

WHO SHALL CARRY THE PURSE?

A DISCUSSION is going on in the Old Country and in America as to whether the man or his wife should control the family exchequer. The new woman is demanding in her usual insistent way, 'who shall carry the purse?' and is trying to get up an agitation among womankind of her own and the purely female sex on this question. She has long ago decided that under the new order of things which she proposes to introduce there shall be a total re-distribution of duties in and out of the household. Among other things woman is to carry the money bags—man, it appears, having proved a perfect Judas in the matter, and so far as I can make out he is to be allowed in return to carry the baby. In this question of the purse the new woman has appealed to a weak spot in the hearts of her less advanced sisters. Where does there exist the wife who does not honestly believe that she could manage the financial affairs of the household better than her husband? She does not covet the entire control of the balance-sheet. To do her justice, she is quite satisfied with the half. Give her the expenditure side to manipulate, and she will give her lord and master free control of the income side. But she does long to have the expenditure columns and the cheque book under her dainty thumb. It is this weakness that the new women have assailed. The new women fished for her with the bait of divided skirts and such like things, but she steadily refused to rise to these. This last rise is, however, proving wonderfully successful, and though it cannot, as long as logic governs the ways of men, bring about the change sought after in the domestic economy, it may create a good deal of discontent among the ladies. Now I am quite prepared to admit that woman has a grievance in this business. She works in many instances quite as hard as her husband in proportion to her strength, and in a sense contributes to the support of the household just as much as he does. She is, too, much more conversant with the needs of the family than he. Yet he almost invariably treats her as a non-working partner in the matrimonial contract, and when she makes demand for money, complies too often in a grudging and suspicious spirit, as if he thought she was meditating some terrible extravagance. Woman-kind—among whom there are many excellent managers, often much better than men—naturally resent this attitude on the part of the male animal, and with a good deal of reason in some instances they have re-echoed the teaching of the New Woman, who tells them that they, as the real rulers and organisers of the household, should hold the purse. Doubtless there are women who are quite entitled to do so, and in affluent families it does not much matter who finances the internal affairs of the house. But among the great majority of families, with whom the question of the difference of a trifling expense is a matter of moment, and constant economies and self-denials are necessary if they are to keep out of debt, it is best that the bank should be kept by those who have the best idea of the value of money; and there is no question that from their training and the fact that they have to make it, men usually have a much better idea than women; or at least if he is not, the fact that on him ultimately rests the responsibility of the whole family will make him the more careful, and stronger to withstand temptation to expenditure than his wife. That temptation is no inconsiderable factor in the question. The shop windows nowadays seem to have been specially designed to tempt frail womankind. They contain so many beautiful things in wearing apparel, or in ornaments which would make the house look more beautiful—and they are all bargains mark you—that the sweetest, most unselfish, and most economically-minded housewives in creation are apt to fall. It requires man with his dull inartistic matter-of-fact soul to resist these things.

A CANDID CANDIDATE.

THE pre-election speeches of seekers after Parliamentary honours are usually very stale, flat, and unprofitable. I don't mean to say that they are inferior to the utterances of the same men when they have developed into full-fledged M.H.R.'s, but they ought to be much better; for when men get into Parliament they are so inebriated with their own verbosity that they lade out any twaddle under the impression that it is eloquent wisdom. A pre-election speech, especially in the case of a man who has never been in the House before, should have something in it if there is anything in the man. Every mortal, however poorly furnished intellectually, has a few grains of original wisdom in his head according to my theory, and these he ought to be able to make something of. But, whether it is owing to some fatal influence in politics or not I can't say, a careful analysis of every address to the electors reveals not even 'a colour.' The facts and fancies are the same we have all heard before, and even the lies are devoid of any originality to commend them. Probably the most original speech of the day was delivered last week to a

that on that day there were laid the foundation of a naval supremacy which has in turn been the basis of England's great empire. If anyone objects to the commemoration on the ground of jingoism—though I hardly think any one would—there is another stimulus of less questionably moral character which the recollection of Nelson's great victory supplies.

'Not once or twice in our rough island story
The path of duty was the way to glory.'

sings the poet, and he doubtless had in his mind's eye Trafalgar Bay and that never-to-be-forgotten signal. It has been objected that there is a ring of theatricality about Nelson's immortal message—'England expects every man to do his duty.' But the charge comes from those who never could have understood the simplicity of the great Admiral. Quite true, a great deal of the talk we hear about duty is mere empty high falutin, worse than worthless, and is often associated with no real sense of duty whatever. But Great Britain will never believe that this was the case with its sailor hero. The message was the simple expression of a soul that had followed implicitly at the call of duty, and it has always seemed to me that he was inspired at that moment by the magnitude of the issue at stake to give voice to the sentiment nearest his heart. Had it been the nature of the man to prate habitually of duty, or of the nation to do so, the effect of his words might have been momentary, but they would never have survived in all their lustre till to-day. Their power lay in the fact that they put into epigrammatic phrase a truth—the supremacy of duty—which mankind has acknowledged in its best moments to be its highest ideal. If the commemoration of Trafalgar can help to preserve that ideal before the British race throughout the world in never so small a way, let us by all means proclaim the day a national holiday. It will be the cheapest and most valuable holiday a people ever had. And if a flag flying from the masthead on the 21st of October can recall the immortal signal—most fitting to be the watchword of our nation—then let the Government invest in every signal code that is on the market.

A MATTER OF TASTE.

IT was remarked long ago by the witty Vicar of Startling that a man of good taste is a man whose taste is the same as your own. In the same way everything that you find displeasing you are certain to designate a nuisance, and if it is a public thing, then a public nuisance. It is all a question of tastes about which, as we all know, there is no disputing. For example, I notice recently that in a certain town in the colony the Salvation Army took exception to a merry-go-round because it interfered with their devotional exercises. The braying of the steam organ drowned what to their ears was the dulcet pipings of the cornet and the mellow thunder of the big drum, and the shouts of the giddy multitude made it extremely difficult for the Salvationists to hear themselves pray. Now, I have no doubt that many worldly people would as soon have the merry-go-round for a neighbour as the Salvation Army. The former would give you a respite occasionally, the latter very seldom, for the one is moved by cash and the other by sentiment, which is much cheaper. And even people who are not worldly object very strongly to those who worship sounding a trumpet before them. To them the Salvation Army open-air services are essentially a nuisance, and if they do not resent it, the reason is simply good nature, or a hesitancy to obstruct any movement however crude that may be well intentioned or productive of good in any form. But if they liked to take action they might have no trouble in proving that the Salvation Army was a nuisance, as the Army might prove the merry-go-round to be one. The question of what really constitutes a legal, or to speak more properly, an illegal nuisance, lately stirred up a village in the State of New York. Because Mrs Greenwald was compelled to call her little daughter frequently the neighbours began to object. Some of them had little daughters of their own, and, in the abstract, the plan of calling children to the parental home was not objectionable. In fact, it is absolutely necessary. But the complaint was made about Mrs Greenwald's method of calling. It is said that her voice is not altogether melodious, and she varied the name of the child from 'Gerty' to 'Ger-troo-oo-oo-oo!' in a manner which was extremely monotonous. The Board of Health was appealed to to abate the nuisance, but the mother insisted that she might call her wandering lamb whenever and in any manner she liked. She said she was not to blame for her voice, and did not propose to attempt to change it just to gratify the silly notions of her neighbours. As the papers say, the case was proceeding when the last 'Prisco' mail left for Auckland.

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

'Twas IN TRAFALGAR BAY.

TRAFALGAR DAY, Wednesday last, passed off very quietly throughout the whole colony. Very little was there to remind one of that grim day ninety-one years ago when the Spanish headland re-echoed the thunder of the immortal victory. Of course there was a certain amount of bunting afloat in the air from ships, masts and house-tops, but flag flying has lost a good deal of significance when every hotel is willing to show a Union Jack on the death of any mere skipper of a timber scow; and seeing that sea captains are as fond of bedecking their ships as some ladies are their persons, it would manifestly be a mistake to measure patriotism by the number of yards of coloured material that can be raised aloft. I am far from decrying the celebration. I believe in keeping anniversaries of this sort much more than I do in perpetuating religious animosities on the 14th of July, or the mere name of some saint, who is semi-mythical and semi-sinner. Saint George, as I understand, got the position of patron saint of England on the ground of some miraculous assistance he is alleged to have rendered to the Christians in the first crusade. But apart altogether from the fact that most people nowadays are inclined to be sceptical in the matter, does it not seem more consonant with the spirit of the age that we should transfer our national allegiance to some more modern and less misty guardian of the national honour? It is very true that we in the colonies only use the saint as an excuse for a holiday. But would it not be better instead of associating our holiday-making with what is meaningless nowadays, to connect it with something that has meaning? If we are to rejoice periodically, why not choose the anniversaries of those days which we would not willingly forget? Then there would be some significance in our national holidays. They would be commemorative of great deeds and great men, and in so far as such commemorations can stimulate our minds to emulate the high examples they recall these would be useful. Trafalgar Day has many claims to be made a national holiday, not the least of which is