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SUNDAY ON BOARD SHIP.

Frank Melton's Luck;

OR,

OFF TO NEW ZEALAND.

AN ORIGINAL STORY. BY THOMAS COTTLE, REMUERA, AUCKLAND, N.Z.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A LADY DISPLAYS POWERS OF CONQUEST—ANOTHER DOES NOT.

FANNY, who happened to be very busy, after giving Julia a kindly welcome, asked Miss Grave to take her into her room to take off her things.

'So you have your old flame, Harry Baker, here all to yourself the last few days,' began Julia, as soon as they were alone. 'I hope you have improved the occasion, and made the most of a chance you are not likely to get again. No wonder you were so anxious to remain here to comfort Miss Melton. Wasn't that the excuse?'

'Now Julia, that is most unfair. It was really only when Fanny pressed me very earnestly to stay, and out of pity for her, that I consented. I thought, under the circumstances, your mamma wouldn't mind.'

'Oh, yes, of course, I can quite believe that (this very incredulously). But, joking apart, if you were not such a noodle I should be jealous of you, for, between ourselves, I mean to accept Harry the next time he asks me, and I shall do my best to-night to hurry him up.'

Her companion listened to this with a quiet, self-confident smile.

'I know it is no good speaking to you, Julia, for you never will listen to me; but I do hope you will not do anything unladylike or forward that you may afterwards repent.'

'Listen to you! I should think not, indeed! What do you know about such things? Nothing, and never will. You are not the sort of girl gentlemen like at all, and are certain to live and die an old maid. Now you see if Master Harry doesn't propose to me this very night. I'm determined to bring him to the scratch to show you that I can do more in one evening with, what you call, my fast manner, than you can with all your ladylike reserve and grand opportunities.' (This very sarcastically.)

'I never allowed, nor will I, that I am trying to win any one, Julia; remember that.

'Oh, no, of course not. It would be no good if you did though; that's one thing.'

Another quiet smile was the sole response Miss Grave vouchsafed to this rude speech. Miss Julia did not notice it, being too busily engaged complacently surveying her charms in the glass, and being satisfied with the result, she prepared to join the company, remarking: 'There now, I think that will do the trick.'

Mrs Robinson made a very clumsy and confused bungle of her share in the explanation, but aunt wisely took it all in good part. Julia professed that, notwithstanding the peculiarity of the circumstances, she had never ceased to love Fanny, and was so very sorry for her. This, however, my consin could not stand.

'Sorry for me, are you? I am not sorry for myself, and I see no need for my friends to express sorrow for me. Keep your sympathy for yourself, Miss Robinson.'

'Oh! I don't need it. I was only joking that evening about being engaged to Gus.— Mr Grosvenor I mean. We were taking a rise out of you, Fanny. We did it well, didn't we? It was not likely I'd become engaged to a man like him. I saw through him on board ship. I could have told you all about him if you had only confided in me.'

Fanny knew she was telling untruths, and longed to tell her so, but judged it best to let them pass, and only took means to show Miss Julia that the subject had better be dropped.

'Well, Julia, be that as it may, I think we can find nicer subjects to talk over.'

Miss Grave, as I must still term her, for though Fanny always called her by her Christian name, which was Annie, the rest of us all talked and thought of her as Miss Grave. The name seemed so applicable and natural to us. Miss Grave, then, was rudely rebuked by the old lady for remaining so long away from her duties. Knowing it was undeserved, as she had written and asked permission, she took little notice of this displeasure on the part of her employer.

Nothing could exceed Miss Julia's gushing manner with Harry, nor the cool way in which she monopolized him the greater part of the evening. Miss Grave watched him closely several times, but it was with a pleased expression on her fair face. There was no element of pain or jealousy, nor was there the slightest cause for it. She was satisfied at once that he was merely interested in talking over old times with an acquaintance he had not met for some time. She could see that the reminiscences which that acquaintance playfully recalled, with her most fascinating manner and sunniest smiles mingling in Harry's mind with others—which she would have given a good deal to have left in oblivion—did not appear to bring the tender glances to his eyes which adorned them when engaged in the most ordinary conversation with herself. She saw this, and was content, and, convinced that her patient waiting and sisterly care would soon be rewarded, as it truly deserved to be, with the earnest, undivided love of a manly heart. She had owned to herself that she would have all or none, and now she felt that all was her's. She had watched to see first if Fanny's charms would have any effect in turning away this all from her; but they had not. Then she waited to witness his meeting with Miss Julia, and she saw that however fickle and changeable he might once have been in his love affairs, he was now true to her and to her only.

And he, what were his feelings and thoughts? I believe I must admit that when Miss Julia made her attempt at fascinating him, he did not strive much to counteract it. He thought it would be a good chance to try what effect his paying attention to her would have on his cool-hearted lady-love. Cool-hearted! he little knew her yet. A warmer heart than lay hid under that calm exterior never beat, and that he was yet to prove to his indescribable advantage. He made his little attempt at provoking jealousy, and looked to see what effect it would create. The pleasant expression he met showed him the uselessness of his attempt, and his response could only be one of those true and loving glances. This made assurance doubly sure to her. It was a complete contrast to the simulated ones with which he had favoured Julia, as he hung over her at the piano, while she sang extra sentimental songs, emphasizing the most touching parts by casting her liquid eyes up into his.

But if that glance of his made assurance doubly sure to Miss Grave, it had an entirely opposite effect on Miss Julia, for she saw it. She had come, as we have seen, feeling that it would be a very easy matter to bring to her feet the man whom she imagined she had held in her power, more or less, ever since she had known him—a man who had raved about her as he had done in the hospital. She had certainly on a few occasions been a little jealous of her companion, but this was forgotten. Now, after trying all her arts of fascinating, singing love songs, and bringing up past tender scenes in the most bewitching manner, it was hard not to obtain one reassuring glance which might betoken a chance of success in the future; harder still to see such a one bestowed on the girl whom she despised too much to consider a rival; whom she had but a short time since pitied, as being 'too quiet and reserved to attract the attention of gentlemen'; and to whom she had strongly proclaimed her intentions with regard to the gentleman in question. What wonder, then, at the sight of that glance that her dark eyes should glitter angrily, her full lips quiver, and her shapely bosom heave in a manner which showed the tumult of jealousy within? Yet it had to be suppressed, though at a cost only known to herself. She could have flown at the nasty, sneaking thing (as she termed her in her own mind), and torn her fair smiling face with her ruthless nails. But it would not do. She must not lose all chance of the game by one rash move, although her adversary had, to all appearance, the best of it. So, with enforced calm and gaiety, she turned from the piano. 'How did you like the song I sang just now, Mr Baker? It was a great favourite of yours on board ship, you will remember.'

'Was it?' he replied, carelessly, 'I had forgotten. The air is certainly very pretty. What a pity they could not have found some sensible words for it instead of that abominable love sick nonsense.'

'Oh, Mr Baker! how dare you say such a shocking thing about one of my songs? There was a time when you said much prettier things to me,' the last sentence in a low tone.

He pretended not to have heard it, and conversed about songs in general. Generalities, however, were not to her taste just now. She altered the subject to that of his military career, hoping for better success.

'I was so pleased to hear how bravely you acquitted yourself in the field of battle, Mr Baker. Everyone was speaking of your courage and pluck. I do love a man who is some good to his country, and not afraid of a few hard knocks like our friend, Mr Gus Grosvenor.'

'Your friend if you like, Miss Robinson, but don't say our's please. I always utterly detested him. I heard of your engagement to him, by-the-bye. Accept my congratulations.'

'Engagement! I never was engaged to him. You must imagine you're speaking to Miss Melton,' answered the young lady, warmly and mendaciously.

'Oh, I understood you were. Brown told me of it. Of course, as you say you were not, he must have been wrongly informed.'

'Mr Brown knew nothing about it. But I want to hear all about your attacks on the rebels.'

'You must excuse me the recital, Miss Robinson; it's too much like blowing my own trumpet. Besides, the doings of a penniless private in a militia regiment cannot possess the slightest interest in your eyes.'

She could stand it no longer, and the torrent of her wrath burst forth. Fortunately the others had moved out on to the verandah, and were not within hearing. Harry had risen to follow them, but Julia detained him.

'So that remarkably ladylike companion of mine has been repeating things I have said—I mean, has been making up things to set you against me, Mr Baker; has she? I could see some malicious person had been at work, you are so unlike what you used to be to me, but I did not think it would turn out to be anyone professing such friendship to me as she does, the nasty deceitful cat! Why do you believe what she says about me?'

'Wait a bit, Miss Robinson. How came you to think it was Miss Grave who "repeated the things you said—I mean made them up?"' replied Harry, using her own words.

'Oh, I can see quite as well as most people; she has been "gone on you" for ever so long, and knowing she could not win you by fair means, she has tried all sorts of spiteful, underhand ways. I wonder you are taken in by such low tricks.'

Harry's patience was now quite exhausted.

'Your surmise is utterly unfounded. The lady you speak of so unkindly has never breathed a word to your discredit in any way to me. It was through one of the hospital nurses that I learnt your feelings for me at the time, as expressed by yourself to Miss Grave at the door. I'll admit I was hurt when I heard it first, lying there almost between life and death, but I have cause to be very thankful to you since for so plainly expressing yourself. As to that young lady being what you call "gone on me," I wish to Heaven I could be quite certain she was. I should then be the happiest man alive. Her affection is worth winning. Her sisterly care of me never ceased when I was poor and friendless, or when I sorely wanted a kindly feminine influence to keep me in the path of duty.'

'Sisterly, pooh! I can see through her now. She was poor, and didn't care what she did to secure a husband whether well off or not at the time. She knew your family at home, and guessed you'd come into money some time or other. She is deeper than I used to give her credit for. A girl of her position could, of course, go into a hospital and nurse a young fellow without anyone knowing or troubling about her, but it would not have been proper for me; mamma said so at the time. There is such a difference in us, you know.'

'Yes, I should just think there was! You could no more understand her motives and feelings than you could fly. I must, therefore, decline discussing either them or her with you,' exclaimed Harry, hotly, losing all patience.

Her indignation knew no bounds. 'Sir, your rudeness is unbearable! Go and inflict it on *that* girl!' (The emphasis on the word 'that' made any adjective superfluous.) 'She will doubtless be proud to bear it. She will gladly put up with the manners of a barman, but spare me the infliction.'

'I never had greater pleasure in obeying any commands of Miss Robinson's,' he retorted with irresistible politeness, the strictest regard to truth, and a most profound bow. Passing out into the garden, he soon joined Miss Grave and Fanny, who, like the rest of the company, were strolling in twos and threes about the garden. The latter mischievously asked him to oblige her by entertaining her friend while she went to see what had become of Miss Julia, as she had missed her for some time. Harry, nothing loth, wandered off with his charge down the winding garden paths, enjoying the cool evening breeze, charged with the mingled perfume from a thousand different flowers, but if I mistake not, enjoying much more one another's society.

Here it may be as well to take leave of Miss Julia, merely stating the fact that two years later she married, against her father's consent, a man considerably more than twice her age, who was noted equally, for the amount of wealth he had amassed, and the unscrupulous manner in which he had made it. We heard of this with much sorrow, for we were certain such a match could not possibly be a happy one. Nor was it, for after fighting like cat and dog for a year or two, he turned her out of his house, and she was obliged to return to her parent's house a soured and embittered woman.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FROM GRAVE TO GAY—A NEW BILLET.

HARRY had little to say until he and his companion were quite out of sight and hearng of the others. He appeared to be absorbed in thought. Miss Grave bantered him on his unusual silence, then seeing that had no effect, she gently inquired if she had offended him? Here was the opportunity, and now that it had arrived, he felt far more dubious about the result than when confidently proclaiming to me a few days previous the almost certain hopes which he entertained.

'Offend me, darling! No, nothing that you would do or say could have that effect on me.' And now words came fast, though faltering in tone, and such words, fair reader, as I hope you may soon hear from one worthy of you, if you have not already heard them—words of true, honest love, words not from the tongue alone, but from the depths of the soul itself, promising what the speaker will assuredly and faithfully perform if he be but allowed the chance, if she will become his and his only.

And could she do this? Yes, she could, and with the maidenly reserve, lovely blushes, and whispering tones, which I am told are usual in such cases, she told him so. He clasped her in his arms, and pressing his lips to here enjoyed to the full that first sweet kiss of love, and several others. They were in paradise; their feet had left the sordid earth. It was, without doubt, the supremest moment they had either of them yet known. Hitherto their lives had not been very smooth. His peculiar temperament had prevented him from making many friends, or securing much sympathy, and her position in a family like the Robinson's, who, from their lowes level, could not understand her, and were constantly paining his finer sensibilities, had been extremely irksome. She would have left them but for an exaggerated notion of Mr Robinson's kindness in taking pity on her, a lonely orphan, who knew not which way to turn for a home. Although Mrs Robinson treated her most unkindly, yet, considering the great assistance she was in household matters, that careful old lady would have been very sorry to part with her. Taking these circumstances into consideration, we can easily imagine that they felt most exquisitely the knowledge that for the future their lot would be a very different one, and determined to vie with one another which should render to the other the greatest amount of happiness. When they joined the rest of us tea was nearly over, and it was not difficult to guess what had happened. Aunt at once attacked Harry. Miss Grave, making some excuse, left the room with Fanny.

'We missed you, Harry. Your grave companion must have become quite gay to make you of all men miss your tea.'

'If she was grave by nature, she has certainly changed, my dear madam, and I think I have the best reasons for saying that she has made up her mind to be Grave by name no longer than it will take to make the necessary arrangements for the proper casting off of that sombre cognomen. She could not withstand my pitiful appeal. It was somewhat in this wise, "Be my companion, my love, instead of Miss Julia's. I require one far more than she does. She has a mother, while I am a poor orphan." This fetched her.'

This levity served to hide Master Harry's real feelings, and caused a laugh.

'Poor little orphan,' replied aunt, 'sad case. I am delighted to hear it will have someone to take care of it, and see that it gets its meals regular, instead of playing about in the garden and forgetting them. Give the poor little manny some cake, Frank. He must be hungry. Don't spill the crumbs on your pinney, dear.'

We all crowded round him and wished him joy, though it seemed a superfluous wish, for he appeared to be as full of the commodity already as he could hold, regularly steeped in it, in fact.

We will pass over the little conversation which passed between Miss Grave and Fanny in her room. The usual amount of happy tears, without which ladies appear rarely able to express their deeper emotions, had, doubtless, been shed, and the regular quantity of purposeless and unsatisfying caresses given and taken.

The Robinsons had returned to their home directly after tea, and consequently before the happy pair left their leafy paradise. Miss Julia had complained of a severe headache. Heartache would have probably been nearer the mark, but ladies must be excused, as their slight knowledge of anatomy cannot be expected to enable them to locate the pain.

I need hardly say that I enjoyed this evening particularly. Although I felt it would not be kind to force my attentions too suddenly on my cousin, yet we had a very pleasant little chat after our friends had left. Her manner was all I could yet desire. She felt evidently that she ought to make amends for her former treatment of me, neglecting my warnings and accusing me of false representations. She could now see, she owned, that my motive had been her happiness, although I do not pretend I was blind to the fact that I hoped it would combine mine also. She asked my forgiveness for her injustice and cruel suspicions. This I freely gave, and the loving cousinly salute with which we sealed the bond of peace was the most exquisite sensation of the sort I had yet experienced; doubtless from the fact that I could certainly discern an element of something far sweeter and dearer in it. Her downcast, blushing face as she acknowledged her unkindness, then the quick upturning of the dark fringes of her beauteous eyes, the warm, red lips seeking mine amid my now luxuriant moustache, gave me a sensation which I cannot describe, and made me feel in that brief moment amply repaid for my long period of suspense. My keen susceptibilities to pain or pleasure were undoubtedly desirable qualities, for, irksome as they must ever be in the former case, they enabled me to feel the latter with tenfold more intensity than individuals of a more phlegmatic mould.

This little scene was enacted in an arbour covered with the trailing branches of the passion fruit plant, and did not keep us long enough away from our friends to expose us to the chaffing that greeted Master Harry, and as I had no real authority for hoping for such a speedy termination, if, indeed, such a happy one as he had already gained, it was perhaps as well.

While we had been thus engaged Uncle, Stubbs, and Mr Robinson, who had not returned with his ladies, held a long conversation over the re-captured prisoner. Mr Robinson informed them that his wife had never told him of Grosvenor's engagement to his daughter; that knowing he was very unfavourably impressed with him, she dreaded he would refuse to sanction it; and as she had set her heart on her daughter's making an aristocratic match, she had determined to try and arrange the wedding on one of his frequent absences from home, after which she felt that she could easily manage to make peace.

'Then you were not greatly impressed with this Fitzwilliams, sir?' asked Stubbs.

'Fitzwilliams! was that one of his names?'

'Yes, that was the name under which he was arrested and imprisoned.'

'Now I believe I can tell you as much as you care to know about him. I had not the slightest idea till this moment that it was the history of an old acquaintance that I heard a stranger in an hotel at Dunedin relate to another fellow. He was talking of the escape, which was in the morning paper, of a prisoner of that name, and I took an interest in what they were saying. One of them had known him at home. His father was a very shady sort of low attorney; the son also had a natural taste for swindling. When he was at school he got the prefix of 'Fitz' stuck on to the more plebeian one of 'Williams' on account of the airs he always gave himself. On leaving school he entered his father's office for a few years, and made the most of the lessons learned there. By means best known to himself he managed to swindle the old gentleman out of sufficient funds to carry him to New Zealand and start him as a baronet's son travelling for pleasure, for he was a 'cute fellow in his way. By various clever little feats of penmanship on blank cheques, imitating the handwriting of his acquaintances, and various other peculiar transactions, he had managed to keep himself going until the Dunedin police dropped on him. He evidently meant to have one or both of our daughters, Melton, curse him! And to give the devil his due, he played his cards boldly, for had not our reverend friend here "held the joker," he would have had a hand too good for us, and we could not have escaped being euchred.'

'Excuse me, sir,' interposed Stubbs, mildly, 'but I do not quite comprehend your statement about my holding the joker. It was Mr Frank who held him. I must not have the credit of doing what was not within my province, even had I been capable.'

'Ha, ha! Of course, you cannot be expected to understand, Mr Stubbs. I was merely making use of some terms in our favourite game of cards, which appeared applicable. It's a sorry joker the wretch would make, as he has found to his cost.'

'Yes,' said uncle, 'he was certainly up to a dodge or two. I'm mad when I think he got over me. 'Cute idea to say he'd gone home, when he was in gaol. It's the only home he's likely to have, though. I did make inquiries about the passengers by the ship he pretended he sailed in. There were several white-headed ones like him, so I thought it was right. See so few of such varmint out here. A man gets too unsuspecting.'

After this we saw very little of either Mrs Robinson or Julia. The old gentleman, however, often dropped in to join uncle and Mr Bowden in a game of euchre, or to have a yarn about matters pastoral. Mrs Robinson wrote a very sharp note to Miss Grave, accusing her of heartless ingratitude and shameless behaviour, and desiring her never to show her face in their house again. This tirade of abuse did not cause much dismay in the young lady's breast, for aunt at once begged her to remain with us until Harry had completed the purchase of a block of land in our neighbourhood and built a house on it, of which it was generally understood she was to be mistress. She gratefully accepted aunt's invitation, and we were altogether a very jolly party.

Stubbs and his good lady had returned to Auckland. The kick on his leg did not turn out serious, and soon succumbed to the careful nursing he received. Harry, of course, was to reside with us until his new home was habitable. His land was principally high fern with a little bush. This class of rich fern land about our locality was very easily transferred into fine grass paddocks without the expense and labour of ploughing. The natural growth was burnt off, grass and clover seed sown on the ashes, the land well fenced, and stocked heavily in the spring, when the cattle greedily eat the young tender fern shoots, and by degrees destroy it utterly. If this precaution of heavy stocking when the fern is young is not adopted, it gets the better hand of the grass and chokes it out, and your paddock again becomes a waste.

Just as I was thoroughly enjoying my daily companionship with Fanny under the altered circumstances, uncle called me into his study one day.

'I've bought that big block of land ten miles north of here. Shall want you to go up and manage it. Take up Tom Hardy with you. He'll look after the cattle and cook. Then those two contractor fellows will soon run you up a slab hut. A tent will do till it's ready. They can go on with the stock-yard and horse paddock after. I'll go up with you to-morrow. Get your traps together, ready to start. I'll give you two pound a week and found. You can put on some stock of your own into the bargain. You've got some coin saved, I know.'

This programme I could not hail with unmixed delight. After residing in our lively home circle I should find bachelor quarters unquestionably dull, and the loss of Fanny's society would be a very severe one. Yet I should be very much more my own master, and instead of being virtually a stockman at the regular wages of one pound per week, I should be an overseer drawing double that remuneration, with the extra privilege of running a mob of my own cattle with my uncle's. I did not inform him that I should be unable to take advantage of this part of the offer at present, for knowing his great aversion to mining speculation, I had judged it wisest not to let him know of my folly in not regarding his advice. Indeed, I now bitterly regretted that I had not the money in my pocket instead of what appeared to me as so much waste paper. I could then have purchased a small mob of cattle. I seriously thought of selling out at once, but when I found that at the current market price I should not get half my purchase money back, I thought I would let things remain as they were for a time. I busied myself that afternoon with looking up our outfit, putting a few fresh straps on the pack saddle, mending a hole or two in the tent, and getting things ready for the morrow's journey. Tom Hardy, who was to be my *fac totum*, was a good sample of the regular old hand. Nothing ever seemed to come amiss to him. He could drive a team of bullocks, break in a young horse, do rough carpentering, put in a day at the garden, slaughter a beast, cut your hair, or serve up as good a dinner as you need wish to sit down at, with the same imperturbable coolness and good humour. He had at various times served in a great variety of capacities. When wanting a job he never refused a good offer whether he knew anything of the duties or not, trusting to good luck and a general aptitude for adapting himself to his work, whatever it might turn out to be, to pull him through, which it almost invariably did. I never yet remember hearing him acknowledge that anything was beyond him. He was that *rara avis*, a jack-of-all trades, and master of—most of them. It will be easily understood that he was exactly the man for me.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

EARLY AUTUMN.

THE country lanes are bright with bloom,
And gentle airs come stealing through,
Laden with native wild perfume
Of balm and mint and honey dew,
And o'er the summer's radiant flush
Lies early autumn's dreamy hush.

In wayside nooks the asters gleam,
And frost flowers dance above the sod,
While, lapsing by, the silent stream
Deflects the hue of golden rod;
That flower which lights a dusky day
With something of the sun-god's ray.

The grape vine clambers o'er the hedge
In golden festoons; sumacs burn
Like torches on the distant ledge,
Or light the lane at every turn,
And ivy riots everywhere
In blood red banners on the air.

A purple mist of fragrant mint
Borders the fences, drifting out
Of fostering corners, and its tint,
As half of cheer and half of doubt,
Is like the dear, delightful haze
Which robes the hills these autumn days,

And strange, wild growths are newly met:
Odd things but little prized of yore,
Like some old jewel well reset,
Take on a worth unseen before,
As dock, in spring, a graceless weed,
Is brilliant in autumn seed.

The cricket and the katydid
Pipe low their sad prophetic tune,
Though airs pulse warm the leaves amid,
As played around the heart of June;
Low, minor strains break on the heart.
Foretelling age as years depart.

The sweet old story of the year
Is spinning onward to its close,
Yet sounds as welcome on the ear
As in the time of op'ning rose:
May life for all as sweetly wane
As comes the autumn time again.

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

DEATH is a wonderful mimic. He can take anybody off.

IT WILL RECOVER.—'He's disgraced his name.' 'What is his name?' 'Smith.'

'This is a terrible weight of gilt,' moaned the little picture with the big frame.

A man never fully realizes the wealth of information he doesn't possess till his first child begins to ask questions.

'In this little casket I have preserved all these years the dearest remembrance of my honeymoon. It is the hotel bill.'

The hospitality of some people has no roof to it. Ten people will give you a dinner for one who will offer you a bed and a breakfast.

If a man is bad his mother says it is because his wife does not understand him, and his wife says it is because his mother always spoiled him.

If a two-wheeled vehicle is a bicycle, and a three-wheeled a tricycle, it does not follow that the one-wheeled is an icicle. It is a wheelbarrow.

A Washington Heights man claims that his wife is the most ingenious woman in the world. He has been married ten years and she has hid his slippers in a different place every day.

'And where are you going, my pretty maid?'
'I'm going, kind sir, to church,' she said.
'But isn't that something new, fair maid?'
'O yes, I've got my new bonnet,' she said.

'Maria, you will please start the him,' called out the parson from the stairway at eleven p.m., and young Doodely, who had accompanied the parson's daughter home from church, took the hint and left.

The spot in Rome where Nero committed suicide is said to have been discovered. It is on the Pincian Hill, and was identified by the discovery of a stone with an inscription fixing the location of the villa where it is known the deed was done.

'I can't say that I was overpowered by the beauty of the New York women,' says Mrs Stanley. 'At the ball there were strikingly handsome belles, but the average personal beauty was lower than you would find in a London drawing room.

The Progressive Woman's club is the name to be given a new organisation soon to be started in London. There is to be but a small entrance fee, women of every class will be admitted and discussions will be entered into on all progressive movements.

Miss Jeanette L. Gilder, sister of the editor of the *Century*, and herself editor of the *Critic*, is credited with being the author of the remark that New York men divide all women into two classes, fools and rogues, and that they prefer the rogues, though they marry the fools.

Those who are near the Prince of Wales say he becomes more and more fastidious about his meals with advancing years, and is something akin to a terror to the royal cooks. He wants but little here below, but, by St. George and all the dragons, wants that little very nice.

A woman named Abigail Cochrane, who has just died in Scotland at eighty-four years of age, was a pauper from the cradle to the grave. She was born in Greenock in 1807, and was imbecile from her earliest youth. It is estimated that she cost the public purse between £2,000 and £3,000.

RATS CHEWED UP HIS FORTUNE.—A miser living on the Missouri River in Minnesota, U.S.A., had been in the habit for several years past of secreting his surplus cash in a cellar under his house. The pile, which was all in bank bills, had accumulated until the total amounted to £1,000. One day he visited the cellar to count over his secreted horde, as was his wont upon Sunday, when to his surprise and chagrin he discovered that the rats had chewed up the bills until they were entirely worthless.

TYPEWRITING NOT LIGHT WORK.—It seems scarcely credible that the girl typewriter whom you can see in any business office in town requires an energy equal to 8,425 pounds to do a fair day's work? But on calculation this is found correct. To depress a key on a typewriting machine requires 6 ounces of energy. There are usually 60 depressions a line and twenty-five lines to a page (foolscap), amounting altogether to 1,500 depressions to a page. To write fifteen of such pages, which is usually considered a fair day's work, the typewriter must depress the keys 22,500 times, which multiplied by 6, the number of ounces a depression, and this again divided by 16, the number of ounces in a pound, will give the astonishing result of 8,425 pounds of energy expended.

HUNGARIAN MUSIC.—It was in 1878-9, during the occupation of Bosnia. The battle of Maglaj was raging. The enemy, well protected in its fortified position, repulsed the repeated attacks of the third escadron of heavy dragoons (Bohemians), who, disheartened and decimated, retreated in wild disorder. Defeat seemed to be inevitable. Captain Milinkovic's presence of mind bade him call in the second escadron of the Thirteenth Regiment of Hungarian hussars. Using no eloquence, no encouraging word, he simply ordered the band to play three Hungarian melodies for them. The thundering hurrah which drowned the songs's last chord led the lads into the fire, and although only twenty out of their hundred survived the carnage, they dislodged the enemy and won the battle.

MAKING LOVE IN CHURCH.—In church a surprising amount of flirtation and love making is done every Sunday. Of course it is carried on covertly, so much so, in fact, that not one of the many worshippers ever suspects the truth. At evening service one Sunday a visitor was ushered to a vacant pew. Carelessly lifting a hymn book out of the rack he found upon glancing at the flyleaf that it was the property of a lady, for her name was thereon inscribed. That, however, was not all, for upon other fly leaves were such passages as these, evidently hastily written, in reply to some other message:—'Florence tells me that she believes you are inconstant. What shall I tell her?' This seemed to have elicited a negative reply, for directly below those lines was this simple yet soulful rhyme:—

Oh, I'm true to her, yes, true to her,
As thorns are true to a chestnut burr.

SOME MODELS.

THERE was the big Somali, Kano, whose yellowy-black epidermis was of the texture of dressed crocodile-leather. In European costume his points did not show to advantage; but in a red-and-white Arab jellaba, embroidered with green silk, with a leopard-skin and a Highland target of bull hide—with a fancy arsenal of weapons, from an Afghan knife to an Ashantee war spear, from a Chinese matchlock to a boomerang—he was a loveable thing to paint. Of late years Kano has vanished from our ken. There is a rumour in Studioland to the effect that he has accepted an engagement with the manager of a travelling circus, and in his character of a freshly-caught Zulu devours three pounds of raw beefsteak nightly, to the tune of 'The King of the Cannibal Islands' as breathed blatmingly from blatant brass.

Then there were those three Italians. A ring at the door, and when it was opened, there they would be standing, opal-eyeballed, olive-green in the cold sunlight of Albion. *I miei rispetti signori!* Off went the three hats together as if three strings had been simultaneously pulled. Did the gentleman want a model? Two models? Three models? Here was Federigo—elderly, wrinkled, with a smile of infinite patience and an appetite of unfathomed capacity: here Battista, surnamed the Big, with the muscles of an ox and the moustaches of a Papal Guard. Last but not least, Beppi the Boy, the mendacious, the gallicky, the beautiful!

Then there was Topsy Tirlepin. Topsy would arrive with a Belgravian rat-tat and inquire airily, 'Scumble in?' Scumble would admit the impeachment. Upon which Topsy would furl the red-satin parasol—she carried this in all seasons—and surge over the threshold and into the studio with an air which betokened her familiarity with the topography of Pot-boiler Flats. Topsy was quite the lady—insistent on the aspirate—had picked up a good deal of the artistic jargon, and employed her knowledge quite as intelligently as the art critic of a minor weekly. She was nice in her eating, was Topsy, and threw over Sapp Green, Academy picture and all, because the views of artist and model did not accord in the matter of lunches. Cold meat, with a pickle, and half-pint of bitter four days out of six! And upon the table of a gentleman in Mr Green's position! A Hot Houtray was, to say the least of it, what one might have expected, and a drop of burnt Cognac in one's caffy! Topsy's criticisms were freely bestowed, if not always gratefully received; and she possessed a vast store of biographical information regarding friends of hers—Topsy's clients were all 'friends'—who had married ladies of her own profession. These ladies, according to Topsy, invariably conducted themselves as though to the purple born; wandering through hazy vista of innumerable Private Views, robed in splendour, leaning on the arm of President himself; whilst their happy possessors invariably attained to repute and fortune.

There was Triggs—little Triggs, who gave up the profession and went into the foreign wine trade. A few of us helped him in his effort to take one manly step beyond the bounds of modeldom. But it was no use; he was saturated with idleness, so to speak. The life had eaten into him. In a dusty corner of the studio stand, to this day, some dozen flasks of Trigg's unique Vesuvio, guaranteed a vintage of exceptional quality, imported from the very foot of the burning mountain. That Vesuvio was tested at a studio supper, and triumphantly vindicated its title to the possession of volcanic properties on that occasion.

Maria Giannina next. Daughter of Venice, adoptive child of London, Saffron Hill knows thee yet. To day Maria Giannina is *Patrona* of a little eating-house in that savoury locality, where veal with tomatoes and long strings of thick macaroni may be washed down Italian throats with the most iniquitous of cheap vintages, and rows with knives are not infrequent. Maria Giannina is aging, with the premature old age of the Italian woman. Her ripe, brown, luscious cheek is getting sunken, her curves of contour are less voluptuous, her ropes of hair—hair sun-gilded on the summits of its waves and black as night in the masses of its shadows—are less plentiful. Her eyes have lost their sleepy fiery expression, and are grown hawk-like, eager for *bajocchi*. Her manners are more civilized, less engagingly brutal. She is less given to the making of inarticulate noises—zoological, repulsive, uncouth. There is an unfinished full length study of Maria leaning up, face to wall, in the same corner with the Vesuvio. She walked out in a rage and didn't come back again, and so the final touches were never put in. It was Chisselish who offended her. He had started a sketch in clay, and string and compass proved Maria Giannina to measure three points less from the tip of the left shoulder to the inner end of the left clavicle than from the inner end of the right clavicle to the tip of the right shoulder. How Maria Giannina winded the slur thus cast upon the exactness of her proportions I hardly know. She had little enough English in those days, but tones and gestures were enough for Southern quickness to comprehend. She rose up and came down off the platform, and unburdened her soul as follows:—'Sons of Giannina! Have he not cry, "Marie, by this soul of mine you have the buti pairfec?" *Che-e!* In my own land the great artists weep. 'Come back, Maria, little love and we will fill thy lap with florins! And I will go back, dedicating you, descendants of drowned dogs, to the devil. *Capisce lei!* Then Maria Giannina bounced out, upsetting Chissellish, high stool, and wet clay and all, with a scornful thrust of her shapely muscular elbow. She shook the dust of the studio literally from her feet, and, having been paid beforehand for the whole three sittings, departed and returned no more.

Mr M. J. Gannon. Mr J. M. Geddis.

Mr Thos. Mackay. Mr W. L. Rees. Mr Jas. Carroll.

NATIVE LAND LAWS COMMISSION.—SEE LETTERPRESS.

THE LOT OF A COUNTRY DOCTOR.

'YES,' said the doctor, whipping up his horse—it was a sprinter—until the light buggy bounded over the stones of the country road like a freight train on the sleepers. It was night, and the lantern swinging underneath only made the darkness ahead seem more opaque than ever. 'Yes, the life of a country doctor is what you might call a picnic in G minor. It is a cake with more spice than plums, for it has more variety to the square inch than any other pursuit that it has ever been my fortune to encounter.

'I have been riding about this country for twenty-two years and have what you might call a pretty extensive practice. I attend about everything in two counties, from chilblains to childbirth. I am the medical foster father of the present generation anywhere within twenty miles of my home. I have closed the eyes and I trust eased the pains of some thousands of good people. Many of my constituency do not know my name. I am simply "The Doctor" to them. Bad debts? Well, I don't know. I never did keep books. But if I had got five shillings for every professional visit that I have made I would be about eight times richer than I am.

'I am on the go eighteen hours out of the twenty-four and seven days in the week. The rest of my time I have for rest and recreation. But a doctor does not need the sleep of other people! I always keep five horses in the stable and change off several times a day. I am a hard driver. When a horse goes lame or breaks down I put him out to pasture. If the breakdown is a bad one I sell the animal and buy a fresh one. Sometimes I drop asleep sitting bolt upright in my buggy while my horse brings me to the stable of his own accord. I try to keep awake, because it is not safe to sleep that way; but there are times when I would sleep if I was riding straight into the teeth of hostile artillery, I simply cannot keep awake. Considering that there are three busy coal railroads and a canal within a furlong of my house, the luxury of sleeping on the go is extremely hazardous, yet I have ridden for miles on the towpath with the canal not six inches from my buggy wheels on one side and the river not six inches on the other. I have done it at night, too. Never had a tumble? Oh, yes I have. Some pretty bad ones. But I am not dead yet, as you see, and on the whole I have had remarkably good luck.

'That lantern between the wheels has saved me many a journey. People see it coming, know that it means the doctor, and run out to intercept me. It isn't everyone who can swing a lantern that way. If you were to try to do it without learning the secret of it the lantern would go out before you had gone ten rods.

'Some day I shall get old and useless, and sell out my business and retire. But I fear I will have to be very old and extremely good for nothing. Or else, perhaps, I shall pitch out on my head some night and get my quietus that way. Then there will be a splendid chance for some young doctor.

'But until one or the other contingency arises the young doctors have got to whistle for patients in my bailiwick, I tell you. I love my business. It is wife and child to me. And I propose to remain monarch of all I survey as long as my eyes can see the horse's flank and my good right hand can hold the reins. There's a strong bit of pride about me if I am only a country doctor, and I am going to do the doctoring of this country side if I have to do it for nothing, because when I do it I know it is being done just right.

From a sketch by Mr T. Ryan.

EVENING AT ROTORUA.—MOKOIA ISLAND.

GIRL SLAVERY IN TIBET.

THE Sau-ch'uanese are much given to selling girls, and large numbers are exported yearly from Ch'ung-ch'ing for Han-kou and Shanghai and other Eastern cities. The price usually paid for one of six or seven years is from seven to ten taels. They are kindly reared by the stock farmer who buys them, receive a 'liberal education with all modern accomplishments,' and when they have attained the age of sixteen are easily disposed of at high prices. The trade has nothing cruel about it, and many of these girls are respected members of society in after life, and certainly enjoy many more material comforts than if they had been left in their poor villages. In homes of highly respectable Chinese the wife can be found with four or five little girls purchased with her savings, and they are treated with as much kindness and love as her own children.

'KO RAUTAO TEPIERE'

Is a native whare at Ohinemutu, erected by the late Niriniona Pene, famous for his beautiful native carvings throughout the Hot Lake District. The whare is at present occupied by Mr Alf. Warbrick, the well-known tourist guide to the Hot Lake District, and is a favourite resort for visitors, who gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of inspecting the collection of native curios which Mr Warbrick is in possession of.

CARE OF THE PIANO.

WITH proper care and attention a good piano should last a family a lifetime. If this is not given it the piano will in time become harsh and 'tin panny' and afford little satisfaction or delight to its owner. Ordinary practice, whether by a child or a grown-up person, will not injure a piano in anyway. It is not necessary to be a professional piano player and to know exactly with what force to strike the keys in order to keep the instrument in good condition. Of course it will not be improved by thumping the case or by striking the keys with any hard substance. Neither does this remark apply to schools and institutions where playing is taught and the instrument is used continuously for ten or twelve hours every day. In the latter case the felt portions will wear out sooner than if it was used in a private family.

The matter of tuning should not be neglected, and should never be intrusted to any other than an experienced person. Incapable tuners very often work irreparable injury to the most perfect and costly instruments. During the first year a new piano should be tuned every three or four months at least. After that it will only be necessary to have it tuned at longer intervals.

Dampness is the most dangerous enemy the piano has to contend against, and for this reason the climate must be considered. If the instrument is placed in a damp room or left open in a draught of air, the result will be that the strings, tuning pins, and the various metal parts will become coated with rust, and the cloth used in the construction of the keys and action become swollen. It is positively painful to play on such a piano.

Rosewood, the material used in most pianos, is a tropical wood with large open pores, and if the instrument is exposed to the dampness for any considerable length of time the effect on the polish or varnish by swelling the wood of the outside case will be extremely injurious. This applies to other woods, although in a somewhat less degree. Persons living at the seaside are particularly liable to have their instruments marred by this element.

That checkered, whitish appearance so often seen on rosewood pianos is due to their being exposed incessantly to the influences of humidity. It causes the dry seasoned rosewood to swell, narrows the pores out of which the varnish is forced with irresistible power and revarnishing and repolishing then becomes necessary. This is rather costly, but it must be done if appearance is considered.

MAORI 'TIKI,'

Found at a pa at Rotorua. Now in Auckland Museum.

Another effect of dampness, and one of great importance although little understood, is the formation of ridges caused by the sounding board swelling and raising out of its exact position. While this in reality is one of the best evidences of the excellent quality and seasoning of the material, the uninformed observer often mistakes them for cracks and lays the blame on the manufacturer. The highest grade of pianos are made of thoroughly seasoned material, which obviously absorbs dampness more rapidly than imperfectly dried wood, and are thus rendered less impervious to its influence. Excessive cold or extreme heat should be avoided, and the piano should not be placed too near a heated stove or hot air from furnaces. Pianos sometimes give forth a rattling, jarring noise, while to all appearances they are in excellent condition. This is caused by some hard substance, often so small as to entirely escape detection, having dropped inside the instrument. It is very important that the sounding board should be kept entirely free from dust and all other extraneous matter. The best way to accomplish this is by keeping the piano closed when not in use. A piano, however, should never be allowed to remain unopened for a period of several months or longer.

To protect the instrument from bruises and scratches it should be covered with an india rubber, or cover of some other material. Strange as it may seem, the piano is not free from the depredation of moths. They are very destructive to the cloth and felt used in the manufacture of pianos, but may be kept out by placing a lump of camphor wrapped in soft paper in the inside corner, which should be renewed from time to time. I have seen pianos which have been in constant use for thirty-five years almost as good as new. With proper care and attention this is possible with any first class pianoforte.

PAULINE LUCCA.

MME. PAULINE LUCCA is on the point of bidding farewell to the operatic stage on which she has gained so many triumphs, and will thus retire at about the same age (48) as that at which Giulia Grisi had, sorely against the grain, to relinquish the career she loved so passionately.

Pauline Lucca was in her best days quite on a par with Patti, Nilsson, Albani, and the other prime donne of the last quarter of a century. Of a slight stature—a little bigger, perhaps, than Adelina Patti—Lucca could, nevertheless, present a most imposing appearance: and in the picturesque costume of Selika in the 'Africane,' a part which Meyerbeer, we believe, wrote expressly for her, she completely filled the stage, even in so large a house as Covent Garden. Selika was, perhaps, her most celebrated impersonation, and her large violet-gray eyes fixed her audiences much as the Ancient Mariner held the Wedding Guest. She was a charming Carmen, and Zerlina and Cherubino were also included in her list of parts.

Lucca is a magnificent dramatic singer, and her voice was full, rich, and of wide range. The music-loving Viennese have been of all mortals the most favoured in the matter of hearing Lucca, and she used to be very popular in London, as well as at St. Petersburg and other European capitals.

An Alliance lecturer, who got up to address a meeting, said: 'Now brothers, what shall I talk about?' 'Talk about a minute,' said one brother, who had heard him before.

From a sketch by Mr T. Ryan.

KO RAUTAO TEPIERE.'—INTERIOR OF MR. ALFRED WARBRICK'S WHARE AT OHINEMUTU.

MY BREACH OF TRUST.

BY EDWARD HERON-ALLEN.

PARIS, the gay city of the volatile Frenchman, was in an excited condition, in the spring of 1877, when I, with two or three good fellows, all of us war-correspondents, had our orders to proceed on our way to the seat of the war in the Balkan Peninsula, which had been recently declared.

The experiences of a war-correspondent are always exciting, often perilous, and generally unique. To an even greater degree than the officer or soldier actually engaged in the field, he requires to be in the forefront of the fight, and, on the principle that lookers-on see most of the game, he is often afforded opportunities of witnessing events which escape the observation even of the officers commanding, as, besides watching the actual progress of the strife, he is bound to keep an eye on surrounding circumstances, ethnological or otherwise, and is often required to play a part—important or unimportant, as the case may be—in the little personal dramas of life and death, which go to make up the history of a war.

The experience I am about to relate was one of these. I was called upon to act, almost without premeditation, in the last act of a drama which was touching, painful, and full of human interest. Whether I did right or wrong is the problem I am about to propound to you.

We sat together in the train bound eastward, chatting over the *casus belli* and probable result of the war, whilst the long vista of iron rails terminated in nothingness at the point of sight behind us, and landed us towards evening at the German frontier. As I wandered around amid the confusion of the *douane*, looking with objectless curiosity at the names inscribed upon the rummaged portmanteaux and other impediments of the European traveller, and wondering which of the harried passengers belonged to which pieces of luggage, I observed a young fellow, scarcely more than a boy, apparently, standing a little apart from the crowd, and evidently unconcerned in the general haymaking that was officially proceeding. What struck me at once about him was the shadow of a great sadness clouding his fine gray-blue eyes. He was short rather than tall, with curly yellow hair, and was dressed in gray corduroy with a *quasi* military helmet on his head, a leathern belt about his waist, his legs cased in knee high soft leather boots. His expression of despair attracted whilst it touched me, and, guessing his nationality to be French, I sauntered up to him and addressed some casual remark in that language, *apropos* of the scene before us. He replied, and we entered into conversation.

'You have got through the infliction of the custom house, said I.

'I have nothing but a valise,' replied he.

'Ah!' I rejoined. 'You travel light, like a veteran—for your costume seems to indicate a long journey.'

'I am proceeding to the seat of war,' replied he. 'I am a special correspondent.'

'Indeed! Welcome, then, *camarade*,' and I handed him my card in exchange for his, whereupon was inscribed, 'M. Maxime Durand, *Correspondent Special du Bulletin Quotidien*.'

I made him transfer his valise into our compartment, presented him to his future *confrères*, and before many leagues had separated us from the frontier, his sadness had apparently worn off to a great degree, and we all became the best friends in the world. Thus we reached Giurgero on the Danube, and set off thence in search of the Russian staff to which we were attached. By the end of the campaign, most of the boys talked a funny gibberish which they called Turkish, but at the commencement I was the only 'Turk' in the party; so I had it all my own way, so to speak, and corralled the soft places in the *arabas*, or carts, that took us to the front. It was this, I think, combined with the fact that I was the first correspondent to know him as 'one of us,' and by divine right of leadership that attached Maxime Durand especially to me. Altogether, we correspondents in the Russo-Turkish business were a joyful crew and kept as close together as we could throughout the campaign, but my especial comrade and the pet of the whole crowd, was Maxime Durand.

He never lost heart, never complained, though he suffered terribly from cold, poor boy, and we used to chaff him unmercifully for the care with which he would put on his gloves and wax his moustaches before a triangular bit of looking-glass, before going to the front. He was the life and soul of the party; he was a really remarkable cook, and performed culinary prodigies with half a dozen looted eggs, some hedgerow weeds and an antique hen, cut off considerably past her prime by a revolver bullet. In the evenings he would sing, or rather croon, echoes of the Champs Elysées, or tell us the most 'impossible' stories till we threw things at him. We used to rout him out with a bayonet, or a lump of ice, in the small hours of the morning, to do the lighter work of the mess, but when it came to his turn to do the heavier work of the community, one of the older men used always to do it for him, assuring him that he would get his hands dirty, or break his eye-glass, or something terrible of that kind, if we suffered him to do his share of the rough work of the camp. In a word, he was our spoilt child, and if ever he happened to be late returning to quarters in the evening, we used to feel positively sick until he appeared, with probably a string of *kebabs* in his hand, which he had a knack of trading with confiding Turks, against an old decoration pick-up on the field, a dilapidated sword, a bunch of looted but homesick carrots, or a handful of apples, no longer 'fragrant with the fire of forgotten suns.' He attributed his triumph in this direction to his eloquence in the vernacular, Maxime's Turkish consisting of: '*Bon istterim*' ('I want this'), '*Vir bana bon*' ('Give me this'), '*Chapuk ol*' ('Look sharp'), '*Souss ol*' ('Shut up'), '*Sheitanyah ghit*' ('Go to the——'), and '*Shekurler Effendim hazerelleri*' ('Thank you, my Mr Your Excellency'), I taught him the original Turkish of these practical phrases, and more he refused to learn.

Well! well! you must forgive me for digressing in this manner, like an old man babbling about his darling. He was very dear to me, was our gold-curly headed little *frileu* Maxime, and when he was killed, I saw tough old correspondents weep for him—*quorum pars fui*.

The war progressed and dwindled to its culminating point (if I may be allowed the paradox)—the Fall of Plevna. For a month we had been encamped with the Muscovite battalions, waiting for Osman Pasha's superb defence to yield before the omnipotent generals Famine, Frost and Disease, supported by Skobeleff and Todleben.

Since the 3rd of November we had been sitting before the walls inactive, waiting in grim horrible expectancy for the heroism of the besieged to give out, for since Skobeleff's disastrous storm of September 3rd known to history as the Lovtcha attack, in which he had lost fully half of his army without impairing the position of Osman, we had learned to respect our foe and to trust to the slow, irresistible weapon of famine, rather than to the impetuosity of the Muscovite soldier or the string of the Berdan rifle. On the 9th of December, however, spies brought us the intelligence that a sortie was imminent and on the 10th, the Turks having deserted the Krishin redoubt, it was occupied by a Russian battalion.

We knew that the beseiging force might expect to be shelled from the fortress at the dawn of the morrow, and as we were ignorant of Osman's resources, we none of us knew for certain that we should be alive to mess together on the following evening, and I for my part wrote a letter, which I felt might be my last, to my paper, and scribbled some short notes home under cover to my editor. At ten o'clock I took my dispatches to the headquarter lines, and having seen them safely *en train de depart*, returned to our tent.

As I approached our canvas shelter, I saw outlined against the dim light within, a cloaked figure in a *tarboush* [erroneously called a *fez* by the occidental]. 'A Turk?' thought I as I crept up behind him and gripped him by the throat. As the starlight shone out upon the colourless face I exclaimed starting back as I did so:—

'*Dieu!* *Maxime, que fais tu ici?*'

'Ah! *Mon cher*,' replied he, 'I was waiting for you—I wanted to speak to you.' On the pale drawn features I could see the trace of recent tears, but I rejoined as roughly as I could:

'How dare you rob yourself of your beauty sleep like this; 'Don't you know we've got to turn out at dawn to-morrow in all probability?'

'Codger!' replied he (a perversion of the Turkish *Khodja* [teacher] bestowed upon me by 'the boys' in deference to my knowledge of the language) 'don't laugh at me to-night for I'm quite serious—for once. You are my dearest friend out here—are you not?—and I want to talk to you very seriously to-night under these stars which I shall never see again.'

'Come, come, *cher ami*,' I said, 'you mustn't talk like that. In the first place it's ridiculous, and in the second it's unlucky. We knights of the pencil don't get shot, and of all of us, you at any rate are bound to return and make some fair Graziella happy for life.'

I had taken him by the arm and we had reached, by a pathway trodden in the snow, the summit of a little earth-work thrown up by Todleben's sappers. He pointed to the distant lights which outlined the fortifications of Plevna and said:

'Behind those walls, old fellow, lies a bullet that will find me in the field in the morning, and I want you to do me a great favour when I'm under the snow in the trenches yonder. Promise me, *cher ami*, promise me!'

'Well,' I replied seeing that he was bound to relieve his mind, 'I promise,—the more readily as I know I shan't be called upon to perform—what is it?'

'Thank you. I must tell you—by way of introduction—something about myself. I was born in Douai, where I lived until my parents died and I became a travelling correspondent of the *Bulletin*; and in Douai there lives a child whom I should have married after this campaign had I lived—we have been betrothed for many years. She is Euphrasie, the daughter of old Baptiste Sterelle, one of the most respected citizens of Douai, and we have loved one another ever since we were children—so high. When you spoke to me at the German custom-house on our way out here, you remember that I was almost heart-broken; I will tell you why. I was engaged for the *Bulletin* at Avignon when I received a telegram from Paris ordering me to report myself for service at the seat of war, at ten on the following morning, in Paris. My first thoughts were naturally of Euphrasie, whom I had not seen for weeks and whom I might never see again, and I left for Douai at once, intending to bid Euphrasie farewell and proceed to Paris by the midnight train. I reached Douai faint with hunger and anxiety, and on my way to M. Sterelle's, I stopped at the restaurant of Père Larréze to take a glass of wine and a crust to strengthen me for my adieu. Whilst I ate, there entered a man by name Nicolas Dufoure, who for many years had endeavoured to supplant me in Euphrasie's love, and who hated me with all the hatred of an unsuccessful rival. I did not want to part—even from him—in anger, so I addressed him, and, on his expressing surprise at seeing me, I told him I was leaving for the war to-night. He could hardly believe it, and I took from my pocket my editor's telegram; as I did so, Euphrasie's last letter to me fell from my pocket-book—I instantly replaced it, but not before he had seen the writing, for he turned white with anger and rose and left me without a word.

'I finished my little meal and proceeded in the direction of Baptiste Sterelle's. It was twilight, and as I mounted the little narrow street behind the Mairie, which led to their house, suddenly I received a blow on the head. I remember nothing more. When I came to my senses I was the sole occupant of a third-class carriage on a train whirling I knew not whither. At the first station the guard opened the door and seeing me recovered, exclaimed:

'"Ah! *mon brave*, that's well. We are better now?"

'"Where am I?" said I.

'"You are in the midnight express on your way to Paris."

'"And how did I get here?"

'"You were carried into the station at Douai, and put under my charge, by a tall blonde man, who gave me your ticket, saying that you had to be in Paris early to-morrow, but had been indulging in a little farewell 'jollication' with your old friends at Douai. *Dieu de dieu!* We all know what it is; sleep on, *mon ami*, we are yet some hours from Paris; you will be all right when we arrive." And so he left me."

'What did it mean? Who was the tall blonde man? Certainly not Dufoure, whom I thought of at once, for he is short and dark. A foot-pad no doubt—for I had been robbed of everything, my watch, my money, my pocket-book containing Euphrasie's letter and my editor's telegram. It was from the latter, no doubt that the robber had discovered my identity and the need in which I stood of being in Paris to-morrow, and I felt almost grateful to the unknown giant who had been so far considerate to me, though he had robbed me not only of my worldly possessions, but of my last interview with Euphrasie. But besides having been stunned I had also been drugged,—it was only twilight when I left the restaurant of Père Larréze, and it was nearly one o'clock in the morning when I received the guard's explanation at that unknown station on the road to Paris. What was to be done? How communicate with my darling in Douai? Well, I hoped that I should be able to write from Paris. To telegraph was out of the question, for, in Douai, the telegraph operator is general retailer of public and private news.

'I reached Paris, worn out, in the early morning and put in an appearance at the office at ten o'clock. I was closeted with the editor for an hour, and received instructions to leave Paris, by the Orient Express at midday, barely time in which to make my final preparations. And thus I left *la belle France* behind me—now you know the cause of my misery when you met me in the German *douane*.

'I have written two or three times since I have been in the Balkans, but alas! it is such a chance whether private letters get through the lines, and even if they do, it is a still greater chance if they ever arrive, and I have a terrible fear that Euphrasie has never heard anything from me since I left. I had looked forward to telling her all about it on my return, now I shall never see her, or Douai, or France again. It is only you, *cher ami*, who can help me now, and you will—won't you?'

He paused, his utterance choked by a great sob. I felt dangerously near tears myself as I answered, 'Yes, yes, *mon garçon*, come, what is it you want of me?'

'It is this—I wear round my neck a chain on which I carry her portrait in a locket and a little gold image of *la Sainte Vierge* that my mother gave me when I was confirmed. When I am killed to-morrow, I implore you to seek my body among the dead. I want you to take these from my neck and carry them back to her, and tell her that I loved her and her alone, to the very end; that Maxime died in harness, with hers, the dream-face, before his eyes; that his last thoughts were of her, and tell her not to think hardly of him when you have told her the story of his last visit to Douai. Promise me, Codger, promise me.'

Of course I promised him, though I repeated my expressions of derision at his 'presentiment,' and then, the stars being on the wane, I bade him get what sleep he could before the first bass notes of the orchestra should wake us to the fact that the opera had commenced.

The next morning, the 11th of December, before dawn, the stir of the camp woke us, and in less than one hour, as the first rays of the sun began to tinge the snow with streaks of transient crimson, that should ere long become permanent, the celebrated sortie of Osman Pasha in the direction of the Sofia road—the Fall of Plevna—had commenced. I had routed out Maxime Durand, who had slept through the opening chords of the cannon's music like a child, and we had ridden to the front together.

To compensate for the dangers that a correspondent has to run he has one protective axiom—it is his duty to himself and his journal to keep as much out of harm's way as possible, and acting in this sense Maxime and I climbed into a couple of trees on a slight eminence commanding a fine view of the fortress and the trenches where the Siberian regiment lay hidden. There we sat for a couple of hours—I with my horse's reins hooked over my foot so that should the animal take fright and start off, he would jerk me down on to his back. Maxime was similarly posted about twenty yards distant. The incidents of that terrible sortie and Osman Pasha's magnificent dying effort are historic and need no recapitulation; suffice it to say that we must have been discovered by telescope from the walls, or by the advancing columns, for suddenly a bullet lodged in the branch on which I was seated, and was immediately followed by a dozen others that whistled unpleasantly near my sacred person. I dropped into my saddle and riding over to Maxime I called out:

'Come down! they're firing at us. Let us find some safer place.'

He came down, and seeing me lighting a cigarette he cried: 'Ah! Codger, *pour l'amour de Dieu et de moi*! give me a cigarette, my fingers are frozen and I have not got a match.'

I rolled him a cigarette and handed it to him with my lighting apparatus, an American invention in which a spring revolves an energy wheel against a steel spike and throws a shower of sparks upon a scrap of tinder. Now, in lighting the tinder I always directed the shower straight before me, between my charger's ears, so that the animal had never seen this miniature firework display, and it was a startling novelty to him when Maxime fired the thing a yard away from his head. He reared, turned and cantered off about thirty yards, and as I returned towards Maxime the keen intelligence of the brute, who was an old campaigner, 'perceived'—as somehow or other horses do perceive, long before their riders very often—the approaching flight of a shell, and 'crouched' as it were. I threw myself along his flank as circus riders do, shouting to Maxime as I did so:

'Shell!'

'*Pas pour moi!*' I heard him cry airily as he lit his cigarette. They were his last words—almost as he spoke the explosion took place covering my horse and myself with snow and earth. I looked towards Maxime. Good God! shall I ever forget the horror of the sight!

A fragment of the shell had struck him full in the breast, and the poor golden-haired boy was literally smashed to pieces. I draw the veil of silence over the horror of my task, and suffice it to say I found the gold chain, the locket and the image, and hung them round my own neck, where they remained till the termination of the campaign. We were a saddened and silent group in the correspondents' mess that night. Plevna had surrendered soon after midday. What a day of carnage it had been! I have been in many such scenes since, but seldom have seen anything approaching it.

The war drew to a close and ended with the treaty of San Stefano. Most of us had mothers, sisters, sweethearts, wives waiting for us at home—I had none of these, I am alone in the world—so I went straight to Paris, and thence to Douai, where I arrived in the blaze of a warm spring noon. As I made my way from the station, I saw inscribed over the window of a *cabaret* in the main street, *Larreze—Restaurateur*.

'Here,' thought I, 'is where the boy passed his last conscious hours in Douai!'

I went in, and seating myself before a modest *dejeuner*, soon succeeding in drawing mine host into conversation.

'I have just come from the war in the East,' said I by way of introduction.

'Ah! Monsieur is from the war!' replied the garrulous Frank, rising at once to the bait, 'then perhaps he met M. Durand, the correspondent of the *Bulletin Quotidien*.'

'Durand?' said I reflectively—'oh, yes, I remember. Did you know him?'

'Do I know him! *Mais oui, le scélérat!* He came from Douai, and I saw him the night before he went to the war. He has stayed out there in the East has he not?'

'Yes—he has stayed out there.'

'Ah the wretch! He was betrothed to one of the sweetest young girls in this city, but he didn't appreciate her and has stayed out there, no doubt living *la vie Turque* with its immoralities and horrors.'

'How do you mean?' queried I.

'Why, the night before he left, he came to Douai and dined at the very table at which you are sitting, monsieur. And then, instead of going to say "good-by" to his loved one, he got into some drunken brawl in the lower parts of the town, and had it not been for the goodness of a friend, who also loved Mlle. Sterelle, he would never have reached Paris in time to follow his duty. This friend happened to know that he had to leave, and saw him off to Paris, terribly intoxicated, and naturally the good people of Douai were very indignant.'

'And where does Mlle. Sterelle live now?'

'Ah, monsieur! Her father died suddenly, soon after Maxime departed, and left her alone in the world; and then, as she had never heard from Maxime, and heard, moreover, that he had decided to remain out their amid the horrible luxury of the East, she married M. Nicolas Dufoure—the *bon bourgeois* who had loved her long.'

'And did she love this M. Dufoure?'

'Not as she loved Maxime, of course, but—*que voulez vous*?—she was alone, deserted, with a business on her hands which she could not manage by herself, and she respected her present husband,—which is, no doubt, far better than loving him,—and she will be happier with him than she would have been with Maxime, who has turned out to be a drunkard and a sensualist.'

'Ah! and where does Mme. Dufoure live now?'

'At the top of the street, behind the Mairie, monsieur, where she and her husband carry on the business left behind him by the Baptiste Sterelle.'

I thanked mine host, and, having finished my *dejeuner*, betook myself in the direction of the Mairie. I found the narrow street Maxime had described to me, and climbing its treacherous cobble-stones, saw at its head a well-to-do-looking haberdasher's shop, over the window of which was inscribed 'Nicolas Dufoure, successor to Baptiste Sterelle.' I entered, ostensibly in quest of some cravats, to be served by a comely young woman, who advanced from behind the *comptoir* at the end of the shop. We were alone. Indeed, Douai seemed to be fast asleep in its intirety, and I had no difficulty in getting into conversation with 'Madame, whom I learned at once so be Mme. Dufoure, *née* Euphrasie Sterelle.

I opened the conversation, as I had done in the case of Père Larréze, with the statement of my recent return from the theatre of war, and, like the worthy restaurateur, Mme. Dufoure immediately asked me if I had know Maxime, and on my replying in the affirmative, added the question:

'Why did he stay in the East, monsieur?'

'*Parce que c etait plus fort que lui*,' I replied ambiguously.

'And when he left, he was *fiancé* to me,' exclaimed the little woman, indignantly.

'But you also, madame, have married elsewhere,' I ventured to suggest.

'And had I had not the right—did I not owe it to myself, to do so?' she returned. 'Maxime and I were betrothed to one another when we were only "so high," and though I had many an offer from some of the best matches in Douai, I remained faithful to my promise to him, for—I loved him. Well, m'sieur, when this war broke out, he came to Douai—to see me?—not at all—to join in some drunken orgie in the lowest parts of the town, I know not where. But fortunately, M. Dufoure, who was there for business purposes, saw him and heard him read aloud, to his vile companions, my last letter to him. Oh! I know that it was so, for M. Dufoure remembered whole passages from it, which I recognised as having written. He was naturally indignant, for he had loved me almost as long as Maxime, but he sincerely hoped that Maxime would clear himself by letter, even going morning after morning himself to the post-office to see whether he had written. But no, he kept a silence as cold as that of the grave, and when my father died and left me alone in the world, I married M. Dufoure, who offered himself at once as my protector. And now he tells me that Maxime has remained in the East to live *la vie Orientale*. Bah! it is all that he was fit for. I do not regret him.' She paused, more to gain breath, I think, than anything else, and then added: 'When did you see him last, Monsieur, and where?'

'It was in the month of December, and at the Fall of Plevna, madame,' replied I, slowly, and was about to add, 'he was shot down within a few yards of me,' when a great wave of thought and commiseration surged up within my soul. Thought for the details of the horrible story of treachery and lies that unfolded itself before my mental vision, and commiseration for the little woman before me, and for her lover, our poor dead Maxime.

Obviously it was this self-same Dufoure who had stunned Maxime in the dark on his last visit to Douai, and who had stolen the letter he had seen fall from the boy's pocket—that letter which he had evidently committed to memory and declared he had heard Maxime read aloud. Obviously it was he who had suppressed Maxime's letters, if they had ever reached Douai, and on this basis of trickery, treachery, and lies, had supplanted the poor golden-headed boy, whom I had seen shattered by a shell.

A problem requiring almost instantaneous solution propounded itself to me as I stood in the little shop at Douai on that spring afternoon. It was this: Here was Euphrasie, married, bound irrevocably and for life to this man who had won her by fraud, but for whom she felt a calm, permanent respect, if not a love like that she had given to Maxime; on the other hand, Maxime was dead, and it could do no good, but on the contrary must do a terrible harm, to fill her young life with a ghastly passionate regret.

To fulfil my promise to Maxime and shatter the woman's trust in the living out of a sentimental respect for the dead, or not to do so, and by the breach of trust let her continue in the path of her duty as the wife of Nicolas Dufoure, untainted by the knowledge of his crime, for crime it was—that was the question. Whilst I stood deliberating as rapidly as I could upon the problem, a short, sour-faced man entered the shop, and, casting an evil look at me said to Euphrasie:

'Madame Dufoure! would it not be better to attend to your business instead of chattering to strangers?'—and the little woman, courteaying to me, retired with a half-suppressed sigh to her *comptoir*.

So this was the husband of Euphrasie Sterelle. God help her, poor child! My mind was immediately made up—better, thought I, to let her make the best of her life, such as it is, than to mar the whole of it from now henceforth with the knowledge of her husband's baseness. Douai is a queer, primitive little place, and, not much from the outer world disturbs the placidity of its provincial existence; the chances were that the story of Maxime's death would never reach the ears of Euphrasie Dufoure.

My mind was made up. I came away without executing my mission, and returned to Paris, where I sought Maxime's only living relation—a sister, the wife of a jeweller in the Palais Royal. To her I confided the whole story, and the souvenirs of Maxime, which I had religiously worn ever since I took them from his mangled body.

And Maxime's sister approved of my breach of trust.

DESCRIPTION OF A FLIRT.

FLIRTING is as universal as it is dangerous, and without doubt one of the most harmful and heartless practices in the world. Certainly there are 'flirts' and 'flirts,' and some flirtations are more innocent than others. For instance, two young people who are neither engaged may amuse themselves with a mild flirtation, and do neither each other nor anyone else any harm; but if either of them has promised his or her affections elsewhere, and flirt merely for the sake of gratifying their vanity and receiving attention to which they have no right, then the flirtation is dangerous, and indeed sinful, especially when it inflicts needless pain on others.

When a girl does all in her power to make herself look her best, appear agreeable, and try to fascinate any young fellow in whose society she may chance to be thrown, her friends (lady ones in particular) will deem her 'a flirt'; but, after all, she has only done what was very natural under the circumstances, and only, perhaps, what they have often done themselves, for it's very human nature to seek admiration from the other sex. This, in its way, may be very harmless and innocent, but the danger of flirtation is that women will often out of sheer vanity or rivalry, lead men on, just for the sake of having the 'honour' (?) of an offer they are well aware they intend to refuse. A flirt can do her mischief very quickly. 'Still waters run deep,' and she has a thousand and one little shafts that fly very silently, and wound very deeply.

A look that accompanies the simple offering of a flower, the unnecessary pressure of the hand when bidding farewell, an almost imperceptible gesture of affection, may each and all send a wave of tumult to the heart, and cause a momentary throb of rapture; and yet the look, the touch, mean nothing—it is only 'flirtation.' Edna Lyall writes: 'No one has any right to raise feelings in another's heart they know they have no intention of satisfying.' The people who are most prone to flirt are generally the most heartless and selfish; they flirt just to amuse themselves, and *pour passer le temps*, utterly regardless of the heartache they may be giving their victims. Having no sensitiveness themselves, they cannot realise the pain impressionable people suffer at their expense. What to them is only an amusement, is life or death to others. Sometimes a woman will turn a flirt from desperation; her heart has been wrecked by past bitter experiences, and having found the fickleness of one man, she believes in none, and knowing she can love none enough to trust them, flirts indiscriminately with each and all that come in her way. 'For a broken heart cannot love or hope.'

Though it often knows how to flirt.

Flirts are like butterflies, they flutter from flower to flower, hover over it one moment, give it a passing kiss, and then off, away to the next that takes its fancy, to soon forget its very existence.

It is said that it 'takes two to make a quarrel,' and certainly it takes two to make a flirtation. It would be useless (or a flirt would term it 'no fun') to make pretty speeches and give tender glances to one who appeared quite unconscious you were trying to fascinate them. A little quiet scorn or silent contempt would soon disarm the most determined or proficient flirt in the world; for, after all, all flirtations are more or less shallow, as there cannot possibly be any depth of feeling.

A man rarely flirts with the woman he wishes or intends to make his wife. His respect for her would be too great to allow her name to be bandied about by the ever-ready gossips and scandal-mongers; and though, somehow, a flirt can get many admirers, she does not always get a lover, for 'admiration is not love,' and few could love and trust 'a flirt.'

EIGHT YEARS IN THE HAREM.—Between eight and nine years ago a young girl, named Anna Prokofyeff, then sixteen years of age, and of remarkable personal attractions, suddenly disappeared from her widowed mother's house in Odessa. The most searching inquiries were fruitlessly persecuted. It now transpires that after her abduction, Anna Prokofyeff was secretly carried to Constantinople, and eventually sold to a Salonica merchant, in whose harem she has remained until the recent death of her owner. From intelligence now received by friends it would appear that Anna was from the first treated with uniform kindness by the Salonica merchant, who, at his death, bequeathed to his favourite slave the whole of his property, consisting of four houses in Salonica, five trading schooners, and £15,000. The fair legatee, now only in her twenty-fifth year, and still possessing her remarkable youthful beauty scarcely impaired, has placed her two boys under the educational training of the Russian monks of Mount Athos, and to their abbot she has presented one of her schooners. She is now also converting one of her Salonica houses into a Russo-Greek free school.

THE TURKISH SULTAN.

THE Sultan of Turkey is of medium height, rather short than tall, well proportioned in his person, and carrying bravely the weight of his onerous duties, though there are also moments when an old and careworn look comes across his face, and when he almost personifies the apathy we so generally connect with the Turkish character. His beard, cut into a slight point is black; so are his hair and eyes. The latter are tender in expression, but also penetrating, and he looks his visitors straight in the face with a scrutiny that seems to read their thoughts. What destroys the pleasant first impression made by these eyes is the constant look of uneasiness in them.

The fact is Abdul Hamid does not feel himself safe even in his own palace. He does not suspect any one in particular, but he is on his guard against every one. . . . Few Padishahs have been beloved by their subjects as he. Indeed, he is to them quite a new type of Sultan, and they do not fail to appreciate the novelty. Here is a man who does not pass his days in a harem toying with his slaves. Here is a man who takes a real interest in the welfare of his people, who, far from following the example of his predecessors and leaving the reins of Government in the hands of some clever courtiers, insists on seeing and judging all for himself, down to the minutest particulars.

Personally, he is most benevolent and kind-hearted, and scarcely a month passes that he does not contribute some large sum out of his private purse to alleviate suffering among his subjects, irrespective of race or religion. His character may be summed up as having for its dominant note an extreme caution, and it is endowed with an unusual faculty for work. In manner he is exceedingly polite, especially in his treatment of European ladies. Indeed, he understands the rare art of making himself respected by all with whom he comes in contact.

Abdul Hamid gets up early. His toilet does not detain him long; indeed, it might detain him longer according to European codes. Dressed, he at once devotes himself to recite the prescribed prayers, after which he drinks a cup of black coffee, and instantly afterward begins to smoke cigarettes, a pastime that he continues all day almost without intermission, for he is an ardent smoker. Breakfast ended, he arranges family affairs, when these require his attention, as is almost always the case with so large a family, and of such varied ages and needs. This done, he quits the harem and goes into the selamlik. Here he receives the reports concerning Court affairs. Towards ten o'clock his Court secretary and chief dignitaries appear, bearing the day's dispatches and reports.

These handed in, the Sultan seats himself on a sofa, with, on his right, these documents, and on his left a pile of Turkish newspapers and extracts from the European press, translated into Turkish for his benefit by a translation bureau specially appointed to that end. His lunch, which follows the dispatch of this business, is most simple—little meat, a fair amount of vegetables. The meal ended, he will take a walk in the park or row in a little boat upon one of the lakes it incloses, always accompanied by a chamberlain or some high dignitary. After taking two hours' exercise in the air he returns to his sitting-rooms where he holds an open reception, or else presides over some committee meeting.

An hour or two before sunset he once more goes out for a walk. His dinner is as simple as his lunch. His favourite food is pillaf, sweets, and a very little meat. He never touches spirituous liquors, in due obedience to the commands of the prophet, but he drinks large quantities of sherbet and eats a great deal of ice cream. Dinner over he receives company in the selamlik, or he will retire into the harem, where his daughters play and sing to him. He himself on these occasions will often seat himself at the piano, an instrument he plays fairly well. For painting, for fine arts in general he has no taste. His women, too, find him very cold, but he is devoted to his children and also much attached to all the members of his family.

NOT IN HIS DAY-BILL.

SIGNOR BLANK is one of the best fellows imaginable. He has a fine, deep baritone voice which has been his means of livelihood ever since his boyhood. He is, probably, one of the best known professional singers in the country. We had arranged a 'sociable evening' at our place for Wednesday night last, and the Signor had been invited. Of course we expected to hear him sing, but aside from that he has so many other entertaining qualities that we wanted him, 'sing or no sing,' and so invited him.

We live in a large family hotel on the west side of the town. The 'party' was held in the private parlours of one of the boarders, and when the Signor arrived I had to escort him through the large public parlour. 'There he is. Isn't he going to sing?' and similar exclamations from a bevy of young ladies greeted the Signor's ears as we ran the gauntlet of the parlour. The Signor was evidently 'flustered' and I made up my mind not to ask him to sing at all.

After introducing the Signor to my friends we engaged in a general conversation and then young Leonard asked the Signor to sing. The Signor looked at me as if in protest, but before I had a chance to say anything he had taken a seat before the piano and commenced.

There was a flutter of excitement out in the hall and the door was suddenly opened, disclosing the eager and expectant faces of a dozen or more uninvited young ladies.

The Signor sang only one song, and then signified his intention of departing. He had only come, he said, to make his excuses, as he had had a prior engagement. I explained to him that we hadn't invited him merely to hear him sing, and then the Signor had something to say on this subject.

'Oh, I understand that very well,' said he, but I'll tell you, though, that I am often invited to dine out, and almost before I have taken my coat off I am asked to sing. It is sing before dinner, sing after dinner, and sing at any and all times. Among friends I don't mind it so much, but even then it is apt to become just a trifle monotonous. Now if you had only invited me here to play a little game of draw poker——'

'Signor,' said I, 'we'll get up a game for your especial benefit next Saturday night, and you won't be asked to sing unless you win.'

'That's different,' replied the Signor, with a smile. 'I'll be on hand.'

CABLE BAY, NELSON.

ALONG a beautiful road winding in and out along the sea-border past the Wakapuaka hills the traveller by road, after a sixteen-mile drive, arrives at Cable Bay, the terminus of the Trans-Pacific cables. From here there are three cables, one to Wanganui and two to 'La Perouse,' Botany Bay, New South Wales. The two latter were laid in 1876 and 1890, respectively, the old cable being 1,282 miles in length, and costing roughly over all £300,000. The new cable with spare lengths and instruments cost the Company about £200,000, and is 40 miles longer than the old. The mechanicism for testing the currents is of the most elaborate order. The lightning guards being especially wonders of ingenuity. The cables themselves are composed of from six to eight layers of material. Taking the old Australian cable as a specimen we find in the centre the wire proper, consisting of seven strands of copper wire, this being covered by a tolerably thick layer of Willoughby Smith's compound of gutta percha, weighing 130lbs. to the mile. This is wrapped round with white tape, and outside again a tape made of a brassy-looking material know as 'Muntz metal,' and next comes a thin strip of hemp soaked in stearine. The 'coat' of the cable is formed of strong strands of iron wire and hemp rope. The power used is a Minotti electric battery, being a modification of a muti-cellular Daniel battery.

In the Australian cables the greatest sea depth is from 2,700 to 2,800 fathoms, and there are five different 'types' of cable used, the thickness and resisting power varying with the depth of water, the stronger cables being used at the shallower portions, and *vice versa*. The receiving instruments are most interesting. In the receiver generally used the message is actually written on slips of paper by a tiny tube of glass containing ink. This tube is set in motion by the deviations of the magnets, and writes on a revolving scroll. In case of powerful electrical disturbances the old flame method is used. Mr W. W. Browning, who was most kind in affording us all information, said that it required at least two year's experience to become familiar with this method. The Eastern Extension Company afford every inducement to their cadets to stay with them, and provide a nice house, boats, billiard-table, etc., to occupy their leisure. The Government officers are situated immediately behind the Company's receiving rooms, and the staff reside at the Bay. Cable Bay is a charming spot altogether, and we have nothing but pleasant memories of our day at the Cable Station. The accompanying sketch shows the station from the Boulder Bank, which stretches across to Pepin's Island.

CABLE BAY, NELSON

Company's Staff Quarters. Staff Houses. Receiving Office, etc. Testing House at End of Cables. Cable Bay. Mount Arthur Ranges.

PRIMITIVE MODES OF JUSTICE.

A RETURNED missionary, who spent a number of years labouring among the heathen in Afghanistan, talking of the summary punishment recently inflicted upon the Italian bandits in New Orleans, said:

'That affair recalls vividly a scene I witnessed in a village called Putka, in Central Afghanistan, some time ago. It seems that some fellow murdered an enemy, and in turn was stoned to death by the outraged populace.

'One morning as I was about to leave my house I saw a yelling mob rushing from all directions toward a large square in the centre of the town, picking up clubs and stones as they ran. I followed, under the belief that rival factions contemplated a battle. When I reached one end of the square a man came running forward followed by a mob of a thousand men, women and children. They hurled stones at him as they ran, and the victim, who probably knew that escape was impossible, ran up and dropped on his knees at my feet. The mob closed around him and pushed me back. A shower of stones were hurled upon him and he fell forward on the ground crushed and bleeding. The mob continued their fusillade until the remains had been covered with a cairn of rocks four feet high.

'I afterward learned that the unfortunate, in a moment of anger, had slain a woman, and that the people had taken the law into their own hands and executed him according to their ideas of right.'

The missionary concluded by saying that the stones over the body were never removed, and that the remains were allowed to stay as they had fallen.

CONVICT WEDDINGS.

THE following is the brief but interesting matrimonial procedure which obtains among the convicts in the Russian penal settlement on the island of Saghalien. Immediately after the arrival of each batch of marriageable *deporters* they are paraded with an equal or larger number of male convicts in the garden of the Government House. The *Brautschau* takes place in the presence of the governor or under-governor. The woman chosen by any convict has the right of refusing him. As a rule, it is the bachelor convicts having good conduct marks who are paraded for this interesting ceremony. The men and women are drawn up in two lines facing each other, and a few minutes are allowed for mutual scrutiny. Bashfulness on the part of the aspiring benedicts, and maidenly modesty among the brides seldom distract or procrastinate the ceremony. The governor or under-governor, as the case may be, by a gesture of the hand invites the first man in the row to make his choice. 'Your Excellency, I should like like the little woman there, with the pock-pitted face.' The governor turns to the little woman, thus ungallantly distinguished by her admirer, with the question, 'Are you willing?' 'Certainly, your Excellency,' and the match is made. In this wise the official pairing is continued. Should some of the more coy and fastidious decline anything that offers among the gray gabardined suitors opposite, they are paraded the next day before another motley batch; but, after a third refusal, they are 'shelved' *sine die*. The marriage ceremony of those who pair is usually solemnised on the following day.

HOW TO AVOID TAKING COLD.

IT requires a good deal of intelligence and care to avoid sickness arising from sudden variations of temperature. Unless great care is taken to keep the body at something like an even temperature mischief is very apt to result, and a good deal of it comes from the injudicious use of outer clothing. Some have prejudices against overshoes, especially goloshes, and yet in slushy days nothing but goloshes will keep the feet dry. Others get into trouble by being too indolent to remove their goloshes when in doors, so that their feet perspire and subsequently become chilled. The common-sense rule is to wear goloshes when they are needed, and not to begrudge the time and trouble necessary to take them off when they are not needed.

Overcoats and wraps, while conducive to comfort and health, are also the cause of much illness arising from perspiration and chills. The sensible course is to have garments suitable to various degrees of temperature, and to be careful to wear them at suitable times. One who has much walking to do needs less clothing than one who rides. People do themselves much harm by wearing heavy outer garments in the house. Men are too lazy to take off their overcoats, and women, for various reasons, keep on their furs in church or theatre. The result is that when they go out they get chilled, and start on the high road to bronchitis or pneumonia. Too much care cannot be taken to accommodate the clothing to the temperature—to take off outer clothing at once upon entering the house, unless the house happens to be as cold as out of doors.

The changes of temperature are so sudden that both comfort and health are promoted by the possession and use of garments of various thicknesses as they may be required. There are warm days in winter when the heaviest winter clothing is not only uncomfortable but unhealthy, because of the danger of excessive perspiration and subsequent chills. Outer garments should be made so as to be easily removed. Ladies have heretofore experienced much inconvenience from overheating in furs and heavy wraps at the beginning and end of the season, but fashion has lately come to the rescue with short coats and capes for the milder wintry weather. Many persons suffer inconvenience and illness from wearing too heavy underclothing. The safer course is to put on extra clothing from the outside, so that it may be readily removed as occasion required. A good deal of sickness comes in the winter from injudicious dressing for social events. Both men and women put on evening costumes which are less warm than those they habitually wear during the day. Then they fail to make up the difference in their outside wraps, and when they emerge from heated rooms after an evening's dancing they have laid the foundation for all sorts of pulmonary troubles.

Medical men agree almost unanimously that flannel underwear is almost absolutely essential to health. Those who wear it daily should change it at night. It is better to wear just enough clothing to keep the body comfortably warm under all circumstances, and to spare no pains to adjust the clothing to the circumstances with promptness. There is an old proverb that a man who sits with his back to a draught sits with his face to the grave. Any one who is in a perspiring state and sits in a draught in that state may be certain to pay the penalty in a very short time in pains and aches. Unless carefully used, heavy outer garments will be responsible for much sickness.

CATANZARO.

FEW cities have such a magnificent promenade as the Via Bellavista of Catanzaro. The road skirts the edge of the precipice by which the city is built, and the broad river bed at its base seems dwindled to a ribbon's width. Hither, at sundown, the citizens and their wives and daughters come to take the air, enjoy the view, see and be seen. The ladies of Catanzaro have long had a reputation for their beauty. When the French soldiers were quartered here in the Napoleonic wars the officers were delighted to find that it was a custom (breach of which implied extreme discourtesy) for acquaintances of both sexes to kiss each other as a formal method of salutation. They thought no more of it than if they had merely put hand to hand. In his memoirs of the war in Calabria, one of these officers describes the winning way in which the fair girls of Catanzaro, upon an introduction, were wont to make tender of their lips. Alas, however! the spirit of progress which has breathed over Calabria in so many directions during the last century has wrought a change in this respect also. The manners of the young ladies of Catanzaro to-day do not differ much from those of the Neapolitans, and it is no longer the custom to kiss a stranger in sight. Otherwise it is probable the excursion agents of the ribald north of Europe would be quick to advertise tours to this fascinating spot. For my part, I was fain to believe the ladies of the city are not as beautiful as their fame. It might have been different if they had shown the old interest in a stranger. But they showed none, as a matter of fact. They moved up and down the promenade in their stiff, unbecoming finery and tall Paris hats, chattering so fast that the swallows, gyrating athwart the face of Catanzaro's cliffs, seemed to hold their babble for a challenge, and screamed loud in their turn. Nevertheless, for their long, exuberant black hair, and their expressive dark eyes, the ladies of Catanzaro still deserve to be praised.

THE POISON ORDEAL.

CENTRAL Africa is a curious conglomeration of diverse peoples, who, in their tribal relations, resemble, in a large degree, the cliques of an English country town. Each tribe subsists by and for itself, to the rigid exclusion of outsiders. Though the mode of life is the same in all, because all have the same natural conditions to which to adapt themselves, the customs are not infrequently dissimiliar. Thus it is by no means uncommon to find a tribe of restless cannibals with roving and brutal instincts bordering on another that is peaceful, industrious, and home-loving. Another striking trait is the varying degree of difference between the sexes. In the majority of tribes the women are only so many slaves, representing the real property of their lords and masters, and upon them falls the most laborious and menial portion of the daily toil. It was now, however, my good fortune to view the reverse of this picture, where the females were the recognised chiefs of the land and the tribe was ruled by a queen.

The short tropical afternoon was rapidly closing in when I reached the chief village of Nkula, a tributary princess governing one of these latter tribes. As I neared the clustering group of dome-shaped huts I heard a monotonous and lugubrious sound of a tom-tom, mingled with the crooning of many voices raised in lamentations. Our approach was not unexpected and did not disturb the mourners, who were mostly females, seated in an open space in front of Nkula's hut. On the report of our arrival Nkula stepped out to meet us. Her appearance was a pleasant surprise. She was young, tall and well made, with shapely limbs and figure. Her face and expression were full of meaning, and intellect of an unlooked-for capacity seemed to beam from her dark and dreamy almond-shaped eyes. The sunlight glistened on and accentuated the clearness of her smooth dark skin—for her only garment was a grass cincture—and flashed upon her heavy brazen ornaments.

She received me with a quiet grace and manner not altogether free from curiosity, which she repressed with a studied courtesy that elsewhere would have been called well-bred. In response to the usual salutations she offered me the shelter of her village, and gracefully accepted a present in token of goodwill. When asked what was the cause of the mourning and lamentation going on around us, her pouting lips seemed to quiver with momentary pain and her nostrils to dilate with sudden passion as she faced me. Then it all faded away, and she simply answered, 'Come.'

Silently I followed her into a hut, to a corner of which she pointed sadly, and in the half-light I could distinguish, lying side by side, the bodies of two small black children stiffened by the hand of death. The scene had a striking pathos all its own. The dim interior, the tall, sad figure pointing silently to the tiny forms on the ground, over which death had cast a halo of impressive calm; the wailing sound of the distant threnody, with its rude chant, and ruder poetry, contrasting with the hushed chamber and its silent occupants made up a picture of which I have never lost the memory. Nkula stood thus for a few moments, and then, with pathetic simplicity, she said, with a perceptible tremour in her voice: 'They are mine. Some one bewitched them suddenly, for they were playing together when bedtime came.'

Sad little souls! A heavy and unbroken sleep would mark their lengthy bedtime.

Before we had pitched our camp I had learned the particulars of this event. Nkula's two babes, on whom, as is common with all African women, she had lavished an extravagant amount of affection, had died the day of my arrival quite suddenly. In accordance with the customs and traditions of the tribe their death was attributed to witchcraft, and I learned that a messenger had been despatched to Emba, Nkula's foe, to send a witch doctor, who was to discover the bewitcher, in order that he or she might be forced to submit to the invariable punishment in these cases—the ordeal by poison.

As the brief twilight of the following evening faded into night I was summoned to attend the witch doctor's ceremonies. I found the village assembled in the open space by Nkula's hut. In the centre was blazing a large wood fire, by the side of which the medicine man squatted. He was a thin, meagre, and hungry-looking individual, clothed from head to foot in a fantastic robe of twisted grasses dyed in patches. His hair was abnormally long, and stuck out round his head like a bunch of crimped black wire. In his hand he held a quaintly fashioned stringed instrument, made of a hollow wooden box with thin strips of root fibre strained tightly across it. At his feet stood a curiously carved calabash containing the poison to be administered to the culprit, and which I afterward found to be a strong infusion of the bark of a particular tree and very rapid and deadly in its effects. In the centre of her people stood Nkula, looking very calm and stately. When the whole village was placed she began to speak with the whole force of her rude language. She detailed the tragic deaths of her children, and then in loud and determined tones announced the punishment of the accused wretch who had bewitched them.

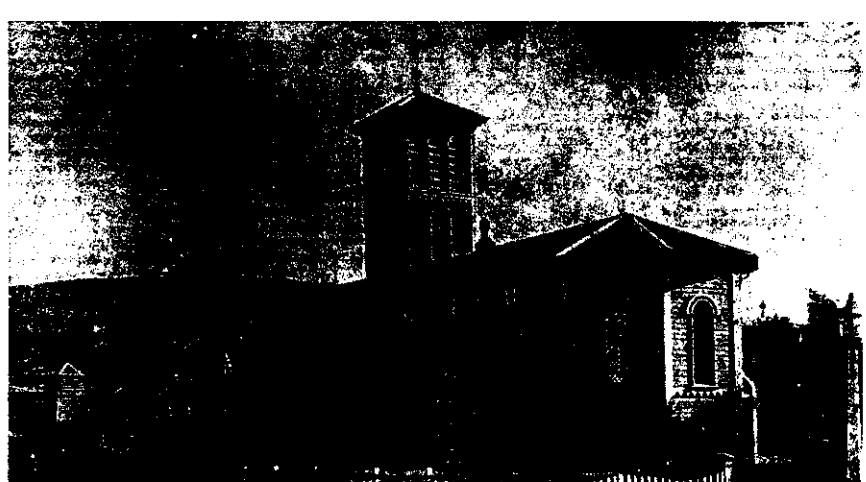
I could with difficulty follow her speech, so measured and yet so rapidly delivered were the periods; but the impression of outraged dignity and intolerant pride that animated her voice; the profound and bitter threats of vengeance against the offender, whom, high or low, male or female, it was her reiterated determination to punish to the bitter end; the fanatic fervour with which she explained how her weird creed enforced the rigid law of vengeance, awed and stirred me and infected me with something of the same spirit that held spell-bound the hushed and awe-struck crowd around us. A low murmur of approbation greeted her as she closed her speech and resumed her seat—her eyes sparkling with excitement, her lips firmly compressed with invincible determination. During the whole of the harangue the women around her beat their breasts with both hands quickly and unremittingly; and the light, regular sound echoing along the line had a curious effect on the listeners. It was a strange, restless, pulsating accompaniment to the words that harmonized with the whole scene.

Then the weird and interesting ceremony commenced. Fuel was heaped upon the fire until its lurid flames played fiercely on the set features of those around it, sending red

REV. F. W. CHATTERTON,
Incumbent of All Saints', Nelson.

shafts of light high up amidst the surrounding trees. The witch-doctor seated himself on his haunches and began a solemn monotonous incantation, accompanying himself with a running series of tones from his stringed instrument, which, without pretence to harmony, rang out, now sharp and clear, now falling to a low vibration, as the cadence of his song were fierce or sad. The music was savage in the extreme. There was nothing of the tender or vague; the expression coincided with the rude denunciation and the description of the unalterable decrees of a stern fate depicted in the song.

At its close a band of women, with their bodies daubed with red and white paint, their heads hideously decked with feathers marched around and around the fire, each holding a fowl in her hand, plucking it as she walked and throwing



ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NELSON.

the feathers in the flames. At first their steps were slow and majestic; then, as the chant gathered volume, they became quicker and quicker, till nothing could be distinguished but a maze of whirling black figures, over whose bodies the leaping flames flashed. When the last feather was plucked the fowls were thrown on one side and each seized a small stringed instrument and twanged it loudly to a new chant. Faster and faster around the fire they danced, twirling round in a circle till one became giddy looking at them. Crash after crash of wild music, with screams and mocking cries, growing shriller and sharper at each repetition, accompanied them as they trod their mad bacchanalian measure, twisting their bodies into nameless contortions and still whirling madly round and round, until exhausted nature gave way beneath the strain of this maddening excitement, and one of them fell to the ground in a fit of violent hysterics.

Instantly the music stopped and a dead silence followed, broken only by the crackling and roaring of the flames. On each face was set a look of fearful, heart-rending anxiety. Slowly the medicine man rose, and lifting the panting figure from the ground, supported it in his arms. With the wild gesture of a maniac she seized his arm and dragged him forward, giving vent to a shriek so wild and despairing in its intensity that my blood ran cold. Dragging him along with superhuman force, she flung herself violently on the ground at the feet of Nkula and was seized with a second horrible fit of hysteria.

A perceptible shiver went around the assembly. Expressions of agonized surprise and fearful doubt flitted across their features. The die was cast. The bewitcher of Nkula's babes was Nkula herself! She who had been so uncompromising in her denunciation of the culprit, so vindictive in her animosity, and so full of threatening vengeance, was singled out by a fiat that admitted of no appeal, as the victim of her own dread sentence. Who could tell what hands pulled the strings which worked the puppets who performed this tragedy?

The fantastic scene was dramatic in the extreme. My eyes were riveted on Nkula's countenance, and never shall I forget the fleeting expressions of anger, agony, doubt, fear, and despair as they passed over her features so that one could read as in a book the tragic course of those inexpressible emotions.

But her native nobility asserted itself. One moment, and no more, of hesitation, and she rose to her feet. Even then, before her affrighted and awe-struck people she might have flung aside the fetters of relentless fate her own fanaticism had forged. But her nature was of sterner stuff. She spoke not, and her eyes seemed to stare dully before her as she stretched her hand to the calabash of poison destined for the victim of her vengeance. One swift glance round on her silent subjects, one swift quiver of the mobile features, and she raised the bowl without trembling to her lips. Ere one could have staid the action she was quivering in the dust in a frightful death-agony.

AN ATTRACTION FOR FATHER AND SON.

CHRISTOPHER BLEYER is the name of a retired merchant of large means, whose daughters were married to well-known men, and whose son is a popular club member. Although Christopher has been a grandfather ten years and more, and is close upon 70, yet he still remains an ardent admirer of the gentler sex, and may often be seen taking young girls to the theatre or opera, or may be seen calling upon some dashing widow. He has plenty of money and spends it freely, and as a natural consequence is very popular. A few weeks ago it was remarked by members of his family that he was haunting a theatre where a fascinating actress is singing and dancing. More than this, his daughters were informed that he was sending valuable presents to Miss Flossie Bremer; that she had answered his notes, and was leading him on. To call the old gentleman into a private room, lecture him for his frivolity, and forbid him to go near Flossie, might merely make him obdurate, and there was no telling what his hot blood might prompt him to do. There was £200,000 at stake. If old Bleyer should marry the actress it would give to her a dower right worth £3,000 a year. The situation called for wise and immediate action and heroic treatment.

The two daughters were equal to it. They went straight to Flossie, laid the matter before her in its true light, and asked her to help them to save their father. Flossie listened attentively to these two fine ladies who had come to her as suppliants. A faint smile parted her pretty lips, and her fingers toyed with the long, silken ears of her King Charles spaniel.

'Ladies,' said she at length, 'I have no desire to disturb the serenity of your family oracle. I'll dismiss Mr Bleyer in a few days; be patient. Old men are often very persistent. It may take a week or more.'

The elegantly-clad ladies shed tears of gratitude as they pressed Flossie's little hand.

'You are so good,' they exclaimed, 'so noble. God bless you.'

Flossie was as good as her word, and such was the contemptuous manner in which she received the attentions of old Mr Bleyer that he got his temper up and abandoned the beautiful Flossie. After the thing was all over, and the gossips had got hold of the veritable facts, one of Flossie's intimate friends rushed in upon her with a long string of hard names. 'Why,' you little fool,' she cried, 'old Bleyer is worth a million, and you have lost the opportunity of your life. In heaven's name, what prompted you to turn him away?'

'Well, I'll tell you,' gurgled this sweet thing in womankind, as she moistened the end of a tiny rose-coloured cigarette with her tongue. 'You see, it was deucedly hard for me to keep the old gentleman from meeting Fred. Poor boy! he was so afraid of running foul of the governor, as he calls him, that he never had a moment's peace of mind in my presence. Just try to have father and son in love with you and you'll see how it is yourself. Of course, I might have given Fred the sack, but, ah me, he is so handsome! And then, you know, love is more than money.'

Brave Flossie!

The railways of the Andes exhibit some of the most marvellous results of engineering skill. The highest inhabited place in the world is Galera, a railway village in Peru, 15,635 feet above the sea, or within 100 feet of the summit of Mount Blanc. Near it a tunnel, 3,847 feet long, is being bored through the peak of the mountain, 600 feet above the perpetual snow-line.

AUCKLAND.

DEAR BEE, JUNE 23.

We have enjoyed the most delightful weather possible at this season of the year during the past three weeks. The bracing air and bright warm sunshine renders all out-door exercise both agreeable and invigorating, and tempts one to leave sewing and other work neglected until the rainy days return. Whilst out paying calls and walking I did not neglect to take a mental note of some of the stylish gowns worn by ladies similarly engaged as myself. The Misses Ruck looked exceedingly nice in stylish navy gowns trimmed with black military braid, and jaunty little black felt hats, one trimmed with cardinal, and the other, I think, all black; Mrs Lawry looked well in a neat-fitting navy gown trimmed with black astrachan, black and carminal velvet bonnet; Mrs Haines also wore a navy gown with panel of white silk; she wore a short jacket with rolled collar opening over a full front of white silk, black hat; Mrs J. M. Butt, black cashmere and velvet gown, black hat; Mrs P. Edminston, stylish plaid tweed gown, handsome plush jacket, felt hat with feathers; Miss Atkinson (Park Road), pretty gown of brown plaid tweed made on the cross, felt hat trimmed with feathers; Miss Firth, very neat-fitting navy cloth gown handsomely braided with black, felt hat trimmed with grey birds; Miss Rees, ruby velveteen gown, seal plush jacket, black felt hat with birds; Miss Worsp, stylish wine-coloured gown prettily trimmed with black braid, jaunty black felt hat trimmed with black feathers; Miss Hesketh, stylish black costume trimmed with velvet, black hat; her younger sister wore a pretty reddish-brown gown, seal plush jacket, and becoming felt hat; Miss Davis, crimson gown trimmed with black cord gimp, black hat trimmed with crimson velvet; her mother, Mrs Lewis, looked well in a handsome long seal plush paletot and velvet bonnet; Miss Hill, navy tweed gown with brown crossbars, seal plush jacket, navy and brown hat; Miss Nashelski, neat-fitting fawn tweed gown with small brown crossbars, brown felt hat; Miss Mackay, stylish navy and reddish-brown plaid gown made with Newmarket bodice, black velvet hat with reddish-brown feathers; Mrs John Ansenne, navy gown braided with black, stylish black felt hat.

The marriage of Miss Berry to Mr W. Sharland was very quietly solemnised at the residence of the bride's parents, Vincent-street, the Rev. J. Chew performing the ceremony. Mr Wilson, of the *New Zealand Herald*, gave the bride away, owing to the unavoidable absence of her father, who was engaged on the jury at the Supreme Court. Only the immediate relatives were present at the ceremony, the happy wedded couple leaving shortly after for the summer residence of the bride's parents at Lake Takapuna, where the honeymoon will be spent. The bride was married in her handsome travelling gown of seal brown tweed.

The marriage of Miss Allright to a gentleman whom I understand belongs to the Waikato, but whose name I have forgotten, takes place immediately. Miss Allright has for a considerable time been an esteemed teacher in St. Sepulcher's Sunday-school, and Mr Hammond, superintendent, has issued invitations to her fellow teachers and pupils of her class to meet her at a social farewell tea, when several presentations are to be made to the bride elect.

The Mount Hobson Hall was crowded upon the occasion of the second monthly meeting of the Remuera Social, Musical, and Literary Society. An excellent programme was gone through, which was most thoroughly appreciated by the members. Tea, coffee, cake, etc., as usual, were provided in abundance by the ladies' committee, and during the short interval for conversation were passed round and amply enjoyed.

The members of the North Shore 'At Home' held their second dance upon the same night as the Remuera Social. There was a very good attendance, and I hear the evening proved both successful and enjoyable.

Surprise parties are becoming more and more popular in Auckland as the winter advances. One took place at Richmond the other evening, when Mrs Billington and family were surprised by a large party from town, who took possession of the house in the usual manner. As there is a fine ball-room with polished floor attached to the house, dancing was at once commenced, and kept up with vigour until after midnight. Another very pleasant 'surprise' was held at the residence of Mr and Mrs S. D. Hanna, Glenburn, Ponsonby, the evening being most enjoyably passed with music and dancing. Yet another was held at the residence of Mr and Mrs H. Culpan, Mount Albert. A large party drove out from town laden with delicacies of all kinds for the supper, which, by the way, was really excellent. The party were most kindly received by Mr and Mrs Culpan, and in an incredibly short time dancing was started in the large ball-room, which has, indeed, a lovely floor. Later in the evening the party was augmented by the arrival of a number of Mount Albert residents, who had arranged to be present. Dancing, interspersed with songs, passed a very pleasant and enjoyable evening, the self-invited guests dispersing for their various homes about midnight.

At the annual meeting of the Auckland Jubilee Kindergarten, held under the presidency of Sir William Fox, the following ladies were appointed the office-bearers and committee to superintend the work for the ensuing year. President, Mrs Tonks; vice-president, Mrs Pickmere; secretary and treasurer, Mrs Philson; committee, Lady Fox, Mesdames Kenderdine, Dilworth, Hales, Lennox, Briggs, Clark, Ashton, Schnackenberg, Miss Bartley. The annual report was read by Mrs Philson, and showed that the work done during the past year had been most satisfactory, and a balance remained in hand with which to commence the new year.

The Auckland University students have arranged for a social evening to welcome Mr C. A. M. Pond, the new professor of English and classics at the University. Mr Pond, who has just arrived from England, is quite young, and a bachelor.

Mr James Macfarlane has just become the purchaser of 'Glenfoyle,' Mrs Tonks' handsome residence at Remuera.

A very enjoyable dance took place in the Foresters' Hall, Newton, in connection with the Mascotte socials. There were a good many present, and the floor was in excellent condition. The music was supplied by Mr Adams, of Ponsonby, and was very much appreciated by all. About ten o'clock light refreshments were handed round, after which dancing was resumed till shortly after midnight. These dances, which have been held fortnightly, have become very popular, and as the season is drawing to a close, it is the intention of the committee to have a fancy dress dance to wind up with.

MURIEL.

DEAR BEE, JUNE 23.

I think I have mentioned the existence, if nothing more, of the Auckland Lawn Tennis Club. They have brought themselves pleasantly before the public in a very successful concert. The stage managers were Messrs Arthur Goldie and A. Hughes; director of *tableaux*, Mr W. R. Robinson; pianist, Mrs Walrond; manager of limelight, Mr F. Hesketh. Seeing all these had to arrange and organise before the concert could come off, I think it is only fair I should first mention that the whole affair reflected very great credit on their administrative abilities. The limelight was particularly well managed. The premier item, the customary duet, this time was 'Chilperic,' played by the Misses Preece in good style. Miss Battley, dressed in prune-coloured gown trimmed with satin, and snowdrops in her hair, sang in her usual able style, 'Beauty's Eyes,' the violin obligato being taken by Miss J. Reeve, whilst her sister accompanied on the piano. A tableau, 'The Gipsy Camp,' solo by Mr R. E. Nerran; chorus of gipsies, Mrs R. C. Chapman, Misses Rigby, Chapman, Preece, Pearson, Scherff, Colebrook, and Messrs Rich, Robinson, and James, followed. A zither solo, 'German Love Song,' by Mr Heinitz, was encored. Tableau, 'Burlesque on Robinson Crusoe,'—R. Crusoe, Esq., Mr Rich; the damsel, Miss B. Atkinson; Friday, Mr H. Battley; cockatoo, Master H. Goldie; was loudly encored. The bones solo 'Down the Swanee River,' Mr W. R. Robinson, was really splendid, and met with the encore it merited. Miss Harper's song, 'In Old Madrid,' was not so successful, and this young lady should remember that in a young musical career there is no security for future success in past laurels; no resting on one's oars until a Patey-like reputation be attained. Resting before then means retrogression. Feeling better for this digression, which I present to the Chair of Music for gratis circulation, let me remember the next tableau, which warns me that 'Walls Have Ears,' and into which 'The Source of Rivalry,' 'The Rivals,' and 'That Awful Boy Again' were introduced with good effect by Miss M. Gorrie, Mr Grant, and Mr J. A. Cooper. It was, naturally, encored. Mr F. E. Baume's humorous reading, 'On Babies,' caused a great deal of merriment. In the tableau, 'Queen Katherine's Dream,' taken by—Queen, Miss Atkinson; Angels, Misses E. Preece, Chapman, Colebrook, D. Scherff, Atkinson (2), and M. Vaile, the gem of the evening was disclosed. A vocal duet by Mr and Mrs C. Hudson, and a mandoline solo, 'Cradle Song,' by Mr Winkleman (encored) followed. Then another tableau, 'Anthony and Cleopatra,' Anthony being Mr John Reid, Cleopatra, Miss Rigby; and slaves, Miss Chapman, Messrs Rich and Battley (encored). The comic song, 'My Mary Jane,' sung in costume by Mr W. R. Robinson, met with uproarious applause, and he was recalled three times. 'Shall I love in vain?' Mr A. L. Edwards, was splendidly rendered, and encored. 'United Service,' a tableau in which Miss Gorrie, and Messrs Marriner and Grant took part, was encored. Song, 'Queen of the Earth,' Miss Battley, was beautifully sung, but the effect greatly marred by the loud arrangements behind the curtain for the final tableau 'Britannia,' in which Miss Scherff was an excellent Britannia. The army was incorporated in Mr Marriner, the navy submerged in Mr Robinson, the colonies federated in Mr Harry Battley, whilst visible and tangible angels, in the shapes of Misses Colebrook, Chapman, and Scherff, hovered around. Great praise is due to the pose and perfect stillness of the figures in the tableaux.

Amongst the various methods employed to keep our young people amused, none seem more in favour just at present than tableaux illustrated by appropriate music and words. Some of the ingenious Mount Albert juveniles hit upon the happy idea of making the rather formidable business of distributing the Sunday-school prizes a pleasant sociable event. Accordingly they combined 'happy ideas' with a decidedly happy effect. A pianoforte duet, 'Qui Vive,' excellently rendered by Misses Larkins and Kensington, announced to the impatient detachment of the 'Albert Guards,' and other juveniles that the performance had actually commenced. Then the curtain rose, disclosing a very pretty tableau. The central figure, the Sleeping Beauty — Miss Muriel Dawson, a dear little girl with fair hair—lay on an opossum-covered couch, one bare arm hanging in a thoroughly child-like attitude over the side. Grouped around her was a bewildering galaxy of fair faces, all daintily dressed, and in various attitudes—one with a salver and glass, one with a fan, another bending over a basket, and so on. But on all a wondrously sudden sleep had fallen, and they stood just as the drowsy god had touched them. Misses Mary Wright, Inez Taylor, Vera, Kathleen, and Iny Alexander, and Florrie Dixon were the attendant nymphs, whilst the fairy prince was Master Jack Alexander, who in the next scene was kneeling by the side of the enchanted beauty holding her hand. The well-known farce, 'Box and Cox,' was cut into portions to fit three very good amateur performers—Masters Hubert Kensington, Matthew Orr, and Cyril Watts. The last-named gentleman, by-the-bye, was a lady, the far-famed Mrs Bouncer, and was an excellent type of the genus landlady. There was no prompter, and no need of one, and, comforting to the audience as a conviction that the players are word-perfect is, a little less rapidity of utterance and more dramatic action would have been an improvement. A hint to the wise is sufficient. The Misses Cecil Taylor played very nicely a duet, the name of which I did not learn, and am equally in ignorance of the nomenclature of the other pretty duet played later by the Misses Sellers. At length the Albert Guards appeared with due noise and pomp on the platform, clad in regimentals not all belonging to their own particular corps, but the commanding officer graciously accepted such excuses as: 'Please, sir, mother didn't known the red braid had to go round the collar, too;' 'Please, sir, it's my brother's real volunteer cap. My own is a straw hat what's got a brim;' 'Please, sir, my best blue coat's a brown tweed, so I've got on my old one,' etc. The medals worn by these beardless distinguished defenders of our colony would have turned many a veteran English officer green with envy! they marched and sang, and were pleased with the applause they received from mothers, sisters, cousins, and aunts.

Then followed the real purpose of the evening, and the hard-working superintendent of the Sunday-school read out the names of the prize-winners, whilst the Rev. F. Larkins handed them their well-earned books, which were very handsome, and carefully selected. Mr Larkins reminded the children that religion did not mean gloom and depression, but pure happiness and innocent enjoyment like that provided for them on this occasion. 'Why are you wandering?' was a very charming rustic scene — a grove, fence, and stile, and Phyllis (Miss Katie Taylor) in picturesque frock and flower-trimmed hat, with a basket, was making believe to look for poppies. Her father, a very old, bent man (Mr C. Dixon), but with a wonderfully melodious voice tried to interpose between her and her lover (Mr F. Dawson), who jumped the stile and sought the trifling, prevaricating damsel. A chorus of harvest maidens in bright and fantastic costumes—Misses J. and L. Taylor, Laura Dixon, Alice Sheath, May Dawson, Edith Tanner—and a reaper, Mr Cecil Dawson, shook their heads at the coy Phyllis, repeating her father's warnings. 'You Dirty Boy' was a really perfect tableau, taken by Miss Ethel Dixon and Master Roy Sellers, and elicited loud applause, particularly from those youngsters who, these frosty nights, entirely disapprove of cold water tubbings. 'Where are you going to, my pretty maid?' was burlesqued by Miss Ada Dixon, as a *fin de siecle* young lady in mortar-board and gown, and Mr A. E. Gilmore, who evidently believes that the coming years will not alter man's garb as they will woman's, and so appeared in a Bond-street, 1891, get-up, with tall silk hat, cane, gloves, and irreproachable suit, and whose first question was loftily answered by the crushing announcement, 'I'm going to lecture.' The querist recovered himself and renewed the attack. An echo round the corner, or a small chorus of two, interpolated the 'Sir, she saids,' which was scarcely an improvement. An emphatic encore was responded to by a new and slightly mirthful rendering of the song, in which rendering the audience heartily joined. The tableau, 'Mother Hubbard,' Miss Maude Sellers making a living embodiment of the famous nursery heroine, whilst the dog was aptly taken by Master Reggie Dixon amidst vociferous applause, finished the entertainment, not the least pretty part of the end being the National Anthem and Doxology sung by the whole strength of the performers, each in his and her last character carefully grouped on the stage. Many thanks and great credit is due to the Misses Wright, Dixon, and Taylor for their painstaking and successful work, also to Mrs Kerr-Taylor for use of the hall, Mrs Watts for piano, and Miss Larkins for interspersed musical items.

I see that the Auckland Academy of Arts is offering medals for various subjects—Maori heads, painting of New Zealand scenery, etc. Probably many will come forward to compete for these honours.

A small but successful dance was given by Mrs (Dr.) Durant, Avondale, who wore a handsome yellow Indian silk. Amonst those present I noticed Mrs H. Walker, black dress relieved with pink; Miss Dixon, black dress with yellow ribbons; Miss M. Kerr-Taylor, trained white silk; Miss Wright, black; Miss Durant, cream trained satin; Miss Sellers, cream; Miss Pollan, white.

The fourth tandem meet took place in Princes-street, and was supposed to start at 2 p.m., but what with an accident and a photo to be taken, they did not get away until 3 p.m. At the start Mr Wansborough wished to drive up in grand style, but, alas! 'pride goeth before a fall.' The wheels of the cart caught in the tram lines, and both the cart and horse were upturned, throwing out the occupants, Messrs Wansborough and Walker, (who were, happily, unhurt) and smashing the vehicle to atoms. Only five tandems started, viz.:—First, Mr and Mrs Chatfield, with Miss Harper and Mr Niccol; second, Mr Sinclair with Miss M. Kerr-Taylor; third, Mr McLauchlin and friend; fourth, Dr. Challinor Purchas and man; fifth, Mr and Mrs Ansenne with his brother, in which order they kept splendidly out to Avondale, where they had tea. The only stoppage was at the word 'halt' to watch the hunt, which was passing across the road at that time.

The meet of the Pakuranga hounds took place this week at Morningside, about two miles from Auckland. There was a great muster of horsemen and horsewomen. Most of them, I believe, came to watch the fun. The ladies whom I noticed present were Mesdames Buckland, Thiele, Laurie, Misses Buckland (2), Hesketh, Banks, Dixon, Garrett, Percival, and others I cannot remember. The early part of the day was spent in drawing for a hare, but was not successful (except when they gave chase to a tom cat), so a drag was started, and laid off by Mr Kelly on Play Boy. There were many falls, but nobody hurt. Miss Banks at-

tempted to jump a ditch, but she herself came to bank on the other side. Mr J. Phillips, on a small grey pony, tried a jump, but his charger got stuck, and then played see-saw on the wall for some time. The only lady who followed the whole way round was Miss Kerr-Taylor on Tairoa. Mrs Bloomfield followed as far as it was possible in a dogcart driven by Mr Ware.

I have noticed some pretty street dresses lately. Miss Russell is wearing a neat navy blue serge: Miss McGlashan, stylish grey plaid dress, black jacket, and gem hat; Miss Wilkins, smart navy blue serge trimmed with gold buttons, white vest, gem hat; Mrs Tonks, black gown, ottoman and fur cape, black bonnet with Egyptian-coloured embroidery; Mrs Brigham, handsome black silk dress, long ottoman silk coat trimmed with fur, black plateau bonnet; Miss Violet Taylor, pretty dark green frock, hat *en suite*.

A dance at a bank is of rather infrequent occurrence in our gay little city, and a good deal of interest was consequently taken in the one given by Mrs Cameron at her residence over the Auckland Savings Bank. The rooms are admirably adapted for this pleasant exercise. The ball-room floor was in excellent order, and the music good. The staircases, corridors, etc., were more patronised by heated dancers than the cosy drawing-room. A large, wide-stepped staircase nicely carpeted affords such a charming place for a cosy tête-à-tête, don't you think so, Bee? The supper was scrumptious, so a gentleman told me, and I, after enjoying a lovely 'extra,' quite agreed with him. That reminds me that the three extras played by Mrs Duthie, who, by-the-bye, wore a very pretty white silk, *en train*, and the two Misses Whitson, one in cream, and the other, Miss Lisa, in white, were uncommonly nice to waltz to. The other music was well rendered by a violin and piano. Our hostess wore a handsome trained gown of black silk; Miss Cameron was well dressed in black net relieved with pink ostrich feathers; Miss Amy Cameron wore a becoming pink net; the Misses Hesketh were attired in blue Liberty silk, with trains; Miss A. Buckland also wore a train; her dress was of old gold silk; Miss Anderson, black; Mrs Ausenne; Mrs Munro, her pretty wedding-dress; Miss Lizzie Gorrie, pink; silk with a train; Miss Upton, maize-coloured dress; Miss Brett, pink silk and train; Miss Amy Brett, pale green silk; Miss Hull, Miss Worsp, Miss Binney, Misses Hardie (2), Miss Ethel Jackson, pink; Miss Nora Kissling, white; Miss Von Sturmer, pink; Miss May Von Sturmer, cream; Miss Francis, white spangled net. I enjoyed myself so much that I forgot to notice the dresses for you, so please excuse the small number out of ninety guests whose names I recollect. There were more gentlemen than ladies, and you know how nice that is for us. I will try and do better next time.

Mr and Mrs Thos. Craig, who are very old Auckland colonists, having arrived in Sydney in 1842, and in Auckland in 1847, celebrated their golden wedding the other day. Several beautiful presents, amongst others a splendid wedding cake and bridal bouquets, were given them. One of their daughters, Mrs C. F. Corlett, wife of the manager of the Christchurch *Press*, came up from the city of the Plains to be present. The eldest son is manager of the New Zealand Insurance Company at San Francisco. In the evening Mr and Mrs Craig entertained a number of their oldest friends, quite a levée having been held all afternoon.

On the evening of Monday, June 23rd Mr Leon Driver gave his second recital in the Choral Hall. On this occasion Mr Driver increased the favourable impression which he made upon the auditors at his first concert. It is some years since Auckland has been visited by a pianist possessing such a brilliancy of technique as Mr Driver, and the feeling of satisfaction is augmented by the knowledge that he is a native of the Auckland province. Mr Driver is quite young, and the evidences of ability and unremitting industry at Melbourne are so marked in his performances that the best results may be augured regarding his future career when he shall have matured himself in the schools of Europe. Already it is in the matter of selection rather than of execution that his exhibitions may be pronounced in any degree lacking. The Liszt school of operatic pyrotechnics and compositions in imitation of them do not reach the hearts of even colonial audiences now-a-days, and a revision of his programmes is the one necessity for setting Mr Driver on the high road to captivating his hearers. In the polonaises and nocturnes of Chopin he has been so successful as to beget a feeling of regret that so much executive ability should be expended otherwise on thankless lines. It is in the matter of the equality and independence of manual action, that Mr Driver is so conspicuous, and his displays with the left hand are most interesting and instructive. With the assistance of a suitable person to assume the labours of organization and a fair vocal backing, there is every reason to anticipate that in the towns of New Zealand Mr Driver's recitals will attract the attention of which his genuine merit is deserving.

HINEMOA.

PALMERSTON SOUTH.

DEAR BEE, JUNE 16.

We do not generally have much news to send you from this little place, but the coming winter promises to be a trifle livelier than its predecessors. We are having an entertainment to celebrate the re-opening of the Town Hall. The programme is very attractive. The first part will consist of a representation of 'The Trial by Jury,' from 'Pickwick.' The second part will consist of a concert, at which some of the best vocalists in Dunedin will assist.

There is also a fancy dress ball on the *tapis*, so that we have a little gaiety to look forward to.

The first dance in connection with the Palmerston Assemblies was held in Clark's Hall. As all the arrangements were well carried out by the Committee, assisted by Mrs R. N. Reid and other ladies, success was assured, and the result was a very pleasant and enjoyable evening. The lovely dance music was supplied by Oswald's band. A special word of praise is due to Mr J. M. Emmerson, as it was mainly due to his untiring efforts that the dance was so successful. I will now tell you something about the dresses. Mrs Robert Ewing wore black, as also did Mrs J. Arkle, Mrs J. O. Mackenzie, Mrs R. N. Reid, Mrs W. H. Williams, and Mrs I. G. Findlay. There were among the unmarried ladies Miss Arkle, in a dainty cream gown with lovely chrysanthemums on the bodice, and a fan composed of the same flowers; Miss Morris (Waikouiti), in a rich-looking white gown; Miss Roberts (Dunedin), black lace gown; Miss Dolly Murdock, white satin and tulle; Miss Emma Murdock, black silk and net gown; Miss Farquhar (Dunedin), pretty gown of lemon-coloured cashmere; Miss Webb (Moeraki), black grenadine relieved with cardinal; Miss Macleod, pretty gown of pale green nun's veiling; Miss Maclean (Dunedin), stylish gown of navy blue velvet; the Misses Fagan, in very pretty gowns of cream satin and fisher's net relieved with pale blue.

ATE.

[Thank you. Shall like to hear about your ball, etc.—BEE.]

CHRISTCHURCH.

DEAR BEE, JUNE 16.

This last has been a very slow week, indeed, and is now so cold I can scarcely hold the pen. Bishop and Mrs Julius gave a small dinner party, when Mrs Onslow Julius, Captain Crutchley, of the S.S. Kaikoura, Mr and Mrs Wilding, Mr and Mrs Burns, and Mr G. Reeves were present. Mrs and Miss Fenwick and Mr Bateman came later in the evening. The latter played well on the violin, also Mr Reeves, Mrs Onslow Julius accompanying. Mrs Wilding gave two piano solos in her brilliant and finished way, and Mrs Burns sang most charmingly one English and one Italian song.

The same evening, in the Opawa Schoolroom, under the management of Mr Harley, the first of a series of entertainments took place, and was very successful. Illustrated songs formed the principal item, and were very effectively done, a good deal of humour being infused into some, perhaps a little overdone in some cases. Dr. Murray-Aynsley, for instance, personated 'Little Jack Horner' in a white embroidered frock and all the etceteras of a well-dressed child, and, of course, elicited roars of laughter from the audience. 'Where are you going to, my pretty maid?' was very sweetly done by Miss L. Murray-Aynsley, who looked bewitching with stool and pail. Mr Curry took the part of the cavalier, and when asked, 'What is your father,' she brought forth Dr. Murray-Aynsley dressed as an ancient farmer in smock frock and red comforter with a bottle under his arm. 'The Girton girl' is a classical parody on that, and was taken by Miss R. Tabart and her brother. She in cap and gown and books, and he in tennis costume. The three goddesses in the 'Judgment of Paris' were Miss Harley, wearing a white and blue flowing gown, and peculiar headdress; Miss Delamain, white, with crimson scarf round her head and falling down the skirt; and Miss Loughnan, in gold and white Greek dress. 'The Maids of Lea,' old and young, was very well done, and though seen so often, is always amusing. The Misses M. Tabart, Hassal, and Harley earned a vociferous encore for this. The thing that caused the most merriment perhaps was the round, 'Old chairs to mend,' sung in character by Mr March, Mr Harley, and Mr Cane. It was almost lost as far as the music of it went in the roars of laughter it provoked. The descriptive songs were sung by Messrs Broadhurst, Corbett, and Harley, and between the acts, as it were, songs were sung by Mrs H. P. Murray-Aynsley, Miss B. Loughnan, Messrs Day, Corbett, and March, Miss Talbot playing Heller's 'Tarantelle' with much brilliancy. The whole was concluded with 'A Village Fête,' in which all the performers took part dancing the barn dance, and every one went home feeling they had had a good evening's fun.

On the night of the Rowing Club ball it was pouring in torrents, and kept many away, but those who ventured, and the rooms were well filled, had a most enjoyable dance. The new boat-sheds are well and favourably known for dancing. The floor and music were all that could be wished on this occasion.

The last of this season's Assembly dances took place at the Oddfellow's Hall, which was extremely tastefully decorated. Curtains divided the room, the first half being a drawing-room with most luxurious chairs and lounges. In the centre of the ballroom was a pretty arrangement of cabbage palm and ferns, and on the stage more palms, flax, and laurustinus. The steps being covered with a bright red, looked most effective. The walls were beautified with mirrors, Liberty muslin, and flax, and to my mind the hall never looked prettier. Mrs Stead and Mrs Tabart were hostesses for the evening, but Miss Tabart had to do duty for her mother, as she, unfortunately, was not well. Mrs Stead's dress was black lace with chiffon, Miss Tabart also wearing black with embroidered panel; Mrs Cowlishaw wore a handsome black moiré with steel embroidered front; her daughter, black lace with mignonette green; Mrs Denniston, chartreuse green Liberty silk with pink roses on the bodice; Mrs Ronalds looked extremely well in black velvet; her daughter, a pretty white dress; Mrs A. McDonald, bronze green silk; Mrs Parberry, a very pretty pale blue Liberty silk; Mrs A. M. Ollivier, cream gown with pink roses, and lovely leaves; Mrs Reeve, black; Miss Reeve, orange coloured silk trimmed with black; Miss Lean, a pretty bright pink gown; Mrs Cotterill, black; Miss Newton, a pretty dress of a lovely shade of blue; Miss R. Tabart, maize; Mrs Symes, blue satin; Miss Thomson, yellow. Captain Crutchley was there and several officers of the Curaçoa. The attendance was rather small, and I very much regret to hear there is some talk of discontinuing these pleasant dances for a season.

To go from the lively to severe, since the departure of H.M.S. Curaçoa one of her seamen has died in the hospital at Lyttelton. He was in delicate health for some time, I believe, and about three weeks ago broke a blood vessel and was taken to the hospital, but Dr. Fairman was never very hopeful of his recovery. He was accorded a military funeral, which was very largely attended. The Curaçoa has made such a long stay in our port that both men and officers have made many friends, and are now quite missed.

Canterbury's pilgrims are rapidly being lost to us. Mr John Stanley, Harewood Road, died suddenly last week. He has suffered with rheumatism for the last twenty years, and an attack on the heart brought about his sudden death. He came out in the Randolph, one of the first four ships, and lived a few years in Lyttelton, afterwards removing to Papanui. He leaves a wife, five sons and five daughters.

Mr William Norman, another much respected and valued citizen, who arrived here in the Sir George Seymour in 1850, passed away after a lingering illness of five months. His first days in the colony were spent farming at Kaiapoi; from thence he removed to his late residence, Papanui Road. He took an active interest in the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association. One of his favourite studies was horticulture, and at the shows exhibits from him have scarcely ever been absent, and perhaps he had the best collection of orchids in the colony. He took the keenest interest in the Christchurch Horticultural Society. He was a member and ardent supporter of St. Paul's Church, Papanui, and for twelve years was churchwarden. He leaves a wife and only daughter, Mrs Rochfort Snow.

Madame Patey is the much-talked-of person just now, and the rush for seats has been quite unprecedented. In this it has certainly been the 'survival of the fittest,' for the weaker had to go to the wall, and some suffered considerably in the crush, while the advance agent was smilingly viewing the scene from the opposite pavement, I am told.

DOLLY VALE.

DUNEDIN.

DEAR BEE, JUNE 17.

While the other towns seem to be revelling in all sorts of social gaieties we are at stagnation. The only reunion I know of this week has been Mrs Woodhouse's afternoon musical, at which Miss Sievwright sang, and Mrs Mills and Mrs Rose also sang a duet together. Among the guests were Mrs McKenzie, Mrs Finn, Mrs Denniston, Miss McLean, Miss Backhouse, Miss Reynolds, Miss Sise, Mrs Melland, and Mrs Ferguson.

Mrs William Dawson gave at her residence, May Villa, Duncan-street, a dance, over one hundred guests being present. It was a most enjoyable affair, dancing being kept up till the small hours were getting large. Several well-known singers were present, and added greatly to the pleasure of the evening. Chinese lanterns and other fancy lights ornamented the rooms, and made the ladies' dresses look exceedingly picturesque.

The University Dramatic Club produced 'She Stoops To Conquer' in the Theatre on two successive nights. As the name of the Club signifies, those taking part lay claim to a University education, and the public naturally expected an amateur performance far beyond the ordinary. These expectations were more than realised. The press criticised them as they would have done professionals, and taking them on their own ground as University students, treated them as such. When I tell you that universal commendation was the verdict of the critics, even the most cynical of them, you will readily understand that their success was a marked one. Upon the opening night every seat was occupied, and many who could not obtain a seat were content to stand. The second night drew almost as crowded an audience, and some among them expressed the feelings of many by the presentation of several lovely bouquets. One of these was presented to Miss Fodor, tied with streamers of the colours she wore, rose and mauve. Miss Freeman (B.A.) took the part of Mrs Hardcastle. Her elocution was splendid, and everyone would like to see her in a more thankful part than that of a very empty-headed and quarrelsome old lady. There were some very good scenes between her son, Tony Lumpkin, and Hardcastle. Hardcastle was taken by Mr Charles Mouat (B.A.). His acting throughout gave no trace of the amateur. In some of the scenes his facial expression was worthy of a professional. Mr J. R. MacDonald, as young Marlow, entirely lost his own identity in the part, and a musical, flexible voice added greatly to the charm of his acting. Mr J. S. Montgomery as Tony Lumpkin was capital. He represented the good-natured, ignorant booby in a manner that took, and created many a laugh. Dr. Jeffcoat made a good Hastings, and Mr W. D. Milne was Sir Charles Marlow. Miss Fodor as Miss Nevill, and Miss Alexander as Miss Hardcastle, both played charmingly. The University orchestra contributed some excellent music, and on the second evening, during the intervals, a number of the students in the body of the Theatre sang some of their merry songs. The dresses were very handsome, and brought with their quaint styles and colours the glories of a toilet of a by-gone age very vividly to our admiring gaze, although one thanked their stars they could don full dress now with a quarter of the elaboration. The gentlemen were no less gorgeous in their attire than the ladies. The material was rich, and the colours correct; but I will give you a description and leave you to judge. Miss Freeman wore in the first act a royal blue quilted skirt with fawn silk pompadour overskirt; made with pointed bodice and elbow sleeves, finished with an edging and fichu of lace. Long old-fashioned earrings and bracelets, powdered hair piled high, and adorned with ribbons, completed the picture. Her second dress was even more elaborate. The skirt was emerald green satin, flounced with real Spanish blonde, and a lovely brocaded overskirt of vieux rose and gold, with lace-edged sleeves. The neck of the bodice was square-cut, and also finished with lace. Headdress of yellow feathers and pink roses. Miss Fodor, as Miss Nevill, was handsomely attired. Her first gown was a rose satin quilted and jewelled skirt flounced with real Spanish lace, and overskirt of pale blue watered silk flowered with red rosebuds, the sleeves and square-cut neck edged with lace and rose-coloured ribbon, the pointed bodice laced with red silk laces. The hair was, of course, powdered, and dressed with ribbons and feathers. The second dress was lovely — the skirt of mauve silk flounced with real Honiton lace that had done service more than one hundred years ago. The bodice and train were of pearl white silk, brocaded with mauve and pink flowers, elaborately trimmed with lace, and finished off with pink and mauve bows; pink aigrettes and mauve flowers formed the head dress. Miss Alexander as Miss Hardcastle looked as pretty as she was supposed to do. In the first act she wore a white striped brocaded skirt edged with clusters of Marguerites, the overskirt of white silk flowered with autumn leaves. Later she donned a royal blue scarf and a large hat adorned with feathers to match. Her last dress—where she 'stoops to conquer' in the guise of a maid—a short skirt of kilted red satin displaying pale blue silk stockings and buckled shoes. The overskirt was of a soft woollen stuff, a dainty white cap, apron and kerchief, and a bunch of keys completed a very coquettish dress. Miss M. White, as a maid, wore a pretty dress—the skirt of dark red, the overdress of pompadour, with white muslin apron and cap. The dresses of the gentlemen were too handsome to be dismissed without a word. Mr C. Mouat wore a suit of the olden

time. The frock coat was of russet brown serge with large brass buttons and knee breeches of the same material and a pale blue and white striped waistcoat. The usual lace ruffles, white silk stockings, and buckled shoes finished the attire. Mr J. R. MacDonald, as Marlow, wore a suit of black velvet, the coat having black bead facings, with vest of white serge, and long top boots. The second dress, the coat was of russet-brown velvet with silk knee breeches the same colour, and flowered corded silk waistcoat, with lace frills, white silk stockings and buckled shoes. Dr. Jeffcoat, as Hastings, wore a suit of black velvet faced with gold, flowered corded silk waistcoat with gold border and dainty lace ruffles. A stone seal set in gold hung at the bottom of the waistcoat, and with a three-cornered black hat turned up, with gold, knee breeches, and top boots, and beauty spots, made a dashing lover. Sir Charles Marlow (Mr W. D. Milne) wore a suit of plum coloured velvet, with drab silk waistcoat made with large lappels and pockets, his coat pockets and waiscoat edged with gold, white silk stockings and buckled shoes. He also carried a silver snuff-box. Powdered wig and lace handkerchief completed the outfit. Tony Lumpkin was very gorgeous in a scarlet hunting frock, handsome figured silk waistcoat tinselled with gold, light brown riding breeches, yellow silk cravat, and a black velvet cap. The arrangement and appearance of the drawing room did credit to the stage manager, Mr S. Soloman; in fact the whole affair was well done.

MAUDE.

WELLINGTON.

DEAR BEE, JUNE 19.

The ball at Government House will be just too late for this letter, so I am afraid you must wait patiently until next, for it takes place the very night that this must be posted. I hear that there are over three hundred invitations out for it, so it ought to be very good. That will be a very nice number for the size of the ball-room.

I believe Mrs Harding's 'At Home' comes first on my list. What do you think? There were actually more gentlemen than ladies—such a revolution in social matters! We girls had, in consequence, such a good time. We shall never forget it, I am sure, for it is so seldom that we can afford to turn up our noses, and say our programme is full, but this really was the case a few minutes after we arrived in the ball-room. The dining and drawing-rooms were both used for dancing, the folding doors having been drawn back. I suppose there must have been fully sixty guests, nearly all young people, except one or two married ladies. Mrs Harding wore black silk with panels of cut steel embroidery, and both her daughters wore white; Miss (John) Johnston wore one of the handsomest gowns, of moss green satin embroidered with white lilies of the valley, her niece, Miss Grace, wearing cream; Miss A. Hadfield wore pale pink; Mrs C. Izard, white silk with black velvet; Miss Larnach, from Dunedin, one of the prettiest dresses, of black velvet, slightly trained, the low bodice and sleeves being softened by quantities of bright yellow embroidered chiffon; Miss Elfie Williams wore a pretty blue chiffon gown; Miss Richmond being also in blue; Miss Buller wore black and white; Miss Cooper, black; and her sister, pink; Miss Moorhouse, white; Miss Gore, black with ruffles of white chiffon; and her sister, cream; Miss Butterworth (Dunedin), white silk; Miss S. Graham (Karori) and Miss Knight both wearing white. Captain and Mrs Edwin were there. Miss Brandon and several others played the extras, King's band supplying the programme music. Supper was served upstairs, and was prettily decorated with flowers, greenery, etc., as were also the ball-room and balcony, which proved a pleasant resort for the dancers. I heard that a large children's party took place there the following night, and passed off very successfully. Mrs Harding has made a splendid beginning, her dance being the first of the session, taking place the very day that Parliament opened. It is to be hoped that her good example will be followed by many others, for what is pleasanter than a private dance?

I feel quite miserable to think that Madame Patey has gone. Oh, she was just delightful, and we all liked her better and better the more we heard her. Her farewell concert was quite the most successful of all, and a more enthusiastic audience could hardly be imagined. Madame Patey was so good in repeating her songs, and in her last song the audience got perfectly wild with excitement, and the great singer responded twice amid ringing applause. She was very handsomely dressed in bright tomato red satin brocaded with black flowers, and made with a very long full train, the front being plain satin of the same colour draped with beautiful fine black lace, and the hem edged with peaks of black jet embroidery. The shoes were red satin embroidered with black jet, and the high collar of the square bodice was also of jet. The corsage sparkled with diamonds and other jewels, and she wore diamond stars in the form of a tiara in her hair. Long pale tan gloves completed a beautiful toilette. Miss Rossow wore a simple gown of cream silk, the skirt being prettily trimmed with lace, her best effort being 'Killarney,' for which she had to respond to an enthusiastic encore and sing the last verse again. Miss Emelia Wood has also established herself a favourite here. She wore black velvet and satin with sleeves of thin black lace. Mr Jones was encored for 'My pretty Jane,' and sang 'Tom Bowling.' Mr Patey has not been able to appear throughout the season here, owing to the effects of an accident which befell him on his way to New Zealand. We were disappointed, but it could not be helped, and Mr F. V. Waters took his place both in the solos, duets, and trios. The company very often sang 'The magic wove scarf,' which was, to my mind, the prettiest trio they had. *The* feature of the evening, of course, was Madame Patey's singing of 'There is a green hill,' which was especially composed for her, and which has been greatly looked forward to by musical people here. It was a splendid season altogether, and I feel sure we will never forget Madame Patey's visit to us.

The Ladies' Gallery at the 'House' has been well-filled since Parliament opened, and was especially so when the Financial Statement was read. I noticed Miss McKenzie, daughter of the Minister of Lands, there. She was with Mrs Ballance, the Premier's wife, and is paying us a short visit. Most of the Minister's wives were there taking a great interest in everything that was said.

The Ambulance Society had a large meeting at the Museum, when Lady Onslow presented the certificates to the members. The Governor spoke encouragingly, and Sir James Hector also made a speech. Here are the names of the fortunate competitors; they are all well-known. Medals: Elizabeth Anketell, Margaret Brown, Francis Chiene, Annie Croucher, Lilian Heath, Margaret Kennedy, Onie McKenzie, Edith Palmer, Mary Tuckey. Certificates: Maude Blundell, Harriet Davy, Emily Edmeades, Jessie Martin, Vida Pearce, E. Seed, Hetty Williams. Home Nursing: Kate Berry, Maude Berry, Harriet Davy, Jessie Martin, and Hetty Williams. Men's Branch: Harry Seed, Michael Kennedy, William Bright, T. Donne, Henry Hadfield, Leonard Tripp, Ernest Bell, Francis Fear, John O'Donovan, James B. Gould, J. Price, Edgar Gibb, D. Darke, and J. W. Whittaker. Dr. Kemp spoke at length, and Dr. Pollen also congratulated the society. Mrs Charles Johnston and Miss King appear to have been especially energetic. An excellent committee has been arranged for the following year:—Madames Russell, Beetham, C. Harris, Brandon, Pearce, McKenzie, W. Ferguson, G. Taylor, Ewart, H. Bell, Pollen, T. C. Williams, the Misses Johnston and Ludbrook, the Rev. W. C. Waters, Canon Howell, Drs. Ewart, Collins, and McKenzie, and Messrs D. Tripe and H. Seed. We are very glad to see the valuable society in such a flourishing condition.

The Harmonic Society are shortly to produce 'The Rose of Sharon,' for which both Miss Spensley and Mr Puschel are coming from Christchurch to take part.

'Rob Roy,' the operatic drama, is being actively rehearsed by amateurs under Mr McDuff-Boyd's leadership, and will very soon be ready for public inspection.

RUBY.

NELSON

DEAR BEE, JUNE 18.

The Provincial Hall was the scene of any amount of gaiety, being the first of our winter entertainments. Busy hands had been engaged in decorating the large room, and all who helped ought to be well satisfied with the result of their work, for the ball never looked so well before. The upper end was reserved as a drawing-room, and was tastefully furnished, the lower end being kept for dancing. For the first two hours music was the order of the evening, Mrs Houlker, Mrs Adams, the Misses Fell and Atkinson, Messrs Fell, Grace, and Maginnity taking part. At 10.30 dancing began, and then a great many who did not care for that frivolity went home, but numbers remained, and I think all enjoyed themselves. The programme was rather short, but we had as many extras as we cared for at the end. Nearly everyone wore new gowns, so I will try and remember a few for your edification, my dear Bee. Mrs Cook, handsome robe of bottle green merveilleux, trained, lovely cream plush opera cloak; Mrs Renwick, black merveilleux handsomely trimmed with jet; Mrs H. Dodson, a black and red gown, which suited her splendidly; Mrs S. Clanders, primrose-coloured satin, trimmed with such pretty striped gauzy material; Mrs Browning (Cable Bay), a becoming black mervielleux and lace; Mrs Buckland (Cable Bay), such a handsome gown of black lace, having panels of yellow satin, over which the black lace was draped; Mrs Theodore Glasgow, who looked one of the best there, wore an uncommon robe of pompadour satin, made plainly and trained, the entire front of the bodice being covered with little gold sequins; Mrs J. Sharp, pretty soft pink silk and chiffon; Mrs Holmes, becoming heliotrope gown; Mrs Thornton, her bridal robe of soft white silk, made plainly, the bottom of the skirt being slightly draped, and caught up with ostrich feathers, ostrich feather fan; Mrs Pearson, becoming pink watered silk trimmed with soft pink silk. Mrs J. Wood, black merveilleux and lace; Miss Gibson, cream broché satin; Miss Morgan, handsome gown of cream merveilleux beautifully embroidered with gold; Miss Wood, black lace robe prettily trimmed with primrose ribbon; Miss Rhodes (Napier), black Russian net relieved with red; Miss Ledger, handsome black lace draped over a yellow satin; Miss Fell, pretty white silk and chiffon; Miss G. Pitt, white nun's veiling embroidered with gold; Miss Heaps (*debutante*), white surah silk, with chiffon ruffles, and sprays of white chrysanthemums; Miss Renwick, a mixture of white and primrose-coloured nun's veiling. I also saw there Mrs Pitt, Mrs P. Adams, Mrs Oldham, Mrs Ledger, Mrs Duddy, Mrs Macquavire, Mrs Wood, Mrs Levien, Mrs Grace, Mrs H. Edwards, Mrs Houlker, the Misses Atkinson, L. Fell, Levien, Sealy, Richmond, Cock (2), Worsley, Watson, Raikes, Gribben, Perry, Burnett, Curtis, Oldham, Lightfoot, and Holmes, and several more I am unable to remember. The committee are certainly to be congratulated upon the success of their first evening, for if all enjoyed themselves as much as Amy and I, they will be well satisfied indeed.

A benefit concert was given to Herr Von Zimmerman by a number of ladies and gentlemen, when Rossini's 'Stabat Mater' was performed with great success. Mrs Adams, Mrs Houlker, and Mrs Chatterton, Messrs Fell, Grace, Lucas, and the Revs. Chatterton and Kempthorne were entrusted with the solos, which were sung creditably by all. During the second part of the programme Prof. Zimmerman gave two violin soloe, which were much appreciated, although rather long. Miss Atkinson accompanied admirably.

In writing of the ball, I forgot to mention how much we all missed the energetic secretary of the committee, Mr E. L. Broad, of the Colonial Bank. He has gone to Sydney for a holiday. We all hope he will have a good time there, and be back for the next dance.

PHYLLIS.

A PROTEST AGAINST 'TRAINS.'

DEAR BEE,

May a much-injured Society man drop you a line with any hope of your publishing his grievance? *Apropos* of the winter dances past, present, and future, do allow me to enter—in common with all my sex—a hearty and emphatic protest against those horrid additions to ladies' frocks—trains! They look well enough trailing over the floors when there is plenty of room, but when dancing begins, and you have to steer your partner out of the way not only of her own tail, but of her sisters', cousins and aunts, the caudal appendage is an unmitigated plague. It goes without saying that women believe entirely in the Darwinian theory when, on the slightest excuse—though, I believe, they are not fashionable in the best London society—a girl adopts a tail, I mean train. I suppose the swish, swish of it on the floor reminds her in a sort of 'looking back' manner of the thump, thump of her ancestor's tail against the trees or hard ground. The sight of two or three inches of a walking (?) dress—say rather a street scavanger's costume—sweeping the pavements, attaching to itself dust, mud, and *all kinds of filth*, as its fair owner promenades our thoroughfares, is most repulsive, and is a disgustingly unclean habit. If a woman left her train on the doorstep, it would not so much matter, but she drags all the rubbish she has collected over her husband's carpets, and carefully introduces germs of infection of all kinds into her nursery and drawing-room. What is the use of the higher education of women, if it cannot teach them common sense?—Yours, dear Bee, TOM GROWLER.

NATIVE LAND LAWS COMMISSION.

(SEE ILLUSTRATION, PAGE 124.)

AMONGST our illustrations this week is a capital electrograph picture of the gentlemen forming the Native Land Laws Commission. Their appointment was the outcome of a resolution passed by the House of Representatives last session, and in selecting Messrs W. L. Rees, James Carroll, and Thomas Mackay as Commissioners, the Government made a wise choice of three gentlemen who were eminently qualified by their experience of native traditions, customs, and usages to discharge the functions of Commission to inquire into the laws affecting the natives and their land. Mr W. L. Bees, M.H.R., for Auckland city, was formerly a member of the House, and will be remembered as having accompanied Wi Pere to England, on the business of the East Coast colonization scheme. Mr Carroll is the member for the East Coast Maori electorate, and is himself a half-caste. Mr Thomas Mackay, the third member of the Commission, was for many years a Land Purchase Agent, and subsequently Trust Commissioner for Native Reserves. The other gentlemen in the group are Messrs J. M. Geddis, of the *Hansard* staff, who filled the position of secretary and shorthand writer to the Commission, and Mr Gannon, interpreter. The Commission travelled through the length and breadth of the North Island, sittings being held at Gisborne, then at Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Islands, Taranaki, and so on through the North Island back to Wellington. Voluminous evidence was taken, but at the close of their labours the Commissioner's were unable to agree. An exhaustive report has been presented by Messrs Rees and Carroll, on the evil effects of the existing system of dealing with native lands. The remedy proposed is that the Native Land Board should be a corporated body, and should be composed of six members, three appointed by Governor and three elected by the whole tribal committees of the North Island. In this Board should be vested all the Maori reserves of the North Island with the sole power of leasing Maori tribal lands under direction from the native committees of the various blocks, and with full power to act in all things for the welfare of the Maori people. The Board, they say, should also be authorised to compromise with the Government and private persons in claims made to Maori lands not held severally, and only when assented to by three-fourths of the natives affected in the administration of the lands not held in several. The Commissioners suggest return to open and tribal dealings. Mr Mackay decided to send in a separate report, in the compilation of which he was engaged when he died very suddenly at the Metropolitan Hotel, Wellington. It has not yet been decided whether his incomplete report shall be published.

THE CITY OF NELSON.

(SEE ILLUSTRATIONS, PAGE 129.)

THE Rev. Frederick William Chatterton, the incumbent of the Church of All Saints in the town of Nelson, has occupied his present charge since the year 1888. He is a graduate of the University of New Zealand, having received his education at the Bishopdale Theological College. He was ordained deacon in 1886, and priest in the following year. About the same time that he assumed the office of clergyman, Bishop Suter appointed him his domestic chaplain.

TABLE ORNAMENT.

SUGGESTIONS ON DINNER-GIVING.

THE table about which we gather to have not only a feast of good things, but a bright chat, and which brings friends together, should certainly have special attention paid it. It is continually quoted about our inability to live without dining; nobody denies this fact, but it is true that we can make dining a fine art, make it seem absolutely poetic. A few years ago, in an attempt to succeed at this, the hostess, anxious as possible, made some very great mistakes. These she has discovered and remedied; the worst were her inclinations to too much millinery on the table in the shape of broad ribbons, enormous dinner cards, too much plush over the tablecloth, and a fancy for enormous floral pieces in the centre which made the people on one side of the table entire strangers to those on the other. Nowadays the most effective dinner table is that dressed entirely in white and having white glass, plenty of silver, the centre-piece low, and a number of soft lights, in the shape of candles, here, there, and everywhere to make a mellow sunshine all round.

The preferred tablecloth is of white damask. It may have woven in it the *fleur de-lis* pattern; it may show, where such a thing is possessed, a coat of arms or a crest, but it is in much better taste, when these do not belong to the family, either to have the initials, or an elaborate monogram woven in announcing in this way that it was made to order. The linen cloth with a broad hemstitching, usually has the initials embroidered in running fashion as if they were written, near the end, but sufficiently far up to come midway between the plate of the hostess and the first candelabrum, or whatever ornament may be beyond. In this way the fine needlework shows to good advantage and, by-the-bye, with such a cloth the napkins match, although, of course, the lettering is smaller and it is embroidered not in a corner but straight, so that the napkin may be folded to be almost square.

The art of dinner-giving becomes more complicated every day, and the unconsidered trifles that must accompany a feast from the fleshpots of Egypt were never more considered than they are this season. The latest designs in dinner favours are miniature reels of silk, and models of anything from a mandoline to a box-hat. Dainty pink and white jockey's caps are used, filled with cachous, and might impart a flavour of sport to the conversation.

Crystallised sweets are generally a feature of the dessert, of which the newest kind are gilded or silvered. Gold bonbons cost about thirty shillings a pound, which may be called a high price for sweets, beyond the dreams of the average schoolboy or girl, but some of us carry our love of bonbons to our graves.

Dame Fashion has also been turning her attention to table-glass, and the lovely tinted ware that made the wine look so rich is to give place to plain glass as fine as Titania's web, and gold-edged, with the owner's crest and a floral design wrought on it in gold.

Coloured glass is still used for the flower-vases, many of which take the form of a water-lily or a thistle. I saw the other day some lovely opalescent glass flower-holders made for pampas grasses and bulrushes. They stood on the floor and were about four feet high, and look better than the pottery and painted drain-pipes we have seen so long.

A DAINTY MAUVE DINNER.

COLOUR dinners are decidedly pretty, and even the most rebellious of men, who object to ribbons and what he calls 'frivols,' can find no fault with the mauve dinner, if it is properly carried out. The table is first covered with a spread of mauve satin, and over this is laid a linen cover elaborately hemstitched, and made lace-like, by drawn-work, until the lavender shows through to good advantage. The centre piece is a low, white bowl filled with purple chrysanthemums or violets or any purple flower. At each end of the table is a silver candelabrum and in it are white candles with shades covered with violets and their leaves. The menus are in the form of a violet, and at each place is a cluster of violets, those for *boutonnières* being smaller than those intended to be stuck in my lady's waist ribbon.

The favours are hand screens shaped like violets and tinted exactly as they would be. These are for the fair sex, while mankind receives either a silver match-box, or silver cigarette case with violets enamelled upon it, and the date of the dinner carefully engraved thereon. The ices show mauve as the predominating colour; the sweets are candied violets, each plate holding them having a tiny music box concealed in it, which, curiously enough, provokes a great deal of fun by playing 'Sweet Violets.' This, of course, is a somewhat elaborate expression of colour in dinners; but the little woman who wants to give a colour dinner, and who does not exactly know how, may gain some hints from it.

INTELLECTUAL MENUS.

THE menu carefully written out and with a proper quotation put after each dish, is still in vogue as being a means of making conversation. Any good book of quotations will help you to arrange this, although, indeed, a volume of Shakespeare often affords all that is necessary. Keep to one writer—that is, have your menu a Thackeray, Dickens, or Shakespeare one, unless, indeed, some of the minor writers afford appropriate quotations.

If you do not care to undertake arranging an entire menu, then have a proverb on each name card, but be careful not to have your 'shaft at random sent' and so hurt somebody's feelings.

Another arrangement liked is to have a question written on the outside of an envelope, sealed or tied with ribbon: inside is the answer written out clearly and distinctly. The questions are talked over and, as far as possible, answered; but the envelope itself remains intact until the dessert is served, and then you are given an opportunity to see how far away you were from the truth.

If you have a daughter or are yourself capable of doing a little work with pen and ink, then you can always make your dinner cards something delightful in the way of souvenirs. A tiny sketch, a pleasant quotation and then the guest's name and the date of the dinner, form a remembrance of a happy time that each one is anxious to have. A trifle—some pretty little toy easily made at home—is in this way made a charming addition to that which, as a matter of course, you intend to give your guests—a good dinner.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS.

ALL the beautiful decorations on the table will amount to nothing unless the hostess herself wears, as a decoration, a charming manner and an absolute ignoring of anything except that which will give pleasure to her guests. If mistakes should occur it will be wiser for her not to see them. If an awkward servant should stumble and upset a dish she should be as equable as if someone had only thrown a crown of roses about her. While it is her duty to permit no guest to be neglected it is also her duty not to seem flustered or worried, and she is the best hostess always who manages to make people feel most at ease.

Don't attempt to do too much unless you have servants who are capable of carrying out your orders. A simple dinner, well served, is always better form than an elaborate one badly served and half cooked, with a worried hostess at the head of the table. Invite people who will help to make your dinner a success, people who talk well, and yet who do not talk too much. Flashes of silence are as much of an art in conversation as are flashes of wit. Put together the people who will grow interested in each other, and under no circumstances yield to the selfish desire of some young woman who wants to be near somebody who won't be interested in her at all, and who will in this way cause a riff in the harmony you desire to achieve. Have your table as prettily decorated as you can, have your linen as immaculate as possible, have everything hot, as hot as it can be, and everything cold, well iced. Do not make the mistake of serving anything tepid; and as for yourself, be as cool as your ice, as bright as the candle light, as charming as the flowers, and as sweet as the bonbons that mean dinner is over.

POPE LEO'S SCANT FARE.

At about 10 o'clock the Pope eats his first meal, which is very frugal and always the same. It consists of two poached eggs, a piece of the breast of a fowl, and for dessert, some fruit or preserves. Leo XIII. drinks but little wine—never more than one glass of white Frascati—during the whole repast. He will not touch Bordeaux, which is more heady and tonic than the wines in the neighbourhood of Rome. At 5 o'clock the Pope eats his second and last meal, which is as frugal and simple as the first. Many a commoner sits down to a far more sumptuous repast. Soup, one kind of meat, a vegetable, fruit and a glass of Frascati wine—such is the Pope's menu.

First landlady: 'I see that Mr Feedwell has left you.' Second landlady: 'Yes; I had to tell him to go.' First landlady: 'Was he behind with his board?' Second landlady: 'No; but I couldn't stand his joking. I had a splendid dinner, and asked him to say grace, and he went and recited a prayer from the Episcopal service, called "In time of dearth and famine."'

Mrs Pompous: 'There will be a number of gentlemen to tea to-night, Bridget, and I want you to dress yourself neatly, as you will wait on the table.' Bridget: 'And is it married men that they are?' Mrs Pompous: 'Why do you ask that question?' Bridget: 'Sure, mum, it's little use to make meself attractive if it is already married they are.'

MY FIRST AND LAST BURGLAR.

BY FRED PILCHER.

STOP! That title is hardly fair, for I really am not certain, even to this day, whether he was a burglar at all. I will just tell you the whole story, asking you to believe that it is in every word true, and leave you to judge, each for himself.

I was living at the time in an unfashionable suburb in the north-east of London, a paradise of young married couples who made up for lack of income by the warmth of their newly-fledged affections. Any house in this quarter, at the gate of which one did not see, morning and evening, the parting and meeting embrace of husband and wife, in no way lacking in fervour from the publicity, would have at once been considered to have something suspicious about it, or rather its occupants. In fact, a worthy old couple, who by some chance found themselves in our little colony, have not. I believe to this day, been recognised by its society because, forsooth, having passed the heyday of youth, they do not kiss at the gate.

I have always had a passion for gardening, and for this reason had taken a house some hundred yards from my nearest neighbour, the first instalment, I have no doubt, of a future street, but whether from want of funds or want of demand for houses, at that time standing a solitary house dropped in a field. Here it was that, for a shilling or two weekly, I had rented a small piece of extra ground, and anxiously and with much labour cultivated an assortment of garden produce for the benefit of the insect pests of the neighbourhood.

We did not in those days keep any servant, if I except a small girl of thirteen, who came at half-past seven in the morning, and left after my dinner was prepared, say, at six in the evening. Consequently between her departure and return there were but our two selves in the house, and the situation was, to say the least of it, lonely.

I had come home on the evening of which I am about to speak, rather more tired than usual, and consequently, when I turned in, wasted little time in getting to sleep. From this sleep I was somewhat rudely awakened by my wife shaking me vigorously and saying, 'Why don't you wake, Will? there is someone at the front door.' I was alert in a moment, and springing out of bed, without waiting to dress, opened our bedroom door, and listened quietly in the hall. The moon was fairly bright, and I could see the faint outline of a figure through the stained glass, and hear the low muttering of a man's voice.

'What is it you want?' I said.

'Never you mind what I want. Open the door,' was the answer.

'But tell me your business first.'

'You don't get any business out of me until you've opened that door.'

'Oh, nonsense, my good fellow. It is not likely that I am going to do that. If you won't tell me what you want I'll go back to bed. Come in the morning.'

'If you don't open the door in five minutes I'll have it down. Now, you hear me. I mean it.'

This was beginning to look serious, and I stole back to my room, where my poor wife was sitting in bed, shivering with terror, to put on a few clothes. Parleying with an unknown ruffian in a cold hall at 1 a.m., with nothing on but a nightshirt, is not conducive to courage.

'Another two minutes and down comes your cursed door,' growled the voice outside again.

There was no time to be lost if I intended doing anything.

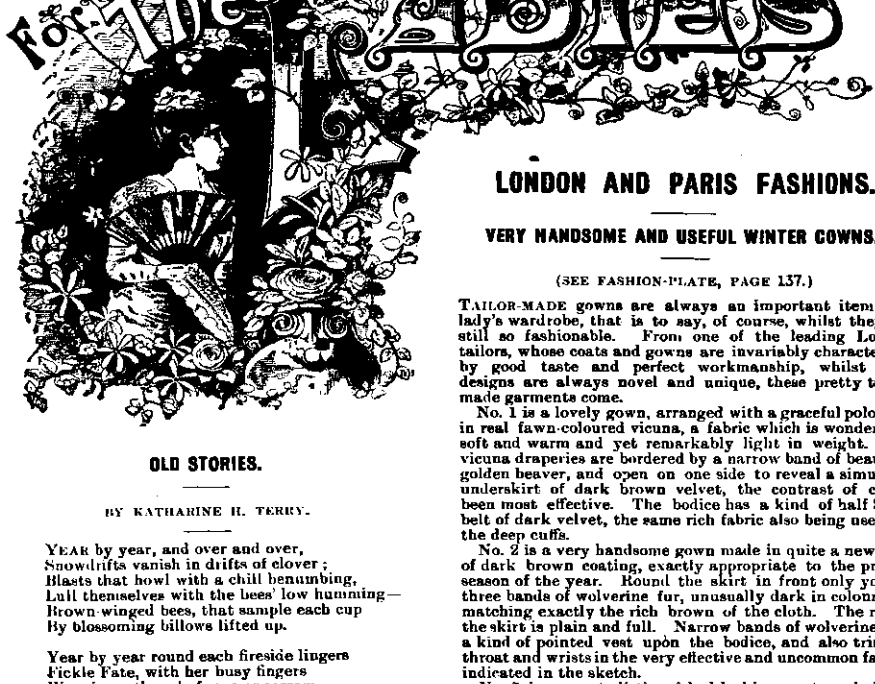
'Jump out of bed, Alice, quick!' I whispered, and catching up the candlestick, an old-fashioned heavy metal one, I threw a blanket over my wife and led the way without a sound along the hall to the kitchen. Here I lit the candle.

'Now, Al.,' I said, 'be plucky, dear. Let me out of the back door and lock it after me, and mind and don't open it unless I give three distinct taps.' I stole out, candlestick in hand, heard to my relief the door locked, and made my way as quickly as I could round the house to the front door. Just in time. In the half light, the moon was just behind a cloud-drift, I saw a big, burly fellow of nearly six feet just gathering himself together for a dash at the door, cursing and growling to himself the while. Doors are not too strong in cheap London houses.

'Stop a moment, my friend; I cried, 'before you injure my property. I am here now. What is it you want? What is your business at this time of night?'

'Business? This is the only business for you,' was the answer. I saw the faint glimmer of a knife, and had just time to spring on one side as the brute rushed at me. Of what followed, or rather how it happened, I cannot rightly say. I know he made a second rush, and I struck at him with the flat of the candlestick, striking him in the face, and getting what proved afterwards to be a very slight wound in the left arm. Then he must have caught his foot in mine, for he fell heavily, the back of his head coming with a sickening thud upon the ornamental tiles which bordered the garden path, and lay still, horribly still. I ran to the front door, gave the three taps, and when my wife opened it, told her to cut down the clothes-line in the garden, quickly, while I guarded the fellow. This done, I tied him up with turns and knots enough to have held an elephant, and giving my wife the kitchen poker with which to stand guard over him, with strict orders to give him a smart tap if he stirred (I never knew she was so plucky before), I ran to the nearest police-station, calling on the way at a neighbour's to send him to keep my wife company.

To cut a long story short, my midnight assailant was safely placed in a cell under lock and key, where twelve hours later he died without having regained consciousness. Not the slightest clue was found in his pockets as to his identity, neither letter, paper, or mark on his clothes. What his errand was, or who he could have been, is beyond surmise or conjecture. A mystery he was and a mystery he must remain until the day comes when all mysteries will be solved.



OLD STORIES.

BY KATHARINE H. TERRY.

YEAR by year, and over and over,
Snowdrifts vanish in drifts of clover;
Blasts that howl with a chill benumbing,
Lull themselves with the bees' low humming—
Brown-winged bees, that sample each cup
By blossoming billows lifted up.

Year by year round each fireside lingers
Fickle Fate, with her busy fingers
Weaving a thread of care or sorrow
That's interlaced with a smile to-morrow;
Turning her wheel with a careless grace,
While each heart keeps time in its shuttle-race.

Storms are chased by the sunniest weather,
Since earth began they have frolicked together;
Lives obscure, or crowned with glory,
Are only leaves from an olden story.
Nothing is new in this busy world
As over the realms of space we're whirled.

But the restless moments are never weary
Of telling their tales, be they glad or dreary;
Now and then with a laugh we listen,
Then under our lashes a tear will glisten.
Strange old world! Are you aught but good
In your darkest moods, if we understood?

EATING AN ORANGE.

THERE IS AN ART ABOUT IT THAT IS NOT EASILY ACQUIRED.

UNTIL the last few years, since oranges have become popularized, it was a matter of no little difficulty and concern to those who desired to eat gracefully to hit upon the best way to eat an orange. The thick, easily broken skin of the Spanish and Italian oranges admitted of but little variation in method. The skin was carefully removed and the fruit separated in its natural sections and eaten piece by piece. With the thin, tough peel and tender interior skin of the Florida orange this was a matter of greater difficulty. Fastidious people objected to the style which is the delight of childhood, viz., punching a hole in the orange with the forefinger and extracting the juice by pressure and suction, and soon the fashion was set of dividing the orange in halves at the equator, if the expression may be permitted, and digging out the pulp with a teaspoon. Some genius improved upon this by cutting off only a small slice of the top of the orange, at about the Arctic circle, so to speak, then with a sharp knife cutting out the core. A second circular cut just inside the skin separates the pulp, and if the operation is dexterously performed the fruit can be eaten with a spoon without spilling a drop of the juice, a recommendation which has made it more popular than any other method. The native Sicilian, who does not care if he does get a little of the juice smeared upon his countenance, takes his long, sharp knife—every Sicilian carries a long, sharp knife for family purposes, as he generally has a vendetta or two on hand—and cuts the orange spirally around so that it becomes a long strip of peel and pulp. He grabs this strip at either end and draws it rapidly across his mouth, absorbing the juice as it passes. It is not pretty, but it is remarkably effective.

Another fashion of eating an orange—which is considerable trouble, and has but little to recommend it, is to cut just through the skin at the equator, and by carefully turning the peel back, form a cup of the skin at each pole of the orange. The pulp is then bitten off around and around, as a schoolboy eats an apple. While this style keeps the hands comparatively clean, it smears the face most unpleasantly. The same objection may be urged against the fashion of peeling the orange on a fork and holding it in that way while eating it.

Some people thrust a fork into the core of an orange, peel the fruit and then slice it as one would an apple, losing thereby a large quantity of the juice. At a dinner table, if the orange knives are very sharp—a circumstance which rarely happens, by the way—this is perhaps as good a way as any. It is simple and makes no fuss, and there is an air of refinement about touching the fruit only with the knife and fork, if it be gracefully done, which recommends it to many people.

LONDON AND PARIS FASHIONS.

VERY HANDSOME AND USEFUL WINTER GOWNS.

(SEE FASHION-PLATE, PAGE 137.)

TAILOR-MADE gowns are always an important item in a lady's wardrobe, that is to say, of course, whilst they are still so fashionable. From one of the leading London tailors, whose coats and gowns are invariably characterised by good taste and perfect workmanship, whilst their designs are always novel and unique, these pretty tailor-made garments come.

No. 1 is a lovely gown, arranged with a graceful polonaise in real fawn-coloured vicuna, a fabric which is wonderfully soft and warm and yet remarkably light in weight. The vicuna draperies are bordered by a narrow band of beautiful golden beaver, and open on one side to reveal a simulated underskirt of dark brown velvet, the contrast of colour been most effective. The bodice has a kind of half Swiss belt of dark velvet, the same rich fabric also being used for the deep cuffs.

No. 2 is a very handsome gown made in quite a new kind of dark brown coating, exactly appropriate to the present season of the year. Round the skirt in front only you see three bands of wolverine fur, unusually dark in colour, and matching exactly the rich brown of the cloth. The rest of the skirt is plain and full. Narrow bands of wolverine form a kind of pointed vest upon the bodice, and also trim the throat and wrists in the very effective and uncommon fashion indicated in the sketch.

No. 3 is a most distinguished-looking coat made in the always becoming Campbell plaid, with its dark shades of myrtle green and navy blue. The under garment is cut in a double-breasted shape, and made tight-fitting. It is quite complete in itself. The cape is made to come well down below the elbows, and is fastened in quite a novel fashion on each shoulder with large buttons of smoked mother-of-pearl. The pretty hood at the back is lined with green silk, while the inside of the tall collar is of green velvet.

SOME BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

MANY celebrated beauties were the daughters of Ireland. Peg Woffington, Mrs Bellamy, Mary Robinson, the 'Perdita' of the Prince of Wales; Miss Farren, who married the Earl of Derby, Mrs Jordan, Miss O'Neill, who became Lady Beecher, were all Irish actresses and celebrated for their beauty, but the most renowned of Irish beauties were the Misses Gunning, who took all London by storm nearly one hundred and forty years ago. They were daughters of a rollicking Irish gentleman, who died when they were quite young, leaving them and their mother totally unprovided for. Their surpassing loveliness soon gave them celebrity in London, where they were presented at the vice-regal court. They then accompanied their mother to London, were presented at court, and became the heroines of the hour. Horace Walpole writes of them in 1751:—

'There are two Irish girls of no fortune who are declared to be the handsomest women alive. They can't walk in the park or go to Vauxhall but such mobs follow them that they are therefore driven away.'

Their marriages were the great events of the year 1752. The eldest, Maria, married the Earl of Coventry, and Elizabeth, the youngest, married the Duke of Hamilton. One was 18 and the other 17 at the time. The Duke of Hamilton, dying in a few years, the Duchess married Colonel John Campbell, Lord Lorne, who afterwards became the Duke of Argyle. She had a brilliant career, and died in 1760 at the age of 66. The elder sister had died in 1759 of consumption, brought on, it is said, by the use of dangerous cosmetics.

'May you have the luck of the Gunnings,' is an Irish proverb to this day.

There was another Lady Hamilton, with whom Lord Nelson's name is forever associated, whose life was a greater romance than that of the Gunnings. She was of Welsh origin, the most obscure and humble, but nature had endowed her with form and features of the rarest beauty. They have long been preserved to us by the pencil of Romney. From being an obscure scullion she first became a painter's model, and soon the wife of the English ambassador, Sir William Hamilton. This made her the friend and associate of the Queen of Naples, the friend of Nelson, and one of the courted and powerful women of her time.

But beauty has not sole empire over the heart of man, powerful as it is. The plain women have had their share of power, dominion, and fame. The salon of Mme. de Staël was as attractive as that of Mme. Recamier, and her fame will be quite as enduring. George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte, and Jenny Lind will be remembered when Mrs Langtry will be forgotten. These were not only plain, but even ugly women. St. Simon in his memoirs describes some celebrated French women. Mme. de Foix was the prettiest hunchback ever seen. She was tall, and in early years danced most charmingly, and with so much grace that one could but wish she were not a hunchback. She was amusing without malice and never more than fifteen years old, though she died at fifty-five, universally regretted.

The Duchess of Burgundy was regularly ugly, flabby cheeks, prominent forehead, insignificant nose, thick lips, bad teeth, and long throat. But she had speaking and beautiful eyes, a majestic courage, gracious manners, an expressive smile, a gaiety that brought sunshine everywhere, and her dancing was exquisite. These women were admired and as much sought for as some of the celebrated beauties of the court of Louis Fourteenth.

SEALSKINS.

IF you are the happy possessor of a sealskin jacket, let me advise you to treat it with care and respect, for it is quite possible that you may languish in vain for another when your present one is worn out.

Terrible tidings reach us from Alaska of the alarming diminution in the number of seals, and that if the slaughter of these useful little animals is not stayed for several years there will be no more seals left to kill.

According to one of the reports received from the Treasury agents at Alaska, it is 'but a question of a few years before the seal family of the Pribylov Islands will be a thing of the past. During the last fifteen years the number of fur seals killed annually has decreased from nearly 100,000 to the 20,945 of last year.

After a winter such as they have just experienced in England, it is frightful to contemplate existence without the essential sealskin coat, which occupies a unique position in one's wardrobe, not to be filled by any other garment.

But should they become worth their weight in gold, what is the average British maiden to do?

A CLEVER BUT EXPENSIVE IDEA.

A FRENCH politician of note, says *The Daily Telegraph*, is credited with a clever plan for ridding himself of unwelcome and importunate visitors. A photographic apparatus stands just in front of his study door. When a stranger enters the room his 'groom,' by means of a simple contrivance, takes his portrait off-hand. If the master of the house has no wish to receive his visitor again this portrait is at once placed in the collection of counterfeit presentments of persons not to be admitted on any pretext whatsoever. The 'groom' in his leisure moments makes himself familiar with their features, and the politician is spared a vast amount of trouble and annoyance. So the story goes. It does not, however, fall to the lot of every public character to possess a 'groom' who is not only handy with the *camera*, but has such a memory for faces.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MRS ALEX. MCVEIGH MILLER is making a fortune with her thrilling love stories. She lives in a grand old country house, with tall columns and rambling piazzas, located near Stafford County, Virginia. Taken to bed for good, as she says, she does all her work on a pillow, which is placed on her breast as a rest for her writing-pad. She uses a pen, and during the thinking and resting spells throws ink all over the bedclothes. So accustomed has the helpless invalid become to the blue-back spots that a new, fresh counterpane is a hindrance to her work until it has been baptized in ink. From one paper she draws a salary of £1,000 a year for her serials.

'Ouida' uses scent in her hair and on her eyebrows that costs £6 an ounce. She can't bear a piece of muslin that has been starched, and the touch of velvet, she says, makes her flesh creep. She hates the world, likes to offend it in her books and shock it with her manners. Her study has a great Persian rug before the hearthstone, and here she likes to lie and scream a little to ventilate her feelings. Her love for lilies and hyacinths is shown in the artistic Atoille, who figures as the heroine of 'Friendship.'

Instead of doing fancy work Mrs Edward Bellamy devotes her leisure to the study of conchology. In the evening, after dinner, she appears with a little basket full of sea shells, spreads a tray of mucilage and brushes, with sponge, cup and scissors on the table, gets the natural histories within reach, and, with the author of 'Looking Backward,' spends the whole evening classifying and labelling the collection of rare shells.

Princess Clotilde, wife of Prince Napoleon, is one of the most faithful followers of the Pope.

There are a few villages in Saxony where about fifteen thousand people do nothing but make violins.

Mrs William L. Vanderbilt has had an exact imitation of the English crown made for her adornment, and has appeared in it at the opera in New York.

In Austria, steeplechases are a favourite pastime for ladies, and it is stated that an attempt was recently made to get up a ladies' steeplechase at Melton Mowbray.

It is said that if ladies take care after washing to wipe the face *upwards*, the wrinkles on the lower part of the face will be gently removed.

Green furniture is becoming fashionable.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

EVERYONE knows that a good deal—though not all—of the misery of life is due to early and improvident marriages. A writer in *The St. James's Gazette* has put this into doggerel as follows:

The reason the battle of life's so hard
Is because of our daughters and wives.
To keep up appearances we're debarred
From smoking our pipe in our little back-yard
And mocking at Fashion's cold gyves.
They must go to the seaside and get into debt,
Ape those who are richer—*we* worry and fret;
And they are the reason—the daughters and wife—
'Gainst fighting the battle of life.

The bachelor's ex's most moderate are,
He aims not to enter swell sets.
He rides in the 'bus or the humble tram-car,
He hails not the hansom that crawls from afar,
He never was known to have debts.
The remedy, then, you can easily see:
From wives and from daughters, oh, keep yourselves free;
And then in a world that's with bachelors rife
There can't be a battle of life.

QUERIES

Any queries, domestic or otherwise, will be inserted free of charge. Correspondents replying to queries are requested to give the date of the question they are kind enough to answer and address their reply to 'The Lady Editor, NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC, *Auckland,' and in the top left-hand corner of the envelope 'Answer' or 'Query,' as the case may be. The* RULES *for correspondents are few and simple, but readers of the* NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC *are requested to comply with them.*

RULES.

No. 1.—*All communications must be written on one side of the paper only.*

No. 2.—*All letters (not left by hand) must be prepaid, or they will receive no attention.*

No. 3.—*The editor cannot undertake to reply except through the columns of this paper.*

ANSWERS TO QUERIES.

'Glacier.'—We frosted the window in our bath-room, and also some glass round a verandah corner about four years ago. It is still in good order. This is how to do it. Get some white zinc paint, and see that it is perfectly free from lumps. I strained a little on to a plate through a bit of buttercloth. Put a small quantity on a shallow dish or plate, then thin with oil or turpentine. It must not be thick. Take a new brush, dip very lightly into the paint—if you have too much on your brush it will be blotchy—and stipple on to the glass, that is, hold your brush as you would a pen, and let the bristles go against the glass at right angles, giving little pecks at the window until it is all closely covered with the speckled-looking paint. If you want to make a pattern, cut a piece of paper exactly the size of the pane, fasten it with a little paste at each corner, having previously cut out your design. Then dab the paint on the squares, or circles, or diamonds where the paper has been cut out. I hope you will understand these directions. I shall be very glad to hear how you get on.

'Primrose.'—I am afraid I shall not be of much use to you, for though I have frequently tried, I have never succeeded in making a perfectly even surface from the description for preparing canvas my painting-master gave me. White of egg, slightly beaten, mixed with powdered starch and a little oil are the ingredients. They should make a paste, and should be spread with a palette knife over the canvas or cardboard. A plan that was told me by a sign-board painter I have really succeeded in carrying out. He said he simply used cold boiled starch, and rubbed in well into calico, crash, canvas, or cardboard. I covered two cheap fans with calico, saturated it with hot boiled starch—the cold does as well—let it dry, soaked it again with starch. When quite dry I painted on it in oils quite easily. If any of my readers can help you through this column I will gladly print their answers.

'Ruby.'—In despair I was just going to write that no cookery book had a recipe for Napoleons, which, alas! is too true. But a chef at one of our best restaurants most generously told me how to make them, and I am very pleased to give you the information. Make puff paste in three long strips according to the length of Napoleons required. Roll very thin, and bake in a quick oven. It is essential that the paste be well baked and dry. Then lay out one strip, and cover it with custard, or custard and jam, according to taste. Put on the next layer of paste, cover as before. Then put on the third layer of paste, and cover with icing sugar. Cut to sizes required with a very sharp knife. I think you will find this tipsy-cake excellent. We have made it this way for years. Make, if you have a proper-shaped tin, or if you can borrow one from your baker, a sponge cake standing about twelve inches high and five inches in diameter. If you cannot make a good one, order one from a confectioner. It must be about three days old before it is used. Cut about a couple of inches out of the bottom. Holding it upside down in your hands, get someone to pour in as much brandy as the aperture will allow of, place it in rather a deep glass dish, and pour over it about a pint of sherry. Leave it to soak for twenty-four hours, but baste it, so to speak, continually with the sherry in the dish till all is absorbed. If it does not seem sufficiently moist, put a little more sherry. Blanch two ounces of almonds, slice each lengthways into pointed pieces, and stick them *all* over the cake. Make a very good custard, flavour well with brandy, and when rather cool pour *carefully* over the tipsy cake. A little whipped cream is sometimes added over the custard, but this spoils the effect, making it too much like trifle. You very seldom come across a real tipsy cake in New Zealand. For children's parties, when ordinary wine is excluded by thoughtful mothers, a little home-made sweet wine or lemonade will do to soak the cake, especially if the custard be made rather thin, and poured over the cake when quite hot. Flavour the custard with vanilla.

'I.F.'—I have three recipes for pumpkin pie, one of which, I hope, will suit you. The first is a genuine American recipe. One quart of strained pumpkins, two quarts rich milk, one teaspoon of salt, and two of ginger cooked with the pumpkins before adding the milk, etc., six well beaten eggs, one and a-half tea cups of sugar. Here is another, also American: Two teacups of boiled pumpkin, three-fourths teacup of brown sugar, three eggs, two tablespoons of molasses, one tablespoon melted butter, one ditto ginger, one teaspoon of cinnamon, two teacups of milk, a little salt. This makes two pies. The third is made in the Waikato, and is very simple indeed. Boil, with a little salt and ginger, as much pumpkin as you think you will require. When soft, add at the rate of one small cup of sugar to two large cups of pumpkin, add a very little milk, and a little butter. Put in a piedish, and cover with ordinary paste. Bake as usual. A pinch of citric acid improves the pie.

SKELETON LEAVES.—I have just heard of another way of bleaching leaves. Boil them in equal parts of rain-water and soft soap until the pulp will come off the skin, place in clear water, lay the leaf on glass, with a tooth-brush remove all pulp and skin, then bleach in this solution:—One pound sal soda dissolved in five pints rain water, one-half pound chloride of lime in three pints water; allow twenty-four hours for the latter to dissolve. Strain out the sediment, and pour the clear solution of lime into the solution of sal soda. If it is not thick like buttermilk, the solution is not strong enough. Filter until perfectly clear. For leaves, one part of solution to one of water; ferns, whole strength. When white, put in clear water three times, letting it stand a few hours in each, the last with a little blue. Float out on paper, and press in books when nearly dry. In mounting, use mucilage made of five parts of gum arabic, three parts white sugar, two parts starch; add a little water, boil and stir till thick and white. I hope you will see this and find it useful.

RECIPES.

POITRINE DE MOUTON FARCIE AUX POMMES DE TERRE.—Bone a breast of mutton, lay it out flat, making a nice stuffing as for veal, but adding chopped mushrooms and ham; spread it on it, roll it up and tie; lay it in a baking tin with some fat or dripping and a few small peeled potatoes round it. Bake in a hot oven till done, basting it and the potatoes frequently. It can be served with sauce if liked.

GATEAU DE NOIX A LA CREME.—Shell a quart of hazel or Barcelona nuts, pound them in a mortar, or grind them in a tiny nut mill; beat up the yolks of nine eggs, then add gradually, beating all the time, half a pound of castor sugar, and the pounded nuts; whisk the whites of the eggs to a very stiff froth, mix them in lightly, and pour the mixture in a well-buttered tin with a band of paper round it, and bake in a hot oven. When cold cut the cakes in halves lengthways and lay whipped cream between, then ice with soft icing and decorate with chopped pistachio nuts.

'HOW TO GET MARRIED.'

BY MRS L. FROST RATTRAY.

SIXTH PAPER.

'Man without woman is a very poor thing.
—From one of Madame Patey's songs.

THE Wesleyan Methodist Society has few and simple rules for the marriage of its members. The Registrar's certificate is all that is required beforehand. The service itself is very similar to that used in the Church of England. There is no stated fee, but the minister always receives something from the bridegroom. This applies all over the colony. I have been kindly furnished with the following short stories in connection with this church:—

'About twenty years ago,' said a minister, 'the Registrar was away for a holiday, I think, and someone else in the office issued the certificates. These were afterwards declared invalid, and the couples had all to be re-married. I had to re-officiate in one case.'

'A friend of mine rode twenty miles to marry a couple. They promised him a side of bacon as fee, and gave him half a pound to take home to try. That was all he ever got.'

The Congregational Church gives me just the same rules as those which guide the Wesleyan Church. The services for the celebration of marriages are dissimilar.

Another anecdote respecting the numerous superstitions attaching to the wedding-ring has reached me.—'Although sufficient for the purposes of a marriage ceremony, there is a very natural objection to the use of a mourning ring; and there is a superstition that fatal consequences will ensue therefrom. In exemplification of this has been quoted the story of Colin, Earl of Balcarres, who was married to the daughter of a natural son of Maurice, Prince of Orange. The Prince of Orange, afterwards William the Third, presented his kinswoman with a beautiful pair of emerald earrings. We may note here that any articles of clothing or ornament of a green colour are considered extremely unlucky at weddings. On the day of marriage, Colin, who appears to have been very absent-minded, forgot all about his engagement, and the messenger sent for him found him quietly seated at breakfast. He hurried to the church, but at the critical moment discovered that he had forgotten the ring. A friend handed him one, which he placed without examination on the bride's finger. On looking at it, after the ceremony, she discovered that it was a mourning ring with the death's head and cross bones, and immediately fainted. On recovering she declared that she would die within the year, a prognostication which was fulfilled.

In the Baptist Church no church license is required, the certificate obtained from the Registrar by the consenting parties being the warrant and authority to the officiating minister to marry. Without this no marriage can be celebrated. The churches nor their ministers do not in any way interfere, or require anything further. As to fees, the Registrar, if he married the parties at his office, claims one guinea as legal fee, and this is the usual honorarium given to the officiating minister. In Victoria three guineas is the usual fee to the minister, while only five shillings is charged by the Registrar. But by far the larger proportion of marriages are celebrated by the clergy and ministers. In New Zealand it depends greatly upon the social standing of the contracting parties, and the honorarium occasionally is much larger, while the poorest generally consider a £1 note the correct thing. My knowledge does not enable me to say what custom prevails in other parts of the colony, but the same legal forms and ceremonies are observed throughout.

Amongst the Hebrews there are some very strict and generally well-adhered-to rules for the matrimonial ventures of those belonging to the Jews' religion. There is a good deal to be considered about prohibited relationships and proper evidence that the marrying parties are both Jews. The ceremony in modern use is of a tolerably simple character. 'The central feature of the celebration, as with us, is the practice of symbolising the union by use of the ring. The formula is: "Thou art wedded unto me by this ring according to the law of Moses and of Israel." Following this and the mutual execution of the marriage covenant is the benediction of the officiating Rabbi, alluding to Genesis xxiv., 60, and Ruth iv., 12; and the publication of the contract, a practice referred to in Tobit vii., 13, 14. A second and final symbolic act is the breaking of a glass, in token, as is supposed, of the transitoriness of human happiness, a practice that is not unknown, perhaps, amongst Christians, only that with them the breaking up of friable household utensils is usually postponed until some little time after matrimony, and figures rather as a practical illustration than as a symbol of the fleeting nature of its joys.' This description of Jewish rites and ceremonies is take from 'A Survey of the Laws of Marriage and Divorce.' I may add that Hebrew marriages in the Synagogue are celebrated under a canopy, held up at each corner by friends of the contracting couple.

The Society of Friends are now allowed to perform their marriages according to their own rites, such marriages being considered legal, the Registrar's certificate having been first obtained. The order of procedure is briefly this: The clerks of the monthly meetings furnish printed marriage forms which the contracting parties fill in. The form is as follows:—'To —— Monthly Meeting of Friends. We, A.B., of ——, son of E.B.—— and of F., his wife, and C.D., of ——, daughter of G.D.—— and of H., his wife, hereby inform you that it is our intention to take each other in marriage, if the Lord permit, and that we are clear of any other marriage engagement. Witness our hand this 27th day of sixth month, 1891.' Signed with the names of bride and groom-elect, and of two witnesses to each signature. A second form has to be procured on which the 'man's parents or guardians' affix their consent, this being also witnessed by two members, and the 'woman's parents or guardians' have also to sign it, two more Friends witnessing their signatures. Still another form is necessary from the clerk of —— Monthly Meeting, being a certificate of 'publication of intention,' stating also that no notice of objection to solemnization of intended marriage has been received. The clerk has to give public notice as early as possible at close of the First-day morning meeting or meetings which the parties respectively attend in these words: 'Friends, there is an intention of marriage between A.B., of ——, and C.D., of ——. If any person has anything to object, let timely information be given.' All objections have to be in writing. After the expiration of fourteen days from such public notice a 'liberation' to solemnize the intended marriage is given. Then follows a capital idea. 'A copy of such minute . . . . and the marriage forms are to be sent in for perusal to the monthly meeting of women Friends.' Marriages are to be solemnized at a meeting for worship in the meeting-house, which the woman usually attends. After a seasonable time the parties are to stand up, and, taking each other by the hand, to declare in an audible and solemn manner, the man first: 'Friends, I take this my friend, C.D., to be my wife, promising through Divine assistance to be unto her a loving and faithful husband until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us.' The wife says much the same. Supposing the parties to be of different monthly meetings, a few further previous forms are necessary. Altogether it will be seen that a marriage amongst Friends is rather a 'ormidable affair and not to be shuffled through anyhow.

Rather a contrast is afforded by a Salvation Army wedding. Specially-appointed district officers are now authorised, after the inevitable Registrar's certificate has been obtained by the contracting parties, to celebrate the marriage. Reasonable notice is to be given to one of these officers, who say they prefer to perform marriages at one of their public services, though if necessary, they allow a private ceremony. A declaration of the articles of marriage has to be signed on a form obtainable from the officers. There is no prescribed fee for the marriage ceremony, only the bridegroom is expected to give £1 at least to the Salvation Army Fund. A description of a Melbourne wedding, taken from the *War Cry*, will best explain the *modus operandi*:—'A jolly house-full, a platform of soldiers, timbrel lasses with decorated instruments suitable for such an occasion, a big brass band, and a magnificent staff, including the Commissioner, were surely sufficient to ensure a first-class affair; and so it proved. A big ovation greeted the entrance of the bridal party, and after the blushing bride and groom had safely secured their seats, the first song was given out. Folks were in for a big time, it was quite evident. They sang and clapped, and clapped and sang, until the old building fairly shook with the vibration. After the usual preliminaries, Staff-Captain Plant sang a solo:

Isn't it funny they don't!

He looked at the single young men of '185,' and, we suppose, thought it was funny they didn't follow the editor's example. We think it would be funnier if they did. His special verse, composed by inspiration on the spot, went something like this:—

With Salvation weddings some folks don't agree,
Now isn't it funny they don't!
But my friend, Stephens, with such folks don't agree,
Now isn't it funny he don't!
He believes that where one has been able to fight,
Two should put ten thousand to flight,
I wish you'd get saved and help him to fight,
Now isn't it funny you don't!

The Commissioner then brought to the front the most important feature of the meeting, viz., the wedding. If Henry James Stephens and Effie Griffiths wished to be married on S.A. lines, they were to stand forth, which they promptly did. Major Barritt held the flag over the heads of the pair, which gave a good effect, and they got down to business. The Commissioner lined out, 'for better for worse,' the bride and bridegroom took it up as an echo, the ring was produced, slipped on, and these twain were pronounced man and wife. So the streams of these two lives were blended together. We pray that God's richest blessing may rest upon the pair. Adjutant and Mrs Stephens had a word each. Mrs S. said she was tempted that she would be able to fight for God better single. The Adjutant said he was glad she had not given way to the temptation; and so were we, because if she had there would not have been any wedding, and that would have been too bad.'

I have not attempted to describe the procedure for weddings in all the different denominations that exist. Such a feat would be well nigh impossible. Nor do I claim to have done more than indicate briefly the preliminary steps for the performance of the marriage ceremony in some of the larger religious bodies, with more or less appropriate but, I believe, genuine illustrations. I must also express my hearty thanks to those gentlemen, clerical and lay, who have so courteously responded to my appeal for help in these papers, and without whose kind assistance I could not have attempted to write on this subject at all. Next week I shall touch upon the important, socially speaking, but really unnecessary, ceremonies of a civilized wedding.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

A SMALL PIECE OF GOSSIP

AND ITS CONSEQUENCE.

'WELL, it was awfully mean of her!'

'But really, Kathleen, if you think she wrote the article you complain of, your most honourable course is to go to her and tax her with it. I think this backbiting and slandering absent people is *mean*, if you like.'

'Oh, Maude, I shouldn't like to mention it to her. Perhaps she didn't do it after all.'

'I still maintain that you should either drop the subject altogether, or give her a chance to explain herself.'

'Hullo!' cried a hearty voice. 'Are you girls gossiping again? Who is the unfortunate victim this time?'

'We were not talking about anyone personally, cousin Philip,' said Kathleen, 'but we were condemning someone's action.'

'The conversation is pretty safe to drift from a person's actions to a person's self. Of whom are you speaking?' and Philip balanced himself on the arm of an easy chair as he took the cup of tea his cousin proffered.

'Well, you mustn't say anything, Philip, but you remember that concert we got up last week? Do you know, Miss Stalk actually wrote a report of it to the Wellington paper, and pitched into all the singers most unmercifully!'

'But,' said a quiet girl who was reclining luxuriously against the sofa cushions, 'I don't believe she did write it. She's not clever enough for a sarcastic article like that.'

'I am quite sure that Miss Stalk would not do anything underhand, or that would be likely to hurt anyone's feelings,' said Philip, warmly.

Kathleen glanced sharply at him. Two or three times lately she had fancied that this wealthy, handsome cousin, whom she fully intended to marry herself, had been rather too pronounced in his attentions to Dolores Stalk. So she said, maliciously:

'Well, it will not be the first time she has been guilty of underhand conduct. I think she is very sly and designing.'

'I thought you and she were such friends,' said Philip, looking searchingly at his cousin.

'So we were, but—oh, well, I won't say anything about it, as it's all long past now, but she and I will never be friends again.'

This version of a severed friendship, which had been caused by Kathleen's love of gossip and jealousy of pretty Dolores, made Maude and the quiet girl on the sofa exchange amused and meaning glances, for Kathleen's designs on her cousin, and his preference for Dolores, were well known in the little suburb of Brelat.

The friends separated, Maude still generously urging that it was only right Miss Stalk should have a fair chance to prove herself innocent if she really was so, and Kathleen laughingly protesting that it wasn't worth making a fuss about. The thing would die out of itself.

But it did not die out. Nay, as almost every piece of idle gossip does, it gained by every repetition over five-o'clock teas and club dinners, until Philip, who had been away from Brelat for a week, was greeted on his return with the same story so improved and enlarged as to be unrecognisable. With a pang he realised how dear this deceitful girl was to him, and how unworthy of his love.

There was a large masquerade dance just coming off, to attend which Philip had specially been urged by his cousin to return speedily. Somehow he did not now care so much about it as when, only three weeks ago, Kathleen and Dolores and he had been discussing fancy dresses at the house of a mutual friend. The meeting had been accidental, for though Kathleen and Dolores still exchanged occasional visits, they saw very little of each other, and only Philip's attention to Dolores, and his cousin's devotion to him, had drawn them together over the interesting, important, and ungrammatical question: 'What shall I go as?'

On entering the ball-room, Philip eagerly scanned the motley crowd before him, looking, but in vain, for a little grey nun. Then Dolores was not there. Had the committee gone so far as to intimate to her that her presence would not be acceptable? Or had she feared to meet those whom she had—according to the latest rumour—cruelly wronged and foully slandered! Ah, well, he would think of her no more. He would dance with any figure that took his fancy, and forget the girl whom he was, he believed, forced to imagine, no fit wife for an upright, truth-loving man. So he invited a quietly robed Greek girl to be his partner in a polka, and then for the barn door dance he delighted Kathleen, whose costume he knew, by a request for the honour, etc.

As the Russian nobleman, in his sable-bordered coat, and the gipsy, in her bright, appropriate costume, turned and twisted, clasped hands, then again assumed a more affectionate attitude, a dainty figure, in white skirt composed of petals of satin overlapping each other, a green satin bodice representing the stalk of the lily, whilst lilies nestled on her shoulders and crowned her flowing hair, watched the only two whose masks did not prevent her from recognizing them, since she had heard them plan the costumes.

Perfectly ignorant as yet of the base slanders in circulation amongst a small portion of the Bretal community, Dolores had changed from the grey nun she had first decided upon to the far prettier design of a lily. Hence, when attracted by her dress, Philip presently asked her to waltz with him, Dolores gladly consented, and was at some pains to disguise her voice. She was exceeding amused at his second remark.

'Do you know Miss Stalk?'

'Yes, I believe I have seen her, that is——'

'There are such queer stories afloat about her,' pursued Philip, who hoped to hear some denial of Miss Stalk's guilt if he made sufficiently numerous inquiries concerning her.

'Queer stories?' breathed Dolores.

'Yes. But if you have not heard them, I shall not say anything about them to you. What an odd sight all these veiled acquaintances are!'

'I should so like to hear the stories,' murmured Dolores.

'Would you? That's just what everyone in Brelat has said, I imagine, and for pure love of gossip, or for want of something besides the weather to talk about, that poor girl's misdoings have been made the general subject of conversation for the last fortnight or so.'

'Then you believe her guilty of whatever she has been accused of?'

Philip sighed. 'I have no choice,' he said.

'Have you ever given her the opportunity of proving her innocence?' queried Dolores, keeping up her feigned voice with great difficulty.

'No, oh, no. I could not insult her like that. Supposing she really was innocent, which, I fear, is utterly impossible, she would certainly never speak to me again. If she is guilty—— But I cannot discuss this question with a stranger. I ought not to have begun it, but I cannot help thinking about it. Thank you,' as the waltz ended, and Dolores, her voice strained and hard, all need for disguising it taken away, withdrew her arm, saying, 'I am tired. I am going to sit down,' and abruptly left him.

Where could she go? She felt stunned and bewildered. They were just beginning a country dance, the signal for a general unmasking. He would know who she was. He would think she ought to have told him at once that she was Dolores. He was such an honourable man, he would think she should have checked him when he mentioned her own name. She had listened to what he most certainly did not intend her to hear. But *what* were people saying about

'HER HANDS CLASPED, GAZING INTO THE GARDEN.'

her? She could not think of anything she had done or said that could possibly have given rise to general gossip about herself.

Before she had made up her mind what to do, the unmasking began. Philip was standing nearly opposite Dolores. He raised his mask and turned to see who his partner would prove to be. It was the Maude who had suggested that Dolores should have a chance to prove her innocence. The eyes of the two girls met. Maude started.

'There is Miss Stalk,' she cried.

Philip looked, and Dolores read astonishment then contempt in his expressive eyes. With a half-choked sob she left the room.

The next day Dolores sought Maude in her own home, and entreated her to explain what Philip's cruel words the previous evening could have meant.

Maude made her remove her walking garments, ensconced her in an easy chair, and strengthening her by a cup of good tea, told all that she knew.

At that moment Philip and a friend of his were announced. Dolores left her seat and stool, half hidden by the window-curtain, her hands clasped, gazing into the garden.

Philip saw her, and fancying she had not observed him, said in a low tone to Maude:

'If you will kindly excuse me just now, I will call later. Meantime, accept as my substitute Dr. Jackson.'

He quietly retreated, and Dolores, whose keen, listening ears had heard every word, turned round as the door closed, and fell in a dead faint on the floor.

'She is not well,' Maude explained, as Dr. Jackson lifted her up and laid her on a sofa. 'Her sister's children have had the influenza, and she has been nursing them. Besides she was tired out with the ball, and owned just now she had not slept a wink all night.'

Thus did Maude try to persuade the doctor that poor Dolores had only these very natural causes to thank for her sudden swoon.

Dolores was very ill for days after this meeting with her lover, and the medical man in attendance called in the young doctor who had recently begun to practise near Brelat. Dr. Jackson shook his head.

'She has received a severe mental shock,' he said, 'which coming after her days and nights of nursing, has been too much for her.'

'Maude,' whispered Dolores a few days later, 'I have found out who wrote that article. 'It was Kathleen herself.'

'Don't agitate yourself, dear,' said Maude, who was a frequent visitor in the poor girl's sick-room. 'Tell me quietly how you know.'

And Dolores explained that she had told the whole story to a friend of hers who had just gone to Wellington. He had made inquiries, which had resulted in proving that the author of all the mischief was undoubtedly Kathleen.

As Maude was walking home she encountered Philip, and promptly told him the whole story.

'Oh, Dolores,' he cried, 'how could I mistrust you! How could I wrong you so!'

Maude did not know what to say. His strong emotion surprised her.

'I must see Miss Stalk at once,' he exclaimed. 'Will you take me to her.'

Maude hesitated, and tears came into her eyes.

'She is dying,' she murmured softly. 'I do not know if they will let you see her.'

Together they, a few minutes later, entered the sick-room. Maude gave Dolores some medicine, with the nurse's permission, then they left the room, and the lovers were alone.

'Dolores, I know all. Can you ever forgive me?' Philip sank on his knees by the couch, and took the white, wasted hand in his.

A beautiful smile passed over her face. 'I am so happy,' she said. 'I could almost wish to live now.'

'You shall not die,' he cried, passionately kissing her hand. 'My darling, my darling; I love you. Marry me and live.'

A perfectly satisfied sigh escaped the girl's lips. 'Oh, Philip,' she breathed, 'this is too much joy,' and with his kisses on her lips and brow she passed away.

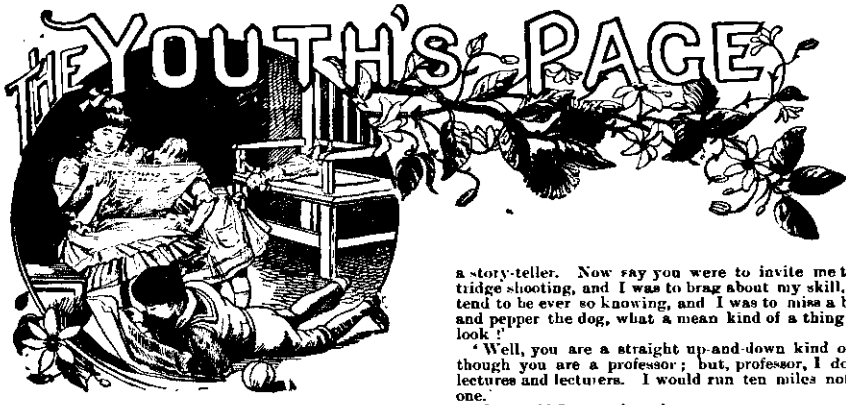
Truly a sad ending to a small piece of gossip.

L.F.R.

A RUSE.

A POLICEMAN'S admiration for a shapely arm led to the discovery of a trick in Paris, when a female debtor's goods were about to be seized upon a judgment. When the officers arrived at the house, the unfortunate debtor was discovered appparently dead, and prepared for the grave. Respect for the dead induced them to defer the seizure, and the men were about to retire, when one of them could not resist the desire to admiringly pinch the woman's plump arm. The officer was astounded to see the supposed corpse quickly arise from the bier, and was quite bewildered when he felt a violent blow from her muscular arm right between the eyes. Indignation at the insult made her forget that she was dead. A prompt seizure of the goods followed the exposure of the ruse.

LONDON AND PARIS FASHIONS.—VERY HANDSOME AND USEFUL WINTER GOWNS.—SEE PAGE 134.



ANSWERS TO CHARADES.

I. Nobody.
II. Murmur.

PROFESSOR GEORGE.

BY BARNET PHILLIPS.

SO that is sister Julia's husband,' said Billy Martial to himself. 'Heard he was a Professor of something or other.' Billy had just gone through an introduction to his new brother-in-law, Mr George North, and Billy was a little upset. 'I don't hanker after Professors,' he added, 'they are so prim and starched. No fun in them. Suppose he should begin to lecture at supper? How sickening it would be!'

Billy fought shy of his new brother. He went fishing, was late to dinner, and had made up his mind to go to bed early. 'For,' said he, 'that new brother in-law is bound to start a lecture at me. He is a Professor, and he can't help it.'

It was sunset before dinner was over. Mr Martial seemed annoyed about the non-receipt of some important letters which ought to have reached him by the afternoon's mail. He said that they were probably in the village post-office now. If he could send a line to the village postmaster before eight o'clock that evening, with an order to deliver the mail, then it would be all right.

'It is a fine night, Mr Martial,' said Mr North, 'and I should be very glad to go for you.'

'Oh, George is a capital driver,' said his young wife. 'You can trust him, father.'

'Can you manage a fairly high-spirited horse?' inquired Mr Martial. 'It is a good sixteen-mile drive there and back.'

'I think I can, sir,' was Mr North's reply.

'Why not let Billy go with him?' said Mrs Martial. 'The postmaster might otherwise hesitate giving the letters to Mr North.'

'That's a good idea. Billy, get ready while I write a line,' said Mr Martial, approvingly.

While Billy was putting on his light overcoat—for the evening, though fine, was chilly—his father came out and handed Mr North a note.

'Father,' said Billy, 'it is funny. Why, you wouldn't let one man in a hundred drive Black Prince, and a Professor can't drive.'

In five minutes afterward the dog-cart with Black Prince came up. The horse was fidgety. Mr North patted him, spoke to him, looked at the bit, saw that the lamps were right, and bidding the family good-bye, jumped into the driving seat, followed by Billy.

When on the road Mr North said, 'He is fresh.'

Now Billy noted a difference in the way his brother-in-law had said that. Generally people had remarked, when they drove black Prince, 'Isn't he, now, just a little frisky?' in a half-anxious, timid manner.

'Decidedly fresh,' said Mr North, as Black Prince rose on his hind legs and pawed the air. 'Come out of that,' said Mr North, giving Black Prince a little cut with the whip, but not hard enough to raise his hide. 'And see here, my coloured Prince, you must not do the running unless I want you to.' And very quietly the professor braced his feet against the iron rest and held the reins as if ready for a bolt, and then whistled 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' just as pleasantly as could be.

'Well, I never, Professor North!' said Billy.

'Stuff, Billy! Don't professor me. Call me George, or brother George,' interrupted Mr North.

'Well, then, Professor George, sometimes when Black Prince is hit with a whip he has been known to kick the dash-board to splinters.'

'That's according to how you hitch him up, and whether you whistle the tune he likes. Black Prince is a lovely beast. Only he ought to have been fastened up a little longer in the traces, and his check-rein loosened two holes. When you drive at night, a horse's head ought to be perfectly free, so that he can see everything. It's safer that way, for then he takes better care of you.'

A man who talked familiarly about traces and check-reins at once gained Billy's respect.

'Professor George, I wondered how it came about that father trusted you with Black Prince?'

'Why? I do not see why. Your father asked me a simple question, something of this kind, could I drive a horse that required some judgment? I said, "Yes, I thought I could." Now suppose I had been a make-believe, a sham, a humbug, and Black Prince had become unmanageable because I knew nothing about driving, and we had been upset, and your arm had been broken, your father would have been in his right to have been angry with me, because I had been a story-teller. Now say you were to invite me to go partridge shooting, and I was to brag about my skill, and pretend to be ever so knowing, and I was to miss a barn door and pepper the dog, what a mean kind of a thing I would look!'

'Well, you are a straight up-and-down kind of a man, though you are a professor; but, professor, I do so hate lectures and lecturers. I would run ten miles not to hear one.'

'So would I, sometimes.'

'You don't say so?'

'And yet I have gone over four thousand miles across the seas to hear one. Now I will wager you something that you will hear a lecture and not know it.'

Billy did not answer, for just here the lane was overshadowed by the thick growth on both sides, and Billy remembered that repairs were being made there.

'If the professor gets a jolt or two it will take the conceit out of him. It won't spill us, and Black Prince is sure-footed;' and so Billy waited and gave no warning. Strange to say, just when Billy expected a bump, the driver spoke to the horse and drew in the reins.

'Billy,' said Mr North, 'when I drove over the road yesterday with your sister—it was in the afternoon—just about here, after you pass the branch, I saw that some loads of stone had been dumped. Oh, here we are, all right! There are the stone heaps.'

'Well, you have a precious good memory, Professor,' said Billy, a little ashamed.

'To remember the things on a road requires no effort. It all comes through practice, and looks like instinct. Slow, now, Black Prince. Billy, just beyond here there is a clearing,' and the driver pointed with his whipstock into the darkness. 'Now over there is a white house, with apple-green window-shutters, and a red barn; and on this side of the roof a gold cow on the weather-vane; and on the other side a crooked lightning-rod; and beyond an old apple orchard.'

'Why, it's pitch-black. How could you guess that?'

'Saw it all yesterday in the daylight.'

'Well, you are a wizard!' cried Billy. 'But what are you slackening for?'

'Because Black Prince tells me, just as plain as if he were speaking to me, that there is something on the road. Yes; it's only a cow. Hear her snort as she goes slap through the thickets? Now, Billy, we will let Black Prince go, won't we? For if it is eight miles from your father's house to the village, we ought to be half-way now, about; that is, by dead-reckoning.'

'You are the most awful sure guesser I ever came across. There is a tree about here that the country surveyor told father was just half-way.'

'Well, I didn't know there was such a good mile-stone as that; but here it is.'

'How do you know, Professor?'

'Because when I was driven past here yesterday I saw the coachman duck his head on account of the low-hanging branch of a big tree; and I shall have to duck my head too, being taller than you.'

'Oh, I say,' cried Billy, 'don't tell me you are not a wizard.'

'Well, it's a flat, good smooth road from here on. Now I may not know how to get the quickest way to the post-office, though I think I have its bearings—a two-story old brick house, with a grocery on one side of it and a bakery on the other, and a cast-iron coloured boy in front for a hitching post.'

'That's it. Professor, you take my breath away.'

'Baker has a tortoise-shell cat.'

'Yes.'

'Grocer a brindle dog.'

'Yes.'

'And the two fight.'

'Do they?'

'They might. Now, scoot, Black Prince, and show me what you can do.'

Black Prince was now footing it faster and faster, and presently the lights of the little village glistened in the distance. In ten minutes more, Billy directing, the post-office was reached. Mr North jumped down, blanketed the horse, and Billy went inside with his order. A package of letters was given him by the postmaster, and after a short rest the horse had his head turned homeward, and he spread himself. As his hoofs struck the ground the sparks flew.

'It's fireworks,' said Bill. 'I never saw them flash like that before.'

'It is because it is a rather dark night. The sparks fly, though, all the same in daylight, though you cannot see them.'

'Well, I never thought about that. It's queer, is it not?'

'What's queer?'

'The sparks. Some boys say it is electricity.'

'Ignorant little boys,' remarked Mr North.

'Well, I am ignorant too. I don't know why the sparks fly. Tell me why.'

'Ever been in a powder mill, where they make gunpowder?'

'No.'

'If you had, you would have noticed that if the workmen wear shoes the soles are fastened on with copper nails; but generally they are shod, or ought to be shod, in wooden shoes.'

'Why?'

'Because if they had iron or steel nails in their shoes, and trod on a piece of grit and raised a spark, there would be a bang, and no powder mill to speak of.'

'But what has that got to do with Black Prince?'

'It's a long story. And you want to know?'

'Yes, I do.'

'Won't get sleepy?

'Pshaw!'

'Know a flint when you see it?'

'Of course.'

'What's a horseshoe made of?'

'Iron. And they do say they put steel clips on some.'

'Well, here is your flint, or hard quartz, in the stones of the road-bed, and here is your iron. It's all explained.'

'No, it is not. It is not explained.'

'Which is the harder of the two? Hustle along, Prince.'

'Oh—oh—the—the—' and Billy thought it over and blurted out 'flint' so loud that the horse jumped.

'It wasn't a lucky guess?'

'No. Because I know that some kind of flint will scratch glass, and iron will not,' said the boy.

'Good! You are a born experimentalist. Now I take a bit of iron, and I hit it against a piece of flint. What is certain to happen?'

'If I take my knife and a piece of wood, and press one into the other, it is the wood which gives way.'

'Good again! Reasoning just that way, when I strike flint and steel together, the flint scrapes or cuts off little fragments of the metal, and they fly into the air. There, it is all understood.'

'No, it is not. For a real Professor you are mean. Here is a fellow coming to you for solid information, and you don't help him a bit. Please go on.'

'You have got one thing solid, and it is that your flint is harder than your steel. Solid fact number two is that when you hit your steel you cut off a little fragment of the metal. Now what is the air made out of? Two gases—oxygen and nitrogen. In the one, oxygen, nearly everything burns, and in the other, things don't burn. When we breathe we take in these two gases, the oxygen being in the larger proportion, and we burn up inside of our own bodies some of the things which are there. We fire up ourselves in order to keep warm. We must keep hot, for if we got cold we would die. Well, then, when my flint cuts off a fragment of iron or steel, it flies right off, and the oxygen of the air gets hold of it—seizes on it like a wolf would a lamb—and in the tussle so violent is the effort that the fragment of metal gets red-hot. This is what is called a chemical combination, and is almost always accompanied by heat. This phenomenon is known as the act of rusting. The rusting process goes on, as far as iron and steel are concerned, whenever a fresh surface of these metals is exposed to the air. All the iron as it is found in this world is discovered as rust. The iron-makers of the whole earth spend millions of pounds getting the iron rust free of its oxygen, and then good strong malleable or tough or hard or soft iron is the result. I might make a most beautiful and expensive flint-striker of pure gold, and it never would bring forth a spark. Why? Because oxygen does not care a snap for gold, but leaves it alone, and this gas will have nothing to do with gold. That is the reason why men lay such stress on gold, because it is nearly indestructible. Gold wears out more rapidly and still is not so susceptible to natural chemical changes.

'Now the iron or the steel must be well tempered. Once—and this is a true story—a trapper in the woods bought him a new steel, and went out into the wilderness. He made his camp, left his gun and powderhorn there, and struck out into the lone country, wanting to set his traps. That night he tried to build a fire to warm himself with and cook his food by. He had never tried his new steel, so he struck and struck at his flint, but never a spark came. Then it began to snow, and the man had a hard time of it. He was benumbed with the cold. Next morning he turned back to reach his camp. He was tired out, when on the road at midday he met a half-breed, and explained to him his trouble. The half-breed laughed, and said he would make the steel all right in a quarter of an hour. What did he do, Billy?'

'I don't know.'

'The half-breed took his own flint and steel, and kindled a fire. Then he took the trapper's steel, heated it to a cherry red, and dropped it in the snow. The steel was good steel, but it had been badly tempered. It was too soft. Dropping it into the snow after heating it restored its temper. It was now hard, brittle steel, and at the first clip the sparks blazed away.'

'Why, brother George, there are the home lights on the heights. We are not more than three-quarters of a mile from the house. I am so sorry. Go on, please.'

'Well, Billy, I will now work a little forward. I start this way. Nothing is lost in this world. Here I am grinding off the tires of these wheels, and Black Prince is losing some of the iron of his shoes every time that springy foot of his touches the ground. That iron is not lost. Nothing, nothing is ever lost. The character of the thing changes; but change is not loss. Always keep that in your head. If what I said about the sparks is true, that they were little fragments of metal heated red-hot, they ought not to disappear.'

'How can you prove that?'

'Why, if I take a large sheet of letter-paper, and strike my flint and steel over that, and catch the sparks, and look at the paper, I may find some holes burnt in it, but at the same time, little round crumbly things, which are nothing more than iron rust, or the oxide of iron; and if I am smart enough—and it does not take much cleverness—I could sweep up these little atoms of rust, and make them into perfectly good iron again. Why, here we are at the gate.'

Billy jumped down, opened the gate, and was up again in an instant by his brother-in-law's side, and Mr North was laughing.

'What's the matter, brother George?' asked Billy. 'Please tell me a little more. I don't see any joke.'

'Why, Billy, I have been lecturing to you for the last twenty minutes. Didn't I ask for a glass of water when I began? I should have told all about the spark from the flint and steel just in the same way to a class of students, only I could not have trotted out a splendid horse to verify the facts.'

'I say, Julia,' whispered Billy to his sister when he got her in a corner that evening, 'that George of yours I like first rate. Can't he drive, though! And, Jule,' he continued, 'he lectured to me. He did, but I didn't know it; and it's ever so jolly to have a brother now who can pitch ball for you, and teach you things without your perceiving it. And I am going after partridges with him, and I am glad you married him.'

And his sister kissed him and said 'he was a dear, good fellow;' but whether she meant George North or Billy Martial, nobody exactly knows.—*Harper's Young People.*

THE

CHILDREN'S PAGE.

OUR FAVOURITES.

PART I.—JACKIE.

BEFORE telling you anything about our pets I must let you know that all I tell you about them is quite true. Children always want to know at the beginning of a story if they may believe every word of it, so now I can honestly assure you that everything I tell you really happened; but I have not told you our own names, for that would not do, but all the animals' and birds' names are just what we have really given them. We have three horses; nine birds in a big cage, where they have to fly to get from one perch to another; a mother pussy and her kitten; a white cockatoo with a yellow crest, who talks delightfully, though I am afraid he says the same things over and over again; cocks and hens, which are all tame, two dear dogs, and above all the most charming little monkey you ever saw, called Jackie. Oh, I forgot we have six white rats, and we are very fond of them, too, but in my eyes and those of our maid Jane, there is no pet as sweet, and dear, and engaging as Master Jackie. I can tell you lots of stories about all our pets, but for to-day I think I shall only tell you about him.

OUR FAVOURITES.

About a year ago my little brother Guy took scarlet fever. When he was better, but still obliged to keep in one room, our doctor told us one day that a monkey he had was very ill, and he thought it would die. The servants did not attend to its feeding, and it felt the cold terribly, and if it lived, he said, he must get rid of it. So we begged he would give it to us, and he promised if it was alive by the next day he would do so. Well, next day came, and one of the doctor's maid-servants brought the monkey to the door, and directly mother went to speak to her, poor, sick little Jackie made one spring into mother's arms, where he nestled against her, holding tightly to her dress with his funny little black hands—little hands like your own in shape, little fingers, nails and all, only quite black, with silver grey hair on the back of them, and short thumbs. Mother brought him in to see Guy who was in bed, but Jackie would not go to him, but just clung to mother.

Through not having been properly fed, or from some other cause unknown to us, he had taken to biting his tail, and he had made it so nasty and sore that we had great trouble in curing it. Mother used to put sulphur and lard on it, and then bind it up carefully with a linen bandage, and Jackie would sit patiently on her knee watching the operation, but soon after it was over those wicked little fingers would set to work, and mother's bandage would be off, and Jackie's tail bleeding again, and when mother scolded him he looked so innocent, with a kind of 'never-was-naughty' expression on his dear wee face.

For many weeks after he came to us Jackie was never happy unless he was sitting on mother's lap, and he was able to do this a great deal, as while she nursed Guy she had a great deal of sitting still, reading to him, telling him stories, or playing with him. Sometimes Jackie would put out a naughty little hand and seize upon a Noah's ark animal, and we had quite a fight to make him give it up. When mother put him down he would sit on the fender and bury his face, crying, '*wit-cha, wit-cha,*' at the top of his voice, showing all his teeth in an angry grin, and pushing mother away with his hand if she attempted to touch him.

Last thing at night, about nine o'clock, he used to have a cupful of warm bread and milk before he went to bed. He hated being taken to his bed, which consists of a wooden box with a square hole cut in the middle of one side. The box is placed on a shelf in the wash-house, and Jackie's chain is fastened to a ring which is fixed to the wall quite close to his bed. For a mattress he has a lot of nice fresh hay, into which he can burrow like a little rabbit, and keep himself quite snug and warm.

Gradually good feeding and care made Jackie get stronger and stronger, and then he got so restless and full of spirits, not to say *mischief*, that he got to be rather too much of a good thing as a perpetual companion in the house, and we gladly took advantage of the warm weather, and used to keep him chained to one of the verandah posts on fine days. He was chained very loosely, so that he could climb up and down like a little sailor.

This now brings us up to Jackie as he is at present—full of life, health, and happiness, with a wicked heart, I fear, but a very dear one. He lost his first teeth lately, and he used to look so funny while he was changing them, with great gaps showing just like a little boy or girl has when *they* have lost their first teeth, and their second have not made their appearance.

One day, when Jane, the maid, went to see Jackie first thing in the morning, she found a *black* Jackie, and Jackie, who had got hold of the black lead brushes, was sitting up, his legs stretched out in front of him, a brush held in one hand, vigorously brushing at his own little blackened chest. You cannot think how funny he looked, and though he is very fond of bathing, it took many baths before Jackie regained his proper colouring.

In warm weather he always has a tub of water standing where he can get at it, and it is so amusing to see him plunging in and out of his bath, dipping his pannikin in and then pouring its contents over himself till he looks like a drowned rat. He sometimes drops a stone in and then dives for it, and when he gets it, holds it in his hands and turns head over heels on the grass.

One day a lady who did not like him, and whom *he* hated, threw a small stone at Jackie. He just picked it up and sat on it, showing his small white teeth in a grin at her, as much as to say, '*you* meant to hurt me, but I *like* your stone.'

One morning mother was disturbed quite early before she was out of bed by Jane telling her that Jackie had got loose, and she was wanted to catch him, and worse still, he had killed Mousie's favourite kitten—such a little beauty, striped grey and black. Mother dressed quickly and went out to Jackie, who instantly flew off the fence where he was sitting, and in one bound was on to the verandah, climbed one of the posts, and mounted on to the top of the house, where, on the edge of one of the brick chimneys, he danced a fiendish little war-dance of defiance. But finally his affection for mother, and the offer of a tempting bunch of grapes, for which he has a great weakness, induced him to come down, and he was securely chained up. But, alas! poor kitty was quite dead, and her mother was licking the little dead body and refusing to be comforted, and utterly neglecting her other kitten, Master Tommie, who is such a jolly fellow—quite black, without a single white hair, and with big round eyes.

I could tell you heaps more about Jackie, what he eats, and how daintily he throws away the skins of grapes and gooseberries, and refuses to touch the peel of an apple or orange, except just to take it off with his teeth and then throw it away, and how he drinks like a horse, sucking the water up, not lapping it like a dog, and how fond he is of father's terrier, Miss Miggles, and how he hates mother's poodle, Toodles, and of how he caught Cockie and tried to pluck him as if he was cook, and Cockie was a fowl being got ready for dinner, Cockie calling out so sadly, '*Poor* Cockie!' till we came to the rescue, but I am afraid I have written too much already. But if you like these stories about our pets you can have more another day.—C.S.B.

OUR YOUNG CORRESPONDENTS.

DEAR EDITOR,—I am only eight years old, and I live at Remuera. I would like to tell you a story about a mouse. This little mouse lived under the fender. He used to pop out and frolic about the room. I set a trap, and this silly mouse thought that it was a nice house for him. He went in to nibble at the cheese, and he found he was caught.—REGGIE COTTLE.

[DEAR REGGIE,—Thank you for your nice little letter. You see I have put it in.—ED.]

SOMEBODY'S DARLING.

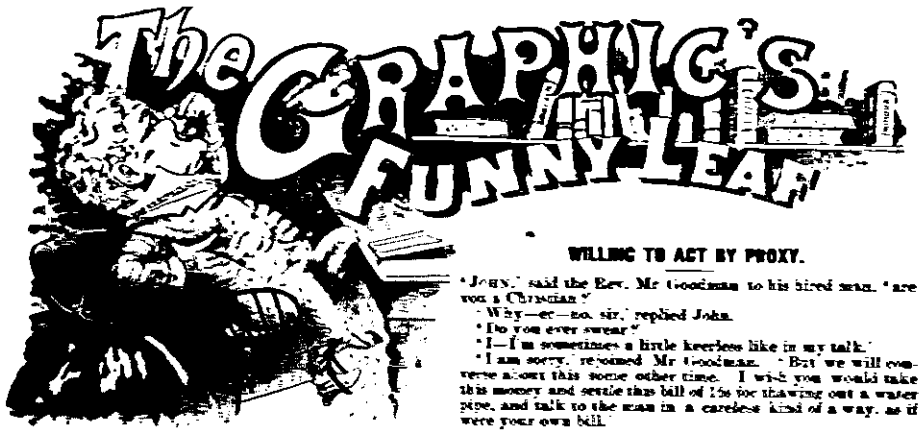
HE bows his head in sorrow,
His fist is in his eye,
And waits not till the morrow,
But at once begins to cry.

Had you seen him in the morning,
When first turned out to play,
As, with curls his head adorning,
He went smiling on his way.

But now he's mud besotted,
His pinafore is torn,
And curls have all got knotted;
This child is *so* forlorn.

Is there no one to clean him?
Not one to take the bother,
And in loving arms to screen him?
Why yes, of course, his mother.

Masterton. M.A.P.



AN AWKWARD MISTAKE.

AFTER divine service held not long ago in a certain church in the "dark town o' Kirkcaldy, the preacher, a stranger who had been officiating in the absence of the regular minister, accompanied, by invitation, one of the elders of the kirk to his house, and introduced him to his wife. The elder having also invited the preacher to stay to dinner, the latter readily consented. The good lady hurried off to make some preparations for the unexpected guest, and on entering the kitchen a little later on saw, as she thought, her husband washing himself at the sink. Without a moment's hesitation she seized a large horn spoon which lay near, and approaching gently from behind, brought it down with a whack upon the bald pate, which resounded like the crack of a cricket ball off the bat, saying—

"Tak that, ye auld blate, for bringin' yer hungry ministers here every time they come to the parish, the cat a-oot o' house an' hame."

As soon as the assaulted one had recovered himself, and had time to get the soap-suds out of his eyes, he looked round, but the good lady was gone. After thinking the matter over he came to the sensible conclusion that the elder's wife had made an unfortunate mistake.

The elder's better half also thought the same when, on entering the parlour with a bland smile upon her face, she saw her husband sitting calm and serene waiting the return of his reverend guest, whom he had shown into the kitchen, "just to have a rinse, before pronouncing a blessing upon the good things about to be set before them."

A LADY, NOT A WOMAN.

A LAWYER who was famous among his friends as a man who never lost his temper or allowed his language to stray from the paths of propriety, was desperately busy the other day when a female book-canvasser entered his private office, and, as she advanced from the door, announced her mission.

"I should like to show you a very valuable work, she began.

"Madam," said the counsellor as he rose from his chair, "you must excuse me. I am very sorry, but at present I am engaged."

Evidently the agent had heard something of the kind before, for she didn't pause in her progress towards the lawyer's desk.

"Madam," he repeated, "I am engaged at present."

Still the agent came on.

"Madam," cried the lawyer in desperation, "I am engaged, and if you don't go away you will force me to be what I have never been before—guilty of rudeness to a woman."

That settled the agent. Probably the very vagueness of the terms helped to vex her to retreating. But like a true woman she had the last word—and several of them—just as she vanished through the door:

"I am a woman, she said, "I'm a lady."

SIGNS—A London sign.

SMALL BOY to affable old gentleman: "Please, mister, will yer ring them there top bell, and give it a good, old pull?"

Affable old gentleman complies.

Small Boy darting round the corner: "Ye'd better run away now, above Mad Jimmy catches yer ringing in bed."

(Affable old gentleman paces nervously, and receives a shower of ashes and dirty water from "Mad Jimmy" at window above.)

WILLING TO ACT BY PROXY.

"JOHN," said the Rev. Mr Goodman to his hired man, "are you a Christian?"

"Why—er—no, sir," replied John.

"Do you ever swear?"

"I—I'm sometimes a little reckless like in my talk."

"I am sorry," resumed Mr Goodman. "But we will converse about this some other time. I wish you would take this money and settle that bill of Jo for thawing out a water pipe, and talk to the man in a careless kind of a way, as if were your own bill."

NEXT DOOR.

WHEN the woman of the house answered his ring he began:

"Madam, I am sorry to disturb you, but I came here from Buffalo to find work at my occupation, and being unable to strike—"

"What is your occupation?" she demanded.

"I am a nurserymaid."

"Then drop in next door."

"But, madam, I—"

"Next door, I say: They have seven children there, while we haven't any."

BENEATH HIM.

CHEVERTON (who knows that Dashaway has been trying vainly for years to know the Von Bummers): "I didn't see you at the Von Bummers' ball last night."

Dashaway carelessly: "No. I presume you know that Von Bummer's grandfather was an undertaker?"

Cheverton (pursuing the subject): "But did you receive an invitation?"

Dashaway: "My dear boy, do you suppose that I would allow myself to remember whether I had received an invitation from the grandson of an undertaker?"

MISCELLANEOUS.

DIVISION OF LABOUR.—Mr Burrage: "Did your ladyship please to ring?" My Lady: "Oh—ah—yes! Ah! send up John, if you please, to drive away this Stonebottle."

ON THE FRONTIER.—"Brother Backskin Bob will please stand at the door while the collection is being taken up and let no one escape," said the frontier missionary in a ringing tone. "Deacon Lariat Ned will pass the hat."

Who carried off the gates of Gaza? asked the Sunday school superintendent. It was the second morning after Hallowe'en, and twenty-seven boys rose up at once and said they hadn't anything to do with it.

Bessie: "Do you know why Miss Bellows left the church choir?" Jessie: "She said she had so many notes to sing that she couldn't get time during service to answer those the tenor wrote to her."

NO BACKING, BUT LOTS OF FRONT.—"I see that young Gilderkin is making application for that clerkship. What backing has he got?" "No backing at all, but he's got more front and puts on more side than any young fellow I know."

Mrs Brown-Jones: "Before I hire you I may as well say that my husband will not allow a girl about the house who has a sweetheart." Bridget: "Shure, mum, yez may tell him that my heart is free as prisint, mum, as his service."

Daisy Flutter: "Oh, Maisy, I don't know what to do. Both Mr Doddering and Jack Margin have both proposed, and—" Maisy Marigold: "Take Doddering. He's already rich and already old. Jack is not sure of getting rich, but he is sure of getting old."

"Isn't it terrible?" said the young wife, dropping the paper, "these stories of beautiful brides being abducted on their wedding day?" "It is," answered her husband, fervently; "but, thank heaven, you are safe, darling."

NO DISCOUNT ON KISSES.—Maude: "How can I ever repay you for your kindness?" George: "With kisses." Maude: "How much do you value them at?" George: "I'll take them at their face value."

Jones: "Very unpaid girl that Miss Wilpin." Smith: "How so?" "Why, you see, we were exchanging compliments the other evening, and I asked her what was the difference between myself and a donkey." "Well?" "Well! Why, by Jove, she said she didn't know."

"I think I'll get out and stretch my legs a little," said a tall man, as the train stopped at a station. "Oh, don't," said a passenger who had been sitting opposite to him, and had been much embarrassed by the size of his tall companion: "don't do that! They are too long already."

A DISTRESSED PARENT.—Sailor looking down the road: "An orphanage, eh?" To girl's father: "Hallo, old man! Are you trying to entice the young couple?" Old Man rushing forward: "Yes. Want to give 'em my blessing."

"Bailie is in great glee to-day." "Why?" "He owed his tailor £120 for five years, and the tailor got mad and put the account up at public auction." "I should think that would make Charlie mad." "Oh, no. He went to the sale and bought it for one and sixpence."

FOOTS IT.—He passionately: "Darling, watch me as I cast myself at your feet. At your feet I plead for love—at your—" She: "Young man, get up coolly." When I am in need of a chiropodist, sir, I will consult you."

Mrs Hornby after church: "How did you come to preach on dumb-bells, dearest? You said at breakfast that you were going to preach your sermon on profanity." The Rev. Dr. Hornby: "I had intended to, my dear; but my collar-button got down my neck when I was dressing for church."

FORETHOUGHT OF THE REPORTER.

"I AM dying, Clara, dying," the old reporter said;
"I have got my last assignment—I must interview the dead;
But don't be nervous, darling, my time has come to rest,
And when my joyous spirit flits among the blest
I'll know I had a send-off when I left this earth below,
For I wrote my own obituary twenty years ago."

MY LANDLADY.

BY A LODGER.

WHO greets me with a sneaky smile,
Though she is dressing the ice while—
And says, "I am out of coals and fe'"
My Landlady.

Who says she's seen much better days,
And will her "poor departed" praise,
And with her chat my meals delays?
My Landlady.

Who lets her son my collars wear,
And with me my clean linen share?
Who with my clothes-brush does her hair?
My Landlady.

Who on my viands waxes fat?
Who keeps a most voracious cat?
Who often listens on my mat?
My Landlady

Who won't bring up cold joints to me?
Who drinks my sperits, purges my tea?
Who for my sideboard keeps a key?
My Landlady.

Who "cooks" the little bills I pay,
And cheats me—yes, in every way?
Who is it I shall leave to-day?
My Landlady.

A SURE RAILROAD TEST.

"So you are an old railroad man, are you?" said the freight conductor to the impecunious individual who was begging a ride in the caboose.

"Yes. I braked right on this road five years."

"How long have you been waiting here?"

"About an hour."

"What time is it, man?"

"Quarter of ten."

"Oh, no. You're a fraud. You never worked on a railroad in your life, and you'll get no ride."

"How do you know I haven't?"

"'Cause if you had ever railroaded any you'd have said nine forty-five. That's how I know."

A THANKFUL SPIRIT.

SCHOOLMASTER: "Johnny, can you tell me anything you have to be thankful for during the past quarter?"

Johnny (without hesitation): "Yes, sir."

Schoolmaster: "Well, Johnny, what is it?"

Johnny: "Why, when you broke your arm, you couldn't lick us for two months."