

John Bull and Company

BY MAX O'REILL.



AN Englishman was one day swaggering before a Frenchman about the immensity of the British Empire, and he concluded his remarks by saying: 'Please to remember, my dear sir, that the sun never sets on the possessions of the English.' 'I am not surprised at that,' replied the good Frenchman, 'the sun is obliged to always keep an eye on the rascals.'

France is the foremost country of the world. This is a fact which it were puerile to seek to prove, seeing that the French admit it themselves. Happy and content in their own country, which is able to support them, the French, of all the nations of the world, are the people who least bother their heads about what is happening outside it; in fact, the masses of the people are in gross ignorance about the rest of the planet. The Frenchman believes in his heart that foreigners were created and sent into the world to minister to his diversion. He looks upon the Belgian as a dear, good simpleton, the Italian as a noisy nobody, the German as a heavy, pompous pedant, he thinks the Americans mad, and the English eccentric and grotesque. And he goes on his way delighted. I have seen French people laugh side-splittingly when I told them that the English drink champagne with their dinner, and claret at dessert.

To be sure, my own way of looking at these things is very much the same. How should it be otherwise? After all, a Frenchman is a Frenchman to the end of the chapter. Of one thing, at all events, I am firmly convinced, and that is that one nation is not better nor worse than another; each one is different from the others, that is all. This is a deep conviction forced upon one by travel.

To a great many people, the word foreigner signifies a droll creature, a kind of savage. In the eyes of a traveller,

world. I say, and repeat emphatically, 'like the English at home,' for it would be a mistake to judge the English by the specimens one meets travelling on the continent. If one wants to judge of a man, one must study him at home,

the bush it is always open house hospitality; the stranger may enter and eat, nay, in many cases he may sleep also, if it pleases him to do so.

If the people of the colonies have all the little failings of



Hanna, photo.

THE FIRST GAME OF THE SEASON

when he has his natural surroundings, and he is thoroughly himself. The Englishman at home pleases me, and I do my best to please him; but let an Englishman in Paris stop me to ask, without even lifting his hat: 'Où est le roue de

a young society, they have, without exception, all the qualities. In this they resemble the Americans. The fact is, however, the Australian begins to dislike hearing himself called colonial. He is proud of his country, the spirit of nationality is growing in him day by day. He is proud, not only of his country, but of his little town, that he has seen spring up through the earth, so to speak, and that he has laboured to make flourishing.

Like the American, he asks you, as you leave the railway carriage, almost before you have had time to shake the dust from your garments, what you think of Australia, and how you like his little town that you have only just set eyes on, and, though that town should consist of but one small street, dotted with wooden cottages, he will offer, without delay, to take you round, and show you the sights of the town. The sights of the town! That is too funny for anything.

I was talking one day to an Englishman who had been established in the colonies nearly fifty years. We talked about Europe, and I had occasion to mention Bismarck, and a few other well-known names. I verily believe that he had never heard any of them before. Presently I said to him:

'Perhaps you do not take much interest in the things that are going on in Europe?'

'My dear sir,' he replied, 'to tell you the truth I shall soon have been fifty years in this country, and now I can do without Europe altogether.'

Here, in Australia, as well as in the other colonies, I cannot help being struck with the fact that the English colonies are in the hands of the Scots. Out of seven Governors, five are Scottish: the President of the Legislative Council is a Scot, and so are three-fourths of the councillors; the Mayor of Melbourne is of the same nationality, and the Agent General in London is another Scotchman. England ought not to call her colonies 'Greater Britain,' but 'Greater Scotland,' and the United States might be named 'Greater Ireland.' As for the south of New Zealand, it is as Scotch as Edinburgh, and more Scotch than Glasgow. Go to Broken Hill, the richest silver mine in the world, and you will see five great shafts bearing the following names: Drew, MacIntyre, MacGregor, Jamieson, and MacCulloch, five Scots. It is the same thing everywhere.

Melbourne, the intelligent, the much alive, closes its museums on Sundays. A deputation waited one day upon Sir Graham Berry, then Prime Minister of the colony, to



Hanna, photo. AUCKLAND BOWLING CLUB--THE OPENING OF THE SEASON.--SEE 'OUR ILLUSTRATIONS'

a foreigner is a worthy man who is as good as himself, and who belongs to a nation which has as many good qualities as the one that he himself hails from. After all, no one is born a foreigner; we all belong to somewhere, do we not?

I remember an American who opened a conversation with me by launching at me, as a preliminary, the following question:

'Foreigner, ain't you?'

'I shall be,' I replied, 'when I set foot in your country.'

Another conviction that I have acquired in travelling is that nations are like individuals: when they succeed at something, it is because they possess qualities which explain their success. And I hope the reader, when he closes these pages, will be able to explain to himself how the English have succeeded in founding the British Empire. In India it is to be seen John Bull Pacha, a grand reigneur followed by gaily-robed servitors who do profound obeisance to him. It is the master in the midst of a subjected people. In the colonies the conquered races have been suppressed. In Canada you see John Bull quite at home, busy, fat, and flourishing, a pink tip to his nose, and his head snug in a fur cap; it is John Bull in a ball. It is the sea. In Australia you see him long and lean, nonchalant, happy-go-lucky, his face sunburned, his head crowned with a wide-brimmed, light felt hat, walking with slow tread, his arms pendant, his legs out of all proportion. It is John Bull drawn out. It is the kangaroo. But it is John Bull still, John Bull, Junior, eating his morning porridge, and living just as if he were still in his old island, eating his roast beef and plum pudding, and washing it down with tea or whiskey. He is hardly changed at all.

Let us then study the English in all those countries that are to be seen marked in red on the maps of the world published in England, countries that John Bull has acquired at the cost of very little blood and a good deal of whisky, always converting the natives to Christianity, and their territory to his own uses.

Revolvy?' and he displeases and annoys me at the same time, so that I promptly answer: 'Connate paz!'

Just like the English at home I found the Australians—and, to include the people of New Zealand and Tasmania, I should say the Australasians—great in hospitality. The most hearty invitations were tendered from all sides. In



Hanna, photo.

AN EXCITING MOMENT.

Like the English at home, the inhabitants of the English colonies are the most amiable and the most hospitable in the