

Notes & Notions.

(By our Flippant Flanour.)

The unconquerable aversion, which even the most wretchedly poor have to entering any charitable institution as inmates, is not by any means confined to the 'Old Country,' where, as is well-known, thousands absolutely prefer to positively die of starvation and exposure, rather than enter 'the house.' At Wellington last week, a poor old body, who applied for temporary relief, was offered the shelter of the Ohio Home, but refused in a most emphatic and really somewhat heartrending fashion to accept the offer. She had previously tried the Home and didn't like it. 'For God's sake, gentlemen, don't ask me to go back there,' sobbed the old lady pitifully. 'I can't do it; you don't know what I have suffered.' According to the report several of the Trustees favoured allowing her rations and half-a-crown a week for rent, which would be cheaper than keeping her in the Home, but objection was made to this on the ground that it was a wrong principle to go upon, and if it was done in one case it would have to be done in others. On a division being taken it was found that the Trustees were evenly balanced on the question. The Chairman then gave his casting vote against the proposed out-door relief, and the applicant was informed that she must go to the Home or remain unassisted.

No doubt the decision was in its way judicious, but one cannot help sighing over it, and feeling uncomfortable for the sake of the poor old woman. It is perfectly true to point out (as no doubt the Chairman did) that she would be well cared for and 'much better off' in the Home than out; but oh dear, how well one understands the feeling which would endure privation outside, rather than bodily comfort where one has to live by rule and rote, and loses persons freedom of independence. Out-door relief is, one is aware, radically wrong in principle, but it makes one's heart ache that it is so. My morals are very weak on this subject, I fear, for though I know it's infinitely mischievous, I cannot resist 'promiscuous charity,' nor before I left the Old Country was I ever able to refuse the few half-pence craved by a beggar for bread, by knowing that of a certainty it would be spent in beer. If any Wellington reader likes to find out if the old lady still needs relief, and cares to interest himself (or herself) on her behalf, I shall be glad to contribute my mite.

An excellent idea for an afternoon's amusement comes from Gore, where the local bowlers met the local tennis players at a tournament, each playing the other's game, the bowlers tennis, and the tennis-players bowls. According to the 'Southland News,' one team of tennis players played especially good games of bowls, making a most creditable display against the flower of the Howling Club's flock. The attempts of some of the bowlers to fathom the deep, dark mysteries of tennis as she should be played were productive of the most intense enjoyment on the part of spectators, the doughty veterans of the more placid and ancient pastime of bowls giving an exhibition of tennis playing which came quite as a revelation to those used to witnessing the common or garden system of accomplishing the game. Despite drawbacks in the facts that the bowlers more frequently drove the tennis balls into the ditch than over the net, and that the tennis players became at times hopelessly bewildered amongst 'jacks,' 'burnt heads,' and other terms of that ilk, a splendid afternoon's amusement, strongly tinged with heartening excitement, was extracted from the proceedings, the Tennis Club securing a victory of two points in the aggregate scores. Assuredly, this is worth trying in other places. It must be great sport.

Speaking of bowls reminds me of another bowling yarn I came across this week in my peregrinations through the Southern papers. At the Thurau bowling tournament one generous rink, being about eighteen up

at the last head, played a fiery, untamed game as far from the 'jack' as possible, in order that their opponents might 'lie' a few, and make the score card look a little less decisive. They succeeded in getting the defeated rink four or five shots in, but the skip of the latter with his last bowl got 'wounded' and drove a short one of the winning rink's about ten feet up the green, when it rolled gently on to the 'jack.' This is another instance of the cussedness of things inanimate, or of the futility of Dutch bowls.

Foreigners, when they get into the witness box, not unusually create some amusement, as, for instance one individual did in Auckland the other day when he observed excitedly to the magistrate that 'all dem stupid questions make me vild'; but in Melbourne last week a young Greek went further than furnishing food for smiles—he created a sensation. He had accused a fellow-Greek of wounding him with a knife, and the inspector conducting the case asked him how the wound was caused. A constable had just previously handed up a long knife to the witness, who toyed with it until the sub-inspector's question was put. Then his eye flashed, and he said, 'How? I show you how he do it.' He grabbed the hilt of the knife, lifted his arm high into the air, and swung round. The bench bobbed, and the clerk, who was immediately opposite to the witness, ducked scientifically, while the press reporters felt the danger of the situation. A constable standing near the box made away, and none too soon, for the witness, with a swoop, turned round and flung the weapon towards a door. It stuck in the wood-work, and some force had to be exerted to pull it out. 'There,' said the witness, as he surveyed the shaking knife, 'That's how he do it.'

The constable took the knife and kept possession of it and the audience breathed freely.

The temperance party have a champion who does not mince matters, in Mr William Heady, of Dunedin, who has been writing to the Dunedin 'Star' a vigorous appeal to Christian voters. He expresses the opinion that the country will not be 'inconceivable over the loss of a few of the old hands, and in regard to some of them a change can hardly be a change for the worse. We do, however, desire that the coming men may be of such stuff as statesmen are made, if there is any of that commodity to be had.' Obviously Mr Heady is not hopeful on this point, nor does he believe that ability is the first essential. The first point in his opinion is soundness on the temperance question. A 'nincompoop, sound on the temperance question, would be preferable to a candidate as clever as Satan—if, like Satan, the candidate is friendly to the liquor traffic. When we enter the polling booth it is to the help of the mighty against the Lord, or the help of the Lord against the mighty—which shall it be? Of course, the enthusiastic gentleman is entitled to his opinion, but surely it would be rather unwise to trust the legislation and management of the colony to 'nincompoops' solely because they happened to be strong on the temperance question.

One hears at times of singular lapses of memory, and a case that occurred in Masterton last week deserves (as the Wairarapa 'Star' observes truly) to rank with the most laughable. A business man brought his bicycle to town in the morning, and about an hour afterwards required to use it. It could not be found anywhere about the premises. Visions of a bicycle thief breaking records on his beloved wheel rose before him, and immediately he offered the sum of £1 for information as to its whereabouts. In a short space of time about half a dozen young men were scouring the town looking for the bicycle. Their efforts were fruitless, and it was not until a small boy returned it to its owner's office that he suddenly remembered that he had left it for repairs at a shop.

The crusade against street betting means bad times for those who follow the gentle art of book-making. 'Coming events,' one knows, 'throw their shadows before,' and according to a Wellington contemporary one book-maker of the Empire City has already discovered that under the new regulations there is no royal road to

wealth, by the book-maker's path, and he yesterday requested a newspaper representative to inform the public that 'from yesterday he had given the game best, and was going back to earn an honest living by his trade.' This book-maker is going to mend people's 'soles' now, instead, as is frequently alleged, of damaging them. My Wellington colleague commends the ex 'bookie' for his effort at earning a more respectable livelihood, and hopes his example may be widely followed. Of course, of course, so do I, but the world's a sad, bad place, and 'I hae me doots.'

The past week witnessed one particularly picturesque, and in its way important, ceremonial, when the Premier unveiled the monument which the Ngaitahu Maoris have erected on the site of the old Kaiapoi pah, near Waikuku, to commemorate their invasion of the district, and the victorious campaign which is so glorious an incident of the tribe's history. The incident was picturesque because of its surroundings, and the pictures it called up of the old days. It was not unimportant, as being perhaps the first instance of a purely native movement in the direction of commemorating old time victories, after the fashion of the pakeha with monuments. The monument is a giant 'tiki' placed on the summit of a stone column some 28 feet high, and as the earthwork on which the column stands is 12 feet high, it will be easily understood that the whole affair is of an imposing nature. Naturally, the tribe made much of the occasion, and hospitality was dispensed in the regal fashion of the good old times. Shark in huge quantities, eels by the hundred weight, and potatoes by the ton were served cooked in Maori fashion, while several bullocks were roasted whole. It was indeed a joyful occasion, and naturally there was much dancing and a prodigious amount of 'koroero.' The unveiling ceremony was decidedly impressive, and the speeches in the main excellent. According to a contemporary one amusing incident was the fearful and wonderful manner in which the Premier pronounced some of the Maori names. He started off splendidly we are told, and uttered Ngaitahu in a way that really left nothing to be desired. Apparently he had rehearsed it beforehand with excellent results. As he warmed to his subject, however, his ideas of Maori pronunciation gradually evaporated and presently, to the bewilderment of his audience, he was speaking of the Nahi-hutis, the Nat-tuis, and finally 'Nattytoos.' The oldest Maori present failed to recognise his ancestors in this last disguise, and came to the conclusion that the Premier was inventing Maori history and Maori tribes on a principle of his own. But on the whole the Premier did excellently well, and the whole affair was, as I said to start with, picturesque in the extreme.

The latest use for paper, according to a German technical paper, is for the production of bath robes. The material used for this purpose is rather thick, and resembles common blotting paper. The bath robes made of this material cling to the body immediately after being put on, and as the paper takes up the moisture very eagerly the drying of the body takes place very rapidly. Furthermore, the paper in a bad conductor of heat, and as such it acts as a protection against quick changes of the temperature, preventing the wearer from catching cold. Slippers and hoods are also made of the same material. These robes are very cheap, costing but a few cents apiece.

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