



THE paragraphs in last week's issue concerning the value and danger of the new defence in murder cases, that the deed was committed under hypnotic suggestion, has drawn several letters from interested subscribers. They deal mainly with the attempt to shoot an Auckland solicitor, and cannot therefore be published at present. That people may be hypnotised, and when under the influence of hypnotism commit terrible crimes must be admitted, and counsel for the defence of prisoners have not been slow to take advantage of the new opening. One of the letters I have received contains a most ingenious defence of the young man who so nearly pistolled Mr Campbell on Wednesday, and one cannot help regretting not being able to publish it. A Wellington gentleman, however, furnishes the most interesting communication. He points out that a hypnotist can not only compel a man or woman to do murder for him, but can by hypnotic suggestion force an innocent man to confess himself guilty of a crime which he—the hypnotist—has committed. Not only could such a thing happen, but it actually has happened. In proof of this my correspondent sends an article of the greatest interest, but which the exigencies of space have compelled me to cut down.

THE story is, it appears, an old legal one, and concerns two men of the name of Bourne, who were arrested and tried for the murder of one Colvin against whom they had a grudge. Colvin had disappeared and the Bourne were charged with his murder. There was nothing upon which the officers of the law could proceed, because there was absolutely no proof of the *corpus delicti*—the body of the crime. That is to say, the accused could not be tried until there was sufficient evidence at hand to show that a crime had been committed. As it was there was nothing more than suspicion. After some delay, however, it was announced by the Prosecuting Attorney that he was prepared to go to trial; that he had obtained the confession of one if not both of the prisoners. The story of the confession as it came out was that the brothers had been confined in separate cells; that they had become worn out by the importunities of those who urged them to confess, and that finally one of the brothers admitted that he did the deed. When this fact was made known to the other he stoutly insisted that it was he and not his brother who perpetrated the crime.

STEPHEN BOURNE, who was convicted and sentenced to be hanged, confessed, so it was said, that without the knowledge of his brother George he had murdered Colvin and buried his body beneath a heap of stones in a certain field. It was shown on his trial that the bones were found just as he described them and they were presumably produced in court. On the day appointed for the execution of Stephen Bourne, and just as they were about to adjust the noose to his neck, Richard Colvin appeared on the scene, and the hanging proceeded no further. Colvin explained that he had wandered away from home in a fit of mental aberration, but had recovered in time, and hearing by chance of the arrest and conviction of Bourne, he had hastened home to prevent the consummation of a legal crime.

THOSE who have had the most experience in dealing with criminal law and that class of officers who devote their lives to the conviction of criminals, not to say to the discovery of crimes, know how unsafe it is to rely upon the testimony of such officers as to confessions made by prisoners. These considerations led the higher courts of the land to lay down a rule of criminal evidence, which is now universally recognized, under which no conviction can be had without proof of the *corpus delicti* beyond a reasonable doubt, entirely independent and irrespective of the confession of the accused. It may be said that in the Bourne case there was proof of

the *corpus delicti* by the exhibition of the bones which were brought from the stone heap in the field which Stephen Bourne either did or did not describe. But when it is remembered that when Colvin returned and exploded the supposed confession of Stephen Bourne, a further examination of the bones disclosed the fact that they belonged to a diseased mule (this is sober and petrified fact), it will be seen how little the proof of the *corpus delicti* in that case depended upon anything but the alleged confession.

In the literature of criminal trials and transactions there are many cases hardly less remarkable than the one just mentioned. There are some well-remembered instances where accused persons have been tried, convicted and executed for murder where there was no lack of proof of the *corpus delicti*, but where there was no evidence to connect the accused with the crime, except alleged confessions—cases where, after execution, the real criminals were subsequently discovered. In other words, where innocent men have been hung for crimes with which they had nothing to do. Is it not practically certain that some of these 'confessions' were obtained by interested parties by mesmeric influence, the object being, perhaps, to compass the death of the innocent man who confesses.

ONE is getting heartily sick of the woman-equals-man discussion, which has taken a new and vigorous, not to say virulent, lease of life in the Synod at Nelson. The whole question was discussed *ad nauseam* when the Female Franchise Bill was yet unpassed, and when once the women of the colony had been admitted to political equality most of us heaved a sigh of satisfaction in the mistaken belief that the arguments both *pro* and *con* were done with at last. Vain hope. The Church plodding heavily behind has re-opened the discussion, and the latest state of the readers of newspapers is worse than the first. Members of Parliament are long-winded enough and prosy enough in all conscience, and the reports of their sayings are dull and dismal reading indeed; but the synodsmen—so to call the proying parsons—who have wasted so much valuable time at Nelson are infinitely more dull, infinitely more verbose, and the reports of their proceedings a positive terror to the man who groans to find the best columns in the paper absorbed by them. Few, one imagines, read them for pleasure—madness would lie that way—and there is little indeed to reward those unhappy beings whose duty obliges them to read or to listen to the speeches. Still there was a pearl here and there. The GRAPHIC, of course, agrees that women should have a vote in vestry and church matters, but I could not help feeling that Mr — went out of his way to court a smart retort when he alluded to the benefit public bodies would derive from the presence of women, owing to the pacific tendency and 'sweet reasonableness of women.' What about Mrs Yates at Onehunga! Sweet reasonableness!! Ye gods!!!

COLONIAL youth beware! Avoid the moonlight picnic, distrust the custom of sitting out. A new terror threatens the engaged young man, therefore fight shy of all that tends that way. Hitherto the dangers of engagement have been of so old established an order that it would be an impious and sacrilegious hand that should dare to use a pen against them, but when a new terror is added it is time to rebel. The tobacco-pouch of push brodered with the fingers of devotion we have come to look on with equanimity, even with favour. It is fat and clumsy and gaudy to a degree, but no man would dare to hint that it was not a charming present. The splendidly floral braces are, too, a legitimate offering, and one to be accepted by the patient and well-behaved male with outward joy and inward resignation. Slippers, of course, one regards as inevitable, and about a year ago in this colony knitted neckties were added to the list. They were allowed to pass without remark, and this perhaps accounts for the fact that we are to have the new terror. Straw plaiting is the latest craze, and it is the thing for a young woman in smart society to give her *fiancé* a straw hat—I mean plaited by her own fingers. The Queen herself has given an impetus to the new fad by positively making a hat for 'dear Battenberg.' When the editor of the GRAPHIC read this announcement he trembled for New Zealand's *jeunesse dorée*, for what will not the loyal colonial girl do to imitate royalty. But he still hoped till in a New Zealand paper he read an advertisement announcing that lessons could be given and materials bought from a certain well-known shop not a thousand miles from Cathedral Square, Christchurch. As someone has truly said in lamenting the innovation, the prospect is formidable indeed; braces and pouches can be hidden away, but a straw hat is always obvious, and seems

likely now and then to be embarrassingly so. The imaginative man will have no difficulty in picturing to himself half a dozen forms of home-made hats which will render suicide not only justifiable but inevitable.

A MALEVOLENT and misguided female has, I observe, been advising women to go in for 'house to house' open air photography for a living. As everyone knows, the method of procedure is simple. You take your camera to a suitable place, say a terrace containing twenty or more houses, and secure one or more views of it. Then you send copies to all the householders resident in the said terrace—their names may be procured from the directory—and request that they will send a small sum, say a shilling or eighteen pence, for the photograph you have taken of their residence, adding that further copies can be had if desired. Probably ten or twenty will not respond at all, but if nine of the rest send their shillings, and the tenth orders half-a-dozen copies, you will not get a bad return for your expenditure in the matter of plates, sensitised paper, and postage stamps. This is obviously only an extension of the idea of the people who photograph the 'Hatch, Match, and Dispatch' columns in the daily papers, and send copies to all the people who have had events in their families. But it has evidently 'caught on,' for in certain new neighbourhoods the speculative photographer follows close upon the heels of the speculative builder, whose new villas are often taken by the camera long before they are taken by the tenants.

THE woman who follows the plan in the foregoing paragraph will probably cause 'man, poor man' a vast amount of misery. It was possible to swear at the men who tried this game, but of course one will have to smile a polite 'No thank you, not to day,' to women when they begin. The GRAPHIC would, by the way, suggest that the plan may at slight risk be made very much more remunerative. If all the family are enticed into the verandah while the house is being taken, a handy accomplice—beg pardon, assistant—may profitably employ herself clearing out the plate box and any valuables to be found in the back rooms, entrance being made by the back door, which is almost sure to have been left open. No charge is made for this idea. It is given away with this number.

IT is surprising how year after year the same questions crop up on the same topics. An experienced journalist can almost predict the month when certain familiar yet strange questions will find their way into the query columns. There is, for instance, that time-honoured and really unanswerable demand—what becomes of all the pins? England alone, it appears, turns out some fifty-four millions daily, and Germany and the rest of the world must average about another fifty millions. 100 millions of pins a day! Surely these are not, cannot be all absolutely made away with daily. As has been said by a contemporary on this important matter, it is rather a difficult thing to lose a pin absolutely. Washerwomen manage to lose a good many in the recesses of one's linen, but the wearer finds them every time, and usually has some pungent remarks to make on the discovery. The number arranged by thoughtless nurses in the softer parts of babies' anatomies is doubtless large, but they usually come to light again, the baby, and the equally wakeful father, know the reason why.

PEOPLE are, indeed, most reluctant to let pins be lost. They remember vaguely that a millionaire, when they were children, scribbled his fortune to picking up a pin, and they are always cricking their backs and staring their eyes in endeavour to follow his example. A great number of pins find their way to the dust heap, but the persons who over-rake these unsavoury accumulations doubtless return many of them to civilisation, only, however, to be lost again. The only suggested explanation at all likely to be accurate, says the *Globe*, is this: 'That just as there are absurd people who imagine that by collecting a million used penny stamps they may gain some great privilege, so there are other misguided persons who believe that a million pins have a special market value, and thus absorb the enormous production.'

JUST now when we hear so much of England's desire and intention to establish 'protectorates' in various regions disturbed by the Asiatic war, it is amusing to read of the fate that befell the British steamship *Yarrowdale*, within a few hours' steaming of the port of Suez, over which England exercises a protectorate in the full significance of the word. The *Yarrowdale*, a ship of 2,000 net tonnage ran on a reef known as *Abou Nahas*, situated at the entrance of the Gulf of Suez, about one hundred and fifty miles south of the chief port of the great canal. As soon as the news of her wreck reached Suez the local agents sent down the Egyptian steamer *Hodeida*, with pumps and other salvage material, a European diver, and one hundred labourers, to try and get her off; but the *Hodeida* was not powerful enough to tow the *Yarrowdale* off the reef and therefore she returned to Suez. In the meanwhile it seems that after jettisoning about 600 tons of cargo, the vessel, when under steam, was got off the reef;