

them to others; but there is no enterprise that so utterly sterilises all the better instincts of the soul. I have seen it evidenced in countless cases in New Zealand. The youngster who is encouraged in that attitude of ironical contemplation, that ghostly repression of enthusiasm, that blind indifference to all that is best and highest, grows up a miserable type of humanity; no real pleasure to himself or anyone else. You meet them every day, these men who have irretrievably closed their ears and hardened their hearts to the voice of wisdom; petrified intelligences that can never expand. And they seemed quick and smart enough in their young days; and perhaps in a kind of way they have fulfilled that promise. But only in a kind of way—a very poor kind of way. They choose to cultivate the meaner side of life, to make love to indifference, to stifle the enthusiasms; and they have their reward. 'Criticism become a habit, a fashion, and a system,' says Amiel, 'means the destruction of moral energy, of faith, and of all spiritual force.' This kind of temper is very dangerous among us, for it flattens all the worst instincts of men—indiscipline, irreverence, selfish individualism—and it erodes in social atomism. Woe to the society where negation rules, for life is an affirmation; and a society, a country, a nation, is a living whole capable of death. These words have a direct application to us; for, while with most communities that temper does not begin to make itself apparent except among grown-up people, our children begin to cultivate that barren pseudo-critical faculty almost before they are out of long clothes, and its malign, corroding influence spreads all through the social body. For heaven's sake, let us have a little less of that sort of thing, and a little more general appreciation of 'the things that are more excellent' in life. Let the youngsters be taught to believe, what is the case, that it is infinitely cleverer, infinitely nobler to understand the good than the ill, and that for their own sakes and the sake of the whole world it is better to cultivate enthusiasm than indifference. For the one sown in youth will yield you a thousandfold harvest, while if you cultivate indifference you will reap nothing but thorns. 'To be an enthusiast,' says Wieland, 'is to be the worthiest of affection, the noblest, and the best that a mortal can be.' Here is a lengthy sermon into which I have betrayed my readers, but perhaps they will pardon me; and they can always skip it.

THE REAL LIVE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT.

MR BEN TILLET is something like the unsaleable article at the auction mart. He has been 'going, going, going' from the colonies for some time now, and is not 'gone' yet. At least he was, not away last week, but was lecturing the Wellingtonians on the general anarchy of the working-men in New Zealand and the other colonies. I suspect this second visit of Ben has been made in the hope that New Zealand will, even at the eleventh hour, listen to his voice and live. In his own opinion he undoubtedly possesses the only true recipe for life, and when he came to New Zealand first he was certainly under the impression that he would find a people able and willing to obey his precepts, and walk in the ways he indicated. He preached to us a mixture of strong socialism and weak nihilism, but all to no purpose. The New Zealanders apparently did not want his gospel or him either. When he found this out he took to abusing them, and left for the other side. Now he has come back to abuse them again, and to tell us that we are not a whit better off than other Australasian Colonies, that we are not democratic in the real sense at all, and that it is all our own fault that we are as we are. Probably all that is true enough, but still to be told it does not in the least reconcile us to Mr Tillet's way of looking at things. Our democracy is good enough for us, and we have no particular hankering after Ben's 'real live democratic movement' which he failed to discover in the whole of Australasia. We can pretty well guess from his utterances what sort of a thing his idea of 'a real live democratic movement' would be: something with dynamite in it, perhaps; and we don't want it here. It would seem that even the London dockers did not want it either;

and probably Ben will have to interview the anarchists before he finds disciples to propagate the gospel he came out to the colonies to preach.

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SOME TESTIMONIALS.
Newlands, Waikato, N.Z., Mar. 26th, 1898.
Dear Sir.—I received Watch and Chain in good condition, and am obliged. The watch is working splendidly.—Yours truly, L. N. WAST.
The Globe Watch Co., 105, Pitt St., Sydney.
Kent Farm, Port Albert, Auckland, N.Z., March 9th, 1898.
Sir.—I received the Gent's Silver Watch and Chain quite safe. My son is delighted with it. I enclose remittance for Lady's Gold Watch and Chain; if it gives as much satisfaction as the silver one, we shall be very pleased to recommend your firm.—Yours respectfully, MARY H. BOOTH.
The Globe Watch Co., 105, Pitt St. Sydney.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Notice to Contributors.—Any letters or MSS. received by the Editor of the "New Zealand Graphic" will be immediately acknowledged in this column.

'M.T.'—'E.L.'—'Aurora.'—'Pegtop.'—Declined with thanks.
'Crest Collector.'—On making inquiries I find that crests cannot be obtained, in the manner you desire, in Auckland, and most probably not in the colony. Your best plan would be to commission some bookseller to send for what you want to London.
'Penwiper.'—It would not be at all correct.
'Ambulance.'—You can get an illustrated bandage from the St. John Ambulance Auckland Secretary.
'Lily.'—You are very kind. Please carry out your suggestion.
'Ink.'—Not necessary in the least.
'V.R.'—Your best plan is to write to the office.
'Essie.'—Send your note to the person in charge of the establishment.
'Mater.'—Why not line your little boy's autumn suit with flannel? He could then wear it out now.
'E.C.'—Not of the slightest moment.
'T.K.'—Kindly call at the office.
'S.M.'—'Polly.'—'Mephisto.'—Will publish shortly.
'A.S.M.'—Many thanks. Regret cannot accept your offer.
'Teddy.'—You must not call until the family appears in church.
'R.F.'—Wear flannel next your skin.
'No. 17.'—You always walk on the outside of the path with a lady.
'Mrs S.'—Furnish your room in brown and gold. The curtains of thick brown art serge can have a zig-zag border of gold, or you can have brown silk lined with gold silk.
'Estelle.'—Drape your stalls in red and white art muslin. Loop up with bunches of poppy.
'Euterpe.'—The name is immaterial.
'Elsie.'—Write a polite note of thanks for kind inquiry, or have cards printed and send round.
'Jean.'—I am sorry that I am unable to give you the recipe you ask for, but perhaps you might be able to get a hint from some confectioner as to the mode of the composition of the delicious lollie. With regard to your second query about 'Living Whist,' I believe Living Whist partakes almost more of the nature of a fancy dress pageant than that of a game. It requires fifty-two people dressed so as to represent the kings, queens, knaves, and common cards of the four suits of a pack. These first promenade as separate suits, then they mix together and are assigned to four players following the rules of dealing a pack of cards for whist. The game is played as with ordinary cards, each living card stepping into the centre of the room as its name is called. The four living cards making the trick perform some graceful evolutions in the centre of the room before they step to the side of the winner of the trick. And so the game goes on until two of the players have made the requisite number of tricks constituting the game. As may be easily inferred, 'Living Whist' makes a very pretty and interesting spectacle, and the closer the dresses are approximated to the appearance of playing cards the more effective does the pageant become.
'A.T.'—Invite relations only, and send each a little note explaining that the ceremony is perfectly private.
'D.E.D.'—A small remembrance like a pipe, or cigar-holder, would do.
'Elfie.'—Kindly write on one side of the paper only, and use ink instead of water.
'Ant.'—Your letter is very far from courteous. Send stamps for reply.
'Eunice.'—With pleasure. Will reply by post to your pretty compliments.
'Tom.'—Your story is incomplete. You left one man alive in it.
'Ruby.'—Declined with thanks. As a rule, 'fat old ladies who waddle to church' to see a brand new curate are not interesting people.
'R.F.'—Have a large supply on hand at present. Write later on.

A VISIT TO THE CHINESE EMPEROR.

A Berlin journal publishes (says the 'Globe') the following account, from the pen of a well-known German traveller, of an audience granted by the Emperor of China to the foreign Ambassadors at Peking. The writer was the only non-diplomatic person present:—

Headed by the highest dignitaries of the Celestial Empire, our procession moved on between rows of Privy Councillors of the first class, bodyguards armed with bows and arrows, civic authorities holding valuable old swords under their arms, and unarmed soldiers of the Palace. We passed by the black tents with the little peeping windows, in which the Ambassadors foregathered in former years before they were received by the Emperor. Silently and pompously we passed over the dark carpet woven out of black camels' hair, and ascended some steps leading to the widely-opened folding doors of a building, from the front wall of which the outside had peeled off, leaving the casing and timbers exposed to view, mouldy and worm-eaten. Thus we reached the audience-chamber, and were within three paces of the 'Son of Heaven,' Kouang Sau, the 'Ruler of the Middle Kingdom.' He was seated upon a raised platform, approached by five steps and three gangways, while from the right and left two narrow paths also gave access to the dais. The latter and the balustrade were covered with red cloth, and trimmed with yellow. On either side of the Emperor stood one of the Manchurian Princes, upright, motionless, and with a stony stare, as though he were keeping watch over a bier.

In this hall, the 'Hall of the Flowers of Literature,' the 'Son of Heaven' sat before a table on the platform, so that only the upper portion of his body was visible.

His Majesty looks older than he really is. With sunken head and yellow face, he looked shyly at the assembled diplomats, and his heavy eyes were lit up for the occasion by opium or morphin. A sorrowful, weary, and rather childish smile played about his mouth. When his lips are parted, his long, irregular yellow teeth appear, and there are great hollows in either cheek. His face is not entirely wanting in sympathy, but rather betokens indifference, and from its features nothing of interest can be read; in fact, the Emperor impressed me as being self-restrained, cold, apathetic, wanting in capacity, worn out, and as though half-dead. I felt that whatever passed before his eyes had not the slightest interest for him, and that it mattered not in the least to him whether he understood the meaning of the ceremony.

After a deathly silence of some minutes, the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, Colonel Denby, Minister of the United States, read an address in English. Prince Kung had previously been made acquainted with the text of this address; he mounted with difficulty the smaller staircase on the right, bowed very low, knelt before the Emperor on the left, touched the floor with his forehead, and translated the address into the Manchurian tongue. The 'Son of Heaven' lisped in Manchurian a few words that could scarcely be heard; Prince Kung then interpreted these Imperial remarks to the audience in Chinese, and finally the Dragonman of the Russian Embassy gave them out in very faulty French. Prince Kung then shuffled backwards down the steps of the throne. We drew back three paces, and, keeping our faces towards the Emperor, passed backwards in his presence through the front door, and thus quitted the 'Hall of Flowers of Literature.' It may here be remarked that hitherto Ambassadors had been obliged to leave this hall by a side door.

The Emperor remained seated upon his throne. To have turned one's back upon him would have meant punishment by death.

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