

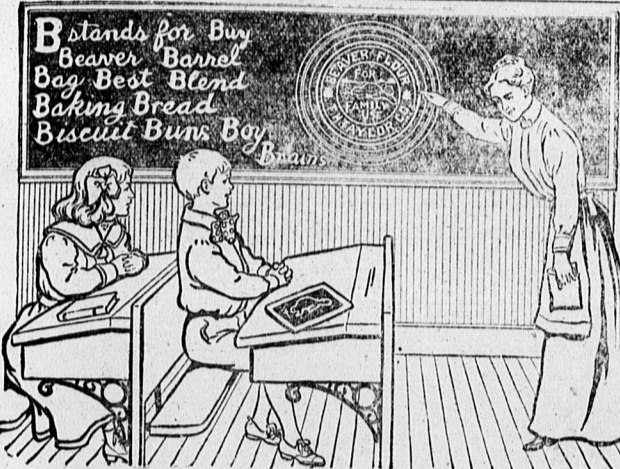
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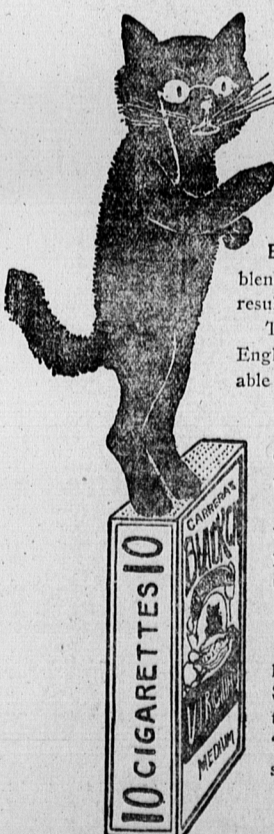
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### A GERMAN GHOST.

A stranger passing through Stettin recently would have thought that a Socialist demonstration or something equally dreadful was taking place. The streets were closed to traffic by the police, and large crowds assembled in the neighborhood manifested their displeasure at this step hour after hour by hooting and cat calls. But all the bother was merely due to the anxiety of the public to devote itself to a little practical psychical research. For at the centre of the cleared area stood a haunted house, and that was what the people were trying to get at.

It appears that a ghost had been at work for a long time past, though it only became an object of general interest a couple of days ago, after it had been taken notice of in the newspapers. The centre of its activity is the tenement of a laborer named Buchler, in the Karkutsch strasse, where it is reported to have brought many strange things to pass. Credible witnesses saw cups and saucers, pots and pans, jugs and bottles lift themselves up without any visible assistance, and sail through the window into the courtyard. Brooms hovered in the air, as if inviting to a trip to the Brocken. Cupboards flung open their doors and precipitated their contents to the floor.

These spectral activities seemed, as is so often the case, to centre as round a young girl, the 11-year-old daughter of the tenant, a sickly and undergrown little thing, who is, however, credited by the neighbors with wonderful "magnetic" gifts. The story, however, which got about was that the uncanny proceedings were the work of a hobgoblin, who came to the house in search of Frau Buchler's housekeeping money, and showed his anger in wanton destruction when it found that the key of her cash box was hanging around her neck, and not to be got at. It appears to be a fact that the ghostly demonstrations were occasionally accompanied by the disappearance of sums of money, but for that there is a spiritual explanation of a different kind.

When the police took the matter in hand they were somewhat at a loss as to the course to follow. One officer called upon Frau Buchler to produce the ghost, or at any rate cause it to give some signs of its existence. The reply was that this was impossible, as she had done something an annoy the disturbing spirit. What the head and front of her offending had been she declined to say, on the ground that the revelation of such mysteries would bring untold disaster upon her head.

The police, however, were not satisfied to let the matter rest there, and their further enquiries convinced them that the mysterious doing were due more to sleight of hand than to spiritual agencies. They also learned that Buchler had been spending a good deal of money at the public house of late, which, perhaps, might account for the disappearances from his wife's cashbox. So the family have been informed that should the mischievous spirit recommence its tricks they will be taken into custody under the "gross nuisance" clause, which can be made to cover everything to which the authorities object, but is not specified in the law.

—Correspondent London Telegraph.

### MELBA.

"Nellie" Melba, usually described as "Australian prima donna," is put down in the biography books as having been born in Melbourne on May 19, 1865, by which account, of course, she would be forty-five years of age. It is, however, twenty-three years ago since she made her debut in Brussels in "Rigoleto," giving up at that time her family name of Mithell, and it is eighteen years ago since we remember her on her first European and American tour. Time has dealt well with Melba, but if it is not less majestic, we would suggest that her voice is not the same as when she created her famous roles of Ophelia, Juliette, Lucia, and even Nedda in "I Pagliacci." A wheel that turns long is bound to get a little worn, and there is that going on in Melba's voice which physiologists tell us always occurs as life advances—a gradual weakening of the upper notes of the register; a changing of the character of the voice owing to loss of elasticity. The voice specialists explain it technically as "being caused by ossification, which first begins about middle life in the thyroid cartilage, then appears in the cricoid, and much later in the arytenoid." That is more curious than illuminating to the ordinary reader, but those who have seen Melba even during the past few years must have noticed an unmistakable change in her face, and it is remembered that the quality of voice depends not merely on the size, degree of elasticity and general mobility of the vocal chords, but also on the position of the larynx, the position of the tongue, and that very slight changes in these may produce striking results. The absurdity of proclaiming Melba to be in the "full prime of her career" and "better than ever" will be perceived.

Melba was one of the most remarkable gifted singers of her day, or of any day, her voice was truly a "wind gift," and she has enchanted the world for nearly a quarter of a century. It is surely enough that her voice can still charm and enthral—together apart from the fetish of her name, which is itself of great suggestive influence—without it being necessary to pretend that it has the same quality, or what is called "clang-tint" or timbre, as of yore. Melba's selections last evening were old, old favorites, which accentuated the change of "timbre" to which we have referred. That they were accomplished with artistry goes without saying, and those who years ago heard her as "Lucia" and "Marguerite" mixed many memories in hearing her rendition of the Mad Scene in Lucia de Lammermoor and the Jewel Song of "Faust." As for "Posti," "Good Bye," the rendering was affected and melodramatic, like the song, and to our taste, unworthy of the artist and of the occasion. However, the audience evidently did not think so, as thousands of hands and throats proclaimed and applauded it, as indeed, they did everything the singer was good enough to do. The fact is that Melba is adored as somebody quite superior to ordinary flesh and blood, and even to hint that all she does is no longer perfect is sufficient to "rile" numbers of her adorers. Her final adieu were made amidst a perfect passion of applause, who years rarely has the entourage of a great artist been altogether so admirable. The flute, that jibed-at instrument of the "love-sick fool," was played in such a fashion as to make everybody wish to play; and the harpist gave one a like happy thought of wishing there were a harp—and such a player of it—in every home. The tenor was admirable, as was the accompanist. Altogether the concert was well deserving of the splendid audience which graced it and of that audience's delight.—Montreal Witness.

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