



CAPTAIN HUNTER-BLAIR.

The Agricultural Department should not publish stale news. A Miscellaneous Leaflet, No. 1, published by them the other day and written by Mr. Lowe, the dairy expert, who acts for New Zealand in London, contains next to nothing that had not been previously said, and said much better, by the London correspondent who writes for the *Auckland* and *Dunedin Stars*, *Lyttelton Times*, and *New Zealand Times*.

By the way, it is not generally known that Mr. Rathbone, the London correspondent in question, was at one time editor of the *Auckland Observer*. His younger brother now edits the *New Zealand Graphic*.

Ugly figures! What is the reason for the very serious falling off in the exports? For the December quarter the exports are put down at £1,702,005, as against £2,016,675 for the same quarter in 1892. There is a falling off on the whole year of nearly half a million. This sort of thing needs investigation and discussion, and the subject ought to occupy the attention of the daily press. Here in Wellington all that the dailies seem to think of is blackguarding each other, and they're so dense that they can't see the public are full up of their dreary drivel.

We publish in this issue the portraits of Captain Hunter-Blair and his wife. The captain came to New Zealand as *aide-de-camp* to Lord Glasgow about two years ago, and since his residence here has made himself very popular amongst the people with whom he has come in contact. A short time back he married Miss Rhodes, of Christchurch, daughter of the late Mr. Rhodes, a well-known gentleman in Canterbury. Captain Hunter-Blair is a brother of Lady Glasgow, and an officer in the Gordon Highlanders. His recent resignation of the post of *aide-de-camp* to the Governor was with a view of returning to the Old Country and rejoining his regiment. We wish the Captain and his bonnie New Zealand wife *bon voyage* and a happy reception on their arrival.

Poor old Monk, ex-M.H.R. for Waitemata. It's pretty hard lines for him to have been elected and then thrown out on petition. He can thank his son—a perfect sample of the common or garden ass, this latter—for his trouble. Every dead beat and disreputable tomato-nosed old harridan on the gumfields seems to have been looked up by Young Monk, and there can be no doubt but that corruption and bribery went on wholesale. The petition must have cost Jackson Palmer a good bit. Wonder who found the stuff?

But Jackson will not jump straight away into the seat without a contest. Major Harris is to run against him and although we believe that Palmer will win, nevertheless he will have to fight hard for his victory.

One of those awful humbugs, female thought readers, a resident in a southern city, prophesied the other day that in seven months time Sir Robert Stout would be Premier of New Zealand. This prophesy is just a trifle too previous. Stout's show of ousting Seddon is mighty small, unless King Dick puts on too many frills and rides the high horse too frequently with the new Parliament. In political diplomacy, Stout is to Seddon, like a newly caught Hibernian bobby to the head of the Scotland yard detectives. What Richard the Fourth doesn't know in up-to-date New Zealand political diplomacy, is not worth knowing.

The *New Zealand Times*, bless her dear old grandmotherly soul, hasn't dared to take up FAIR PLAY'S challenge about the electric motor. The *Times* announcement—"first paper printed by electricity in the Southern hemisphere, etc. etc."—was a splendid bit of bluff, but it was far too thin. As a matter of fact, the *Times* has not even yet been printed by electricity. Manager Brown is a smart fellow in his way, but there's such a thing as being too smart. We gave all possible publicity to our challenge of £1000, and stated at the time that if the proprietors of the *Times* failed to accept it they would *stand convicted of a deliberate attempt to deceive the public*. They occupy this position to-day. We don't presume to say that this is the first time this journal has deceived the public. Its reader, few though they be, have probably discovered that long ago. We only refer to the present situation, and warn the public to its further utterances with a ton or so of salt.