distrust. Barrel-organs and other forms of street music are taxed or licensed in some countries, and the idea is a good one, and worth commending to our Colonial Treasurer, who might also add a tax on infants howling in places of amusements, railway trains, trams, 'buses, churches, and in the public streets.

Amongst other pleasures which summer brings in its train is the annual church meeting. Compared with the lively interest—we might almost say excitement, which these old-time institutions are at present creating in social circles throughout Auckland, the stage and sinful appendages thereto, are simply 'not in it.' Perhaps the soothing monotony of columns of facts and figures bearing on a subject distinctly connected with his soul's welfare, is more congenial to the average colonial than applauding a ballet in temperature 90 something in the shade. We do not venture to suggest that the lemonade, raspberry syrup (more effective than Mother Siegel) and bananas, dispensed like the teaspoonful of jam after castor-oil, are any attraction, but, whatever the reason, church meetings have of late attained the eminence of an important social function.

Whether the yearly reading of not too flourishing financial and other reports in a congregation are conducive to heavier collection plates and renewed effort on the part of parishioners, or effectual in extinguishing the last ray of hope and promoting universal collapse amidst zealous church-goers, it is of course impossible to say. Judging from a meeting held recently in an Auckland district, the ceremony of reading the annual balance sheet is not always attended with that amiable Christian good feeling which one would expect. The gentleman upon whom had been conferred the privilege of displaying the pounds, shillings and pence outlook of this particular community, (*i.e.*, the secretary) refused to do so because of an insult he and other officers had been subjected to by some pet lambs in the flock. The insult was a prayer offered on behalf of 'the cold-hearted, luke-warm officers of this church;' the pet lambs were some Christian Endeavourers, endeavouring to attend to every business but their own. Now the aforementioned ballet undeniably makes money skip, whether from the pockets of people who would otherwise place it in the collection plate or not is another matter. There is deplorably too little in any of our churches to make the preparing and reading of an annual balance-sheet a particularly elevating occupation at any time, and those who have the courage to cheerfully perform such tasks from a sense of duty, are in themselves a noble contradiction of the unjust and untrue aspersions cast upon them by members as useless probably, as they are disagreeable.

The recent suggestion of Dr. Youl, the City Coroner of Melbourne, that a witness would do well to tell a lie even on oath to save the reputation of a woman, has, of course, caused a great deal of comment in Wellington as elsewhere. Many superficially good people are excessively shocked at it. Nevertheless (says our Wellington correspondent), it ought to be the fortieth article of the English and some one article or other of every other Christian church. There is not in Australasia, nor perhaps in all England, a man with a vaster range of human experience than Dr. Youl. He has held inquests on people whom he afterwards met in the street, and in one single year he has held enquiries concerning the deaths of one hundred and twenty-seven unfortunates fished up out of the muddy Yarra. He must be getting pretty old, and tolerably tired of the dismal and dreary and eternal story of human frailty and misery by this time. I knew Dr. Youl many years ago, and he was not young then. He always struck me as being a remarkable man, eccentric in some ways and things, but possessed of an immense fund of downright common sense. There was nothing of the 'namby pamby doctor' about him. He was indeed that somewhat *rara avis*, an M.D. with character marked distinctly in everything he said or did. A lady went to him once and said, 'Oh, doctor, I'm afraid there's something fearfully wrong with my stomach.' 'Oh no,' said Dr. Youl, 'nothing at all wrong, madam, with your stomach. God made your stomach; He knows how to make 'em. You have put something into your stomach which has disagreed with you.'

For a man who has been writing depositions all his life his aversion to the pen is strange, but he never puts anything down on paper that he can possibly avoid. 'One never knows what even a scratch of the pen may do,' he says; and even his signature he abbreviates, writing 'Ric. You.' (for Richard Youl) in such fashion that no one could possibly tell what or whose the name was. But he talks freely enough, and if anything he says gets into print and causes unpleasant comment, he says even the press is not infallible, and reporters occasionally get hold of the wrong end of the stick.

If amateur photographers increase and multiply at present rates they will soon need special members of Parliament to represent their interest. Seriously, the number of Kodak and detective cameras one sees about is surprising. In Wellington the Camera Club has done excellent work in drawing the best and most enthusiastic spirits into communion and good fellowship. The recent conversazione and exhibition of lantern slides at the Academy of Arts showed that our good amateurs are little, if at all, behind the professional. A photograph by a really good amateur is indeed usually better than one of the same subject by a good professional. The amateur's production has generally a more artistic and original air.

The Brough and Boucicault Comedy Company are now creating a boom in Wellington. The comedies enacted by them are almost entirely new to Wellington audiences. Something which we may call instinct for want of a better term enables the public to have knowledge of real dramatic excellence even before they have seen it, and hence the Opera House had not an unoccupied seat in any part of the building on Friday evening last, when the Company, having arrived in the city but a few hours before, made their first acquaintance with the somewhat critical frequenters of certainly the finest and largest theatre in New Zealand. Saturday night again, most singular to say, the house was packed from floor to ceiling, for as a rule, Saturday night is an off night in Wellington.

'The Village Priest,' with which Brough and Boucicault opened, is one of 'The Profligate' order of plays, that is to say, it has a purpose in view all along—that of showing that the effects of crime are eternal, involving for ever and ever the innocent and the guilty alike in inevitable catastrophe. It has been called a most improbable story. I see no improbability in it. Anyhow, we care not much whether the stage story is real or unreal, so long as the men and women on the boards are real human beings holding a real mirror up to real human nature. This is what the Brough and Boucicault Company do. The Abbé Dubois may not be a very real Catholic priest, but he is a real man. It may appear very unlikely that Jean Torquenie, an innocent, should serve nineteen years in a convict cell, but such things have happened, and a more consummate representation of such a thing than Mr Brough presents us with has never been witnessed on any stage This play made its great impression in Wellington not, I think, owing to the marked ability of any one actor or actress, but to the general perfection of the whole company.

A well known firm of colonial bankers in London have just made a profitable investment. Some time ago a man who had defrauded them of a large sum of money was taken into custody, convicted, and sentenced to a long term of penal servitude. As may be imagined, the prison fare did not agree with one who had lived on the fat of the land. The change affected him in many ways, but he complained more particularly of the injury the food caused to his teeth. They were neither numerous nor in good condition when he was sentenced, and as they rapidly become worse he applied to the governor of the prison for a new set. Being told that the Government did not supply prisoners with artificial teeth, at the first opportunity he wrote to the banking firm in question, offering, if they would send him a new set, to tell them something to their advantage. Thereupon the bankers, thinking the offer might be a genuine one, sent the governor of the prison a cheque for £5, and asked him to provide the convict with a set of artificial teeth. In due course the convict kept his promise, and sent the bankers certain information by means of which they were enabled to recover no less than £1,500 of which they had been defrauded. They naturally regarded this as the best investment they had ever made, but it has proved even better than anticipated, for they have just received from the prison authorities a remittance for £1, the teeth having cost only £4.

It is a good many years since drinking as a gentlemanly recreation went out of fashion, and there is little if any doubt that the shearer, lumberer, and gumdigger are also by slow degrees giving drinking bursts best. Of course one occasionally comes across a series of pretty hard cases, but drinking as a pleasure is losing its hold on the middle and lower classes as it has done on the 'hupper suckles.' Nevertheless, a man died in Christchurch from over-drinking, and the coroner pointed as a moral that homes for inebriates are required. The whole difficulty appears in deciding who shall pay for such homes. We pay for prisons in self-defence. One never knows who may be robbed next, but the drunkard only robs himself and his family, and though the world agrees that in theory he ought to be prevented from doing so, yet in practice it declares itself against it. If the habitual drunkard can be made self-supporting and useful, the sooner he is locked up the better for himself and the community at large. But this, it seems, is practically impossible. No woman, however badly she had suffered, would allow her husband to be imprisoned with labour, not hard, perhaps, but labour, for that is what a visit to the home would mean.

He who does not think too much of himself is more esteemed than he imagines.

UNFORTUNATE POETS.

The lives of the poets is not a pleasant volume. Of all those spirits who have worked for the pleasure and profit of their fellow-creatures, the poets have ever been the worst paid, and the most unfortunate. Keats, Shelley, Poe, Burns, Chatterton, Byron, Cowper, Madox Brown, Heine, Alfred de Musset—all these names suggest as much of the mournful in life as of the splendid in literature. Does not Ben Jonson record of the divine Spenser that 'he died for want of bread in King street?' When the statue of Burns was unveiled in Scotland amidst an adoring populace, some sceptical person remarked: 'He asked you for bread and ye gave him a stone.' The 'stone' too often has been the poet's sole reward. The fault, however, does not always lie with the world, but is as often as not a consequence of the poetic temperament. Exaggerated sensitiveness, physical disease, temporary hallucination, madness, suicidal tendency, these more especially during the last hundred years have been the accompaniments of the divine afflatus; and we may well ask with Taine if there be a man living who could withstand the storm of passions and visions which swept over Shakespeare and end like him as a sensible citizen and landed proprietor in his small county.

In a recent number of the *Spectator* appears a poem by William Watson, the young poet who, it will be remembered, received a bounty of £200 for a greatly admired poem in *The Illustrated London News* on the death of the late Poet Laureate. It was thought by many that this gift would shortly be followed by a greater honour, but whatever may have been intended, an incident which occurred almost immediately afterwards, and led to the painful necessity of placing the young poet under restraint, effectually for the time being dispelled his chance of the Laureateship.

The following lines, pathetic in their import, strong in their sanity and rightness of feeling, and exquisite, almost Miltonic in fervour of execution, are the first utterance of the restored spirit:

VITA NUOVA.

Long hath she slept, forgetful of delight;
At last, at last the enchanted princess earth
Claimed with a kiss by spring the adventurer.
In slumber knows the destined lips, and thrilled
Through all the deeps of her unageing heart
With passionate necessity of joy,
Wakens and yields her loveliness to love.

O ancient streams, O far-descended woods
Full of the fluttering of melodious souls;
O hills and valleys that adorn yourselves
In solemn jubilation; winds and clouds,
Ocean and land in stormy nuptials clasped,
And all exuberant creatures that acclaim
The earth's Divine renewal; lo, I too
With yours would mingle somewhat of glad song.
I too have come through wintry terrors—yea
Through tempest and through cataclysm of soul
Have come and am delivered. Me the Spring,
Me also, dimly with new life hath touched,
And with regenerate hope, the salt of life;
And I would dedicate these thankful tears
To whatsoever Power beneficent,
Veiled though his countenance, undivulged his thought,
Hath led me from the haunted darkness forth
Into the gracious air and vernal morn,
And suffers me to know my spirit a note
Of this great chorus, one with bird and stream
And voiceful mountain—nay, a string, how jarred
And all but broken! of that lyre of life
Whereon himself, the master harp-player,
Resolving all its mortal dissonance
To one immortal and most perfect strain
Harps without pause, building with song the world.

William Watson.

Lands and Survey Office,
Auckland, February 1, 1894.

It is hereby notified that Lots 656 and 670, Town of Ngaruawahia, advertised for Sale by Public Auction, at this office, on the 21st inst., are WITHDRAWN from such Sale.

GERHARD MUELLER,
Commissioner Crown Lands.
