

'dearest love' to wear these Puritan robes, 'so like herself,' the *fancier* was decidedly stunned to receive the other parcel with a questionable letter, and the contents of a decidedly unconventional character. There was a *deus ex machina* and a parting, and the *bonne Aidoire* went the rounds of society, to be unconsciously recounted to the dancer herself when masquerading to the delusion of the *haut ton*.

THE EPSOM DERBY.

(SEE ILLUSTRATION, PAGES 108-9.)

WHAT New Zealand fanfare is there that does not take more or less interest in the great English "classic" race—the Epsom Derby? The result is looked forward to in all parts of the world. Our illustration on page—conveys some little idea of the scene among the mass previous to the start for the great three-year-old race. Human nature on the racecourse is depicted by an artist in its many forms, and what eager looks are cast at the horses as they indulge in the preliminary canter. The accounts of this year's contest inform us that the Derby was run in drenching rain. Common, the winner, is the property of Lord Alington, and that nobleman also claims the honour of having bred the colt. Lord Alington is one of the great London ground landlords, and it is said on his behalf that he is a most excellent landlord, and a man of unblemished honour in all his dealings. Common was got by the defunct Isomy (son of Sterling) from Thistle, by Scottish Chief from The Flower Safety, by Wild Dayrell from Nettle, by Sweetmeat. The colt was prepared by the famous trainer, John Porter.

STAR ACTING OFF THE STAGE.

A JUDGE was sitting in the Court one day and was not in a particularly good humour. He had good cause to feel somewhat exasperated, for almost every jurymen that had been summoned applied to him to be excused. One had a sick wife; another was subject to fits and was liable to swoon away and froth at the mouth any minute in the day; another simulated deafness, and so on to the end of the chapter.

When Henry Tomkins, the thirty-seventh reluctant juror, appealed to the judge to be released, the latter remarked, with unmistakable sarcasm:

"This seems to be a very unhealthy winter for jurymen. Have you, too, got an epidemic in your family?"

Mr Tomkins' breast heaved as he turned his head aside and brushed his eyes with the back of his hand. He swallowed a big lump in his throat, and with quivering chin tried to speak, but finally broke down. At last he stammered:

"Your Honour—this—this morning I—I—lost my only son."

The unfortunate man buried his face in his hands and sobbed so that his whole frame shook.

There was a dead silence in the court room. The judge who was a very humane man, was dreadfully shocked. He was several minutes before he could speak, and when he recovered his voice it was husky with emotion.

"Mr Tomkins, I beg your pardon, and regret that your feelings have been lacerated by my thoughtlessness. I did not suppose for a moment that you were suffering domestic bereavement. You are excused from jury duty in this court for the rest of the term."

The afflicted man put his handkerchief to his eyes and hurried out of the court room, in which there was hardly a dry eye. Mr Brown, a warm, personal friend and near neighbour of Tomkins, happened to be in the court room on business, and he, too, was much affected by the bad news. He followed Tomkins and overtook the bearded father in the corridor, where he seized Tomkins' hand and said with a deep sigh:

"My dear friend, this is a terrible blow, but you must try and brace up and bear it like a man. Perhaps the little boy is better off. My heart bleeds for you, for I, too, have suffered bereavement. It was only yesterday the little fellow was in my yard playing with my children, the picture of life and health. How did it happen? Was little Tommy run over by a car?"

To Brown's utter amazement Tomkins burst out laughing, which added to Brown's misery, as he was satisfied that Tomkins' grief had unsettled his mind.

"Tommy is all right," said Tomkins, punching Brown honourably in the ribs with his reversed thumb.

"Tommy all right?" gasped Brown.

"Yes," replied the escaped juror. "You see, Brown, there was no other way for me to get out of that infernal jury box."

"But you told the judge that you had lost your only son." "So I have. I had morning *Sun* in my overcoat pocket when I entered that court-room, and now it is gone. I believe the court officials or one of those rascally lawyers picked my pocket."

"Tomkins, that was the best piece of emotional acting I ever saw in my life. You missed your vocation. You should try your luck on the stage."

"It's too late for me to think of that, but what's the matter with our trying our luck at the bar? Will you join in drinking a toast to Tommy's health?"

A FICKLE WOMAN.—Miss Clara Mitchell, the belle of a village in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, mourns the loss of two lovers because she could not choose between them. One Sunday she was to have married J. B. Reed, but just before the time for the ceremony James Gibson drove up and asked to see Miss Clara for a minute. Clara walked to the gate with him in her bridal robe and then, to the astonishment of the company, followed him to his conveyance, and they drove away. Reed insisted that the wedding feast should go on, and presided over it. Before the guests had dispersed the young woman returned, and announced the company by declaring that she could not choose between Reed and Gibson, and would not marry at all. She then relented and promised to marry Reed, but again changed her mind before the knot could be tied. Both Reed and Gibson now declare that they will not marry her.

A MUSICAL SYMPOSIUM.



AM weary," said the seedy man. "I fain would rest," and he sank into a chair, tipped his battered hat over his nose and the gentle snore trembled through the rim as through an audiphore. He was allowed to rest until his resting made everybody restless. Then the waiter woke him up.

"Certainly, with pleasure. With whom, did you say?" There was no response.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen. Why, oh, why did you disturb me?"

"You were snoring." "No. That was but an echo of the conversation."

"What conversation?" "I have before alluded to the fact that I am gifted with mediomistic powers, I believe. I was not asleep. I was in a trance. What did I talk about?"

"You talked so through your nose that it was quite unintelligible."

"It was Wagner, I suppose. He and Rossini and Donizetti and a whole lot of them were quarrelling over opera."

"What are you quarrelling about?" asked Balfe. "Don't you Italian sufferers know that Mapleson lost £50,000 trying to put you on in London once?"

There was a silence.

"I hate to talk about myself," went on Balfe, "but nobody ever lost money on 'The Bohemian Girl.'"

"They couldn't," said Donizetti. "It does not need any voices or orchestra."

Balfe pulled out his shillelagh, but Gluck interposed. "Ah! that good Mrs Thurber," said Gluck. "She was indeed a paragon of artistic taste. She played my 'Orpheus and Eurydice.'"

"And 'lust up,'" said Balfe.

"Gentlemen," said Beethoven, "when my opera has been given—"

"It hasn't paid the gas," said Mendelssohn.

"Ah, you opera composers," spoke up Chopin, "you make a mistake. My music."

"Three concerts in a season." "Well, they pay," said Chopin.

"The piano man," said Balfe.

"Take my 'Huguenots,'" burst out Meyerbeer. "There's a work that is played oftener than any other."

"And loses more money." "Ah," said Rossini, "things are not as they used to be when 'Iye was in his prime.'"

"No," said Donizetti, "when he used to play my 'Lucia' and 'La Favorita' and 'Linda.'"

"They'd all be dead now if Patti did not sing them," muttered Balfe.

"I believe," remarked Bellini, "I believe there is an opera called 'La Sonnambula' that is popular."

"With *debutantes*," said Rossini. "They can't sing my music."

"What about Don Giovanni?" asked Mozart.

"Can never get a cast for it," said Balfe. "Besides it's confoundedly absurd."

"That's it," said Wagner. "That's the trouble. All this tootle-ti-tootle is absurd. My music is not absurd."

"No, it's unintelligible," said Mozart.

"My dear sir, music should be an expression of unutterable emotions."

"Indescribable emotions, you mean, don't you?" sneered Balfe. "Now I—I would like to know what has more pathos and grief in it than 'The Heart Bowed Down.'"

"Sing it," said Rossini. Balfe sang it.

"What is the matter with the man who sings it in the opera? Indigestion?" asked Mozart.

"I'm sorry I couldn't remember the words," said Balfe, "but he's lost his child, or something."

"The words may mean that, but the music is dyspeptic."

"You just sing something yourself," said Balfe to Rossini. Rossini sang something from 'Semiramide.'

"What's that about? I believe 'Semiramide' is a tragedy, isn't it?" said Wagner. "Now listen to this." And Wagner gave a bit of 'Die Walkyrie.'

"Is she crazy when she sings that?" asked Balfe.

"No; that is godlike rage. Of course you must hear the trombones and the horns and the drums."

"You can't carry an orchestra about with you?" mildly suggested Donizetti. Then Donizetti gave an example of his work.

"Is that the soprano or the tenor?" asked Meyerbeer.

"No, that's the baritone."

"What's the matter with him? Is he going to cut somebody's throat?"

"No; he's telling the *prima donna* he loves her."

"I hope she understands that clearly before he begins," said Balfe.

A man in the corner who had taken little part in this conversation suddenly began to sing "Annie Rooney."

"What's that?" they all asked at once.

"That's the music of the present," said the fellow who would not give his name.

"Yes," said Wagner, "that's the kind of thing that vitiates public taste and ruins the advance of idealization in music."

"Yes," said Rossini, "we can't expect anything of an age that produces that kind of thing. What's the song?"

"Annie Rooney."

"Bah! No wonder Mapleson loses £50,000 trying to play my opera. Such miserable trash—" "Annie Rooney," did you say?"

"Yes, 'Annie Rooney.'"

"Ah!" sighed Mozart, "and all my beautiful compositions—forgotten—for this—what did you say! 'Annie Rooney,' How does it go?"

"Such simple, musical nonsense, said Bellini. "The idea! 'She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau,' and he began to sing it."

"That's not it," said Meyerbeer. "This is how it goes: 'She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau.' What's the next line?"

"She's my Annie, I'm her Joe."

"No, no," said Beethoven, "that's all wrong. It does not go that way at all, and he gave his idea of it."

"Idiotic!" said Wagner. "What childishness to sing such rubbish." "She's my sweetheart I'm her beau."

"That isn't a bit like it, Wagner," said Balfe. "This is the way that it ought to be sung."

"Suppose," said Mendelssohn, turning to the minstrel, "suppose you sing it again for us."

And the fellow in the corner sang it through again, while they all kept time. Then they all began singing. "She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau; she's my Annie, I'm her Joe." They were singing it for the sixth time and Chopin was playing it on the piano when I woke up.

P. R.

SECOND

CHRISTMAS STORY

COMPETITION.



THE success attendant upon the production of the last CHRISTMAS NUMBER of THE NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC induces the management to again entertain the idea of repeating so satisfactory an experiment. The object of evoking a body of contributions bearing, in their incidents and associations, upon the peculiarities of colonial life was in a great measure realised, and indicated that the mission of the GRAPHIC in encouraging local talent is being fulfilled. It being the desire, of the projectors of the

NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC

that ample time and opportunity should be afforded to intending competitors this year; and, taking into consideration the fact that an early delivery is absolutely necessary for the purposes of illustration, the announcement of the second

CHRISTMAS STORY COMPETITION

for THREE PRIZES is now made to the readers of this paper, and subjoined thereto are the conditions by which the contest will be regulated.

The three selected tales will be awarded prizes in the following order:—

FIRST PRIZE	£5.
SECOND PRIZE	£3.
THIRD PRIZE	£2.

The GRAPHIC, however, is to enjoy the privilege of publishing any others sent in, if they should be considered suitable.

In writing, these conditions are to be observed:—

- The matter must not extend over more than four columns of space exclusive of illustrations. This means 6,000 words or less.
- The incidents and features of the story must relate in a great measure to New Zealand, its history, more especially war incidents and adventures, its scenery, its climatic aspects, its old identities, its social and sporting gatherings, etc. Scenes may, however, be cast in other places, though a preponderance of that which possesses a local flavour will turn the scale in cases where the contributions are otherwise of equal merit.
- Each manuscript must be addressed to the Editor, Shortland-street, Auckland, and have a motto inscribed at the head without the writer's name. Accompanying it must be a letter also addressed to the Editor, and at the back of it the words "Christmas Story. Motto "such and such," repeating the motto in the manuscript. Inside of this the name of the writer should appear.
- All contributions must reach the office before the 20th of September next ensuing. The result will be declared in the Christmas number.
- Writing to be on one side of the paper only.