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Harry Tate, *Back from the Front*, 1916

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7a 21/-
The Empire Theatre

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BACK
FROM
THE
FRONT.

A
Skit.

-0-

Add MS 66140 M

No. 409 ✓	
LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE.	
Name of Play.	Back from the Front.
Theatre	Empire Theatre. ✓
Date of Licence	Aug 19, 1916



LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE,
ST JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.

18th Aug. '16.

"BACK FROM THE FRONT" addition to Revue at the Empire.

A soldier, just home on leave from the trenches and anxious to talk of home interest, is ~~informed~~ by his family to tell them about the war. Thereupon he excitedly describes a sally from a trench and illustrates it, in pantomime destructive of furniture and crockery. At the end, being asked if he "got anything" for all this bravery, he replies "Yes: the Itch", a tag which, though possibly not unnatural, must be altered into something less offensive as a result of trench warfare. If such alteration is made the sketch is

Recommended for License.

(Sgd) Ernest A. Bendall.

*Character of humorous attraction
from 4 managers. word "itch"
changed to German measles.*

21/8 16

LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE,
ST JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.

18 Aug 16

"
Back from the Front", addition to Review of the
Empire.

A soldier, just home on leave from the trenches
and anxious to talk of home interest, is implored
by his family to tell them about the war. Thereupon
he vividly describes a rally from a trench & de-
scribes it, in pantomime, destructive of furniture &
everything. At the end, being asked if he got anything
for all his bravery, he replies Yes: the D.K., a
rag shirt, though possibly not unusual must be
added into something less offensive as a result of
trench warfare. If such attraction is made the sketch

Recommended to Review

Ernest Boddie

BACK
FROM
THE
FRONT.

SCENE: The dining room.

CHARACTERS.

The Wife
The husband
The Brother
The Maid
The Kids

Edie Veno.
H. A. Kennedy.
Harry Dale. *TATE*
Alice Williams
Harold & Gerald.

AS CURTAIN RISES HUSBAND DISCOVERED
seated - ENTER THE WIFE.

Husband Whatever has delayed him ?

Wife How do I know ?

Husband He said I shall be home from the trenches on
Saturday about 3 o'clock - it's a quarter past.

Wife Quarter-past ! Good Lord, you don't suppose they
run wars to the minute do you ?

Husband Well, I'm very disappointed.

Wife So am I - but I'm not going to show it - He won't
want to see a lot of miserable people when he turns
up - Buck up - pull yourself together - Look at
me -

Husband Going - I know, it's wonderful at your time of
life too -

Wife

My time of life - my time of life ! -

Husband

Yes.

EXIT.

Wife

My boy I'm as good as the youngest of 'em - don't you forget it - There's life in the old girl yet.

SONG.

Wife

EXIT. RETURNS.

Brother

The BOYS ENTER start picking things off table.

Wife

Leave that alone - you young monkeys - leave it alone, I tell you - you wouldn't do it if your father was here -

Tom

Alas ! Papa coming - !

Wife

Any minute he may arrive.

ENTER HUSBAND excitedly.

Husband

He's here - he's here -

Wife

Oh ! (nearly faints) At last - at last -

HIS FOOTSTEPS ARE HEARD.

Tom

Papa ! - Papa !

HE ENTERS - There is a wild scene of happiness - all crowd round him.

Wife Sit down - have something to eat - (calls) Mary -
bring that in -

Brother I don't want anything to eat.

wife You must -

Husband Yes - you must -

Brother I can't eat - I've just had a big feed -

Wife You must eat -

Brother I tell you I can't.

ENTER MAID with dish.

Brother Hullo ! - Mary -

Maid How do you do ? Sir -

Brother Can't eat it.

Wife What a pity - never mind - tell us all about it.

Husband Yes - tell us all about the war -

Brother Oh ! lor -

All Yes - yes - do etc.

Brother But I want to talk about other things - How are
the pigeons ?

Tom They're all right - Tell us about the war -

Charlie

Yes - the war -

All

The war - the war -

Wife

You'll get no peace till you do - I can see - so
you might just as well do it -

~~Wife~~

~~Let me hear about it.~~

Brother

(Aside) They're asking for it, they'd better have it. (Aloud) Well, imagine then, there we were, a lot of the boys shut up in a kind of trench, a sort of a rabbit hutch.

Husband

But of course there were no rabbits.

Brother

No, and no pickled pork either. We had to stoop, like this, now you can imagine how comfortable we all felt, try it.

Brother

THEY stoop like him.

All

All of a sudden the fellow next to me called out "Rats, Rats."

Brother

WOMEN scream and get on chairs.
HUSBAND seizes tongs.

Husband

Where, where ? (He is very frightened)

Brother

What's up ? gone potty ? this was in the trenches.

All

Oh !

Get off chairs.

Wife

What a turn you gave me.

Husband

I wasn't frightened.

Brother

No. (Aside) we shall see.

Pinches his calf.

Brother

A rat.

HUSBAND jumps and starts.

Brother

I say, old cock, it won't be you that will march to Berlin.

Husband

I'm not afraid, certainly not, I can face Germans, but rats, oh, lor.

Wife

What happened next ?

Brother

Well, the boys and I decided we'd change our lodgings and go to a house opposite, there were lodgers there already.

All

Who were they ?

Brother

The Germans.

MAID screams. Drops a dish and cover. HUSBAND looks apprehensively at bomb.

Husband

I say, the bomb, be careful.

Wife

Oh, you're always afraid, frightened out of your life.

Husband

I'm not afraid (Looking at bomb all the time) I'm never afraid.

Brother

Well, then, one by one, in the black night, we crept out of the trench.

Wife

Oh, don't I'm going goosey.

Brother

Sh ----- no noise, we creep, we wriggle on our tummies, and there I see a fern, the sentinel, off goes my rifle, straight to his nose. (Squirts syphon at Husband)

Husband

I say !

Brother

Silence, that gave the alarm, and then the fight commences. First, it's a fight with grenades, bang. (Slaps Maid) Come on, come on, are we going to let them beat us. No, fetch me those bombs, those hand grenades, bring them on, the grenades (Seizes lamp, statue, cups, plates etc. Bangs them on floor)

All jump.

Maid

Oh, lor, there goes victory.

Brother

Back, I say, back. Curtain fire. (Throws fruit at everybody) Forward boys, forward, follow me.

All

Yes, but, etc.

Brother

You're not going to funk it, the first who flinches (with knife) Off comes his napper.

All frightened.

All

At the double, one, two, one two.

Brother

All double. HUSBAND falls over chair.

He's hung up in the wire. Here they come, they're counter attacking.

Wife

HUSBAND runs away. Falls.

Brother We are lost !

Husband Oh, don't say that.

Brother Munitions, in Heaven's name, Munitions.

BROTHER pelts HUSBAND with cushions, footstool etc, etc.

Husband Mercy, mercy.

Brother Oh, the monkey, he is doing the "camarad" trick. Look, we are lost, the poison gas.

All alarmed.

Brother On with your gas helmets. Gas helmets, on with them. (Puts vases etc over their heads) Now, (Bangs table with stick)

Husband Mind your bomb.

Brother Mind your own bomb. Ah, a Jack Johnson. Down on your tummies, down, flat on your tummies.

ALL fall flat.

All We are lost.

Brother No, it's all over, the danger's past, take 'em off, take 'em off.

THEY remove vases. Faces are black.

Wife Isn't he wonderful ?

Husband

Splendid, and you've been in the trenches two years
and got no medal, no decorations ?

Brother

No.

All

Isn't it a shame. Why not ? etc.

ALL crowd round him.

Husband

And you never got anything ?

Wife

Nothing at all ?

Brother

Yes.

Husband

What ?

Brother

The itch.

ALL draw back.

BLACK OUT.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-