



EITHER the old resourceful, indomitable British salt is extinct with the wooden ship he manoeuvred so long and so well, or naval architecture in Great Britain is on its last legs. No sooner are we through with one disaster than we are furnished with another. No sooner have we warped a million pound ship at immense cost off a Biscayan shoal than we are confronted with the spectacle of a hundred thousand pounder piled on a reef. Scarcely have we time to recover from the loss of the Victoria, rammed by the Camperdown in broad daylight on a smooth sea, than we are met by the news of the total loss of the Ringarooma. Truly the behaviour of the British fleet during the last ten years has been a spectacle for gods and men. Gun explosions, collisions, wrecks, and strandings have occurred with a frequency to which the incident of the 'Invincible Spanish Armada' alone offers a parallel. Would it be matter for wonder if the haggard tax payer perambulating the streets of England in his uppers, should cry out for war in preference to disastrous peace? War with its risks, but also with its chance of recouping on the foreign tax payer a tithe of the enormous losses incurred in the preservation of universal quiet.

The old proverb, 'Any stick is good enough to beat a dog with' might be paraphrased in this colony into, 'Any excuse serves for a holiday.' But it must be granted that there was some justification in giving the Auckland school children more or less of a holiday last Friday to enable them to convey their exhibits to the Children's Flower Show at the Choral Hall in the morning, and in the afternoon to search, with bated breath and flushed, eager faces, for the coveted prize marks upon their flowers and vegetables. The idea of the Show, and the immense success attending its execution are alike due to Professor and Mrs Thomas, to whose untiring energy and excellent diplomatic skill, aided by willing friends, the Auckland children owe the great enjoyment derived from the whole affair, on Friday and Saturday. And not a few grown-ups added their smiles and voices to the bubbling laughter and happy chatter of the crowd of young folks who thronged the hall. Gardening is such a thoroughly wholesome occupation, and a love of flowers so elevating and ennobling that Children's Flower Shows ought to receive the greatest encouragement from everyone who has the interest of this young colony at heart. Every child can add its mite, and a little one living in the heart of the city with no possibility of a garden, cheerfully set to work and grew radishes in a box, winning for them a first prize! The exhibits were wonderfully good, some lovely flowers being shown, early as is the time of year, and trying as were the snow storms of last week. A capital band added much to the general pleasure.

OUR colonial shopkeeper is somewhat prone to bewail the general dullness of colonial trade, and to speak, even if he does not think, enviously of the advantages enjoyed by London tradesmen, and the richness of the harvest to be reaped during the season. But there is a companion picture of more sombre hue of whose very existence few people are cognisant. A good season may and does mean fine times for London shopkeepers, but when our colonial tradesmen think enviously of this, they should remember what fearful losses are sustained if a great Royalty dies, or if, for any reason, the season turns out a bad one. It has been so this year. The season, after a lifeless existence of six weeks only, expired with surprising suddenness on the 25th or 26th July. This we gather from English papers, *via* Brindisi, on Saturday. Commenting on the failure of fashion and frivolity this year, Labby says truly:—'It is difficult, of course, to calculate it accurately, but many would be astonished were

they to know what a large distribution of money is caused even by a garden party at Marlborough House. Supposing that a thousand women attend this, and taking as a ridiculously low estimate that they each spend ten pounds upon their dress for the occasion, this item alone produces a total outlay of ten thousand pounds. To it, of course, has to be added a number of other channels in which money is spent through that single entertainment, and if the truth were known, as many of the dresses are very costly, a Marlborough House garden party must mean to trade the receipt of close upon thirty thousand pounds! It would be good policy for Parliament to petition the Prince to give a series of them. More practical would it be, however, for the tradesmen who are principally affected to subscribe the necessary sum between them, and, representing the matter to the Prince, beg of him to give the garden party, and permit them to defray the cost. This is not a poetical proposition, but a practical one, and in these unromantic days, and especially where the issue is so serious to the poor, it is the practical that has to be pursued.'

ON a smaller scale the same plan might, by the way, be tried here. Wellington has its session, but Auckland with Christchurch and Dunedin rarely get a 'season' save in race week, when the fleet is in, or—if he be hospitably inclined—when a Governor is in residence. Suppose, for instance, next summer if Lord and Lady Glasgow were in Auckland the shopkeepers were to beg to be allowed to defray the cost of a garden party and ball at Government House. Would the speculation pay? Decidedly so, we should say. Besides, as these affairs are done, the cost of the experiment would not be excessive. Still we should scarcely like to be the delegate sent to propose the matter to Lord Glasgow. He is usually good-tempered enough, but—well, the interview would probably be *lively*.

It is a decided pity that we colonials are so hard to rouse on the question of sanitation and sanitary reform. Every now and then we hear of one or other of our greater cities claiming the very questionable honour of being one of the worst drained and most insanitary cities in the colony. There is a sensation for a day or so and then the matter drops again. Dunedin is for the moment to the fore, but it was only the other day we heard growls from the Wellingtonians, and Auckland is certainly wise in keeping a discreet silence on the subject. The drainage of Auckland is, we imagine, as bad as it is possible for any drainage to be. In Dunedin the medical faculty are endeavouring to rouse the public to some conception of their true position. The utility of appealing to the humorously termed 'proper officials' has, of course, been recognised and proved in Dunedin as elsewhere. The persons supposed to look after such matters at present certainly do not adequately fulfil the duties of their position. It is possible, of course, that they are not able to do so, but in more cases than one we wot of, the conduct of the 'proper officials' would lead an innocent body to believe they didn't care.

Take, for instance, the case quoted by the Chairman of the Medical Association in Dunedin:

He had been going through the fire in connection with the leakage of sewage water on to his premises. After a great deal of difficulty and trouble, the Board of Health (Members of City Council) took the matter up, and under the supervision of the city surveyor a full inquiry was made. The pipes were examined and the cesspit was examined, with the result that a report was sent in that there was not sufficient evidence to prove the necessity for any interference. After that report was sent in the speaker procured a sample of the drainage, which he produced to the meeting, and it was handed round for inspection. (The sample was contained in a bottle, and was a dirty green liquid, and upon the cork being extracted by Dr. Colquhoun a mild explosion followed.) There was, the Chairman added, absolutely no one to see the law was carried out.

So much for Dunedin. Now for Auckland. Last summer a friend of the writer complained bitterly to him of the conduct of his neighbours whose habits were so filthy as to utterly bar description here. The condition of the next door premises and yard were such and the stench so intolerable that though they used carbolic by the tin, both man and wife felt deadly sickly, and were scared to death of typhoid. Appeal to landlord had done no good; for certain reasons an immediate 'move' was utterly impossible without very serious financial loss—loss which could not be afforded. At his request a letter was sent by the present writer to the city officials, whom he supposed looked after such matters. There may have been some mistake, but not the slightest attention was paid to the letter. No answer was received, and so enquiry even made into the affair. As for the condition of Auckland drinking water, it is too disgusting to imagine what the water from Western Springs must become in a short while.

THERE seems a very prevalent idea that the emancipation of women, the revolt of daughters and what not, has had the result of bringing into contempt—so far as advanced women go—the joys and duties of maternity. Whether the woman who is an ardent politician, 'a cautious Conservative,' or 'a rash Radical,' will make a better or a worse wife and mother than the less modern type whose thoughts never wandered far from domestic concerns is a big question. Personally, though we fully appreciate the justice of the bestowal of the franchise on women, we are not altogether sorry that our own childhood was passed in earlier and less progressive days. An interest in politics does not of necessity mean a lessening of interest in the nursery, but the garden of a man who has no interest save gardening will ever be more beautiful than that of the man to whom the garden is but one of several or even of two interests. And surely the cases are parallel.

ONE'S thoughts tend this way after reading the reviews on what must be a very fine and a very noble book—Lord Dufferin's memoir of his mother. That the late Lady Dufferin was one of the most beautiful, wittiest, and best woman of the century most people knew. 'Spontaneous goodness, like spontaneous wit and humour, emanated—a fascinating, an irresistible, a fertilising force—from this true daughter of the Sheridans. Her father was Tom Sheridan, Richard Brinsley's son, and his children had all the wonderful Irish beauty as well as Irish charm of the family. . . . But (says her brilliant son) the chief and dominant characteristic of her nature was her power of loving. Generally speaking, persons who love intensely are seen to concentrate their love upon a single object; while in my mother's case love seemed an inexhaustible force. Her love for her horse, for her dog, for her bird, was a passion; and the affection she lavished on me, on her brothers, sisters, relations, and friends, was as persistent, all-embracing, perennial, and indestructible as the light of the sun.'

WHEN he has recorded her death, Lord Dufferin breaks into the following pardonable threnody: 'Thus there went out of the world one of the sweetest, most beautiful, most accomplished, wittiest, most loving and lovable human beings that ever walked the earth. There was no quality wanting to her perfection; and I say this, not prompted by the partiality of a son, but as one well acquainted with the world and with both men and women.' Even from his babyhood this wonderful recollection of his mother seems to have fixed itself in his memory, 'as her loving, radiant face, which was my childhood's Heaven, as indeed it never ceased to be, bent over my cradle.'

AND yet there are women who despise the mission of the mother! For the world, for humanity, for posterity—for any of those grandiose objects about which the 'new' womankind are concerned—what greater work can any woman perform than to train her children, if with children she is blessed, as this mother trained her son, and to leave behind her amongst those she knew and loved such a memory?

NOW that New Zealand and France have both awakened to the monstrous injustice and iniquity of the present divorce laws, considerable amazement and a good deal of instruction may be got from a passing glimpse of the marriage and divorce laws of the world or of some of the countries thereof. And as the *Speaker* justly says, the marriage laws of the civilized world show no lack of variety. In Russia you must not marry if you are over eighty, or if you have had three husbands or three wives already. Why the interdict should fall on the fourth marriage, and not on the third, it were hard to say. In Roumania, after divorce, you must not marry again. Italy, at all events, is more logical, and says you must not be divorced at all—a rule productive of much social mischief which the curious may study in Signor Mantegazza's book about the choice of a wife. South Carolina is of one mind with Italy, though in forty-six States of the American Union divorce is remarkable for its simplicity and despatch. Roumania, which forbids the divorced to re-marry, is incongruously ready to dissolve marriage, if convinced that married people cannot dwell together in unity. In France ill-treatment of a mother-in-law is sufficient ground for divorce; but, in the absence of definitions, we do not know whether this offence includes the traditional satire to which the mothers of wives are exposed. If a French husband applies such an epithet as '*canaille*' to his wife in the presence of her children, she can divorce him, but if the husband gets a divorce on the ground of his wife's infidelity, she is still liable to imprisonment for the misdeemeanor.

BUT worse remains behind. If France is backward in recognising woman's individuality, the bad eminence of sheer repression belongs to Portugal. A married woman, in that benighted land, 'may not publish her literary works without her husband's consent.' It is easy to imagine the domestic tragedy which must spring from a tyranny so gross.