



faith or sympathy with the speaker's utterances and opinions is straightway lost.

THE seriousness of this failing cannot be over-rated. As another instance of its present flagrance may be mentioned the very important matter of the Divorce Amendment Bill which was brought before—we cannot say discussed—the Auckland Women's Political League meeting. A lady on the platform (Mrs Giles) moved a resolution, 'that this meeting strongly disapproves the Divorce Amendment Bill as introduced by Mr Macgregor.' Here was a question of vital importance to women—one of the greatest social questions of the day. One might have supposed that before coming before a public meeting on a matter of such widespread interest, the proposer and seconder of the motion would have at least been at the pains to have ready some explanation of the Bill and its clauses. As a matter of fact neither proposer or seconder appeared to have even read the Bill, or anything about it. They were neither of them able to offer one single word of explanation to some one in the audience who asked what the Bill was about. It is only charitable to suppose the President of the meeting was equally ignorant. Her answer that three years' desertion constituted ground for divorce would otherwise have been an exceedingly unfair and politically immoral representation. Of this, however, more anon.

If the Auckland Woman's Political League duly learn the lessons to be gleaned from the somewhat questionable success of their recent meeting, it will not have been unproductive of great results. These lessons are:—That it is utterly impracticable and absurd for the League to pretend to be a non-party association, and to call meetings to discuss distinctly party questions. That the ignorance of the very elements of politics exemplified in the innocent supposition, that a protest against a Government measure could be discussed on non-party lines by a non party body, while touching in simplicity, is calculated to bring deserved contempt and ridicule on those who share it. That to rush before the public with wild statements and ignorant generalities is one of those privileges which should be left exclusively to the male politician; that before women talk politics in public, they should educate themselves in practice.

In an interesting little article recently published in one of our cheap periodicals an attempt was made to give what are the usual subjects of conversation among ordinary people in their proper proportion—so much per cent. to sporting matters, so much to the stage, to business, to affairs of the heart, and so on. The writer had evidently given his ear to a good many people who had been unaware that it had been presented to them, and gathered a great deal of miscellaneous information. Upon the whole, his conclusions seem very much what one would have imagined they would be, except that his unsuspecting clients seem to have had little to say about the weather. To judge from the odds and ends of talk that one cannot help hearing between one's fellow-passengers in the railway and the omnibus, this is surely a favourite topic. It is used, of course, chiefly by persons who have little else to talk about, or merely as an introduction to break the ice of silence; but it would astonish the sound to know how largely it would enter into their discourse should they become sick. To the young and strong the matter is of no consequence—

Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I lived in't together;
but to the aged and the frail it is one full of importance.

THERE is something pathetic—though, it must be confessed, very uninteresting to the outsider (says Mr James Payn), in the talk of these persons about the prevalence of east winds, or of the damp weather, which increases their ailments or delays their recovery; for in nine cases out of ten the weather, unhappily, has very little to do with it—no, nor even the time of the year, though the date (that is, the Anno Domini) has generally a good deal. How the doctors would get on without this topic one can hardly conceive; for when there is no other hope to be held out to the chronic invalid, they always pretend to look for improvement in a change of weather. When the warmth of summer sets in, or the clear sharp frosts of winter, we shall get relief, they say; and let us hope the recording angel blots out their too smooth prophecies with a tear. Though in his secret heart the patient has long lost hope, it is touching to see how he answers to the spur of encouragement; how he talks of the spring weather coming very slowly up his way—and how he will be 'another man' by midsummer, which, indeed, he may be, and in another sphere of existence.

FOR many years of his life Dr. Johnson looked with incredulity upon the weather as having any influence upon the human frame, though he seems to have rather given himself away in saying, 'Why, yes, Sir, it is good for vegetables, and for the animals who eat those vegetables, and for the animals who eat those animals.' If any of his acquaintances told him it was wet or dry, he would stop him with, 'Pooh, pooh! you are telling me that of which none but men in a mine or in a dungeon can be ignorant. Let us bear with patience, or enjoy in quiet, elementary changes, whether for better or the worse, as they are never secret.' When the Doctor became an invalid, however, he shared the common lot. 'The weather, you know,' he writes, 'has not been balmy; I am now reduced to think, and am, at last, content to talk of the weather. Pride must have a fall.'

DESPITE some very distinct mannerisms few melodramatic actors have been more popular with New Zealand audiences than Walter Howe, who was for so many years with Bland Holt, but who recently started 'on his own.' Walter Howe has many friends on this side, and these will all be sorry to hear he has lost his brother. Poor Howe, surely one of the gentlest and most amiable men that ever lived, did excellent service as a musical and dramatic critic for many years. He was a sound musician and a most capable judge of acting. It sometimes his criticism seemed to lack vigour, it was because his generous disposition prevented him from writing strong words which would be likely to cause pain, even when condemnation was richly deserved. He was an entirely lovable man, and will be sincerely mourned and missed. We must all sympathize most deeply with his father, who has lost the prop and comfort of his age.

FROM New Zealand to London in twelve hours. Such is the brilliant conception of an English merchant. The means is so simple (says Picaroon, to whom we are indebted for this item) that I fancy it must have occurred to a good many people already. Everyone knows that the world spins round on its axis once in twenty-four hours. Whence it is clear that if you hang yourself up somewhere and wait, in twelve hours New Zealand will be under your feet, and you will only have to step down in order to be comfortably there. The good merchant proposes to send passengers up in a well-appointed balloon, where they will wait until Australasia comes round. It is an admirable scheme. And yet I suppose everyone will laugh at it. Why? How many people could explain in ten words why it will not work? The other day I consulted a lady on the subject. She said it was a question of gravity. Which, for my own part, I found rather difficult to maintain.

MUCH may be forgiven those smarting under non-success, and in the first passion of disappointment it is not always easy to speak moderately. One of the examiners at a recent examination for a medical degree lately received the following letter from a lady candidate:—

Sir,—Don't you dare refuse me again in physiology when you know I know all about physiology; I very likely know more than you do. I shall write to Mr— if you do about it. Very soon Doctors will be drawn only from *we pure, noble-minded women, and you vile, drunken, filthy men expelled for ever.* (Signed) _____

Even if the lady passed in physiology she should have been 'ploughed' in grammar.

THAT a surveyor's life in this colony is far from being an uneventful one was claimed by a gentleman of that profession who returned last week from a survey in a somewhat wild locality north of Auckland. He said that the night before he left that district for more civilized regions, he put up at a small bush pub. The accommodation was limited, and a man who arrived after he did was assigned quarters in a sort of lean-to which did duty usually as a butcher's shop. The last-comer, it appeared, was a little queer in the upper story. In the night, our surveyor was awakened by some alarming noises. A cat belonging to the establishment, recollecting juicy meals in the lean-to, entered that apartment in search of her supper. Her appearance so frightened the temporary occupier thereof that his mind became completely unhinged. He seized a butcher's knife and cut off the head of the feline intruder. Then he added to his weapons an axe and a saw. Thus armed, he rushed out, got up on the roof of the bush hotel and began sawing away at the rigging. The surveyor and the other inhabitants of the house hastily left their rooms, clad, it must be confessed, in somewhat scanty attire. They expostulated, remonstrated, entreated, commanded, threatened, but the ghostly figure on the roof sawed savagely away. Mr W., the surveyor, took up the door-step and flung it at the man. It had no effect, and as there was nothing more to throw and nothing could be done, the surveyor turned in again till morning. Sleep was out of the question, however.

As soon as it was light, a friend of the erratic man on the roof was fetched. The friend was also a bit queer, and succeeded in inducing him to hurl the saw and the axe at the onlookers. The knife he would not part with. Then queer one No. 2 climbed up, and waged a battle on the roof with the other queer fellow. The surveyor urged diplomatic dealing and caution, but his

THE political woman has been somewhat prominently before the public during the past week, with interesting and, it is to be hoped, not unproductive results. Public political meetings convened by women have been held in Wanganui and in Auckland, and though neither one nor the other is likely to prove of any great or immediate political importance, both are worthy of more than passing consideration and attention. Considerable capital has been made, by those to whom political activity in woman is an abomination, out of the fact that the Auckland meeting was a divided one, and that the proceedings were of the class usually described as 'lively.' It is certainly to be regretted that the want of a little tact and judgment should have given the hard-dying conservatism, which disbelieves in the advancement of women, so excellent a peg on which to hang exaggerative and damaging reports. At the same time, it must be remembered that the faults of the meeting have been, to say the least, made the most of, while such virtues as it possessed have been entirely ignored.

VIZWED dispassionately, the meeting was no worse than many (we cannot say the majority) of those held and convened by men. The personalities exchanged between Mrs Daldy and Mrs Collings were neither better nor worse, wiser or more foolish, than those which we have heard exchanged more times when masculine political disputants have warmed to their work. And though a platform interchange of amenities between two speakers, where one doubts the competency of the other's judgment, and that other responds by calling the antagonist to order and to retract, may amuse rather than edify the public, yet it is unfair to make mountains out of mole hills just because the moles on this occasion are of the feminine gender. It is, nevertheless, a pity, a very great pity, that there should have been mole hills at all. Mountains may be climbed, and though those who are prepared for them do not do so, mole hills are easy things to stumble over. One cannot help remembering, too, that we once heard a good deal from women about the discreditable manner in which *men* bickered, and squabbled, and lost their tempers, and became personal in the discussion of politics, and we were surely given to understand that woman would show man a good example when once she began political work. She has certainly begun, but we yet await the example.

BUT after all, 'the liveliness'—so to term it—of the Auckland meeting, though made much of in certain quarters, was not the point most open to criticism—and unfavourable criticism. No person who attended the meeting or even read the reports of it, could fail to have been struck at the really lamentable ignorance displayed on the subjects under discussion by the ladies who so ardently discussed them. If women desire to engage actively in politics, they must take the trouble to arm themselves for the fray. Before speaking at a public meeting on questions of such intricacy and importance as those discussed in Auckland, a superficial knowledge of the matter is at least advisable. To get up on the platform and to address a convened meeting of citizens and citizenesses on a question with the very rudiments of which you are unacquainted is certainly imprudent, and approaches perilously near to impudence and impertinence. Yet this the ladies did at the Auckland meeting. Many of us do not agree with the cheap money to farmers' scheme, some on the ground of impracticability in practice, others from a more decidedly antagonistic point of view; but for a speaker on the subject, on one side or the other, to tell a large audience that farmers don't want to borrow money, in your opinion, argues so fatuous an ignorance of the subject that all