years later as being set in at "Camp Flapdoodle." The characters are Mike O'Brien (the handsome private), General Hardtack (just like his name), Sissy Sweet (a fellow interested in the army), Dolly Brazen (Mike O'Brien's niece) and the Military Maids (chorus) with Miss Rifle, Miss Sabre and Miss Gunn also in attendance. The songs appear to have also reflected the revusical's preoccupations with war. Some titles are "Ladies of the Military," "All the Diggers Parlez-Vous," and "Fall in Line and March Away" (4).

- George H. Ward and Charles L. Sherman FN: 7 Apr. (19123), 4. See also 1921 AVTA entry.