

## PASSAGES FOR DICTATION.

(a.) At the rate of 80 words per minute. Takes 10 minutes.

Well, all I can say is that, while my friend took exception to the way in which the Statement was compiled, he did not endeavour to follow the practice which he advocated by words; because, I think, on reference to his speech he will find that he dealt with a great many subjects that had nothing whatever to do with the Financial Statement, or with finance. I cannot help saying that my honourable friend's speech seemed to be remarkable for the very thing that he condemned. I should like to mention the points to which the honourable gentleman referred. I will give but a few of them. He stated that my Budget was not finance: I say that his speech was not finance. He said there were too many subjects dealt with in the Financial Statement. I say there were too many subjects referred to in his speech. I may refer to some of the subjects which the honourable gentleman touched upon. He started with an old Greek, and then went on to Shakespeare; then he spoke of Jack and the Physic and the Pancake, and from him went on to George Washington; then he referred to "The Fabian Essays"; he passed from them, and entered a travelling circus; he then introduced us to Richard the Second and Wat Tyler; from them he passed on to old Selden, the great English lawyer; and then he interspersed a financial disquisition with a little of Goschen, Gladstone, and Harcourt; then he took us back to Cromwell, and next introduced us to a doctor of divinity; then he interviewed Hamilton and Northcote; next we found ourselves in France with Beaulieu; from him he took us to the sweet by-and-by; and after that he passed into the infernal regions, and there I leave him. If the honourable gentleman complains of my range of subjects, I think I may fairly complain of his range of subjects. The honourable gentleman also commented upon my attitude in delivering the Financial Statement. He said that I turned my back to the Commons. I think I maintained the same position that I am doing now. But it did occur to me, when my honourable friend was quoting Gladstone, Goschen, and other notable men, that perhaps he is aspiring to a seat in the House of Commons, because when the honourable member is practising in this House, and giving us a little Goschen and Gladstone in New Zealand finance, I fancy his mind must be carried somewhat far away. He said that the Financial Statement was crowded with instances of how people make mistakes; and he indicated some of the mistakes. He said careless things were done. My honourable friend has discussed many Financial Statements in this House. He discussed one last year, and discovered how things had been done wrong then. He discovered that, in consequence of its being leap-year, there was an extra day, and that the Treasurer received an extra £11,000; but the honourable gentleman forgot there was an extra day's expenditure and forgot to deduct the day's expenditure from the day's receipts. And last night he also conveniently forgot some most important matters. For instance, he stated that the estimates in connection with the interest showed an error of £14,000. But I may tell the House that there is nothing at all wrong about the Statement on this point. We have to provide for the payment of interest on the guaranteed debentures lying in London with the bankers for emergency purposes: but, no emergency having arisen, those debentures were never used, and consequently the £14,000 was not required. The interest had to be included in the estimates as a precautionary measure, to be paid if necessary. The honourable gentleman will see that, as far as that is concerned, there is nothing in his argument. Then the honourable member referred to the conversion of £400,000, and alluded to the fact that £20,000 increased capital was not shown. I may tell the House that the operation by which this £400,000 was turned into £420,000 results in a saving of £150,000 during the currency of the loan; and yet he complains and is not satisfied. I think the House will see, therefore, that the honourable gentleman was somewhat unfair in his criticism. The honourable member also said that the £414,000 surplus was incorrect. I wondered in what respect it was so, and I interrogated him at the time. He said he would deal with that, but he finished his speech and never alluded to it again.

(b.) At the rate of 120 words per minute. Takes 10 minutes.

Title: "Omega: the Last Days of the World." The scene is laid in Paris several hundred years hence, and the article deserves, and will receive, considerable attention as an interesting exercise of the scientific imagination.

The scene is laid in Paris, which has telephonic communication with the observatories on all the highest peaks in the world. The story opens at the time when the life of the great capital is paralysed by the intimation of the rapid approach of a comet thirty times the size of the world.

The following extracts from the chief astronomer's speech give an account as to what would happen if a comet like that of 1811 were to collide with the earth:—

The destruction of the world will result from the combustion of the atmosphere. For about seven hours—probably a little longer, as the resistance to the comet cannot be neglected—there will be a continuous transformation of motion into heat. The hydrogen and the oxygen, combining with the carbon of the comet, will take fire. The temperature of the air will be raised several hundred degrees; woods, gardens, plants, forests, habitations, edifices, cities, villages, will all be rapidly consumed; the sea, the lakes, and the rivers will begin to boil; men and animals, enveloped in the hot breath of the comet, will die asphyxiated before they are burned, their gasping lungs inhaling only flame.

If our latitude were to receive the first shock of the comet, reaching us, we will suppose, in summer, the Tropic of Cancer, Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Greece, and Egypt would be found in front of the celestial onset, while Australia, New Caledonia, and Oceania would be the most