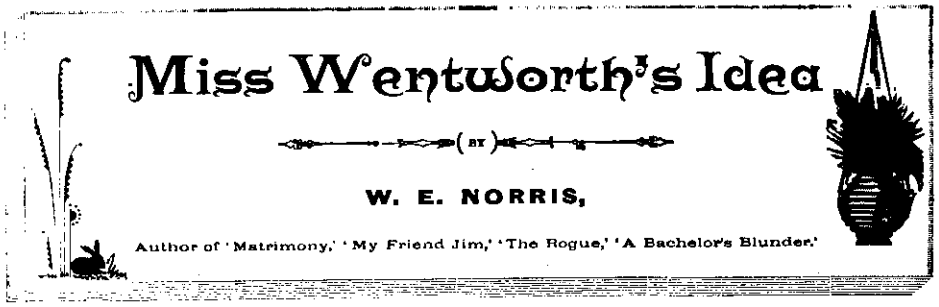
The New Zealand Graphic

And Ladies' Journal.

VOL. VIII.—No. 39. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1891. [Subscription—25s per annum; if paid in advance, 20s. Single Copy—Sixpence.

ROMEO AND JULIET.



CHAPTER XIX.

IT is a truism, and a somewhat melancholy one, that our minds lie at the mercy of our bodies, and that any trifle which may happen to throw the complicated organism wherein we are imprisoned here below out of gear has power to affect our hopes, our fears, our wishes and our anticipations to an extent against which there is little use in struggling. Sylvia Wentworth would doubtless have been a good deal more vexed and angry, on being informed of the trick which had been played upon her, had she not been preoccupied by the circumstance that she was in for a very bad cold. She had been chilled through and through on the previous day; symptoms with which everybody has good reasons to be acquainted were beginning to assert themselves; she felt as sincerely sorry for herself as everybody feels when suffering from the lassitude and heaviness which precede catarrh, and she also felt as sure as everybody feels at such times that she would obtain no sympathy from those about her. Under these depressing circumstances she could not distress herself very greatly at the thought that Sir Harry Brewster would scour Andalusia for her in vain; it was bad enough to have the prospect of a long night's journey before her. Sufficient unto that night was the evil thereof; it would be time to recur to other sources of sorrow when she should be in bed at Biarritz, with her nose swollen to twice its natural size and a mustard plaster upon her chest.

In the meantime, she conceived that she had every right to make herself disagreeable to her travelling companions, and she did so. She neither slept herself nor suffered her aunt to sleep. She knew, she said, that she was going to be very ill; not improbably she might die, and if she did, Muriel would have the satisfaction of knowing what had killed her. The night was cold, the railway carriage was draughty; it was mere mockery to offer her lumps of sugar saturated with camphor. Anybody who had taken the trouble to look at her might have seen that she was not in a fit state to travel; but it was too late now, and all she asked was that she might be left alone.

As a matter of fact, she asked a good deal more. All her life she had been in the habit of exacting constant attention when she felt indisposed, and all her life that attention had been conceded to her as her due. Muriel bore patiently with her ill-temper now, feeling that it was excusable. A cold in the head is no such very grievous calamity, but a heartache is less easily cured, and, bad as Sylvia's conduct had been, some allowance had to be made for the fact that her heart was in all probability aching. She might be pardoned and pitied for imagining herself at the point of death, even though such a stretch of imagination might be intrinsically ridiculous.

The girl, however, was really ill, and when the return of daylight showed her flushed cheeks, her aunt became seriously uneasy about her. It was useless to say anything to Mr Wentworth, who slept placidly until the frontier was reached and then averred that he had not closed his eyes; but it was now beyond a doubt that Sylvia was threatened with something worse than a mere cold, and the long delay and changes of carriage at Irun did her no good. On arriving at Biarritz she was in high fever; insomuch that the first thing to be done was to get her to bed and send for the doctor. The servants, who had only a few hours before been warned by telegram of the return of the family, had omitted to light fires in the bedrooms; the house was miserably cold; the sheets were not properly aired; there was nothing except bread and butter to eat; and Mr Wentworth, completely thrown off his balance by so comfortless a reception, swore that he could endure this sort of thing no longer. Come what might of it, he would start for England the very next day.

The doctor, who was soon upon the spot, and to whom after he had examined his patient, the above determination was expressed in vigorous language, answered rather sharply that there could be no immediate question of a journey to England or anywhere else.

'Your daughter's condition is not at all satisfactory, Mr Wentworth,' said he. 'I cannot tell yet what this will turn to; but both her pulse and her temperature are far higher than they ought to be, and you may depend upon it that, at the best, she will not be able to leave her bed for a week.'

On the following day things were very much worse. The doctor then unhesitatingly pronounced the case to be one of congestion of the lungs. He must await further developments before stating whether this was or was not complicated by some kind of low fever; but there were indications that pointed that way. Meanwhile, he wished it to be understood that the young lady's state was critical.

'And she has no stamina—no stamina at all,' he added, in the accusing sort of tone which doctors so often assume when making such announcements.

Muriel was in consternation; and so, to do him justice, was Mr Wentworth. He would cheerfully have consented to forego his dinner for a month, if by such a sacrifice he could have restored his daughter to health; and it would be impossible to describe the depth of his affection more forcibly than that. Sylvia herself was not frightened. At times she was light headed, but when in possession of her senses she did not fear for her life. Her one idea was that this illness might be turned to good account, and she never wearied of imploring Muriel to send for Sir Harry Brewster.

'If I could only see him, I believe I should get well,' she declared; 'and if I am not to get well, what harm can my seeing him do?'

These representations might very likely have proved effectual—for Muriel, in her distress and alarm, was ready to consent to almost anything—but for the circumstance that Sir Harry's whereabouts could not possibly be ascertained. It seemed best, therefore, to reply with vague and soothing promises, of which the invalid did not fail to take note. She was backed up by the doctor, to whom she managed to convey a hint, and who said meaningly that if his patient had any sort of mental worry or anxiety, nothing ought to stand in the way of its being removed.

Now, it so happened that Sir Harry, in defiance of all the laws of chance, had not taken his ticket for Seville. He was a man who seldom left more than he could help to chance; he had thought it extremely likely that a change of plans might be brought about by the events which have been narrated, and, as the result of certain inquiries, he had found out, not only that the Wentworths had quitted Madrid, but that they had departed by the night mail for France. That being so, what wiser course could he adopt than to follow their example? Personally he had no wish to visit the south of Spain; his only wish was to see Sylvia once more, and he was not sure that loyalty to her did not command him to gratify it. Mr Wentworth, no doubt, would be justified in calling him by very ugly names if he should take up his quarters at Biarritz; but on the other hand it had to be taken into consideration that he owed more to Sylvia than he did to Mr Wentworth, and that if he went straight back to England, she might suspect him of having faint-heartedly abandoned her to her fate. As a sort of compromise, he finally decided to break his northward journey at Bayonne, where in all probability he would be able to obtain some news of her, without letting her relations know that he was in their neighbourhood.

It is unnecessary to add that within twenty-four hours of his arrival at his destination he was a passenger by the little steam-tramway which connects Bayonne with Biarritz. There is a thirteenth-century Gothic Cathedral at Bayonne, but there is not much else to look at, and Sir Harry Brewster had never pretended to be a judge of architecture, or to be interested in cathedrals. It was simply out of the question for him to spend the whole day in loafing about the streets of a French country-town; moreover, it did not follow that by whiling away a few hours in the adjacent watering place he must needs encounter any member of the Wentworth family.

He had not, however, progressed very far on his way from the railway station to the *plage* before he found himself face to face with one of them. Muriel emerged from the chemist's shop, where she had been to leave a prescription, just as he passed the door, and he would have been greatly surprised had she confessed the truth, which was that the sight of him lifted a load of anxiety from her mind. She did not tell him that; but she paused, instead of passing on, as she might have been expected to do, and she interrupted without ceremony the halting apology upon which he embarked.

'I knew you would catch us up either here or elsewhere,' she said impatiently; 'you did not make any secret of your intentions and I made none of my opinions about them. But all that is of no consequence now. You can stay at Biarritz if you choose, and you can search the whole place for Sylvia. You will not meet her, because she is in bed and dangerously ill.'

Sir Harry started back. 'Do you mean that,' he asked, 'or do you only say it to frighten me? Is it really true that her life is in danger?'

'The doctor thinks so. She was not well when we went to Madrid, and she caught cold that day when she met you at the gallery. I don't know whether I am wise in saying what I am going to say; but I dare not leave it unsaid. She is always asking for you; she declares that if she could see you she would get well, and it is just possible that that may be so. At any rate, I shall tell her that you are in the place, and if she grows worse, I will take the responsibility of sending for you upon myself. At which of the hotels are you staying?'

Sir Harry replied that he was staying at Bayonne, but that he would at once telegraph orders for his luggage to be sent on to the Hôtel d'Angleterre. He added, with a touch of emotion which was evidently sincere: 'You are very kind to me, Miss Wentworth. I know that I don't deserve your kindness; but I hope I may be able to show you some day that I am not quite so unworthy of it as you suppose.'

'I have no wish to be kind to you,' Muriel returned; 'setting everything else aside, the fact must always remain that your wife is still alive, and nothing would ever reconcile me to an engagement between you and Sylvia. I can't allow a chance of saving her life to slip through my fingers, that is all. Now I must go. If you don't hear from me, you will understand that she is better—in which case I could not be concerned in bringing you together.'

'I fully understand that,' answered Sir Harry humbly; 'but I trust you will see no objection to my making inquiries at your door. After all, you cannot doubt that I love your niece, and you must be aware of what torture suspense will mean for me.'

Muriel made the required concession, not over graciously, and, after answering some eager questions as to the nature of the disease and the condition of the sufferer, left him. As a matter of fact, she did not believe that this man loved Sylvia in any true or worthy sense; but she thought it probable that he cared enough for the girl to be made miserable by the absence of any tidings of her, and there was nothing to be gained by making him miserable. Let him come to the door as often as he pleased, if only he could be prevented from crossing the threshold!

But it is needless to say that such a prohibition was virtually impracticable. The thin end of the wedge had been inserted, and what followed was what invariably does follow, when once that initial difficulty has been overcome. Sylvia's joy on learning that her lover was within reach of her was only equalled by the persistency with which she pleaded that he might be admitted into the sick room.

'Do you want to kill me?' she asked. 'Well, you *will* kill me if you refuse to let me see him. You don't understand—you are too cold-hearted to understand how I long for him. All I ask is to be allowed to talk to him alone for a few minutes. Then, if I die, I will at least have told him some things which he will remember after I am gone, and if I recover—why, all will remain as it was. You can't do any real good by inflicting this pain upon us both.'

Many excellent reasons might have been given for turning a deaf ear to such entreaties; but it was not easy to state these or to resist pleas which were interrupted by prolonged fits of coughing. Muriel, knowing full well that she was beaten, could only take counsel with her brother, who proved himself no very valuable counsellor. Mr Wentworth was distressed and unnerved; he heartily wished Sir Harry Brewster at the devil, and he said so; but he complained pettishly that he was being driven into a *cul-de-sac*.

'You are determined to throw the whole responsibility upon my shoulders,' he remarked; 'but what am I to do, I should like to know? You agree with me that the man is impossible and that Sylvia can never be allowed to marry him; yet you ask me to let her do a thing which you know as well as I must compromise her. It is a case of life or death, you say? Well, if you and the doctor will take upon yourselves to affirm that, I don't see how I can hold out against you. But I give in under protest—mind that!—and nothing will induce me to sanction an engagement.'

The matter was debated a little further; the doctor was summoned and to some extent confided in; but the upshot of it all was that Sir Harry Brewster was sent for on the following day. It is true that by that time Sylvia was rather worse than better, and that excitement had had a prejudicial effect upon her; still it was with a heavy heart and with many misgivings that Muriel received him on his arrival. She did not offer him her hand; she merely went half-way down the stairs to meet him and then, turning round, beckoned him to follow her. With her hand on the lock of the invalid's door she paused, saying:

'I will leave you alone with Sylvia for five minutes; she is too weak to talk any longer than that.'

'Thank you very, very much,' answered Sir Harry in a grateful whisper. 'I give you my word of honour that I won't outstay my time.'

'You will not be allowed to do so,' returned Muriel coldly.

But even while the words were upon her lips she was conscious that it was no longer in her power to decide what this man should or should not be allowed to do. He had won the battle, such as it had been; and when he re-appeared—which he did with punctilious exactitude—the light of victory was in his eyes.

'She will recover, Miss Wentworth,' he said confidently, 'I am certain of it, and so is she. She says she feels a different being now that——'

'Now that she has seen you?' asked Muriel, half angered, half softened—for indeed the man's face had somehow become transfigured by that brief interview, so that he looked almost boyish, and it was difficult to believe him guilty of anything worse than that selfishness which is the commonest of all human failings and which, unhappily, is so often equivalent in its results to villany.

'Well—I suppose so,' he answered, with a half-laugh. And then: 'I'm afraid you will always hate and despise me, Miss Wentworth. What can I say? I ought not to be here; and yet my being here may perhaps have saved Sylvia's life.'

'If that is so,' returned Muriel gravely and sadly, 'we can only be thankful for your presence; but we cannot be thankful that it is so. When Sylvia is out of danger we shall have to begin thinking about her future and her happiness again, and I suppose we shall feel that we have not done our best for either by allowing you to meet.'

Sir Harry had no rejoinder ready; nor in truth would it have been easy to dispute so patent a probability. Of course he came again on the ensuing day; it was no more possible to forbid that than to help rejoicing at the marked improvement which his advent had brought about in Sylvia's health.

'I feel as if I shouldn't much mind dying now,' the girl declared; 'but I am going to live, because I want to live.'

She was in a sort of ecstasy, the cause of which could not but appear pitifully and pathetically inadequate to Muriel, but which nevertheless had to be recognised and dealt with. How it was to be dealt with was a question which hardly admitted of more than one answer.

'We have yielded,' she felt constrained at last to say to her brother. 'Rightly or wrongly, we have done what we swore that we would not do, and now we must face the consequences. It is impossible that things can go on like this.'

'Why is it impossible?' the head of the family inquired blandly.

'Because everybody in Biarritz will know, and every soon all our friends in London will know that Sir Harry Brewster has been constantly with Sylvia since her illness. The only way in which we can excuse ourselves is to admit that they are engaged to be married.'

'It does not surprise me to hear you say so,' remarked Mr Wentworth, with a resigned air; 'you are always in extremes. Personally, I prefer means, and Brewster, I suspect, has next to none. Not being disposed to support him out of my own—which, as you know, are very modest—I cannot bestow my daughter upon him, even to stop the mouths of the gossips.'

'You put your refusal upon the wrong ground,' returned Muriel impatiently. 'When you say that you cannot bestow your daughter upon Sir Harry Brewster, you mean, I suppose, that you cannot bestow her upon a man who has been divorced from his wife.'

'Excuse me; I mean nothing more than what I say. For choice, one might prefer a son-in-law whose history had been a little less eventful; but fathers are seldom permitted to pick and choose. Under all the circumstances, I should be prepared to make the best of Brewster if he had a sufficient income. Since he has not, he will have to go, and we must put our trust in time and in Johnny Hill.'

'Sylvia will never marry Johnny Hill,' said Muriel, shaking her head.

'I am not so sure of that; still you may possibly be right. What then? The world is full of Johnny Hills, and we shall have to devote our energies to the discovery of another one.'

Muriel sighed. It was useless to expect assistance from one who could not or would not believe that human life is anything but light comedy; she said what she had known all along that she would be forced to say, although she had cherished some faint hope of a respite.

'I can't let Sylvia die. In my heart and conscience I believe she will die if we separate her now from the man whom she loves; so, as your only objection is on the score of income, I will supply the income. I will settle two-thirds of what I possess upon her, and then they will be able to marry and be happy. At least, I hope they will be happy. If it is wrong for people who have been divorced to marry again—and I am afraid it is—then I must bear the blame, I can't let Sylvia die.'

Mr Wentworth clasped his hands behind his head and contemplated her, with a smile, through his half-closed eyelids. 'The funny thing,' he observed, 'is that you really mean it. You would make this insane sacrifice; you know that it would be accepted; and, unless I am greatly mistaken, you also know that it would no sooner be accomplished than you would begin to regret it. Now, do let me warn you, while it is still time, not to play these dangerous pranks with frail mortals. Sylvia and Brewster would take your money as soon as look at you; they would make conventional protests of course; but they would be very much disappointed if you listened to them. As for me, just consider for a moment what a temptation you are holding out to me. I don't snare your scruples with regard to divorce; I don't believe Brewster to be very much worse than his neighbours; I am naturally anxious that your money shall find its way into her pocket, instead of swelling the resources of the Society of St. Francis or of some kindred association. But as I am not wholly devoid of principles, I must ask you to reflect upon what your position will be after you have despoiled yourself. A third of your present income will certainly not suffice to provide you with the comforts to which you have been accustomed, and you will be no richer at my death; for I need scarcely tell you that I have bequeathed everything to my daughter. Look again before you leap.'

'I have looked,' answered Muriel, 'and I have come to the conclusion that the leap must be taken. It isn't the reasons which you mention that would have made me hesitate, and the true reasons, it seems to me, are overruled by sheer necessity. Mr Compton told me how it would be. I don't know whether he will admit me into the Society of St. Francis now; but if he won't, I shall be able to find some other way of occupying my time, and although I shall not be rich, I shall not be poor. Neither you nor Sylvia must imagine that the loss of money is any real loss to me; I have always wished to get rid of it, and always intended to do so in one way or another.'

Mr Wentworth shrugged his shoulders. '*Liberavi animam meam*,' he remarked; 'it is no fault of mine if you refuse to listen to reason. You are a singularly foolish and impetuous person, all the same.'

CHAPTER XX.

WORDSWORTH—at any rate he says so—was often left mourning by the gratitude of men, and had only 'heard' of 'hearts unkind, kind deeds with coldness still returning.' One would be sorry to accuse so admirable a person and so admired a poet of consciously writing claptrap; but it will be admitted that his experience must have been somewhat exceptional. The truth doubtless is that we ought not to expect gratitude, that if we look for payment in that coin our kind deeds cannot be called unselfish, and that when we fail to obtain it we are no more deserving of pity than anybody else who has made a bad bargain. Still we may as well, all of us, confess at once that we like to be thanked, for this is a fallen world, and we are miserable sinners, and there is no health in us.

Mr Wentworth proved himself a true prophet with regard to his daughter and Sir Harry Brewster. When Muriel's proposition was first broached to them they declared with one voice that they could not accept unhoped-for bliss at such a price; they were quite sure that it would be wrong to do so, and they begged her to say no more about it. But she persisted in saying more, and she made use of arguments which certainly did sound plausible, and in a very short time they grew accustomed to the idea. After all, why should they not take what she did not want and what would otherwise be in all probability bestowed upon less deserving members of the community? It must be assumed that she knew her own mind, and they could not but feel a sympathetic respect for the wishes of one who knew her own mind.

However, when it was all settled and the engagement was an established fact, they might have been a little more amiable and a little more thankful. If Muriel did not say this to herself the unformulated thought was present with her; and so it came to pass that another portion of her brother's forecast was to some extent verified. She did not regret her generosity, for she knew that, if it could have been recalled, she would have acted in the same way again; but she did deeply regret the necessity for it, and she felt, too, that it had not won her the love of its recipients. She should, of course, have been aware that love is not to be bought, and also that her gift had hardly been conferred with that good grace which alone can render gifts palatable. If she could not look cheerful about it—and this was beyond her—her reward must be found in the consciousness of having averted a great calamity by the substitution of a minor one.

But indeed it was not a matter of certainty that the great calamity had been averted. Sylvia, to be sure, had been tided over a crisis; she was now able to leave her bed, and, the weather having suddenly become warm, she could lie upon a sofa by the open window for several hours every day and enjoy the sunshine; yet her strength did not seem to return, nor would the doctor say any more than that there was no longer any reason for immediate anxiety. She was perfectly happy, which was no doubt an important thing; only Muriel saw what neither Mr Wentworth nor Sir Harry would see, that the high spirits which kept up her vitality during the day were always followed by a physical reaction towards evening, and that she was not getting the repose which is so essential to convalescence. Her nights, too, were disturbed and restless.

One afternoon when Sir Harry had at last been induced to take his leave, after having sat talking to Sylvia for two hours, Muriel followed him out of the room, and said:

'Do you know what I should like you to do? I should like you to be summoned to England on business and to go away for a week or ten days. At this rate, Sylvia will never get well. I don't think you realise how weak she is, or what harm it does her to over-exert herself.'

Sir Harry pulled a long face. 'I am willing to do anything that may hasten Sylvia's recovery,' he replied, 'but I daresay you will forgive me for doubting whether my departure would produce that effect. In any case, I can't go back to England, because to tell you the honest truth, I am afraid I might have some disagreeable encounters with the writters if I did. I might go to Paris, of course; still I really don't think I ought, unless Sylvia gives her full consent. My own belief is that she is growing stronger every day; but even if I am mistaken, you will agree with me that it can only do her harm to be distressed. And I have the vanity to feel convinced that my going away would distress her.'

Muriel did not attempt to argue the point. For a short time she had almost liked the man, and had tried to believe in him; but now she had reverted to her original conviction of his worthlessness, and that incidental admission of his with regard to his debts did not shock her as it might have done a week earlier. She took for sheer impudence what was in truth a manifestation of the candour which was his redeeming virtue, and she let him go without further words.

It remained to try what could be done by means of an appeal to Sylvia; but she was not sanguine as to the results of such an appeal, nor was she surprised by its complete failure.

'What do you mean, Muriel?' asked the girl starting up from her reclining posture as soon as she saw the drift of the suggestion which was delicately conveyed to her. 'Why do you want to send Harry away? Do you think you can part us now? Oh, you can't be so cruel and so wicked!'

'I am not so foolish, at all events,' answered Muriel, smiling. 'There is no question of your being parted for more than a week or so; but you yourself must know that you are not advancing as you ought to be, and that his being here for such a long time every day is keeping you back. For the matter of that, he won't go unless you ask him to go; he has just told me so.'

'Then,' said Sylvia, sinking back upon her pillows again, 'he will stay. I couldn't ask him to go even if my life depended on it. I shouldn't dare! So long as he is here he is mine, and I have no fears; but if he were to leave me—oh, how can one tell what dreadful things may not happen! Men are not like us; generally it is out of sight out of mind with them, and—and—well, I don't know whether the joy of seeing him and talking to him does me harm; but I know that it would do me a thousand times more harm to be continually fretting during his absence.'

'Do you trust him so little?' asked Muriel, sadly.

'Oh, I don't deny that it is shameful to distrust him; but I am ill, and I can't always drive away the horrid thoughts that come into my mind. Do you remember that day when Colonel Medhurst met Harry and made a scene? I thought at the time that I didn't care a bit whether what he said was true or not; everybody commits sins, and everybody is supposed to be forgiven if he repents of them. But now, when I am lying awake at night, the thought of that woman haunts me. I say to myself, "He must have been in love with her once; but he tired of her, and why shouldn't he tire of you?" It isn't as if I had anything to give him except a rather pretty face and my face won't be pretty for long; it looks quite drawn and ugly even now in the mornings. I don't know why I am speaking to you in this way. Does it disgust you?'

Muriel shook her head, but could make no articulate reply. Her eyes were full of tears and her heart of pity. Alas! the poor child's apprehensions were only too well founded; it was impossible to refute them, yet it would be worse than useless to express concurrence in them. There was nothing for it but to keep silence, and this was the more easy since she could not trust herself to speak.

But Sylvia, who read her thoughts, began to laugh and said: 'There! you needn't look so dismal about it; it is all nonsense. When I am in my sober senses I am as sure of Harry as I am of myself; I only let you into the secret of my nightmares so that you might understand why I can't send him away from me. Besides,' she added in a graver voice, 'I am not sure that I can afford to lose him even for a day. Yesterday I asked the doctor suddenly whether I should ever be well again, and I saw by his face what he thought, though he pretended to laugh at me. Last night I felt as if I was dying. Antoinette was dozing in her chair, and I was very nearly waking her and sending for you; but the feeling passed off and I fell asleep. Well, if I do die, I daresay I shall have had as much happiness as most people; and perhaps if I live—but we won't talk any more about it. I am going to bed now; and please, Muriel, don't ask Harry to leave me again, because indeed I couldn't bear it!'

Muriel could but give the required promise. Sir Harry would not go at her bidding, nor did she any longer think it desirable that he should do so. From that moment she lost all hope of her niece's restoration to health.

Many days passed without much apparent change; but she saw that the girl was slowly sinking, and the doctor, while declining to commit himself to any positive opinion, saw it also. 'I told you from the first, my dear lady, that she had no stamina,' he said.

Only Sir Harry and Mr Wentworth remained blind; because they were both of them men who possessed the power of ignoring painful possibilities. What Sylvia herself thought it was difficult to tell. After the conversation recorded above she did not again refer to her condition, and Muriel had not the heart to say anything to her about it. A time must come, and would probably come soon, when all affectation of ignorance would have to be cast aside.

But that dreaded day never came. One evening Muriel had, as usual, left the invalid, who had fallen asleep, and was herself preparing to go to bed, when Antoinette, the French maid, rushed into the room without knocking.

'Venez, Mademoiselle, venez vite!' the woman gasped; 'je crois qu'elle est morte!'

Muriel was scarcely frightened at first: Sylvia had had more than one fainting fit of late, and that her inexperienced attendant should have mistaken unconsciousness for death was not surprising. Antoinette, however, was not mistaken, and when Muriel had hurried to the bedside, the evidence of her own senses soon convinced her that there was no room for doubt or hope. It was terrible, it was incredible; but it was true. Without a word of farewell, without, so far as could be known, any presentiment that her end was so near, the girl had passed quietly away in her sleep; she, her joys and her troubles had ceased to belong to this world, and never again would she be a source of anxiety to those who loved her.

Well, it was more than probable that, as she herself had said, she had had her share of earthly happiness; death is not the worst enemy of mankind, nor is life our best friend; and since we all must die sooner or later, those who die painlessly in their youth should perhaps be esteemed fortunate. But these consolatory reflections are of general rather than of particular application, and Muriel had to pass through a long period of sorrow and self reproach (though there was little enough occasion for the latter) before she was able to admit them.

CHAPTER XXI.

MURIEL, as has been said, had been in some measure prepared for Sylvia's death; she had, at any rate, known there was little or no prospect of ultimate recovery. But upon Sir Harry and upon Mr Wentworth the blow fell like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, and they were completely stunned by it. Of the two, the former, when he regained possession of his senses, suffered perhaps the most. His love may not have been and probably was not, worth much; the chances are that it would have burnt itself out in due season and that he would have treated his second wife no better than he had treated many other women before her. But naturally he did not take that view of his case, and his self-pity was, to say the least of it, excusable. He had made such excellent resolutions; he had been so fully determined to turn over a new leaf and begin a different kind of life! Now everything was at an end; his dream was one which would have to be put away and forgotten, like other dreams; he had lost—at least he told himself so in his despair—all that rendered existence of any value to him. It would be doing him an injustice to say that he mourned over the loss of the fortune which his bride was to have brought with her as her marriage-portion; yet that loss was a serious fact which stared him in the face when he tried to look forward into the future and to which he could not altogether close his eyes.

His connection with the Wentworth family was perforce terminated. Mr Wentworth had only accepted him under protest and because there had seemed to be no help for it; Muriel had always detested him; and, as a matter of fact, both of them begged to be excused from seeing him until after the funeral. He had of course a right to be present at that sad ceremony, and he was present; but as soon as it had been concluded and the earth shovelled on to the wreaths which covered poor Sylvia's coffin, he felt that there was nothing to detain him any longer at Biarritz.

'I suppose we shall be strangers henceforth, Miss Wentworth,' he said, at the end of the brief farewell interview which Muriel accorded to him; 'everything connected with my name must be painful to you, and I don't wonder at it. But, although I dare not thank you in my own name, I may be allowed to say that I shall never forget your goodness and generosity to Sylvia; and I think, after a time, it will be a comfort to you to remember that you were the means of making her last days happy.'

Thus he made a fairly graceful exit, and since he will not appear again in these pages, it may be mentioned here that his subsequent career, so far as it has gone, has not been marked by any scandalous episodes. Apparently he has overcome his financial difficulties; for he is to be seen in London and at Newmarket, and, as he has not ceased to be a first-rate shot, he is invited to many country houses during the winter months, although Morecambe Priory is not one of them. One may surmise that in a heart toughened by varied experiences a soft corner remains sacred to the memory of Sylvia Wentworth, and one may also, by a stretch of charity, go so far as to believe that some of the good resolutions with which Sylvia was instrumental in inspiring its owner have been fulfilled; but men of Sir Harry Brewster's stamp do not brood over their sorrows; otherwise their faces would not remain smooth while those of so many of their juniors are scored by indelible lines.

As for Mr Wentworth, his grief, while it lasted, was deep and sincere. It was, of course, selfish like every other emotion that he experienced. His feeling, if he did not express it in so many words, was that he had been very cruelly treated. He had been a most indulgent parent; he had refused his daughter nothing; he had consented to her marriage with a man of whom he could not approve, upon the understanding that the pecuniary sacrifice which such a marriage must entail was to be borne by somebody else; and this was his reward! His child was taken from him; his sister was sure either to marry or to devote herself and her means to some insane scheme for ameliorating the condition of the lower classes; he saw before him the prospect of a lonely and objectless old age. It was very, very hard; and Muriel, who should have been sympathising with him and trying to comfort him, would only hold her tongue and look heart-broken.

Muriel looked as she felt, and although she was sorry for her brother, she could not attempt to console him after any fashion which he would be likely to consider appropriate. She knew him well enough to know that in his case time would prove a certain and speedy anodyne, and perhaps this knowledge, combined with her own preoccupation and unhappiness, rendered her somewhat less attentive to his creature comforts than had been her wont. He was by way of being too bowed down by the weight of his affliction to care what food was set before him; but he could not help caring, and when, after Muriel and he had returned to their melancholy home in London, the cook took advantage of relaxed supervision to send up dinners which were far below the mark in point of refinement, he assumed the air of an uncomplaining martyr.

It was indeed a melancholy home that these two bereaved persons were doomed to inhabit. They had little to say to one another; they only met at meal times; visitors were not admitted, and at first Mr Wentworth doubted whether he ought to go to his club. At the expiration of a

week be granted himself that trifling concession, feeling that flesh and blood could no longer endure a system of solitary confinement; but Muriel sat all day long in the silent drawing-room, where a hundred trifles kept reminding her of her loss, and had not the heart to go out of doors. She would not even seek out Mr Compton, much though she longed to confide all her sorrows to him. She knew instinctively that he would understand her, that he would not be hard upon her in this hour of her despair, that he would condone the weakness which he had predicted, and from which, after all, no evil consequences had resulted; yet she could not summon up courage to take the risk of a rebuff. He must have heard the news of Sylvia's death; in all probability he had heard of her previous betrothal to Sir Harry Brewster; if, then, he felt any pity for one whose intentions at least had been good, and upon whom a heavy visitation had fallen, he would surely find time to call at Upper Brook-street. In fact, she so fully expected him to call that she gave instructions for his admission in the event of his presenting himself.

As, however, he failed to put in an appearance, she was forced to the conclusion that he felt no pity for her. Well, he had never shown himself very compassionate; perhaps, clever though he was, he could not quite enter into a woman's feelings. It had been clever of him to lay his finger upon the weak spot in her character; yet he might have divined that there is a species of strength belonging to that particular species of weakness, and that just because she could not bear to see others unhappy, she was capable of devoting herself heart and soul to such a work as he had in hand. Being thus defrauded of sympathy from a quarter to which she had looked for it with more confidence than she had been aware of, her thoughts not unnaturally turned towards one who had once told her that she was essential to his happiness and had furthermore implored her to let him know if at any time he could be of service to her. Her occupations and her troubles had not caused her to forget Colonel Medhurst; she had often thought of him, she had often accused herself of having behaved badly to him, she had more than once longed for the sight of his honest face and the sound of his voice, and certainly it was in his power to render her a service now at no greater expense of time and convenience than might be implied in finding his way to her house. But such favours cannot be asked for; they ought to suggest themselves to persons of ordinary intelligence. Moreover, it had to be borne in mind that Colonel Medhurst was not the man to look leniently upon such a surrender as that to which she had been driven. Sylvia was dead; but Sylvia, if she had lived would have become the bride of the villain who had wrecked his sister's life, and he might not unreasonably hold Muriel answerable for an abomination which had only been averted in that tragic way. Upon the whole, the chances seemed to be that his friendship, like that of Mr Compton, had been fruitlessly sacrificed.

He cleared himself in some measure of that unmerited suspicion by a letter, written from Colchester, which was delivered to Miss Wentworth, one morning, and which was not much more infelicitously worded than letters of condolence usually are. What disappointed and vexed Muriel was that it was a letter of condolence, pure and simple. Anybody and everybody, writing to her at such a time, must have made use of commonplaces, which he appeared to consider adequate. He would have set them down on paper earlier, he said, but he had shrunk from intruding upon her and had also been kept busy by troubles of his own which, although not to be compared with hers in magnitude, had left him little leisure for correspondence. He was sure, however, that she would not attribute his silence to indifference—and so forth.

It was easy enough to read between the lines and to guess at the nature of the troubles alluded to. His sister, no doubt, had been horrified by the intelligence that the man who had once been her husband was about to contract a second matrimonial alliance; she would have said some hard things about the Wentworth family, which Colonel Medhurst was in no position to contradict. Nay, he must have shared her indignation and disgust; for how was he to know anything about the cruel dilemma in which the Wentworth family had been placed? He might, to be sure, have been wise enough and charitable enough to understand that one member of that family would not have given way without reasons of overwhelming cogency for so doing; but, when all is said and done, wisdom and charity are not such every-day qualities, and since Muriel did not intend to marry Colonel Medhurst, it was perhaps a matter for congratulation that he had been thus summarily and effectually cured of a vain attachment.

That he had been cured was quite evident. She read his letter through again from beginning to end and was more than ever struck by its cold and constrained tone. No lover could possibly have written so formally, nor could he have felt any doubt as to the sense in which his composition would be interpreted. Indeed, he had evidently been at some pains to make his meaning unmistakable. 'You are not what I took you for,' he seemed to say. 'Of course, under the circumstances of your bereavement, I cannot openly upbraid you; but I wish you to know that you have lost both my love and my esteem.'

Now there are very few women in the world, or men either, who can endure to have that kind of thing said to them. Most of us, knowing full well that we deserve all the love and esteem we are ever likely to get, would be made exceedingly angry by such a statement; but Muriel, who was in a deplorably low condition of mind, was only moved to tears by the thought that her best friend had turned his back upon her. She did not blame him; his conduct was—at all events ostensibly—justified by hers, and perhaps, if no allowances were to be made, she might be said to have fairly forfeited the friendship which he had been so kind as to offer her. But she pitied herself very much, and she realised for the first time what a heavy penalty was implied in the payment of that forfeit. She had always been lonely. Now she was absolutely and utterly alone; nothing remained to her, save the intermediate companionship with James, and the pleasing duty of ordering James's dinner for him every day.

But who can tell when the turning in the long lane of misfortune has been reached? Muriel had begun to devote her attention once more to cookery-books—since that appeared to be her sole mission in life—when one evening, not long after this, Mr Wentworth entered the drawing-room with a smile of suppressed amusement upon his lips which seemed designed to provoke inquiry. It produced that effect after a minute or two and elicited a prompt reply.

'You want to know what I am laughing at?' said he. 'Well, I will tell you; because it is really funny, and I hope it will make you laugh too, though I notice that you have rather lost the trick of laughter lately.'

'Neither you nor I have much reason to feel merry,' observed Muriel, with a shade of reproach in her voice.

'My dear girl, sorrows are sorrows, and jokes are jokes. We are so constituted that both appeal to our sensibilities, and why should we pretend that we can't laugh through our tears, when the phenomenon is one of daily occurrence? Permit me to indulge my humble little joke and don't be so foolish as to accuse yourself of heartlessness if it tickles you. What should you think of me in the character of a blushing bridegroom, for instance?'

If this was a joke, it was not a very successful one. Muriel had never lost sight of the possibility that her brother might marry again; but that he should contemplate such a step just now amazed her and, to tell the truth shocked her into the bargain. She said something more or less appropriate and gravely inquired the name of her future sister-in-law.

'Ah,' answered Mr Wentworth, leaning back in his chair and nursing his leg, 'this is where the comic part of the business comes in. I should like to make you guess; but you look so forbidding that perhaps I had better hurry the point and secure my reward of cheers and laughter without more delay. The name of the lovely and accomplished being who has deigned to bestow herself upon me is—Mrs Hill.'

Muriel was so taken aback that she could only stare incredulously. Her first impression was, that her brother was amusing himself by talking nonsense; but on scrutinising him more closely, she thought she could detect a certain shamefacedness beneath his assumption of jocularity. 'I don't know what to say, James,' was all the reply that she could make, after a prolonged pause. 'You have always cited Mrs Hill as an example of everything that is vulgar and ridiculous; but I suppose that you must be serious and that you are telling the truth.'

'I am certainly telling you the truth,' answered Mr Wentworth; 'as for my being serious you will perceive that the subject is not one which lends itself very readily to serious treatment. Mrs Hill, is, of course, ridiculous and she may also be vulgar, although I do not remember calling her so; but she is good-natured, she has plenty of money, and I am convinced that she will take the greatest care of me. Moreover she will provide me with constant diversion. Far be it from me to utter a word of complaint against you, my dear Muriel; but you must acknowledge that home has not been made particularly diverting for me of late. And I really cannot live without diversion in some form or other.'

It was impossible to feel very angry with one who was so candidly selfish. 'You have a right to please yourself, James,' began Muriel hesitatingly, 'and now there is no need for you to consider anyone except yourself. But—but Mrs Hill, of all people!'

'Oh, she is rather old and rather fat, and she lies open to hostile criticism in a great many respects. She possesses, however, the solid merits which I have enumerated. I understand the significance of the reproof which you convey so delicately when you tell me that I am not now called upon to consider anyone except myself; but in all sincerity don't you think I have as much consideration for you as you have for me? I am not asking you to live in the house with Mrs Hill; I know you wouldn't do such a thing; but then I also know you won't live much longer in a house with me. Nothing seems to me more certain than that you will either marry or join some eccentric society before the year is out. Now isn't it a fact that your eyes have already begun to turn longingly toward your friend Compton?'

The retort was fair enough. There are more ways than one of displaying selfishness, and Muriel could not but acknowledge to herself that if Mr Compton had offered, at any time since her return home, to receive her into the Society of St. Francis, she would have been sorely tempted to abandon her brother to his fate. She did not answer his question, but somewhat hastily disclaimed any intention of reproving him; and so, after a few more words, the conversation ended.

Later in the evening she was able to derive some comfort from the thought that she was at all events emancipated by this change in her prospects. Mr Compton might continue to disbelieve in her vocation; but he could no longer represent to her that her duties began and ended at home. She was about to be deprived of her home; she would have to provide herself with a fresh one; she was not sufficiently advanced in age to live alone, and surely she was entitled, if ever any woman was, to claim the refuge afforded by the association of which he was the head. Since he did not choose to come to her, she would go to him; she would lay her case before him, begging him to disregard all preconceived notions that he might have formed respecting her and to treat her as what she was—an individual without family ties and with a certain amount of money which she was anxious to expend in furthering the objects that he advocated. In common justice and consistency he could scarcely dismiss her. Being thus firmly resolved as to her course, she went to bed in comparatively good spirits and slept more soundly than she had done for a long time past.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

NOT ENCAGED.

'ARE you engaged?'—He whispered low
And low the sad sea breezes
Went sighing through the stilly night
And through the leafy treezes.

'Are you engaged?'—He whispered low
And low the white capped billows
Come drumming in upon the beach
Green fringed with drooping willows.

'Are you engaged?'—He whispered low
And low, the night birds winging
Their silent courses through the sky,
Brought distant notes of singing.

'Are you engaged?'—He whispered low.
'No, no,' she said, and tarried
A moment, while he kissed her hand,
'No, no,' she said, 'I'm married.'

A TRIUMPHANT FOOTBALL CLUB.

THE Alhambra Club (Dunedin) by their victory over the Athletic Club (the champion club of Wellington for the year) brought to a successful close what has been a brilliantly successful season. The first fifteen played 12 matches, all of which they won, scoring 25 goals and 27 tries, while the score against them only amounted to 4 goals and 8 tries. Reckoned by the system that is at present in vogue, the Alhambra scored 87 points while 17 were obtained against them. It may be of interest to know the scores of individual players in the team, and by virtue of his place kicking G. Restieaux heads the list. This crack-place kick was responsible for 25 goals kicked from tries, a really splendid record, in addition to which he has placed two tries to his credit. W. H. Noel has been the heaviest scorer of tries, having the substantial number of ten to his name; A. Downes secured three ties and potted two goals; T. Cunningham obtained two tries, and O. Crawford four. Of the forwards G. M'Laren has scored most, four tries being down to his account, but J. Baker and D. M'Laren follow him closely with three each; W. Johnston obtained two tries; and A. Esquilant and J. M'Court one apiece.

The following list shows how the club's record for the season is made up:—

March 28—v. Star (Invercargill): Won, 2 tries to nil.
May 9—v. Kaikorai: Won, 4 goals 1 try to 1 goal.
May 23—v. Merivale (Christchurch): Won, 2 goals 1 try to 1 goal.
May 30—v. Taieri: Won, 1 goal 2 tries to 1 try.
June 6—v. Piratas: Won, 1 goal 2 tries to 1 try.
June 13—v. Union: Won, 1 try to nil.
June 20—v. Zingari-Richmond: Won, 2 goals 1 try to nil.
June 27—v. Dunedin: Won, 4 goals to nil.
July 11—v. Kaikorai: Won, 2 goals 1 try to 1 try.
July 25—v. Union: Won, 2 goals 1 try to 1 goal 1 try.
August 1—v. Dunedin: Won, 7 goals 2 tries to 1 try.
August 27—v. Athletic (Wellington): Won, 1 goal 1 try to 1 goal (penalty) 1 try.

The Alhambra Club first came into existence in 1884, when, at the request of about a dozen young fellows, Mr W. J. MacLaughlin, then a prominent member of the Zingari Football Club, convened a meeting, which resulted in the formation of the present club. In his position as President

F. L. Jones, photo., Dunedin.

MR. W. MACLAUGHLIN,

Founder of Alhambra Football Club.

Mr MacLaughlin found the first difficulty which presented itself was the want of a suitable ground. He then applied to the City Council for a piece of bush land, which was granted. The bush was so thick that he and the city surveyor, on visiting the spot, had to cut a track before they could go over the site. Despite the manner in which the proposition of forming a football ground in such a place was ridiculed, he and a few other enthusiasts set to work, and subscriptions having been raised, a small contract was let for the clearing of the bush. The members of the Club, with laudable zeal, assisted at these operations in the evenings and early mornings with such good effect that in the following season the ground was used constantly for playing on. Varying success followed until a few years after when, having beaten all the junior teams, they considered themselves sufficiently strong to cope with senior teams. An attempt to amalgamate this and the Zingari Club having fallen through the latter then joined the Richmond, and formed what has since been known as the Zingari-Richmond Club. Owing to this amalgamation Mr MacLaughlin severed his connection with the Zingaris, and devoted all his energies to forwarding the Alhambra's interests, and was elected captain. The first day's play under his captaincy after their advent as a senior club resulted in their first second and third fifteens winning their respective matches. The second and third fifteens won the premier positions for that year, the first only losing the same honour by a narrow majority. About this time, too, a number of the Club's supporters presented them with a banner. The Club has successfully continued its career until it now heads the list for the South Island, having this season, under the captaincy of Mr McCleary, not only beaten all the Dunedin Clubs, but also the premier teams of Wellington, Canterbury, and Southland. The last two, indeed, met a similar fate last year, when the Alhambras beat them at Christchurch and Invercargill, respectively. Although the Club has paid all travelling expenses incurred by the teams representing it, the Club is in a good financial position, having a credit

balance at the present time of something like £50. Last year's first twenty were the recipients of very handsome caps, which were presented by lady supporters of the Club. During each season the members meet twice a week in their own hall for social recreation and practice. Three fifteens are played each Saturday throughout the season, and two others could be kept going if necessary. The following are the office bearers of the Club at the present time:—President, Mr James Allen, B.A.; Vice-presidents, Messrs L. Dymock, M. Fagan, J. M. Jamieson, A. A. D. MacLaughlin, E. J. Roberts, and R. G. Stone; Captain, James McCleary; Deputy-captain, A. Downs; Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, D. Paterson; Committee of Management, Messrs W. J. MacLaughlin, W. Skitch, G. Weitzel, and O. Briggs; Delegates to O.R.F.U., Messrs W. J. MacLaughlin, Stone, and McCleary. Messrs Paterson and W. J. MacLaughlin have been the leading lights in managing and financing the Club since its infancy, and deserve great credit for the way the Club has been conducted.

The photo was taken by the Exchange Court Studio, Princes-street, Dunedin.

THE HINDOO STRANGLERS.

THE subject of the 'Thugs of India,' forms a moral and political phenomenon, which is, perhaps, the most extraordinary that has ever existed in the world—a phenomenon more striking than anything that romancers have feigned touching the Old Man of the Mountain or the Secret Tribunals of Germany; a phenomenon of which strange and appalling glimpses have been occasionally obtained, but of which the nature and extent have never, and probably never will, be fully understood. It appears, then, from the most overwhelming evidence, that there existed in India a vast fraternity of murderers, consisting of many thousands of persons; that this fraternity has existed for many ages, and through many political revolutions, that it has spread its ramifications over the whole of that vast country, from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas; that it has flourished alike under Hindu, Mohammedan, and British rulers; that it has destroyed multitudes of victims; and yet that its constitution—we may say its very being—has been quite unknown to the most active and vigilant functionaries, and very imperfectly understood, even by the native Governments.

It was, indeed, notorious that gangs of thieves sometimes strangled travellers. It was notorious that the members of these gangs were usually expert at the operation of strangling; but that these gangs were merely small detached portions of a vast organised community, the members of which recognised each other as brethren in the remotest parts of India; that these murders were all committed according to certain ancient and solemn forms, and were regarded by those who committed them, not as crimes, but as solemn rites, which it would have been sinful to omit, remained long unsuspected. These extraordinary people are known by the name of Thugs, and their profession is called Thuggee. They are divided into Burkas, or persons fully instructed in the art, and Kuboolas, or novices. 'They consider a Burka as capable of forming a gang of Thugs out of the rude material around him in any part of India, and a Thug who has arrived at this stage of proficiency in the art ought not to be therefore left at large. A Kuboola, or novice, they think, could do nothing if left to himself, and he might, therefore, be left at large without much danger to society, if he had no leader to join.'

These are by no means nominal distinctions. No Thug is allowed to take his degree as a Burka, or to assume the office of strangler, until he has been on many expeditions, and acquired the requisite courage and insensibility by slow degrees. They are first employed as scouts; then as sextons; then as shumeesas or holders of land, and lastly, as Bhurtotes or stranglers. When a man feels that he has sufficient courage and insensibility for the purpose, he solicits the oldest and most renowned Thug of the gang to make him his cheyla or disciple. The Thug agrees to become his goorooo, or spiritual preceptor, and when the gang falls in with a man of respectability, but not much strength, fitted for the purpose, he tells the goorooo that he is prepared with his permission, to try his hands upon him.

While the traveller is asleep with the gang at their quarters the goorooo takes his disciple into a neighbouring field, followed by three or four old members of the gang. On reaching the spot chosen they all face to the direction the gang intends to move, and the goorooo says in (Ramasee) 'Oh, Kalee, Kunkalee, Bhudkalee. Oh, Kalee, Mabakalee, Calcutta, Walee. If it seemeth to thee fit that the traveller now at our lodging should die by the hand of this thy slave, vouchsafe us the Thibaoo.' If they get the auspice on the right, within a certain time (half an hour), it signifies her sanction; but if they have no sign or the philaoo (or sign on the left), some other Thug must put the traveller to death, and the candidate for honours wait for another time.

The Thugs travel along the roads under various assumed characters, in parties varying from ten or twelve to several hundreds. They appear as traders, as pilgrims, as sepoys seeking or returning from service, and sometimes one of their number figures as a Rajah, with all the necessary equipments of tents, carriages, etc., and the rest act the part of his obsequious followers. If the gang is numerous they are divided into several parties, who follow each other at some distance, or, taking different routes, rendezvous at an appointed place in advance. Their victims are almost always travellers.

The most expert members of the gang are employed to collect information and insinuate themselves into the confidence of travellers whom they find at the resting-places or overtake on the road. They usually propose to them to join the company for mutual safety, and if the traveller suspects one party he soon falls in with another, who pretends to enter into his feelings of distrust. A person is sent before to select a proper place for the murder and scouts are employed to prevent intrusion. The travellers are generally induced to sit down under the pretence of resting themselves, and they are strangled at once on a given signal. The bodies are then buried, after having been mangled to expedite dissolution and to prevent their swelling and causing cracks in the ground.

Two Thugs are employed in the murder of each individual, one of whom holds his legs or hands while the other applies the noose. If a traveller have a dog, it is also killed, lest the faithful animal should cause the discovery of the body of its murdered master. Thugs designate their murders in a peculiar manner by the number of persons killed. Thus they speak of the Sutrooh, or sixty-soul affair. The Chaleasrooh, or forty-soul affair, is also famous. Sometimes, but very rarely, the Thugs are obliged to depart from their rule of putting their victims to death by strangling. This was the case in a remarkable affair, in which they obtained a booty of £20,000. In Bengal, which is much intersected by rivers, the plan is modified to suit the circumstances of the country. The practice there is to inveigle travellers on board pretended passage boats, which are manned entirely by Thugs, and then to strangle them and throw their bodies into the river. Several of these boats follow each other at short intervals, so that if the traveller escapes one snare he may fall into another.

The Thugs are forbidden by their rules to kill a woman of any description, and either men or women of the following classes: Fakirs, bards, musicians by profession, dancing men and women, washerwomen, sweepers, oil vendors, blacksmiths and carpenters, when found together, maimed or leprous persons, men with cows, and Ganges water carriers while they have the Ganges water actually with them; but if their pots are empty they are not exempted. Those exceptions are not, however, made out of compassion, but from a feeling which is one of the strange tenets of this strange system of religion.

The Thugs date all their misfortunes from their murder of a native lady, whom they call Kalee Beebee, or black lady, who was proceeding to Hyderabad with a sheet of cloth of gold, for the tomb of a brother of Saulabut Khan. Since then the northern Thugs have murdered women as well as men; but those south of Nerbudda adhered to the primitive usage in this respect. The extent to which the natural feelings of humanity had been extinguished in these miscreants is perfectly astonishing. A party of them accompanied Newal Singh, a Jemadar in the Nizam's service, and his family more than 200 miles—were on most intimate terms with them for about twenty days—and received essential favours from them.

Once Newal Singh, not knowing them to be Thugs, procured their release when they were imprisoned on a charge of setting a house on fire in which they had lodged; and on another occasion his two daughters of 11 and 13 years of age saved them from detection by sitting upon some plundered silk whilst they were searched by the police. He and all his family were put to death. A system so diabolical, which embraced the whole of India, could not be suppressed by a few inroads upon it. The gradual dispersion of the gangs, which was vigorously entered upon by the Government, had the usual effect of a persecution, which, does not go to the length of entire eradication. The scattered Thugs formed numerous separate gangs, and although the number of raw recruits whom they enlisted contributed in the end to their downfall, yet its immediate effect was greatly to increase the number of victims.

BACK ROW.—Dawes. Esquilant. Robertson. R. McLaren. J. McLaren. Baker. MacLaughlin.
MIDDLE ROW.—Jas. Allan. Haig. Briggs. Downes. McCleary. Johnston. Restieaux. Cunningham.
FRONT ROW.—Ross. Crawford. Noel.

ALHAMBRA (DUNEDIN) FOOTBALL CLUB.

Exchange Court Studio, Dunedin.

LOVE IN ABSENCE.

THE lamp is lit, the fire glows red,
The storm roars over the roof;
I am weary of weaving the drowsihead
Of thought into warp and woof.

The music lies in the yellow light,
I finger the ivory keys;
But the charm—the charm is fled to-night
Of melody wont to please.

I turn the pages of sweet Scot's song,
But it is not sung by me:
These airs to a gentler voice belong;
Each page has a memory.

Books hold me not; at last I rise,
For the lines but fade from view;
I am haunted—by splendour of shining eyes,
And my heart, sweetheart! is with you.

GEORGE EYRE-TODD.

DON BASILIO'S STORY.

I.

DON BASILIO, play the cornet and let us dance! It is not warm under the trees.'

'Yes, yes, Don Basilio, play the cornet!'

'Give Don Basilio the cornet on which Joaquin learned.'

'No use! Will you play it, Don Basilio?'

'No!'

'Why not?'

'No, I say!'

'But why not?'

'Because I do not know how.'

'Not know how! Was there ever such hypocrisy!'

'Of course you desire to gratify us?'

'Well, come! We know that you were chief musician of the infantry!'

'And that no one played the cornet as you did.'

'And that they listened to you at the palace, in the time of Espartero——'

'And that you have a pension.'

'Come, Don Basilio! Have pity on us!'

'Well, then, senor. It is true. I have played the cornet; I was a—a specialist, as you say nowadays; however, it is also true that two years ago I presented my cornet to a poor licensed musician, and that since then I have not wished even to sound it.'

'What a pity!'

'Another Rossini!'

'Ah! since it is this evening you ought to play!'

'Here in the fields, everything is permissible——'

'Remember that it is my birthday, grandpapa!'

'Hurrah! hurrah! Here is the cornet!'

'Yes, now play!'

'A waltz!'

'No, a polka!

'Polka! Away with you! A fandango!'

'Yes, yes, a fandango, the national dance!'

'I am very sorry, my children, but I cannot possibly play the cornet.'

'You, so amiable!' 'So willing to please——' 'Your little grandchild begs you to!' 'And your niece——'

'Leave me alone, for God's sake. I have said that I cannot play.'

'Why not?'

'Because I do not remember; and because, moreover, I have sworn not to learn again——'

'To whom have you sworn?'

'To myself and to some one who is dead—to your poor mother, my child!'

Every face saddened suddenly on hearing these words.

'Ah! if you knew at what cost I learned to play the cornet!' added the old man.

'The story! the story!' exclaimed the young people. 'Tell us the story.'

'In fact,' said Don Basilio, 'it is quite a story. Listen to it, and you may judge if I can or cannot play the cornet.' And seating himself under a tree, surrounded by the curious and courteous young people, he told them the story of his music lessons.

In the same way Mazeppa, Byron's hero, related one night to Carlos XII., beneath another tree, the terrible story of his riding lessons. Let us listen to Don Basilio:

II.

SEVENTEEN years ago Spain was agitated by the Civil War. Carlos and Isabel were disputing for the crown, and the Spaniards, divided into two bands, poured out their blood in the fratricidal struggle.

I had a friend, called Ramon Gúmez, lieutenant of my battalion, the most clever man that I have ever known. We were educated together; together we left college; together we had been reprimanded a thousand times, and together we desired to die for liberty. Ah! I must say he was more liberal than I or than any one else in the whole army!

But a certain injustice had been done by our chief to the hurt of Ramon; one of those abuses of authority which disgusts one with the most honourable profession. This arbitrary act made the Lieutenant of the Caradores desire to abandon the ranks of his brothers, the friend to leave the friend, the liberal to turn to the faction, the subordinate to kill his Lieutenant Colonel! Ramon was not in the mood so early in the morning to bear insults and injustice.

Neither my threats nor prayers were sufficient to dissuade him from his purpose. He had decided to change the helmet for the cap, although he abhorred the rebels.

We were then within three leagues of the enemy. It was the night in which Ramon was to desert—a cold, rainy night, melancholy and sad, the eve of a battle.

About two o'clock Ramon entered my lodging.

I was asleep. 'Basilio,' he murmured in my ear.

'Who is it?'

'It is I. Adieu!'

'Thou art going now?' 'Yes; adieu.'

And seizing my hand—'Listen,' he continued. 'If there should be a battle to-morrow, as they think, and we should meet in it—'

'I understand; we are friends.'

'Very well; we will embrace and then fight. I shall die in the regular way to-morrow; however, I hope to trample all under foot until I have killed the Lieutenant Colonel! As for thee, Basilio, do not expose thyself to danger—glory is only smoke.' 'And life?'

'Thou art right; make thyself Commander!' exclaimed Ramon. 'The pay is not smoke—until after one has smoked it. Ah! all that is ended for me!'

'What sad thoughts,' I said, not without terror. 'We shall both survive the battle to-morrow.'

'Then let us arrange to meet afterward.' 'Where?'

'At the San Nicolas Inn, at one in the morning. Death alone shall prevent the meeting. Let us agree to it?'

'Agreed.' 'Then—adieu!' 'Adieu.'

Having said this, and after tenderly embracing me, Ramon disappeared into the shadows of the night.

III.

AS we hoped, the rebels attacked us on the following day.

The action was very bloody and lasted from three in the afternoon till it grew dark. About five my battalion was fiercely attacked by a force commanded by Ramon. Ramon now wore the badges of Commander and the white cap of the Carlists.

I gave the order to fire against Ramon, and Ramon against me; that is to say, his men and my battalion fought hand to hand.

We were victorious, and Ramon was put to flight with the small remnant of his force, but not without first having himself killed with a pistol-shot him who the evening before was his Lieutenant-Colonel, and who in vain tried to defend himself from the fury of Ramon. At six o'clock the action took an unfavourable turn, and I and a part of my poor company were cut off and obliged to surrender.

They led me to the little village of ——, which had been occupied by the Carlists since the beginning of this campaign, and where it was certain they would shoot me immediately. The war was then without quarter.

IV.

IT was one o'clock in the morning after that melancholy day—the hour of my rendezvous with Ramon!

I was confined in the dungeon of the public prison of the enemy. I asked for my friend, and they answered me: 'He is a brave man! He killed a Lieutenant Colonel, but he perished during the last hour of the battle.'

'How! Why do you think so?'

'Because he has not returned to the camp nor can the men who to-day were under his command give any account of him.'

Ah! how I suffered that night! One hope I still had. Ramon might be waiting for me at the San Nicolas Inn; this would explain his failure to return to the rebel encampment. How distressed he would be to find that I did not keep the appointment!

'He will,' I said to myself, 'think me dead! And, truly, how far am I from my last hour? The rebels always shoot their prisoners, the same as we do!'

Thus dawned the following day.

A chaplain entered my prison. All my companions were asleep. 'Death?' I exclaimed, at sight of the priest.

'Yes,' he answered, gently.

'Now?'

'No; within three hours.'

A minute later my companions were awake.

A thousand cries, a thousand sobs, a thousand curses filled the prison.

V.

EVERY man, who is about to die is possessed by some idea which will not leave him.

Whether it were nightmare, fever or madness, the thought of Ramon—of Ramon alive, of Ramon dead, of Ramon in heaven, of Ramon in the inn, took possession of my brain in such a way that I could think of nothing else during those hours of agony. They took from me my captain's uniform, and dressed me in a soldier's cap and an old cloak.

Thus I went to meet death with my nineteen companions in misfortune. Only one was to be saved from death.

He was a musician—and the Carlists did not shoot musicians, because they were in great need of them in their battalions.

'And were you a musician, Don Basilio? Were you saved on that account?' asked all the young people with one voice.

'No, my children,' replied the veteran. 'I was not a musician.'

The square was formed and we were placed in the middle of it.

I was No. 11—that is, I would be the eleventh to die.

Then I thought of my wife and my daughter, of thee and of thy mother, my child. They began to fire.

Those detonations maddened me. As they had bound our eyes I did not see my companions fall.

I tried to count the discharges, that I might know a moment before dying that my sojourn in this world was finished. However, at the third or fourth detonation I lost count. Ah! those shots will thunder eternally in my heart and in my brain as they thundered on that day.

Now I heard them a thousand leagues distant; now I felt them reverberate in my head. And the detonations continued.

'Now!' thought I. The discharge sounded and I still lived. 'This one!' I said at last.

Then I felt myself seized by the shoulders and shaken, and voices sounded in my ears. I fell.

I knew no more.

Then I experienced something like a profound sleep. I dreamed that I had been shot dead.

VI.

I DREAMED that I was stretched on a small bed in my prison. I could not see.

I raised my hand to my eyes to take away the bandage, and touched my wide-open, dilated eyes? Was I blind?

No. I was in prison, in utter darkness.

I heard the toll of a bell and trembled.

It was the ringing of the *animas*.

'It is nine o'clock,' I thought, 'but what day?'

A shadow, still darker than the dark air of the prison, leaned over me.

It appeared to be a man. And the others—the other eighteen?

All had been shot!

And I?

Did I live or was I delirious in the grave? My lips mechanically murmured a name; always his name, my nightmare—'Ramon!'

'What is it?' the shadow beside me answered.

I shuddered.

'My God!' I exclaimed. 'Am I in the other world?'

'No!' answered the same voice.

'Ramon, art thou alive?'

'Yes.'

'And I?' 'Thou also.'

'Then where am I? Is this the San Nicolas Inn? Was I not taken prisoner? Have I dreamed it all?'

'No, Basilio; thou hast dreamed nothing. Listen.'

VII.

'AS thou knowest, yesterday I killed the Lieutenant-Colonel in fair fight. I am revenged! Then, mad with fury, I kept on fighting and killing till it grew dark, till there was not a Christian on the battlefield. When the moon arose I remembered thee. Then I directed my steps towards the San Nicolas Inn, with the intention of waiting for thee.

'It was ten o'clock. The appointment was for one, and the night before I had not closed my eyes. So I slept profoundly. About one I gave a cry and awoke. I dreamed that thou wast dead. I looked about me and found I was alone. What had become of thee. It struck two, three, four—what a night of anguish!'

'Thou didst not appear. 'Without doubt thou wast dead!

'Day dawned.

'Then I left the inn and directed my steps to this village in search of the rebels. The sun arose.

'Everyone thought I had fallen the day before.

'Thus at sight of me they embraced me and the General loaded me with honours.

'Then I learned that they were about to shoot twenty-one prisoners. A presentiment arose in my mind.

'"Could Basilio be one of them?" I asked myself. I ran then to the place of execution. The square was formed.

'I heard several shots.

'They had begun to shoot the prisoners.

'I strained my eyes, but I could not see.

'Grief blinded me. I was delirious with fear.

'Finally I distinguished thee.

'Thou wast about to be shot!

'There were two victims only before thee.

'What should I do?

'I became crazy; I screamed; seized thee in my arms, and, with a hoarse voice, trembling with emotion, exclaimed:

'"Not this one! Not this one, my General!"

'The General who commanded the square and who knew me for my deeds the day before, asked me:

'"Why not? Is he a musician?"

'That word was to me what it would be to an old man blind from birth to see suddenly the sun in all its brightness.

'The light of hope shone so vividly in my eyes that it blinded me.

'"Musician!" I exclaimed; "yes—yes, General! He is a musician—a great musician!"

'In the meantime thou wast stretched senseless.

'"What instrument does he play?" asked the General.

'"The—the—the—yes!—exactly!—it is—the cornet!"

'"Do you need a cornet player?" asked the General, turning to the band of musicians.

'In five seconds, which seemed five centuries, came the answer:

'"Yes, General, there is one needed," replied the chief musician.

'"Then take that man from the ranks and let the execution continue instantly," exclaimed the Carlist chief.

'"Then I took thee in my arms and carried thee to this dungeon.'

VIII.

AS Ramon ceased speaking I got up, and weeping, laughing, and trembling I embraced him. 'I owe thee my life!'

'Not at all!' replied Ramon.

'And why not?' I exclaimed.

'Dost thou play the cornet?'

'No.'

'Then thou dost not owe me thy life. I have only compromised mine by saving thee.'

I turned cold as stone.

'And music?' asked Ramon, 'dost thou know it?'

'A little, very little. I remember what they taught us at college—'

'A very little it is, or better say none! Thou shalt die without fail, and I also as traitor. Just imagine in less than two weeks the band to which thou shalt belong will be organized.'

'Two weeks!'

'Neither more nor less! And as thou dost not play the cornet (unless God performs a miracle) they will shoot us both without doubt.'

'Shoot thee!' I exclaimed; 'thee! and for me! for me, who owes thee my life? Ah! no, Heaven forbid! In less than two weeks I shall understand music and play the cornet.' Ramon laughed.

IX.

WHAT more shall I tell you my children? In two weeks—oh, power of the will—in fifteen days, with the fifteen nights (for I neither slept nor rested a minute for half a month), in two weeks I learned to play the cornet! What days they were!

Ramon and I left camp and passed hours and hours with a certain musician who came daily from a place near by to give me a lesson. *Escape?* I read the word in your eyes. Nothing more impossible! I was a prisoner and they watched me, and Ramon would not escape without me.

I neither spoke, thought, or ate.

I was crazy, and my mononmania was music—the cornet, the devilish cornet!

I desired to learn, and I learned!

And if I had been dumb I should have talked.

And if paralyzed should have walked, if blind should have seen. Because *I willed* it so!

Oh! the will can do anything!

To wish is to be able.

To wish—that is a great word!

To wish—and I advise you, children, learn this great truth!

I saved then my life and Ramon's. But I was mad, and my madness was art. During three years the cornet did not leave my hand. Do-re-mi-fa-sol la-si; that was my world during all that time. My life was reduced to blowing. Ramon did not leave me. I emigrated to France, and in France I continued to play the cornet.

The cornet was I! I sang with the cornet at my mouth! Men, people, celebrated artists crowded to hear me.

Here was a wonder, a marvel. The cornet was flexible in my fingers; became elastic, moaned, wept, cried and roared; it imitated a prayer, a human sob, or a wild beast.

My lungs were of iron. Thus passed two more years. At the end of them my friend died. Looking upon his body I recovered my reason. And when, now in my senses, I took up my cornet one day, to my astonishment I found I did not know how to play it.

Will you ask me now to play it for you to dance?

A VISIT TO NEW PLYMOUTH.

BY R. H. BAKEWELL, M.D., AUCKLAND.

I REMEMBER a long time ago hearing a very idiotic song, the refrain of which was, 'Thou art so near and yet so far.' This is, however, strictly true of New Plymouth. Very few persons from Auckland visit the place, although numbers pass through *en route* to or from Wellington. The fact is that New Plymouth, or rather Taranaki, is not in great favour with the rest of the colony. We know too well what that province has cost us. Mr Courtney calls it 'our dear little province,' and it is a 'dear' little province to the rest of New Zealand, though in a different sense from that in which Mr Courtney used the word. Perhaps it is not quite fair or just to visit the cost of the war on Taranaki itself. The old settlers say, and with some appearance of truth, that if the soldiers and the settlers had been allowed a free hand, they would soon have made an end of the war. They declare that they were hampered and hindered mainly by two men, who are held in such high esteem generally, that it quite shocks one to hear the terms applied to them in Taranaki—I mean the late Bishop Selwyn and Sir George Grey. I certainly cannot but think that the Taranaki settlers are doing a grave injustice to these two men. It is impossible to believe that two such men occupying the positions they did, could have been guilty of high treason by aiding, protecting, and abetting rebels in arms against the authority of Her Majesty; and yet, as I pointed out, this is what they are charged with doing, and that not by one, but apparently by all. However, all that is past and gone—old history—and it is with the present state of things we are most interested.

It is really a wonderful thing to go from Auckland to New Plymouth and find everybody cheerful, happy, contented, and prosperous, population increasing in the country districts by honest settlement not by crowding into the towns, and the whole place with hardly a house or a shop to let. New Plymouth is a much larger town than I expected to see, and the population is totally different from that of any of the principal centres. Instead of the Babel of accents and languages you hear in their streets, you hear only English, spoken by English people, nearly all either natives of the place, or settlers from the old country. It seems that the earliest settlers all came from Devonshire, and from a very limited district in that county. One of them, with whom I had some conversation told me that they had all come from a district about twenty miles square. The consequence of this is that the younger people all speak good English—not the horrid mixture of Irish and Cockney which is spoken in Auckland. For example, a Taranaki native would say, 'It is a fine day; I think I shall go out.' An Aucklander says, 'It is a foine day; oi think oi shall go *owt*.' This is owing probably to the fact that in these smaller provinces, such as Nelson, Marlborough, and Taranaki, the salaries of school teachers are so small that teaching is not a profession sought after by the children of the lower middle class. There are a large number of gentlemen's sons and daughters embarked in it, who teach at any rate, good English.

The town of New Plymouth is two or three miles from the Breakwater. You can go there by tram, or in a cab, or if a resident, on horseback. No resident ever thinks of walking such a distance. In fact, no Taranakian apparently considers walking, except just for a very short distance, or to church and back, as the kind of thing that any sane person voluntarily undertakes. Horses are dirt cheap, and everybody rides or drives. I walked several times to a settlement between four and five miles from New Plymouth, and the amount of pity and astonishment this tremendous walk afforded to all who heard of it was most amusing. 'And did you really walk *back* as well?' was asked, as if a ten-mile walk was a thing unheard of in the district.

New Plymouth is an exceedingly well-laid-out town, bright with recent paint—a sure sign in the colonies of a thriving place—and I did not see a shabby-looking house or a shabbily-dressed person in it. Work is plentiful in the country districts. I believe they can take on many additional hands at the bush-falling. I saw advertisements in the papers calling for tenders, and I was told that any able-bodied man, even a new chum, can get his twenty-five shillings a week and rations at this work. You see no loafers in the streets—none of that dirty, disreputable, shabby scum that settle round the corners in Queen-street, making the pavement filthy with their expectoration, and the air filthy with their talk. The cabmen know how to charge. When I had to leave I took a cab in consequence of having some luggage. From the time the cab arrived at my lodgings, including the time for putting on an overcoat, loading up the luggage, taking it out and putting it in the station platform, was under four minutes by my watch, and the fare was two shillings. 'It's a lot of money for such a short job,' said I to the cabman. 'It *is* a considerable sum,' replied he, calmly, in much better English than mine. I paid him the money, and as I did so I remarked, 'It's the largest fare for such a short journey that I ever paid, and I have been in all four quarters of the globe.' 'Well, it's according to the tariff,' he said. 'I'll immortalize you,' I replied, at which he laughed good-humouredly. The cab was a hansom. If you insert this I shall send the cabman a copy of the NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC to prove to him that I have kept my word, and that he *is* immortalized.

Naturally I thought that the subject of the New Plymouth Harbour Board debentures would be a very delicate one to introduce in Taranaki. I thought it would be like transportation in Sydney, or coloured blood in the West Indies—a forbidden topic. But I soon found that I had no reason to be afraid of wounding the sensitive feelings of the Taranakians by allusions to the unpaid interest. They think 'the Government' is wholly to blame. 'The Government' have altered the Land laws, and the Government ought consequently to pay the interest. When I mildly hinted that the New Zealand Legislature—not the Government—could hardly be expected to allow legislation on the land question to be arrested, solely in order to enable the New Plymouth Harbour Board to fulfil their obligations, then they promptly replied that the Government was bound to take over the debentures. I told them plainly that this could never be, but that the colonists of New Zealand owed New Plymouth Harbour Board a debt of eternal gratitude for having stopped borrowing. However, nobody seems to trouble themselves about the unpaid interest; *they* only grumble at the amount of the rates.

They are going in for frozen meat as well as butter. This is a good thing, as it does not do to have all your eggs in one basket. The soil is wonderful. Residents in other parts of the colony may imagine what it is by figuring to themselves a magnificent district with only one hill in it (Mount Egmont), covered by beautiful chocolate soil, like the patch in front of the Free Library, of unlimited depth. There is literally not a stone to throw at a dog in it. I believe they get their road metal by driving into the heart of the little hammocks which lie about the great plain, where they find some volcanic boulders. Anybody looking at a map will see how abundantly the district is watered by streams originating in the mountain. Of course, 'the mountain,' as they call it, is the chief feature in the landscape, and a most beautiful feature it is. The ascent from the land side is so gradual and gentle that the visitor can ride up to the limits of perpetual snow. The soil is so light that it hardly requires any preparation for ordinary garden crops. I dug a small patch to warm myself one day, and it really seemed almost superfluous labour. One might have put in cabbages or peas without any digging.

The people—those I meet, at least—are the very best sort of colonists. I should say that the sturdy English determination which enabled these men to remain during all the troubles of the war time, literally fighting for their lives and property, soon weeded out all the rogues and speculators and idlers, if there were any, and left, by the survival of the fittest, an admirable stock. And now they are reaping the fruits of their toil, and endurance, and patience, and valour. Their land is fetching prices not to be surpassed in the colony, and is rising weekly in value. Settlers are coming from Canterbury and England, and a boom is at hand.

MOUNT EGMONT.

Very different is the reception given to 'labour' at New Plymouth and in other parts. Mr Courtney's party, consisting of some families and a number of young men come out to work, were welcomed at a social party, in St. Mark's schoolroom. The room was crammed. There was no sitting room, and numbers had to stand. The entertainment consisted of music, songs, recitations and speeches. The songs were enthusiastically encored, rather to my surprise, as I am sure that any church choir in Auckland could produce at least three voices far and away superior to the best of the New Plymouth singers. They were certainly not up to the average chorus singers in Auckland. [N.B.—I don't say this for the sake of flattering the Aucklanders. I detest Auckland.] One gentleman sang 'The Gallants of England.' Great Heavens! When I thought of Mr Knox's rendering of that famous song, I wondered whether the gentleman had ever heard it *sung*. He warbled it. It was as soothing as a nursery rhyme, and yet he was encored! And then he came on and sang a local parody on 'Far, far away.' This was irresistibly comic, and suited his plaintive and feeble voice exactly. When he sang, that before the breakwater was finished the present generation would be 'far, far away,' and pointed his finger and lifted his eyes to the ceiling, there were shouts of laughter, and when he sang that the skippers of the steamers that called in at Waitara wished the bar of that port 'far far away,' and pointed downwards, there was another roar. I thought that he might have given us another verse about the debenture-holders who are 'far, far away,' but he didn't. After the songs and the speeches, in which some very interesting anecdotes of old times were narrated, we had tea, coffee, and cocoa, and cakes. And ye gods! what nice cakes they were! I have a tender affection for sweet things, though I am an old man now, and certainly those New Plymouth cakes were good, very, very good. And they were served by smiling and lovely young ladies, who would, I feel certain, speedily console tender-hearted new chums who were lamenting 'the girl they left behind them.' In fact I saw the process going on in one or two cases in a most satisfactory way.

Now in Auckland this would all have ended in a dance, but nothing of the kind seemed contemplated. I stopped until the feeding was nearly over, and I never saw any attempt to clear away the seats, and did not hear of any dance, and as I lodged next door, I should certainly have heard it, or of it. But there was a somewhat Puritanical look about the elderly parties which made one fancy that dancing would not be quite aproved of. The young people, too, seemed far more respectful in their manner than is usual in the larger towns, and I should think would not, as a rule, go out without their parents' consent.

I never saw a single person the worse for liquor during the nine days I was there, including Saturday, when the town is crowded by country visitors. Altogether I was delighted with my visit, delighted with the people and delighted with the country. But this article would not be believed to be mine if I did not find fault with something, and here it is. The people are too healthy. I did not pick up a single fee.

WHAT IS LOVE?

BY A WOMAN.

'WHAT is love?' Love is very much the creature of impulse. One cynic of about 30, who has seen all of life and exhausted it, announces that there is no such thing. Another aged philosopher, who has seen about twenty-three summers, thinks that love is of little use unless 'a woman had been everywhere and seen everything and could make it interesting for a fellow.'

A young woman with delicious blue eyes and brown hair says that 'Love is heavenly,' but then she has only been engaged twenty-four hours, and her experience is limited to a solitaire diamond ring and a bunch of orchids. A little woman who has been married eight years and who is the proud possessor of two pairs of twins, announced 'That love was all very well in its way, and that the first year or two of your married life you were always devotedly fond of Charlie, but when it came to real satisfaction, give her babies!' Nobody denied her her privilege. A man about sixty, who really knew what he was talking about, said that 'love was like champagne—every fresh glass seemed the best;' while a bachelor of forty-five said: 'you know it is very nice to have a little woman fond of you, and all that sort of thing, but never allow yourself to get fond of her; you will spoil her.' Inasmuch as everybody knew that he was under the complete control of a woman who weighed about ninety pounds, it was more than charming to hear him make this announcement.

For my own part, I think love is very much like hokey-pokey ice cream. The day is warm, the sign is attractive, you stand and read, 'Hokey-pokey ice cream, only one half penny a square.' You are weary, you are warm, you feel in your pocket, you find the coin, you know that you are going to get a delicious mouthful that will make you oh! so happy! You walk up to the cart where love—I mean hokey-pokey ice cream—is sold; you lay down your penny; you demand your square. It is given to you on a piece of brown paper; it looks fascinating; you walk back to the pavement and you conclude not to take it down in a gulp, but to enjoy it by slow mouthfuls. At first it is delightful. The second mouthful is cool, but suggestive of oleomargarine; the third mouthful is waxy and sticky; and then you take the last with a wry face and are disgusted with yourself for buying it; feel that it has upset your heart—I mean your stomach—and that you never want any more again. And you don't, until the next time you are warm and the enticing hokey-pokey comes along to lead you to new loves and new pains.

I regard love as the spring disease of the brain. The system is all upset, and we take sulphur and treacle and spots come out on our faces and we feel generally diabolical. Then the heart and the brain get themselves agitated, and the girls and boys get to thinking themselves the only persons in the world who thoroughly understand the advantages and delights of hokey-pokey ice cream—I mean love—and so they rush out with their complimentary coin seeking whom they may devour. This springtime fancy may last during the summer days, but at last like the hokey-pokey ice cream it disappears in the early autumn and platonics and chestnuts take its place. I feel that I have said all that I can about love. I trust that I have given some tips to the unwary as to the eating of hokey-pokey or love.

THE CHILDREN IN THE STREETS.

THE sweetest sounds in the city wide
Are those when the children shout and call
In the hollow streets at eventide,
When the mellow western shadows fall;
They run and they jump,
They tumble and bump,
In the sounding streets in the evening time.

Many a time I have tripped over Tot,
And broken my shins over Jacks and Jims;
But I went on my way and heeded it not,
For the laugh of a child is the sweetest of hymns;
They scream and they shout,
And they scamper about,
In the joyous streets in the evening time.

But growlers that growl and bachelors old,
Cry out at the game and object to the din;
They snarl and complain, they croak and they scold,
At the child who plays in the streets—it's a sin,
Let them tumble and leap,
Like wee, wee sheep,
In the sounding streets of the evening time.

MELROSE FOOTBALL CLUB, WELLINGTON, THIRD FIFTEEN.

WINNERS OF THIRD JUNIOR CUP FOR 1890-91.

H. Black. F. McCarthy. A. McInnes. A. G. Warwick. C. Campbell. W. Swiney. J. Mildenhall. H. Pearman. D. McCarthy. A. Campbell.
W. Cocks. G. Bristow. W. A. Warwick. R. H. Smith. D. J. Love. J. Morris. A. Church.
L. Johnson. F. Martin.

Wrigglesworth & Binns, Well

BACK ROW.—Mr Webb. Tepene. Wi Hape. Mr J. Thornton. Hawkins. D. Ellison. W. Williams.
MIDDLE ROW.—Luscford. Kahene. Friday. Stuart. Hiroa. Andrew. Haka.
FRONT ROW.—James. Morgan. Paul. Matthews. Paul. W. Taipa.

TE AUTE COLLEGE FOOTBALL REPRESENTATIVES, 1891.

Standish and Preece, photo., Chch.

FUNNY NAMES.

A Somerset House clerk has lately declared that the tedium of his labour on the registry of births and deaths is often relieved by coming across a humorous juxtaposition of names. There is, indeed, a good deal of humour in the Somerset House Registry; the fun consisting in an odd or barbarous collocation of names. For hours the eye of the clerk will roam over reams of dull proprietary in such names as Henry Wilson, George Williams, or Samuel Smith; and then the face of the clerk will be covered with a smile as he comes across 'Ether' for the front name attached to the surname of 'Spray.'

It may seem strange, but it is certainly true, that entered in the books is 'foot-bath,' which must be written in capitals, 'FOOT-BATH,' as really the name of a fellow-creature. 'River Jordan' is another case in point. Mr Jordan had a child to name, and, like a free-born Briton, he claimed his right to name it as he pleased. Unfortunately, the name he selected has left the sex of the child rather doubtful. Mr 'Anthistle' had a daughter to name, and he must be forgiven for giving her the Christian names 'Rose Shamrock.' 'Rose Shamrock Anthistle,' is a young lady whose names must please any patriotic man. Another happy father who gave his innocent offspring the names 'Arthur Wellesley Wellington Waterloo Cox,' behaved rather unfairly to the infant, as he pledged him to a career of greatness. The baby must have had some difficulty in understanding the obligations imposed upon him. Probably Master 'Arthur,' etc. etc., found it difficult to live up to his names, and despairingly endured an existence which gave no promise beyond mediocrity. Miss 'Fanny Amelia Lucy Ann Rebecca Frost O'Connor Douall Luck Holberry Duffy Oastler Hill' it is to be hoped has realized all the expectations formed of her when she received her baptismal names, somewhere about the time of the Chartist agitation. One lady is actually going about with six-and-twenty 'front names'—one for each letter of the alphabet in its proper order, as 'Ann Bertha Cecilia,' and so on down to 'Xenophon, Yetty, and Zeus.'

Some children have been rather cruelly named, in a manner which forever reminds them that they have made a mistake or committed a fault in coming into the world. Thus, 'One Too Many Harry,' or 'Not Wanted James' may be happy young men; but if they are, it is in spite of their names. 'That's It, Charlie,' or 'Who'd Have Thought It, Tom,' are names which certainly give utterance to a mild surprise.

TE AUTE COLLEGE FOOTBALL TEAM, NAPIER.

(SEE ILLUSTRATIONS, PAGE 412).

This team went South a few weeks ago as far as Christchurch, playing the various clubs *en route* both ways, and altogether had a very enjoyable and successful tour. The boys, as will be noticed from the photo, are mostly Maoris or half-castes, and as is the usual rule with natives, are very enthusiastic players. They were under the charge of Mr Thornton, one of the masters, who is to be complimented on their good conduct throughout the whole of the trip.

The following were the principal matches played:—

July 7—Defeated the Christchurch Club by 6 points to 3.
July 11—Defeated by Canterbury College by 13 points (4 goals and a try) to 8 points (2 goals and 2 tries).
July 17—Defeated Poneke Club at Wellington by 5 points (1 goal and two tries) to 'love.'
July 20—Drew with Wellington Club after a most exciting match, no score being made by either side.
July 22—Defeated at Masterton by 11 points (3 goals and two tries) to 1 try.

During their stay in the City of the Plains they were photographed by Messrs Standish and Preece, to whom we are indebted for the accompanying picture.

MELROSE FOOTBALL CLUB THIRD FIFTEEN.

(SEE ILLUSTRATION, PAGE 412.)

The competition for the 'third-class Cup' was instituted by the Wellington Football Club in 1889 for the purpose of encouraging junior football. The handsome Challenge Cup which was handed to the managing committee carried with it the condition that the trophy should become the property of a team winning it twice in succession or three times at intervals. The competition excited keen interest, and after a series of matches the Union's second fifteen were declared the winners for 1889, they having played 12 matches, won 11, and drew 1, the Melrose team (present winners) being second. In 1890 the same two teams contested the premiership, and were so well matched that a deciding match had to be played, the Melrose eventually winning a good game by a goal to nil. Their record for the season was 10 matches played, 9 won, 1 lost, scoring 35 points to 5, the Unions being second with 8 wins, 2 losses.

This season the team made a determined effort to win the cup outright, and as a result of consistent training and practice, finished first with eight wins and a draw, scoring 53 points to nil—a really fine record. Three teams tied for second place, the Union team being unrepresented. The win of the Melrose team was, considering the position of the Club, most meritorious, and no small amount of credit is due to their captain for the way in which he worked the team. We are indebted to Messrs Wrigglesworth and Binns for the accompanying excellent photo group of the team.

The diplomate who said that tale-bearers could not occupy high places never saw a monkey go for a cocoanut-tree.

MOUNT MATAWHAURA, HEAD OF LAKE ROTOITI.

(FROM A SKETCH BY MR T. RYAN.

LETTER TO A YOUNG MAN.

My Dear Esslemont,—I only returned from Neversuch this afternoon, and found your note awaiting me at the Club, where I had unfortunately omitted to leave instructions for forwarding letters in my absence. I am not in any way surprised to hear that you are in love, and, indeed, this is a complaint that all healthy young men of your age should be chronically troubled with—teething in childhood, love in youth, indigestion in middle life, and gout for old age.

But why connect your present attack unnecessarily with matrimony? Marriage and suicide are, I admit, equally infallible cures for the disease; but then are these remedies not somewhat too complete in their operation?

What is it that principally attracts you towards Miss S——? Her beauty?—that is evanescent. Her character?—it needs verification. Her individuality?—a quality much apt to become troublesome later. There are psycheial periods when every woman not absolutely repulsive is more or less attractive to individual members of the other sex. There are other periods also when the imagination is less ecstatic, and the judgment more temperate.

Fascinating women are exceedingly plentiful, and you cannot possibly, of course, contrive to marry them all. Pause, then, before you make a definite choice. Young ladies nowadays—in our particular sphere of life—regard marriage purely as a profession. All their attractions are artistically suggested previous to the legal ratification of the contract, and it is only afterwards that the blemishes are generally revealed.

Subdued love, active respect, and mutual consideration are the three ideal ingredients of happy married life. I invariably suspect ardent admiration—it is a passion, and therefore transient. You may flirt persistently, but with average good fortune you can only marry once. A good wife is the best gift the Fates can bestow; but a young man like yourself, with wealth, title, and leisure cannot reasonably expect such a privilege. You are too desirable not to be deceived. Besides, the very conditions of your life are sufficient to demoralise even the very best of women. Continual frivolity, constant glorification, no interest but that of the pursuit of pleasure, praise, and popularity. Do you not perceive that these things are inconsistent with the happiness of home? They depend exclusively on external circumstances, and, therefore, the very instant you and your wife retire into private life you must necessarily become the hopeless victims of ennui. To be happy in matrimony your mutual interests should be centred at home and not abroad, and this is a condition which the luxury of your surroundings does not permit of.

Of Miss S—— I admit I know but very little. She is pretty, apparently amiable, and chatters and chaffs much as other girls do of her age and social sphere. That she is occupied in trying to secure, not only a husband, but, commercially speaking, a substantial one, there cannot be any question for doubt whatever. Nor can it either be denied that you would precisely be—also from a commercial point of view—the kind of husband most adapted to her taste. But balance well the happiness you anticipate in the near future with the possibility of annoyances at a period a little more remote. You will give her a permanent and prominent position in life, and you will also secure for her the enjoyment of innumerable luxuries. Will she eventually utilise your wealth to attract the envy of other women, and even the admiration of other men? Will not the position which you may give her be in itself an almost incessant source of temptation? Will not the inevitable abatement in your active affection after marriage, in her experience, increase the pressure of this temptation?

It is, I presume, in my capacity of a man of the world that you seek my advice. Well, then, I warn you seriously to consider both carefully and judiciously before you take so definite a step. All is not gold that glitters, and every woman we love is not necessarily lovable; indeed, but too often it is our own disordered imagination that endows them with those identical qualities which we most particularly admire.

Experience daily teaches me that if it is good for poor men to marry, it is infinitely better for rich men to remain single. A poor man can only secure love in his youth—a rich man may purchase it whenever he so pleases.—*Truth.*

Neither of Them Knew.—Whoever reads the following must own to a feeling of respect for the honest king. King Frederick VI. of Denmark, while travelling through Jutland, one day entered a village school, and found the children lively and intelligent, and quite ready to answer his questions. 'Well, youngsters,' he said, 'what are the names of the greatest kings of Denmark?' With one accord they cried out 'Canute the Great, Waldemar, and Christian IV.' Just then a little girl, to whom the schoolmaster had whispered something, stood up and raised her hand. 'Do you know another?' asked the King. 'Yes; Frederick VI.' 'What great act did he perform?' The girl hung her head and stammered out, 'I don't know.' 'Be comforted, my child,' said the King; 'I don't know, either.'

A Journalist on Journalism.—It is a wearing, tearing business. You get nothing out of a newspaper excepting what you take from it. I am bent on it that neither of my sons shall go into journalism. The eldest is practising medicine, and the other two are still boys. There is nothing in it for a man in comparison with almost any other profession. Take Mr Dana, for instance. Think of his vast accomplishments. There is no other man to my knowledge that equals him in brilliancy and variety of attainment, and I've known a great many brilliant and versatile men. He is a fine writer and a clever editor; and have you heard him speak? He's a splendid speaker. Now, such a man leaves no posthumous fame; only a tradition. A great journalist is like a great actor, he leaves no coffin. When he dies, all his brilliant writing is stored away on newspaper files, that nobody ever looks up. During his life, his influence is only indirect. He doesn't get credit for what he does.—Henry Watterson.

THE MAN WHO GOT IN AT BRUGES.

PORTMAN BROWN was a prosperous elderly gentleman, of quiet ways and fixed habits. A small circle of familiar friends supplied all his social needs, he concerned himself little with the rest of humanity, belonging to the class who can live side by side in the same street with a fellow-creature all their lives without so much as knowing him by sight.

Amongst Mr Brown's fixed habits was a yearly tour. But he did not take it, like most people, in the summer months, but in the early spring. Regularly, as the first week in March came round, he went abroad. A common-place tour in beaten tracks, following the usual routine of travel in steamers and trains, and lodging at palatial hotels. No adventure had ever broken the uneventful record of these tours for over a quarter of a century; no more exciting incident than an unusual overcharge at some hotel had come within Portman Brown's personal experience.

In 18—, when March came round, he made the usual preparations for his yearly tour in his usual way. On the evening before his departure, an old City friend, Mr Goldsmith, dined with him at his house in Harley-street. When about to leave, Goldsmith drew a small case from his pocket.

'I brought this with me, on the chance that you were going to Lucerne. You will do me a great favour by giving it into my brother's hands there. It contains a brilliant of such rare value that I could entrust it to few. It will give you no trouble being so small—there is no risk, as no one will know you have such a thing with you.'

'Anything to oblige a friend,' said Brown, lightly. 'I would take the Koh i-noor as a travelling-companion under the same circumstances.'

The two men were standing at the study window, the blind of which happened to be up. Whilst in the act of placing the case in his pocket, Brown's eyes wandered to the street. At the moment the light from a lamp in front of the door struck on the face of a man who was passing—or had he been standing there?—a peculiar dark face, with straight black whiskers.

The man moved on; Brown drew back hastily.

'None of your people knew that you were giving me this commission?' he inquired of Goldsmith.

'Not a soul, my dear fellow; the matter is entirely between you and me. My head clerk alone knows of the existence of the brilliant.'

'What is he like?'

'Like you, like me. Respectability itself! What are you thinking of?'

'Has he black whiskers?'

'Grey as a badger's—white even! But, bless my soul, what is the matter? What do you mean? Have you seen any one?'

'A man was standing there by the lamp-post as you handed me the jewel-case. He was apparently looking at us, and might have heard what we said.'

'Then he must be in the street still,' said Goldsmith, throwing up the window and putting his head out; Brown did the same. The night was bright. Not a soul was to be seen anywhere—the street was quite deserted.

'A neighbour or a neighbour's butler. He has gone into some house.' Goldsmith withdrew from the window. 'In any case, no one could have heard, nor, I should think, have seen us. As for my clerk, Travers, I boast myself an honest man, but I don't hesitate to acknowledge that he is the honester of the two. Your imagination is playing you tricks. I didn't know you were given that way. Perhaps you would rather not take charge of the brilliant?'

But Brown would not hear of this. Already shamefaced over his hasty and somewhat ridiculous suspicions, he dismissed them abruptly.

'Not for worlds would I give up the charge,' he said. 'I'm not such a fool as I seem. The man probably is one of the new neighbours; there are a good many new-comers in the street.'

Portman Brown set out next morning for Lucerne *via* Brussels and the Rhine, staying a few days at Ostend on the way. He took his place in the undeniable comfort of a first-class carriage in the express to Brussels with a mind as free from care and uneasiness as elderly gentleman ever possessed. A life of plain undiluted prose had up to this kept his imaginative faculties in complete abeyance; lunatics, hypnotists, murderers, etc., as possible fellow-travellers had never entered his mind. As a rule, indeed, his fellow-travellers no more excited his interest or notice than his near neighbours at home. On this occasion he was just conscious, in leaving the station at Ostend, that an elderly couple were the other occupants of the carriage; he merely gave a passing glance from his newspaper at the man, a stranger, who got in at Bruges and sat down on the opposite seat.

Nearly an hour had passed before Brown laid down his paper and glanced round the carriage. He was thinking of the Parliamentary debate he had been reading, and of the lost tradition of good breeding in the House of Commons, and not at all of his fellow-travellers, when, on a sudden, his eye caught that of the man opposite curiously fixed on him. Each becoming aware of the other's glance, withdrew his at once, not, however, before Brown's attention had been engaged. Was the man a complete stranger as he had supposed? Had he not seen the face before? And when? Where? Or was it merely a case of chance likeness to some acquaintance? Parliamentary shortcomings passed from his mind whilst he racked his brain on this subject. The face was peculiar, with straight black whiskers. During Brown's furtive study of him from behind the *Times* the stranger turned his head sharply, the light from the window struck full on his face. With the suddenness of a flash Brown's memory was illumined. The man opposite was the same who had stood in the lamplight outside the window in Harley-street. There was no doubt of it, no mistaking the unusual face of the 'shadower' in the station. Brown remained on the platform until the last moment, then, with a fervent sigh of relief, he entered the railway carriage. The train was just moving off, when the door was suddenly opened, a breathless porter dashed in a hand-bag and parcel of rugs, followed by a still more breathless traveller. The door was shut, the engine shrieked the last departing signal, the train moved from Bale station. In one corner of the carriage sat Brown; in another—the farthest on the opposite side—sat the man with the black whiskers.

How often—in fancy—we place ourselves in heroic situations, and there—in fancy—act with invariable heroism. It is quite different, however, when the heroic situation is a reality; our consequent actions are liable to be quite different, too. The position in which Brown now found himself might well have appalled the bravest. He was alone in a railway carriage, with a scoundrel who had followed him from London; Brown had utterly abandoned surmise since last night, and accepted each idea as an absolute certainty—the object in this scoundrel's view was the capture of the valuable diamond, which was at that very moment on Brown's person. A long journey lay before them and Brown was unarmed. At this review of the situation his heart sank; he drew back instinctively into the corner. His eyes suddenly met those of the other man; a deep flush suffused his face, which seemed to find a reflection in the other's. Brown hastily took up Baedeker and affected to read, the man opposite simultaneously did the same. A transparent unreality on both sides. Brown's furtive glances invariably caught—quickly withdrawn though they were—those of the other man levelled on him. Whilst this went on, the slightest change of position, the least movement in the opposite corner made Brown start. Might it not herald the approach of danger? A spring, a rush, the attack!

'ROB ROY,' AT WELLINGTON OPERA HOUSE.

The tension was terrible; to remain inactive almost impossible. Brown had an inspiration, as a man in extremity sometimes has. Though he was not armed, he would pretend to be. That might do something; produce hesitation or delay, at least. Accordingly, he deliberately assumed a bold, even threatening demeanour. Casting a truculent glance across the carriage, he plunged his hand into his pocket, affecting to grasp an imaginary revolver. To his intense delight the ruse took immediate effect. The man opposite gave an unmistakable start, and shrank back into his corner. So far, so good. But how to keep up the pretence? What to do next? At this crisis the whistling of the engine suddenly distracted Brown. Good Heavens! He had forgotten the long tunnel! They were coming to it now! His eyes, with a quick, involuntary movement, sought the lamp. It was not lighted!

Entrapped! Doomed! The wildest thoughts rushed confusedly to his brain. With a shriek the train plunged noisily into the tunnel, into darkness. The din and rattle outside contrasted sharply with the silence within the carriage. Crouched in his corner, Brown, his hearing sharpened to agonising acuteness, listened for a stir, a rustle, the sound of human breathing drawing nearer to him. Every moment fancy detected a step, a stealthy, cat-like movement. His imagination after the neglect of a life-time, was now taking ample revenge. Uncontrolled and uncontrollable were its wild flights. Every railway murder of which he had ever read flashed before him with all the ghastly details. The spring upon the victim, the struggle, the death-stroke the body thrown out on the rails. How idly he had read of these things happening to other men! But now to realize himself as the victim; his, the body! Absolute panic seized upon him; hardly knowing what he was doing, he tried softly to open the door. It was locked, however. His movements must have been heard, there was a stir at the other end of the carriage. The fatal moment had come, the assassin was advancing to the attack! In the extremity of his terror Brown sank swiftly on the floor and crawled under the seat.

For what length of time he crouched there half-stifled and scarcely daring to breathe, Brown knew not. Agony cannot measure time. A sudden and extraordinary rush of air made his heart first stand still, and then sent the blood coursing wildly through his veins. The far door was swinging open. Something had happened! And what!

His straining ears detected no sound but the outside rattle and roar of the train through the tunnel; within all was silence. He remained listening in intense excitement and amazement until the hope which had hardly dared to stir in his breast grew into vigorous life. He was alone in the carriage! He was saved! Deliverance had come miraculously—why and how, he knew not.

The tunnel was coming to an end; light began to stream into the carriage. Cautiously and slowly Brown peeped from under the seat. He was quite alone. The man had disappeared.

The fact of his escape was, at the time, enough for Brown. Afterwards, in thinking over the adventure, he surmised that the man, deceived by his (Brown's) attempt to turn the handle of the door, had followed in supposed pursuit.

At the station, just outside the tunnel, Brown—alighting almost before the train had stopped—changed his place for one in a crowded second-class compartment. A few hours later the brilliant was safely transferred from his charge into that of Goldsmith's brother at Lucerne.

The rest of his tour was uneventful; he neither heard of nor saw his persecutor again.

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Brown's adventure made quite a sensation on his return to London. He was the hero of the hour in his circle. Whether or not he related the circumstances exactly, as here set forth, need not be mentioned. His friend Jones, amongst others, gave a dinner-party in his honour. Brown, with his usual punctuality, was the first of the guests to arrive.

'By the way,' Jones said chaffingly to him, as the two stood chatting together on the hearth-rug, 'You must look to your laurels to-night, Brown. Do you know Leroy, your neighbour in Harley-street?'

'Never saw the man in my life. What's the joke?'

'A rival adventure! In Switzerland, too, and culminating in a tunnel—not sure that it wasn't the Olten one also!'

'Dear me! What an extraordinary coincidence!'

'In his case it was a lunatic, not a robber. He was shadowed at hotels and in trains. You must hear the story from his own lips; he's dining here to-night. The climax is terrific. Shut into a railway carriage alone with a lunatic, aforesaid lunatic armed with a revolver. A long tunnel, an extinguished lamp, the lunatic crawling in the darkness to the attack, an escape by the skin of the teeth. Leroy had sufficient presence of mind to open the door, and pretend to get out, in reality crawling under the seat instead. The ruse saved his life. He supposes that he fainted in the stifling air, for when he was next conscious the train had left Olten and he was alone in the carriage, from which all traces of the lunatic had disappeared.'

Jones was so engrossed in telling the story, he did not remark its curious and startling effect on Brown.

Just then the door was thrown open, and the footman announced 'Mr Leroy.'

Jones, springing forward with effusion to greet the new-comer, led him gushingly up to Brown.

'You two must know each other,' he said.

And they did. The recognition was instantaneous on both sides. With a gasp, Brown stared in speechless wonder on the man with the black whiskers, whilst Leroy started back aghast on encountering the gaze of the lunatic!

THE CUSTOMS OFFICER OUTWITTED.

THE famous Hungarian, Count Zichy, who lived on a princely income in Vienna, was, in his younger days, well known all over Europe on account of the bets he made and generally won. Once, when there was a heavy duty imposed on every head of cattle entering the Austrian capital, he made a bet that he would carry a lamb duty free through the gate of Vienna, and that the gate keeper, who acts as imperial officer, adjusting and receiving the duty would be glad to let him pass.

Next morning, the Count, disguised in the clothes of a butcher, his butcher knife in his hand, his shirt-sleeves rolled up, and carrying a heavy sack on his shoulder, made his way to one of the fashionable gates of Vienna. But the watchful officer soon espied him.

'What have you in that sack, fellow?'

'A dog, sir.'

'A dog? Dog yourself. Down with that sack. I know fellows like you sometimes carry dogs in sacks through the gates, and sell them for mutton in the town. Down with your sack.'

'But it is nothing but a dog, and a bad dog too. I will——'

'Never mind what you will. Down with your sack.'

The officer pulled the sack from the supposed butcher's shoulder, cut the string, and sure enough out jumped one of the biggest dogs in Vienna. The dog rushed against the faithful Government servant, landed him several steps away in the gutter, and then left for parts unknown. After him went the young butcher shaking his big knife before the eyes of the frightened officer, and exclaiming:

'I'll settle you after I catch that dog.'

About two hours afterwards the face of the butcher again appeared before the raised window of the gate officer.

'I have just caught that dog again. Would you like to look at him?'

'Get away. Get out, you and your horrid dog.' And with a crash the window went down, and the smiling butcher entered Vienna.

But no dog was that time in his sack, but the fattest lamb that could be found in the suburbs of the capital.

THE OPERA OF 'ROB ROY' AT WELLINGTON.

NOTHING probably surprises a reflecting English person more than the extraordinary number of local entertainments which from year's end to year's end are organized for the delectation of the public of the towns of New Zealand, and the liberality with which, even in hard times, these are patronised. One merit which a town of small or moderate size has over a large city, in democratic communities like these of Australasia, is that of enabling much local ability of a moderate nature which would otherwise be entirely overlooked in a great crowd, to become satisfactorily employed for conducing to the general amusement. It also has the effect of educing exceptional talent, which, alas! so soon as it becomes conscious of its own value, immigrates to other larger centres, from whence it only transiently re-visits its old home. Of late years the formation of amateur opera companies in our towns here has become a notable feature of the life of the inhabitants. There is not one of the larger sort which does not once, and often twice or more times every year, enjoy an exhibition of this diverting and recreating nature.

Wellington is the last place which has been the scene of an operatic *divertissement*. There the musical drama 'Rob Roy,' from Sir Walter Scott's novel of that name, was produced by a number of amateurs at the Opera House recently in aid of the funds of the Boy's Institute and St. Joseph's Orphanage. The production was on the whole most creditable. Of Mr A. S. Paterson it may be said that he made in every respect a typical Rob Roy M'Gregor. Possessing wondrous length and strength of limb, he looked the bold outlaw as if to the manner born, his make-up and dressing in the part being perfect. Mr Paterson's voice and figure are both eminently suited to the character he assumed and in Miss Letham who sustained the part of Helen M'Gregor, he had a fitting consort. Miss Letham quite astonished those who had only previously seen her in comedy. Francis and Rashleigh Osbaldistone were respectively played by Messrs E. J. Hill and H. E. Nicholls. The former gentleman was in good voice, and with Miss Samuel rendered the incidental singing which falls to the *rôles* of Francis and Diana Vernon capitally. Mr Morris Fox, that sterling actor, doubled the parts of Owen and Major Galbraith, and in each character he was successful. To Messrs John and A. W. Newton were entrusted the responsible character parts of Bailie Nicol Jarvie and Dougal Cratur. The remainder of the cast was as follows:—Captain Thornton, Mr W. Sim; M'Stuart, Mr J. M. Nairn; Saunders Wylie, Mr A. M'Bain; Sergeant, Mr F. Bacon; Robert and Hamish, Masters Lawson and Newton; Andrew Fairservice, Mr A. Ballingall; Mattie, Miss Newton; Martha, Miss Greig; Jean Macalpine and Hostess, Miss Jessie Newton. The realistically beautiful scenery, including 'Old Glasgow Bridge by Night,' 'Clachan of Aberfoil,' 'Pass of Loch Ard,' and 'Rob Roy's Cave,' with 'Loch Lomond by Moonlight,' did infinite credit to Mr J. M. Nairn, the artist, while the choruses and the individual singing throughout, together with the orchestral music, reflected the highest amount of credit upon the conductor, Mr M'Duff Boyd.

The sketches are from the pen of Mr J. S. Allen, our Wellington artist.

THE 'DOUGAL CRATUR.

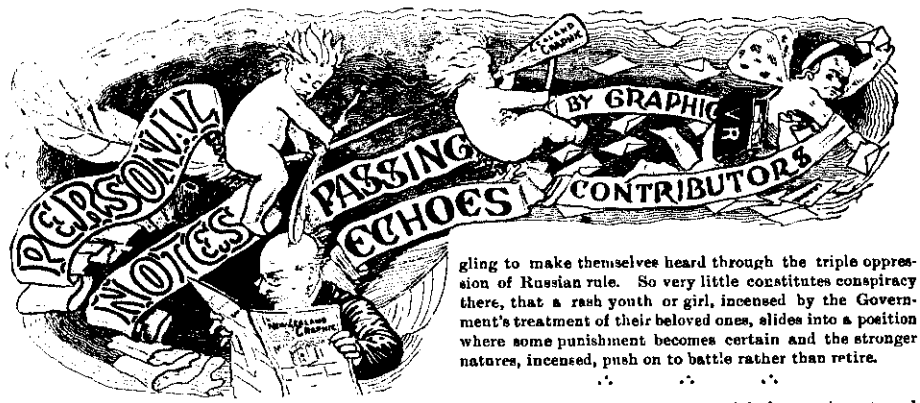
THE EASE OF AN INN.

LET there be ever so great ease, plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everyone should be easy in a private house, in the nature of things it cannot be. There must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests, the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him; and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome; and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.—DR. JOHNSON.

BUSY WOMEN.

A RECENT organization, in which some of the most distinguished ladies in New York are actively engaged, is a street-cleaning association. Its object is sufficiently stated in its name. In order to secure neatness and cleanness in the city streets, which are so often disgracefully neglected, these women have invited other prominent citizens, both men and women to join them in enforcing the city ordinances with regard to cleanliness, and the tact and energy which they exhibit are harbingers of success.

'ROB ROY,' BY WELLINGTON AMATEURS.



The New Zealand Graphic

AND LADIES' JOURNAL.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1891.

In our issue of the 18th of April last appeared, under the title of 'A Political Devotee,' an account of the trial of the last most prominent woman in the ranks of Russian Nihilism. Her name was Sophia Günsberg. Early in last November she was condemned to be hanged. There was an agitation got up in New York on her behalf, and the Czar, wishing not to offend American susceptibilities, commuted her sentence to solitary imprisonment for life. A recent cablegram states that she has committed suicide, presumably at Schlüsselberg, Lake Ladoga, near the Russian capital, where she was confined. In the matter of this report the world is, of course, at the mercy of the Russian Government. It is clearly to its interest that a woman round whom endless conspiracies might group themselves in the event of Russia going to war should be dead or supposed dead. The prisoners in the clutches of a mighty despotism sink from sight, and their fellow beings hearing that they are dead, know not whether it is true or whether it is not by foul or furtive methods that the welcome disembarrassment has been procured.

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The wonder is that the Russian Government should allow any knowledge of the fate of Sophia Günsberg to leak out, unless it were for the purpose of crushing the hopes of those who may have been bent upon liberating her. 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church,' and of political conspiracy, which in the case of the Nihilists represents the revolt of a small educated class against the abuses of a tyrannical and obsolete Government, the same may be said. The spectacle of complete self-sacrifice even in a conspiratress like Sophia Günsberg, excites sympathy in the minds of all who breathe the air of popular freedom, and her tyrannicidal aims are condoned by the plea of extreme provocation. On all who consider the question of Russian despotism seriously, the example of these desperate Russian women, with their nerve of steel and their unflinching determination to shake off the incubus of mis-government at all costs, is most baneful for the Czar and his advisers. So conscious are the latter of it that they extend no mercy whatever to a female Nihilist. The influence of women like Sophia Perolfskaya and Sophia Günsberg is such as cannot be counterbalanced by the possession of countless legions.

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Nothing is gained in this world without agitation, even in a free country. The secret of reform everywhere is ceaseless publication and protest, the advertisement of the new principles and the public condemnation of the old ones. Now this is exactly what the Russian Government will not allow, and hence the Nihilists are driven to assassination as a means of keeping their cause before their fellows. It is a lurid sort of advertising—not brutal, malicious homicide. Why a Czar who collects and lets loose a million of his soldiers to cut the throats of his neighbours in the effort to rob Turkey of Constantinople should not be held as culpable as those who say to him, 'Grant us reform or die by secret assassination,' is not very intelligible. He is ready to slay countless thousands in the pursuit of his state-craft, while they only desire to slay him in the pursuit of theirs. It is a difference of might and a difference of opinion, that is all.

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The Nihilists who declare war against the Czar's person, march to a more certain fate than do soldiers on their way to battle. Nihilists who can be tracked do not hope for mercy if the Russian Government can lay its hands upon them. To be suspected of doing acts and using words which in other lands are virtuous and patriotic is enough to entail a loss of liberty or of life in the enthusiasts who are struggling to make themselves heard through the triple oppression of Russian rule. So very little constitutes conspiracy there, that a rash youth or girl, incensed by the Government's treatment of their beloved ones, slides into a position where some punishment becomes certain and the stronger natures, incensed, push on to battle rather than retire.

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Sophia Günsberg the Jewess, was of the latter. Accustomed from earliest youth to see the people of her race persecuted, and finding sympathetic allies in the discontented section of the educated Russians, she threw herself heart and soul into the torrent of agitation. There are only two courses open to liberal-minded persons in Russia, either to surreptitiously infect the masses with their ideas, or to try and blow up the Czar. Discovery in doing either is fatal. The Government keeps a strict watch over the school-teachers so as to prevent their creating freedom of thought among the children, and also a strict censorship over the press. Hence, energetic spirits can only give expression to their feelings by publicly protesting. This protest is to the Czar, and through him to the whole world. It runs shortly thus: 'Give some form of constitutional government and freedom to speak of abuses, or else be blown up.'

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With very partial assistance Sophia Günsberg is stated to have organized a formidable plot, which for two years past has caused great apprehension to the Czar and his counsellors. As she well knew, she went forward to a more certain fate than the soldier who advances towards the deadly imminent breach. There is a nobility about such hopeless self-sacrifice. There are infinite chances against succeeding, discovery means the loss of everything, and the success is not personal but for the cause.

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For this Sophia Günsberg toiled and now she has won the crown of martyrdom in the battle between ancient despotism and modern free-thought. She was young, she was supremely beautiful, and she had a nerve of steel which fascinated men into following her to destruction. It is women such as she who keep Nihilism alive, for they can drag on hesitating men to certain death with their eyes wide open. Hence the Russian Government would not extend to her any mercy. For ten months she endured, looking helplessly through the narrow windows of her prison, the prospect of a life-long confinement alone. The sensation of realizing that one is alone for ever and the coming prey of inevitable insanity, must be so awful as to speedily resign the mind to the idea of suicide. In such a case self-destruction is merely an indication of the sane desire to avoid madness, and not madness itself. We are now told that Sophia Günsberg has committed suicide. But there is a darker aspect to the case. It is possible that the Russian Government may have dreaded her escaping and destroyed her. Such deeds have often been done before. Certain it is, however, that her blood will cry aloud from the cell, for deliberate self-renunciation such as hers has never lacked imitators in the chequered history of mankind.

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There is a certain sort of individual everywhere who is the object of much misplaced sympathy on the part of the gentler sex. It is the 'rogue-bachelor.' The rogue-bachelor is a male who ought from his years to know better than remain unmarried after he has reached the mature age of thirty or thereabouts. If he is under sixty and well preserved, the rogue-bachelor is more of a rogue-'lion' than a rogue elephant, in the sense that he is less dangerous to others than others are to him. There is always a lurking feeling in the minds of the ladies that the rogue-bachelor who has anything to recommend him must be existing miserably because of some lamentable miscarriage in the great love affair of his early life.

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Seeing that no satisfactory existence is conceivable without love, it is but natural to conclude that the rogue-bachelor pursues his solitary lot cheered only by the hope of re-union hereafter to her of whom he was in youth bereft, owing to the cruelty of circumstances beyond his own control. The thought that the combined charms of countless women are capable of being resisted is not to be entertained, and the survival of a rogue-bachelor is therefore attributed either to the fact that his own true love died, or that her father wouldn't let him have her, or that she wouldn't have him, or that he couldn't screw up his courage to the popping-point for fear of a refusal. Just as a lighthouse is a standing stumbling-block and rock of offence to the mighty ocean which beats and lashes itself around the base, so is the surviving bachelor a sort of living protest against the charms of the sex, and one whose bad example, seeing he cannot be killed or caught, must be neutralized by some plausible explanation.

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There are also other affecting fictions in connection with the rogue-bachelor, and which adhere to him with wonderful pertinacity. It is that he is ever at war with his landlady, and that he sews on his shirt-buttons himself after the return of each week's washing. Why the rogue-bachelor should necessarily quarrel with his landlady does not appear, unless the wish is father to the thought. The truth is, landladies who succeed in making the rogue-bachelor comfortable without any other ulterior motive of completing his happiness by taking him unto themselves, are regarded as traitors to the cause. Every self-respecting woman is supposed to form part of the universal combination, and to allow the unreclaimed rogue bachelor to exist peacefully in his den is regarded as in some sort treason unto the rest. 'Misguided woman, would you actually make the wretch comfortable?'

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Alas! yes, he is made too comfortable. When he drops in upon a married friend and holds the crying baby, while his friend mends a fracture in his braces to the whirring sound of a sewing machine in the next room, which his friend's wife is wielding in the construction of a new dress for herself, he thinks that the married lot resembles his own in being mixed. Unlike death, it is not absolutely inevitable, but it resembles death in that it conceals much that is unknown, and therefore formidable. Still as there are some women with whom a man will cheerfully tempt death, so there are some women with whom even the rogue-bachelor will cheerfully tempt matrimony. If he ultimately escapes it is owing to premature decease or inevitable age. Given time enough and opportunity, enough he goes the way of most men-folk.

CHORAL IDYLL.

'NEW ZEALANDIA.'

Men, I know a being fair.
CHORUS—Who is she? Who is she?
She's the pet of sun and air.
CHORUS—Can it be! Can it be!
None who've sung of Aphrodité rising glorious from the main
Tell how stately New Zealandia from the womb of ocean came,
CHORUS—New Zealandia! That's her name!

Ages passed, and no man sought her,
CHORUS—Not a lover, not *one* lover?
Yes, *two* constantly did court her,
CHORUS—New Zealandia-like all over.
Daily drew the sun his tribute of hot kisses and went roaming,
While the monster sea kept crawling round her feet with love-sick moaning,
CHORUS—New Zealandia! Woman-owning.

Now she boasts of lovers more,
CHORUS—We are some of those blest fellows.
But she should have countless score.
CHORUS—So she ought, for we're not jealous.
Come then, brothers, chant in cadence sweet and sounding as we go,
Of the health and wealth and beauty New Zealandia has to show.
CHORUS—Ready, brothers, on we go.

Northwards far to Mongonui,
CHORUS—Glow the orange, peach, and lime.
Auckland, o'er thy meadows dewy
CHORUS—Citrons gleam in winter time.
On the fields of Canterburia wheaten-seas wave in the sun,
Over wild Otagan pastures sheep and kine in thousands run.
CHORUS—New Zealandia, blessed one.

On the West her frosted mountains,
CHORUS—Smite the sky and foil the main.
Flowing from them tiny fountains
CHORUS—Swell to rivers in the plain.
Land of bold and placid beauty, land of all the temperate zone,
With its various fruits and breezes, set by Nature thus alone;
CHORUS—For us happy folk to own.

Sing then, brothers, sing in cadence.
CHORUS—Shout we rather—'tis her due.
There would run a world-wide fame hence,
CHORUS—If all but her merits knew.
Rugged pleasures of Helvetia, charms of Andalusian land,
Wait on those who seek the favours poured from New Zealandia's hand.
CHORUS—New Zealandia fair and grand.

MILLIGAN HOGG.

NELSON.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 11.

I wish you could have been here to see 'Mrs Jarley's Waxworks,' which were exhibited in the Theatre. They were just splendid, and the audience was kept in roars of laughter from beginning to end of the performance. Mrs Jarley being incapacitated, her place was ably taken by Mr Pitt, whose ability as a lecturer is undoubted. The first lecture lasted half-an-hour, and during that time the different figures were wound up, oiled, and set in motion. It was then the fun began. The 'laughing boy' (poor creature, he must have been over wound, I should think, to judge from the noise he made) laughed; 'Madame Squalline' sang, the 'Prince put the shoe on the foot of Cinderella;' the 'Executioner beheaded Mary Queen of Scots,' 'Grace Darling rowed her boat,' 'the Chinese giant showed how he had cultivated growth.' Some of the positions in which the different figures stood were most trying, and it was wonderful how still they kept. At the end of the first set of figures there was a character concert, which was very good, the gem being 'Auntie.' This was sung by Miss Sealy, dressed appropriately as an old lady, and having beside her a sweet little 'boy blue.' Another item I liked very much was 'Comin' Through the Rye,' sung by Mrs Percy Adams. 'A Bird in the Hand' was the title of the next song. Misses Sealy, L. Fell, and Heaps appeared dressed as three young maids, and sang the first half of the song in that character, and then to everyone's astonishment, suddenly turned round, and lo! they appeared, or rather their backs, as three old maids with very hideous masks on. It was a most amusing get up. The next portion of the entertainment was more waxworks. This time the figures represented 'Little Jack Horner,' 'Mrs Squeers and one of the boys from Dotheboys Hall,' 'The Sleeping Beauty,' 'Loreley,' 'Organ Grinder,' 'The Dirty Boy,' and Justice O'Hannigan and the Larrikin.' Mrs Squeers seemed determined the boy should have enough brimstone and treacle, and ladled it out generously. There were a great many people present, among them Mrs Watts, wearing a long embossed velvet cloak, small cap; Mrs Percy Adams, pretty pale heliotrope costume; Mrs Booth, dark green merveilleux trimmed with gold; Mrs T. Glasgow, pale shade of grey; Miss Glasgow, black net relieved with red; Mrs J. Sharp, black; Mrs Pitt, black, very pretty little cap; Miss Curtis, beautifully fitting grey tweed; Miss Gibson, crimson cloak; Miss Watson, brown tweed; Mrs J. Wood, brown cloth costume trimmed with fur; Miss Broad, grey and black tweed; Miss Catley, blue cloth; her sister, red cashmere. Mrs and Miss Mackay were also there. They have just returned from a trip to Sydney, and are both looking very well after their change.

There was great excitement at the Boys' College over the play 'Princess Ida,' which was held there on two evenings. The large room at the Boys' College was packed both evenings, and I should say a nice little sum must have been added to their Sports Fund. The play is a most amusing one, and was capitally acted by all. Of the boys, G. Wither was by far the best, and in his character of King Gama, he showed great dramatic ability. H. Moore, as King Hildebrand, was also very amusing; in fact, most of the boys were good, and did great credit to their persevering stage-manager, Mr Cooke. The boys were assisted by three lady amateurs—Misses Watson, Broad, and Richmond, Miss Watson taking the difficult rôle of Princess Ida extremely well, while Misses Broad and Richmond as Lady Psyche and Lady Blanche were both very good. In fact, Mr Cooke is to be congratulated on the undoubted success of the performance. The room was so full, and the gas not being very bright, I found it difficult to make people out, but I saw Mrs Watts, Mrs Percy Adams, Mrs Pitt, Mrs L. Adams, Mrs J. Sharp, Mrs R. Kingdon, Mrs T. Glasgow, Mrs Tomlinson, Mrs Pearson, Mrs Leggatt, Mrs Wood, Mrs J. Wood, Mrs Kenny, Mrs Atkinson, and Mrs Fell, Misses Wood, Jones, L. Fell, Heaps, Sealy, Curtis, Glasgow, Gibson, Gribben, Higgins and Pitt.

The College fifteen have gone to Wellington, where they played football against fifteen from Wanganui and Wellington College, respectively. The Collegiate school fifteen played against them, and this match resulted in a draw, neither side scoring. The next day our boys beat the Wellington College fifteen by fourteen points to five, so I think on the whole their trip was a most successful one. I forgot to tell you that they have been the lucky winners of the Junior Cup this year.

Mrs Levien gave an enjoyable dance to children. I hear there were about seventy children present, and all seemed to enjoy themselves immensely, and when twelve o'clock came they all voted it a very jolly dance.

The Camera Club here are holding an exhibition of their views and photos at the Bishop's School. They certainly have some talented members among them to judge from the very clever pictures some of them have done. It has been open for three days, and on the first evening one of the gentlemen gave an exhibition of his art, taking by flashlight a photo of a well-known resident, and the next evening this was shown us by limelight, as well as a number of views. Although I went three times, I did not have time to see them all properly, and others said the same. We all wished they would allow it to be open for a week, but it was very good of them to let the public view their efforts at all, as they must have gone to great trouble to arrange all their views and photos on screens so beautifully.

We are having the most perfect weather now you can imagine, Bee. The gardens are all looking lovely and bright with the sweet spring flowers. I see the shops are showing their new and tempting spring goods, so I hope soon to have some smart gowns to describe to you.

PHYLLIS.

CHRISTCHURCH.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 9.

Things in the scholastic world somewhat clashed here the other day—a football match between Christ's College and Wanganui, and the breaking up in the evening and presentation of diplomas at the University, and students' social, but both were largely attended, and went off very vigorously. The day was very cold, with some smart showers, so the attendance at the football match was small in comparison. Mrs Worthy most kindly supplied afternoon tea in her dining-room which was much appreciated. She was assisted by a host of girls. The first part of the programme in the evening consisted of songs by Mrs Harrison, Mr W. Day, and Mr C. Turner, and recitations capitally given by two very small boys. Then came the farce 'Little Toddlekins,' which was extremely well done, Upton, who took the title rôle, receiving immense applause. The others were Miss Worthy, Masters Acland, Izard, Bell, and Worthy. It was one of the best breaking-up entertainments they have given. The room was quite full, including the Wanganui team. At the University long before three o'clock the hall was packed, and some of the 'grads' that day must have felt proud of their old colleague and chum, Mr Hay, who occupied the chair as deputy for the Chancellor. The proceedings were most orderly, but the usual songs were indulged in, some composed for the occasion airing the students' grievances and giving their opinions, which were very amusing. In the evening a large gathering of students and their friends met at Hobbs' Buildings, when a most enjoyable time was spent. One room was set apart for games, and some really good pictures were on view there, but dancing was the principal item on the programme, interspersed with musical items by Mesdames W. Wilson and Garrard, and Mr Merton. Among those present were Mrs Bickerton, wearing a crimson broché dress with demi-train, Honiton lace collar, and handsome necklace of Indian filagree and stones; Mrs G. Merton, in black net and maize sash; Mrs Tendall, crimson and black striped silk, and handsome cloak; Mrs Grossman, white Liberty silk; Miss Pratt, pale blue silk; Miss C. Pratt, electric blue net and silk; Miss Tendall, pale pink; Miss Bickerton, white silk, with pale pink panels; Miss Prosser, white Liberty silk; Miss Marchant (Wellington), black velvet, with green chiffon frill on bodice and sleeves; Miss Greenstreet; Mrs Wilson, electric blue silk and brocade; and many others.

Mrs and Miss Loughnan had a large party for afternoon tea at Tilford that day, and in spite of the cold and damp, all spent a merry time. The musical portion was exceptionally good. Mrs Wilding gave some of her charming pieces. Mrs Burns, Mrs H. Murray-Aynsley, Mrs R. Wilson, Mrs Alan Scott, and Mrs Westmacott sang most pleasingly, while Miss B. Loughnan accompanied herself on her guitar in a quaint Spanish ditty. She also gave us sweets in another form, which she learned to make while on a visit to Dunedin; they were much praised by everybody. Mrs Murray-Aynsley wore a navy blue serge, with full vest of blue silk with white spots; Mrs R. Wilson, a seal brown dress with trimming of astrachan; Mrs Clifford, in grey; Mrs Napier Bell, light brown dress, braided, with cape of brown plush; but as the day was so dull only winter garments were worn. Among the guests were Mrs and Miss Campbell, Mrs Kimbell, Miss R. Tabart, Mrs Ollivier, Miss Helmore, Mrs Baker, Miss Wimperis, and others.

The concert given to the Misses A. S. and Lavinia Taylor by the Society of Musicians took place at the Oddfellows' Hall, and it was evident how much the people of Christchurch were in sympathy with those ladies by the numbers assembled there, the place being packed. The concert was an excellent one, though several alterations had to be made in the programme, owing to the unavoidable absence of Mrs W. Wilson, the Misses Fairhurst and M. Bell. Miss Fisher, from Wellington, very kindly filled a gap, and gave the audience a real treat by singing two songs, with an encore to each, and Mr F. M. Wallace giving another 'little tune on his fiddle,' as he called it, and which we are always pleased to hear. Miss Stratton was the first lady vocalist, and looked very nice in pale pink silk. Gounod's 'Worker' was the song chosen, but from nervousness or some other cause was not a success. Miss L. Wood, who made her *debut* at the Musical Society's concert, came next with 'Voi Che Sapete.' She looked very sweet in pure white silk, with white bouquet, and sang as sweetly, but she, too, suffered from nervousness. Then came one of the gems of the evening, 'She Wore a Wreath of Roses,' from Miss Fisher, the full, rich tones of her voice reminding one actually of England's great contralto, Madame Patey, and given the same training, would be a glorious voice. She sings with much pathos, and gave as her encore Packer's 'Listening.' In the second part she sang 'The Fog Bell' beautifully, and received a most enthusiastic recall, and gave 'Three Fishers.' She was robed in black velvet, with train, and chiffon frills on bodice and sleeves, and looked extremely well. Miss Ada Taylor sang, 'Pack Clouds Away,' with obligato on the English concertina by her sister. Their appearance on the stage was greeted with quite an ovation, most of the audience rising. Miss Ada wore heliotrope silk with crimson flowers, and carried a beautiful bouquet, and Miss Lavinia a red dress handsomely braided. Mr Millar was very successful in 'Honour and Arms,' also Mr Weir with 'The Requital.' The instrumental part of the programme was contributed by Mr F. M. Wallace, who played charmingly, Messrs Lund, Searell, Merton, and Loughnan. Among the large audience I saw the Bishop and Mrs Julius, Mrs Embling, Mrs Macintosh (*née* Normington), Mrs and Miss Rhodes, Miss Hutton, Mrs Cunningham, Mrs Common, Mrs and Miss Greenwood, Mrs Parberry, Mrs Denniston, Mrs G. Roberts, the Misses Moorhouse, Mrs R. J. Scott, Mrs Wigram, Mrs Macdonald, Mrs Ollivier, Mrs A. Wilson, Mrs R. Wilson, Miss Mien, Mrs Wilding, Mrs Matthias, Mrs W. Willock, Mrs G. Harper, Mrs Burns, Miss Loughnan, Miss Burns, Mrs R. D. Thomas, Mrs and Miss Graham, Mrs and Miss Hargreaves, Mrs and Miss Kimbell, the Misses Turner, Tripp, Andrews, and many others. There were some beautiful cloaks worn. Mrs Rhodes had an exquisite pale grey, with Medici collar and high shoulders; Miss Emily Rhodes, a lovely white one, with feather trimming; Mrs Cunningham, long one of white and gold brocade; Mrs Common, white brocaded with gold.

That evening Mrs Ross gave a small dance for young people, 'not outs' principally, and one for children the next evening. Both were much enjoyed.

It was a lovely day, and many townspeople hied themselves to the North Canterbury Steeplechase held at Amberley. It is a grand country for a race, the slopes down to the course forming a natural stand. The residents turned out in great force, and there were several well-appointed four-in-hands. Mr Lance drove one, well filled with ladies; Mr Greenwood and Mr Thompson also tooled fours, and Mr H. Lance a tandem. Miss A. Greenwood, who is staying with Mrs Wilson, Culverden, was there, Mrs Michael Campbell and her daughter, Mrs Gould, Mrs Stevens, Mrs Alan Scott, Mrs Boyle, Mrs Wilder, Mrs H. Murray-Aynsley, Miss Murray-Aynsley, Miss Cowlishaw, Miss Helmore, and others. Mr G. Murray-Aynsley was most fortunate, winning three out of four races he rode in. Mr Douglas Kimbell got a roll on the grass again. He seems to be of the India-rubber type, and comes up with a bound not much the worse. Mrs Courage was hospitality itself, and provided afternoon tea for countless people, and as the cold east wind came up as the sun declined, it was most acceptable.

In the evening a fancy dress ball was held in the Town Hall, I suppose it was called. It was so nicely decorated as to be scarcely recognisable, so a barn would have done provided the floor was as good as this one was, and the music was Fleming's, from Christchurch, which is quite enough to say. Some of the dresses were very pretty, and nearly everyone wore fancy costume. Several wore evening costume, adding powder and patches—Mrs G. Gould, Mrs M. Campbell, Miss Helmore, Mrs White, and others. Miss Campbell, as Priestess of the Sun, looked very nice in loose flowing gown of white and gold with coronet; Duchess of Devonshire, Mrs Douglas, green silk with pink trimming, and the orthodox hat and feathers (a striking and becoming dress); Miss Cowlishaw and Miss Clark, in Grecian gowns; a Watteau dress worn by Miss M. Courage was very pretty of some striped pink material. Among the gentlemen there were peasants from the east and peasants from the west, soldiers, sailors, tennis players, etc., etc.

On the same day Miss Brett, eldest daughter of the late Colonel Brett, was married to the Rev. W. Easton, Evangelist. The bride wore a pretty dove-coloured dress, white lace shawl and bonnet, and was attended by four little nieces in cream frocks with pale blue sashes, and hats trimmed to match. It was a quiet wedding, only a very few guests being present. The Italian band played on the lawn during the afternoon, and about four o'clock the happy pair left *en route* for Hanmer Plains.

The grouping and photographing of the little people who attended Mrs E. W. Humphrey's fancy dress ball has been going on apace, and the album will form a very pleasant reminder of the very happy time she gave them.

DOLLY VALE.

DUNEDIN.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 9.

I am afraid I shall not be able to crowd the news into my allotted space this week, for I know you do not care for each correspondent to occupy more than her column.

The most interesting event, socially, since my last letter, was Mrs Haggitt's dance, given at 'Wychwood,' their residence at Anderson's Bay, where the beautiful ball-room is well known. The hostess received her guests in a very handsome black silk with jet trimmings. Her daughter, Mrs Tolmie, wore her wedding dress, which I described to you a short time since, and looked very nice indeed. Mrs Fenwick looked nice in black, with pale blue chiffon; Miss F. Spence, very pretty pale pink merveilleux; Miss Spence, pale pink Liberty silk; Miss Sise, primrose merveilleux, which suited her admirably; Mrs A. Morris (Laurence) wore a very pretty pink cashmere, the skirt edged with ruching, and adorned with ivy leaves; Miss E. McLaren, in white, looked nice; Miss Dymock wore an exquisite dress of pale pink merveilleux, the point of the bodice trimmed with chiffon and bands of silver braid; she carried a bouquet of white flowers; Mrs Lindo Ferguson, combination of blue and cream, the train and bodice of cream brocade, the front of bodice and skirt of pale blue; Miss Macassey, white merveilleux, with blue cornflowers on bodice and skirt; Miss Williams, black; Miss Mary Williams, cream silk; Mrs E. C. Reynolds looked very well in white silk with violet velvet trimmings; Mrs De Zouche wore an effective black and white gown; Mrs A. A. Finch, a rich ivory silk with long train; Miss Hodgekins, in red silk and black velvet; Mrs Bowen, black; Miss Ethel Roberts, terra-cotta Liberty silk, with pale pink chiffon trimmings; Mrs Finker, pale pink silk, the bodice trimmed with net; Mrs Husking looked very nice; the bodice and train of her gown were of white silk, the underskirt of red net; Miss

Neill (Clingford), lovely white merveilleux trimmed with striped apricot-coloured brocade; Mrs Pim wore a pretty pale lilac brocaded silk; Miss McLean, black trimmed with bright red; Miss Stephenson looked very nice in white; Miss Tui also looked well in heliotrope fisherman's net; Miss Roberts, cream merveilleux. A handsome dress was worn by Mrs Melland. The bodice and train were of brown velvet, the petticoat of striped cream satin edged with a full ruche; Mrs Robert Turnbull looked well in white and pink brocade. Three young ladies made their *début*—Miss Alice Dymock, Miss E. Shand, and Miss R. Neil. The dresses of all three were of white merveilleux, Miss Dymock's trimmed with silver fringe, and finished with a silver girdle; she carried a lovely white bouquet. Misses Neil and Shand's dresses were both trimmed with chiffon round the skirt and on the bodice. Both wore pretty white opera cloaks, Miss Shand's braided with silver. Mrs G. McLean, slate-coloured silk, with ostrich feathers, pink and slate-coloured; Miss G. Neil, broad striped pink and white silk. There were also present Misses McNeil, Scott (2), Mackerras (2), Grierson, Gibson, Morris, Belcher, Ross, Huxtable, Garrat (2), Webster (2), Shand, Rattray (2), Cutten, Reynolds, Martin, and Livingston. The large ballroom looked very pretty, and although so many were present, it was not overcrowded. The supper-room was tastefully arranged, the table draped with pale green silk, and ornamented with ivy leaves and white camellias.

Another large entertainment of a different character was given by Mrs Dymock in the form of an afternoon tea to Mrs Buller, which was a farewell previous to her leaving for Christchurch. Almost everybody was there, among them being Mesdames Preston, Macassey, Stanford, Gaulter, Denniston, Driver, Webster, Grierson, Lindo Ferguson, Hosking, Mackerras, McNeil, Rattray, McKenzie, E. C. Reynolds, Galloway, Scobie Mackenzie, Haggitt, Gibson, Davidson, Michie, Spence, Boyd, Sise, Thompson, Charlie Turnbull, Fenwick, Melland, Woodhouse, R. Turnbull, Shand, Holmes, R. Gillies, and Sievwright, and Miss Gibson, who wore green braided with brown, and hat to match; Miss Reynolds, fawn costume; Miss S. Sise, light brown tweed, black jacket, and sailor hat; Mrs Hosking, black serge, red jacket, and sailor hat; Mrs Haggitt, grey spotted tweed; Miss Neil, brown serge, black jacket, and brown hat with brown feathers; Miss Driver, navy blue serge trimmed with black astrachan, sailor hat; Miss Spence, alight grey tweed and sailor hat; Miss McNeil, drab tweed, and black hat; Mrs Ferguson, red cloth dress trimmed with dark brown fur; Mrs Melland, grey check braided with gold, and black bonnet; Mrs Fenwick, light brown tweed; Miss Shand, navy blue serge and sailor hat; Miss M. Mackerras, dark green dress, black jacket, and black hat; Miss L. Mackerras, red serge, and sailor hat with striped band; Miss F. Spence, light brown tweed, and sailor hat; Miss Macassey, light grey tweed, blue jacket, and hat; Mrs E. C. Reynolds, navy blue serge, grey boa, and black hat; Mrs R. Turnbull, dark blue dress, sealskin jacket, and black bonnet trimmed with yellow. Miss Dymock looked very nice in a brown cashmere; Miss Alice Dymock, navy blue serge, made with Norfolk bodice; Miss Ruby Neill, grey tweed, black jacket, and red felt hat.

The Lady Savages still continue to give their entertaining Tuesday evenings, and it will be a matter of regret when the season comes to a close; but by and bye tennis will begin to claim attention again. The gentlemen Savages close their season by a supper. We of course, are not going. These things are not good for us. The last meeting of the ladies was at Mrs Lindo Ferguson's; it was not a visitors' evening, so there were just the members present. Among these Mesdames Hosking, Colquhon, Davidson, Ogston, Melland, Spence, Gaulter, Woodhouse, McLaren, Sise, Boyd, Rattray, E. C. Reynolds, Stilling, and the Misses Rattray, Cargill, Spence, Rich, McNeil, Webster, Reynolds, Sise, and Sievwright. The Misses Cargill acted a very amusing farce of their own composition, a skit on the Woman's Franchise. Miss Rich gave a lecture on the Sea serpent, which was also amusing, as well as interesting, and several songs were sung, Mrs Monkman's being very sweet. Only a limited number of tickets are to be disposed of for the gentlemen's evening which the ladies propose to give, and every individual lady in town would like to go, as well as the lady members. We read of the gentlemen savages in London giving a ladies' evening for the first time, so in that respect at least we are long way ahead.

A new art club, called the Dunedin School of Art Club, was opened in the Choral Hall. The enterprise has been the work of a few young men, who although following other occupations, are no mean artists. Mr E. Packer's name is among them, and Mr O'Keefe, Mr Hayward, Mr Sligo, Mr W. E. Hutton, and Mr R. F. Smith. Their idea was to cultivate art among young artists, and introduce it to the class of people who cannot afford to buy pictures. With this object in view the admission charge gives each one a chance at the end of the time of drawing one of the prizes in the Art Union. Quite two hundred pictures are displayed, some of which show considerable merit, all of which show skill and perseverance. I noticed several good pictures by Mr Packer, views of the Sounds, and several good studies of heads by Mr O'Keefe. Among the contributors are the names of Miss M. Wain, Miss J. Pollock, Miss A. Emery, J. Gilgour, J. McAllister, R. Coghill, Miss N. Hutton, D. Scott, P. McIntyre, and many others.

Before I close I must tell you about the Capping Ceremony, which took place in the Garrison Hall, which, as is usual upon such occasions, was thronged in every part to suffocation. The most exacting could not accuse the students this year of misbehaviour, although they never at any such time show 'deference due to high degree.' They had their fun—very hearty fun—some of it being directed against the women's franchise, the skeleton of a female being tawdrily dressed out, and raised by means of ropes to a very exalted position indeed, a few lines of Hugo's song, 'Who's Going to Wear Them, I or You?' being sung to give effect, or rather mumbled in subdued tones. Their printed songs were witty and clever, and a cleverly-drawn cartoon showed two doctors, easily recognisable, fighting over the lymph question. One sprawling upon the ground was represented as just having dropped a jar of Koch's lymph, while above him flourished the words,

'Oh what a surprise,
Two lovely black eyes.'

The greatest enthusiasm was shown when the ladies stepped forward to receive their honours, showers of bouquets falling at their feet. These were chiefly composed of spring flowers, and it struck me as very appropriate, as the ladies were so young, and gathering the first honours of their labour. Miss Sylvia E. Gifford, of Auckland, was among the M.A.'s, Messrs L. A. Sine, J. A. M'Mickle, and P. G. Morgan being the others. Among the B.A.'s were Miss Helen Alexander, Miss Catherine Ferguson, Miss Catherine Moss, and Miss Marian S. W. White. A wreath intended for Miss White fell at her feet, and Dr. Stuart smilingly stooped down, and raising it, placed it upon her head in his own nice, inimitable way. As had been done in previous years, the students had erected a platform in the body of the hall, and upon this their orchestra was stationed, unrecognisable in all sorts of disguises, one as Old Father Time, with a scythe and hour glass, an immense affair, which he kept turning in mute appeal through the speeches. But I must hurry on.

Mr G. H. Schacht's Annual Soiree was given by his pupils one evening last week, and they did both him and themselves credit. Misses Bertha Mendelssohn and Jessie McNeil played the opening piano duet. These were clever pupils of Mrs Singer. Master Cecil Williams, Miss Fanny Fergus, Master James Allen, Miss Rachel Marks, Miss Jessie Brown, Master Percy Braithwaite, Miss Violet Greig, Miss Mary McNeil, Miss Effie Inglis, Miss Gwenda Williams, Miss Jessie Bair, and Master Claude Williams were among those who gave remarkably clever selections upon the violin.

Bland Holt has opened. The Engineers' ball is upon us, and for an evening or two there is a pleasant outlook.

MAUDE.

[Owing to the enlargement of the paper and the interest taken in society gossip, we are giving more space to it, so that you need never hesitate about sending more than a column.—Bee.]

MARLBOROUGH.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 10.

The last hunt of the season, which always takes place at Mr E. Paul's property at Spring Creek, is over and done with, and the indefatigable members of the Hunt Club have to content themselves for a few months by relating most wonderful adventures 'of moving accidents by flood and field' to any of their friends whom at any time they can manage to buttonhole.

Professor Anderson has lately paid us a visit, and exhibited some of his really wonderful talent as a conjurer to a large and admiring audience. His skill in obtaining money by simply waving his hands has inspired many a youthful soul with fervour. Many are the disappointed millionaires amongst the rising generation whom the professor has tempted to borrow silk hats for the purpose of working a charm and causing half-crowns to rain into them. In the matter of egg-raising, the process was so simple that I, for one, am greatly surprised that anyone having any regard for their neighbours' feelings or their own pet gardens should keep fowls at all, when they can procure eggs *a la* Anderson at any time by twisting a silk bag about. I found out one of his tricks, though, when he gave me a box to put a lady's watch in. He left the key with me too, but there are ways of getting a slide out of a box without opening it, and the box was long enough in my hands to prevent any surprise on my part, when on opening it, I saw a canary instead of a watch, which appeared rising up out of a bunch of flowers on the stage.

Mr L. Allen, who has been promoted as accountant to the Bank of New Zealand, Hastings, was interviewed by his bachelor friends previous to his departure from Blenheim, and after some congratulatory and valedictory speeches, was presented with some valuable volumes. He was also the recipient of a handsome gold horse-shoe scarf-pin, which was presented by Mr Snodgrass, Manager of the bank, on behalf of the Bank-staff. Mr T. Monat, of Gisborne, takes his place as teller here.

The last of Miss (A. P.) Seymour's sessional assemblies successfully came off, and was attended by most of her usual clients, who spent a very pleasant evening. There have been so few dances this winter, that these monthly assemblies have been almost the only thing to look forward to, and will be greatly missed.

Society people in Picton, though few in number, are much more energetic than their Blenheim neighbours, judging by the number of events which 'come off' there. The Excelsior Club (the members being the teachers and pupils of the borough schools) gave one of their periodical socials. Quite a number of young people outside the society were invited, but no chaperones, the teachers, Miss Hay and Miss Gilbert, doing duty in that capacity. Games, to please the little ones, and dancing, including a lively kind of square dance, called here ninepins, for the older ones, passed the time away all too quickly till eleven p.m., when the party—to use the children's own expression—'broke up.'

The Picton borough schools, under the conductorship of the headmaster, Mr Howard, and assisted by a few friends, gave an entertainment in aid of the school library fund. These entertainments are always popular, and draw a large house, all the town being, as a matter of course, interested in the doings of the little folks. The very tiny ones, under Miss Gilbert, went through their Kindergarten performances, and sang their Lilliputian choruses correctly and sweetly, to the wonder and delight of their parents and friends, who all feel grateful to Miss Gilbert for the kindly care and attention she has bestowed on them. The 'Imitation Song,' 'Mother's Little Maid,' 'The Dairymaid,' and 'The Little Sailor,' were all nicely sung by the mites. 'Mrs Nickleby's Courtship' was acted by Miss Howard, Miss Rackley, and Messrs M. and H. Greensill. Mr H. C. Seymour sang a comic song, which elicited a vociferous encore. Two charades were acted, and a comedietta, 'A Surprise Party,' but owing to the incessant undercurrent of conversation carried on in the hall, it was impossible for the audience to hear the plot of the surprise party, but judging merely from what one could see, it was a case of surprise all round. Miss Greensill kindly acted as accompanist, and Miss Lily Falconer played the overtures.

The sea-serpent may have been accounted for, but another curious fish has come to light from the waters of Queen Charlotte Sound. It is called a 'porotaki' by the Maoris, and is about five feet long. It is a *tapu* fish by the common herd, and only fit food for the highest chief in the land. Its resurrection—it is many years since one was seen—portends some great event about to take place.

Picton was *en fête* yesterday, on the occasion of opening the waterworks for the town. Everybody was in holiday attire, and everybody capable of walking two-and-three-quarter miles wended their way up Esson's Valley under the viaduct, which crosses the valley just beyond the Esson's homestead, up the track made for the convenience of sledging plant to the reservoir, and which winds round the hills above a romantic stream, which in places becomes a ravine nearly a hundred feet below, and is here and there bridged across so as to get at the easiest gradient for the track. The processionists stop here and there on the bridges, and look down on the stream, which rushes and tumbles over its rocky bed, and admire the crisp-looking *asplenium bulbiferum* below, and then they look up to beds of *trichomanes reniforme* (the kidney fern), which grow so abundantly in the neighbourhood of Picton. Undeterred by the mud on the track, or the sharp rocks which metal it in places, our indefatigable party proceed to the end of the track through a short tunnel, which was left, I presume, to add to the romance of the situation, an idea of which you will obtain from your travelling artist, whom I met in Picton yesterday. At the end of the track we go down a ladder, and stand on the concrete, where the Mayor makes his speech, and presently Mrs Fell (the Mayor's wife) breaks the orthodox bottle of champagne, pours the contents into the reservoir, and after turning on the water, declares the Picton water-works open, and hopes the water may be a boon to the townspeople. I couldn't tell you half the people who were there, for many had scrambled up the hill, and were sitting about wherever they could find a spot level enough to hold them, but on the concrete I noticed Mrs Fell, Mrs H. C. Seymour, Mrs Allen, Mrs Duncan, Mrs Andrews, Mrs Beauchamp, Miss (A. P.) Seymour, the Misses (H. C.) Seymour, Miss Nellie Allen, Miss M. Fell, the Misses H. and E. Dart, the Mayor (Mr Fell) and councillors, the engineer (Mr Dartnell), the Inspector of Works (Mr Johnston), the contractor (Mr Carr), the Press reporters, and many others. At the far end of the dam stood the inevitable keg of Picton beer, in which, I suppose, everybody's health was drunk after the ladies had started on their homeward journey, and what was left was used by the bearers, who marched in procession down the track, and caricatured the proceedings at the dam by christening the bridges after the principal families in the town.

In the evening a public social was held, and never before was such a crowd of people seen in the Public Hall. The management of the affair had been left in the hands of Mr H. C. Seymour, and he, ably assisted by several ladies, who in turn were supported by generous donors of provisions, so that there was plenty and to spare for all the three hundred people. The supper-table was laid out on the stage, and it speaks volumes for the Picton boys, of whom there were a goodly number present, that not one single thing was touched on the tables till the ladies sat down to supper, though to get a view of the proceedings in the body of the hall they had to stand on the forms surrounding the supper-table, and the fruit and other good things looked very tempting. During the evening several songs were sung. Mrs Litchfield sang, 'For You and Me,' splendidly—if that is a proper superlative to use in regard to any lady's singing. Miss Speed, 'Love's Young Dream;' Miss Howard, 'The Song That Reached My Heart;' Miss Lily Falconer sang, 'Within a Mile o' Edinboro' Town,' and received the only encore of the evening. Miss Allen and Miss M. Philpotts sang a duet, 'The Cousins,' very well indeed, though coming in, as it did, at the end of the programme, after dancing all the evening, their voices sounded rather tired. Mr Howard also sang 'The Powder Monkey.' Everybody seemed bent on enjoying themselves, and there was not a sour look or a sad face to be seen all the evening. A set of Borough Councillor quadrilles were down on the programme, but when the time arrived for the City Fathers to seek their partners, the City Fathers were *non est*, and the City Mothers had to content themselves with more juvenile partners. Dancing was kept up till 2 a.m. There was no formal opening, and no question of precedence, and no Mrs Push deliberately jumping Mrs Wright's claim, and so, in consequence there were no black looks. Mr Seymour had settled all that by letting the young people take the lead in a polka. I saw Mrs Fell, in black lace; Mrs (Capt.) Kenny, Mrs Duncan, Mrs Cragg, Mrs Oxley, Mrs Fisk, Mrs A. P. Seymour, Mrs Aitkens, Mrs Falconer, Mrs F. Godfrey, Mrs Scott, Mrs Miles, Mrs O'Donnel, Mrs Card, Mrs Blaymires, Mrs Howe, Mrs McIntosh, Mrs Jenkins, Mrs A. Price, Mrs Carlton, Mrs C. Western, Mrs Jackson, Mrs Gillies, Mrs Bartlett, Mrs H. C. Seymour (in heliotrope cashmere and chiffon ruffles), Mrs McNab (Blenheim), Mrs Andrews, and Mrs Allen, the Misses Philpott, Webster (2), Carlton, Speed (3), Seymour, Pasley (Blenheim), Lloyd (2), Smith (2), Fuller, Allen (2), Seymour (H.C.—3), Scott (2), Howard, Young, Greensill, Falconer (2), Linton, Hunt (Wellington), Waddy (2), Fell, White, Hay, Gilbert, Kenny, Carrol, Jenkins, Price, Compton (Blenheim), Western (2), and Divens. All the old celebrities were present from Old Worser (Mr Hebberley), who acted as pilot for Queen Charlotte Sound fifty years ago, down to some of the first white residents in Picton, who all remained to see the very last dance.

JEAN.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 11.

And now for another chat, although there is not very much to chronicle this time. Of course there is not a continual whirl of gaiety in a little place like this, but we have the name of being a very light-hearted community. I hope it is not the sign of a 'grovelling' mind, but for my part I much prefer things in a small way. Don't you think, Bee, that small dances are much more comfortable and enjoyable than large ones? And it is the same with 'evenings,' and afternoon teas, and riding parties, and everything—to my mind, that is. Like Ibsen's Dr. Stockmann, I would rather belong to a minority than to the 'compact majority.'

Since I despatched my last letter to you, Mr Courtney has returned with another large contingent to bask in the shadow of Egmont. Some people are very fond of speaking against the 'invincible William,' but it seems to me that we have reason to be grateful to him. As I write I can think of many most desirable settlers who have come out by his advice, several of them capitalists, too. Of course, all the world over there are people who have not the capacity of succeeding *anywhere*, and if certain of this class have come out with him, I don't see that *he* should bear all the blame.

At any rate, to my woman's judgment there seem to be more successes than failures among the many who have come out by his advice. So often he brings out one member of a family as a cadet, and if this member likes the life and the prospects of the district, he writes home and persuades his parents and brothers and sisters to come out. Needless to say, some do not succeed in this 'Brighter Britain,' but I'm sorry to say that that glorious and unknown country where there are no failures is as yet an undiscovered Utopia. I wish I could find it. To return to Mr Courtney, several leading citizens thought it would be nice to give him and his latest contingent a formal welcome, so a conversazione was arranged, and a great success it was. It was held in St. Mary's Schoolroom, or Hall, as it is beginning to be called, and very soon after the doors were opened there was not standing room, even the stage being partly covered. A varied and interesting programme was gone through, several well-known leading vocalists taking part. Mr Ralph Colson's song, full of local hits, took immensely. It began 'Where has William Courtney gone?' But *the* feature of the evening was the performance on the harp by Miss Nielson, a bird of passage here. If you have the chance do go and hear her, Bee, and I will answer for it that you will be pleased. Besides her talent as a harpist, she is also the possessor of a very sweet, though not strong, voice, with which she delighted her audience, so much so that they demanded several encores. One of the new arrivals from England also recited in a perfectly wonderful manner. She is a very young child, and ought to make a name for herself. Then there was a good deal of speechifying, which was very amusing. Mr Courtney spoke very nicely, and also one of the 'new chums' and other people. Soon after ten tea and coffee, and sandwiches and cakes were handed round, and a most enjoyable evening brought to a close. Several of those who had come out with Mr Courtney on previous trips were present, which was a pleasant thing to see, as it showed that they bore him no grudge for having persuaded them to leave the dear old home across the seas to brave the hardships and dangers of an unknown country. Mr Courtney always seems a paterfamilias to all his importations, that is, until they have been dispersed among their various situations, which, fortunately, does not take long to happen.

We have had two good lecturers here lately. The first was the Rev. Mr Isitt (who delivered his interesting lecture on Fred Douglas) and the second was Thomas Bracken, who delighted us all with his mixed humour and pathos.

And now I must tell you about an exceedingly good entertainment we had here lately. It was the third, and perhaps the most successful, of a series, of which the proceeds are to be devoted to the finishing of the interior of St. Mary's Schoolroom. That object has now been accomplished, and the congregation of St. Mary's may well be proud of their room. It is quite a hall, and is splendid for sound. The two preceding entertainments consisted of music and some capital *tableaux*, but for the last it was thought advisable to have a change, so a farce had been prepared for the second half. The hall was crowded, and the programme began with an overture by Miss Halse, who now ranks as one of our best musicians. Next came Tosti's 'Venetian Song,' given by Miss Hamerton in her usual finished and cultivated style. Mr Clement Govett followed with a most humorous reading from 'Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow,' entitled 'Babies.' Mr Ellis (late of Nelson) next gave a song, 'The Armourer,' which elicited a hearty encore, to which he responded by 'Joe and I.' This gentleman is a stranger to a New Plymouth audience, but I hope we shall often hear him. His voice is a rich baritone. Mrs Hall was also heard to great advantage in the song, 'Dearest of All.' Mr Hislop then followed with a most amusing reading, 'Jack Moser's Dog,' in which he nearly proved the death of the audience. More I need not say. Mr Hempton concluded the first part of the programme with the song, 'Anchored,' for which he received an enthusiastic encore, but he declined to respond. Part II. was filled by the amusing little comedy, 'Ici on Parle Français.' Toole's favourite part of Mr Spriggins was taken by Mr Harry Penn, of Stratford. All I can say is that Toole himself might possibly have gained a few 'wrinkles' had he been present. Seldom have I seen an audience laugh so much. His get-up was perfect, and his acting most natural. Miss Teed, as Mrs Spriggins, also, was capital. Sometimes I think she has missed her vocation. As Victor Dubois Mr L. E. Mair (late of Whangarei) was all that could be desired, his French pronunciation being unusually good; his costume, too, was exactly 'the thing.' Mr Fred Watson took the part of the blustering Major Rattan to perfection, while Mrs Walter Penn and Miss Nellie Webster made the very most of their respective parts—Mrs Rattan and Angelina. Last but not least comes Anna Maria, which part was taken by Miss Devenish, whose impersonation of the 'domestic phenomenon' caused unfailing laughter. Her 'get up' was fearful and wonderful. Oh, Bee, you ought to have seen her bonnet; it puts all the spring millinery completely in the shade.

Talking of the spring makes me think of the gardens. They are getting to look so beautiful now. The camellias and daphne have been so lovely here this year. I do believe this is the place of all others for these flowers. The daffodils, too, have been abundant. There is a place not a dozen miles from New Plymouth where they have literally gone wild. It is quite in 'the bush,' and is the site of an old garden. The ground to a large extent is perfectly golden with them. It makes one think of the descriptions one reads about England and the 'Lent lilies,' as they are called there. Isn't it extraordinary to think of the change that has come over our ideas with regard to flowers? I remember the time when we all looked down with profound contempt on the homely daffodil, and as for the humble sunflower, it was hardly mentioned at all in polite society. Now there is a change come over the spirit of the dream. Even the lowly dandelion and dog daisy are allowed to possess some beauty. I believe to some extent we have to thank South Kensington for opening our eyes to beauties which we never saw before.

I hear there are to be 'dances and rumours of dances' in the next few weeks, so you may expect a newsy letter from me before long.

MIGNONNE.

AUCKLAND

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 15.

The Committee of the North Shore 'At Home' are to be congratulated upon the very successful termination of a most enjoyable season, the final dance being in every respect a most pronounced success. The attendance was large, and as there was no great preponderance of the fair sex, 'wall flowers' were conspicious by their absence. Hannken's Band supplied the music, which was really excellent, and the floor was all that the most fastidious could wish. To the ladies is due a special word of praise for the splendid supper provided by them, and to which I need scarcely add ample justice was done. The night was exceedingly warm, therefore the light, cool, and dainty dishes which were provided in such abundance, were both highly appreciated and enjoyed. Quite a number of visitors were present from town, a special steamer conveying them back in the early hours of the morning. The evening terminated about half-past two a.m., all present having spent an exceedingly pleasant evening. I must not forget to mention that extra dances were splendidly played by Misses Chapman, Buddle, Mrs Keals, Mr Barnett, and others. Many handsome gowns were worn. Amongst the most attractive were Mrs Keals, dainty sea-green gown, with black girdle, and long black gloves; Miss Murchie looked very pretty in a lovely gown of rich cream merveilleux, the skirt finished with a pleating of fine lace, the bodice prettily trimmed with maize silk; Miss Gascoigne, pretty amber net gown finished with aigrettes of amber and gold feathers; Miss Atkinson (Park Road), lovely white Indian silk gown, with sash and shoulder knots of gold ribbon; Miss Holland also wore a very pretty gown of white silk, finished with velvet butterflies; Mrs Walker, black satin and net gown; Miss Bylünd, pretty white evening dress, finished with aigrettes of white feathers; Miss Harvey looked nice in a pink veiling gown, with ruby plush trimmings; Miss M. Harvey, white, with pink sash; Mrs Anthony, handsome cream satin gown; Miss Wood, pretty gown of yellow striped net; Miss Chapman (Auckland), very becoming black evening dress; Miss Niccol, dainty pink gown; Miss Von Sturmer, handsome pink silk gown, with aigrettes of white feathers on the shoulders and in the hair; her sister wore a dark velvet gown, with sash and shoulder knots of white silk; Miss Williams, pretty heliotrope evening dress; Mrs Kelly, crimson net gown finished with ribbons to match; Miss Kirkwood, very pretty heliotrope silk evening dress; Miss Buddle, dainty white evening dress, gold girdle; Miss Brown, black satin and lace gown, with blue ribbons; Miss Cave, pretty pink evening dress; Miss — Cave, white evening dress; Miss Mays, black evening dress, the shoulders finished with knots of amber ribbon; Miss Gordon, cream satin and gauze gown, effectively finished with yellow ribbons; Miss Fenton, pretty white gown, the corsage finished with a cluster of crimson poppies; Miss Chapman, buttercup yellow gown finished with loops of black ribbon velvet, and yellow feathers; Miss — Chapman, white costume, the low corsage prettily finished with green leaves; Mrs Skardon, black grenadine evening dress; Mrs A. Burgess, pretty crimson gown; Miss Burgess, handsome cream satin gown; Miss Gouchey, dainty white costume; Miss McMillan, pink evening dress trimmed with gold bands; Miss Steele, pretty black gauze gown, white flowers in the hair and on the shoulder; Miss Corbett, white evening dress finished with ribbon; Mrs W. Boak, black merveilleux, with shoulder knots of yellow ribbon; Miss Edson, pretty pink evening dress; Mrs Spencer, pretty cream costume; Mrs Ferrier, handsome black evening dress, with Medici collar; Miss McCorquodale, black evening dress; Miss Patterson, pretty pink net gown. Many other pretty costumes were worn but the names of the wearers were unknown to me.

The usual monthly gathering of the Remuera Social, Musical, and Literary Society took place in the Mount Hobson Hall, a full attendance of members and friends being present. The Chairman, Mr J. J. Boak, in a neat little speech introduced the programme, which proved an exceptionally good one. Songs were given by Miss Bursill, Mr G. M. Reid, and Mr A. L. Edwards. Mr Cottrill gave one of his amusing comic character songs, and Mr Cook amused the audience with an excellent recitation. The evening terminated with the performance of a charming little one-act comedy, entitled 'Love or Money,' the characters being assumed by Miss Kate Ryan, Miss Clara Steele, and Mr Montague. The piece was nicely staged, and capitally acted, while the costumes were pretty and attractive. During the interval allowed for conversation tea, coffee, and light refreshments were handed round and duly enjoyed. Very few of the ladies present appeared in evening dress, warm gowns being generally worn. Mrs Worsp wore a black costume; Miss Worsp, crimson gown trimmed with black braid; Miss Johnstone, dark gown, handsome plush jacket; Mrs F. Winstone, pretty cardinal and black costume; Mrs Herbert Gould, dark tweed costume; Miss Hardie, grey gown, half of the bodice being of olive green velvet; Miss Claudia Hardie, dark skirt, crushed strawberry silk blouse; Miss Maxwell, peacock blue costume; Mrs J. J. Boak, dark green costume; Miss James, grey gown; Mrs James, black gown, white lace cap; Miss Finlayson, pretty grey gown; Mrs R. C. Carr, black gown, fur-lined cloak; Mrs E. W. Burton, grey tweed gown with large spots; Miss Spiers, navy blue costume; Miss Beale, black gown, plush jacket; Miss Harrison, brown tweed costume; Mrs Edwin Hesketh, black gown, pretty white shawl; Miss Hesketh, brown plaid tweed gown; her younger sister wore black. Amongst others also present were the Misses Von Sturmer, Misses Thomas, Miss Westwood, Miss Owen, and numerous others, many of whom I did not know.

The Auckland Orchestral Union, under the conductorship of Mr G. A. Paque, gave the third of their delightful concerts in the Choral Hall, a large audience being present. The orchestral selections, of which the programme was principally composed, were on the whole most beautifully rendered. Mr S. Jackson gave one of his charming clarionet solos, while Miss Neilson, Mrs C. Burgess, and Mr T. M. Jackson contributed vocal selections. Mr C. Hemus acted as leader of the orchestra with his accustomed ability. Mrs Burgess wore a handsome black silk gown, the front of cream satin; Miss Neilson, electric blue costume. As the evening was a boisterous and disagreeable one, evening dress amongst the audience was conspicuous only by its absence. Amongst those present I noticed Mrs (Dr.) McArthur, Mrs Possenaskie, Mrs S. Kissling, Miss Kissling, Mrs P. A. Edmiston, Misses Colebrook, Miss Bastard, Miss Owen, Miss Partridge, Mrs J. J. Holland, Mrs J. Lusher, Mrs Boardman, Mrs Niccol, Mrs Macindoe, Miss Butters, Mrs and Miss Hoffman. It has been arranged by the Society to give a concert at an early date for the benefit of Mrs Sibbin, whose husband recently met with such a shocking death whilst playing football.

I hear that Mr Colin Ballantyne formerly well known in Auckland, but at present residing in Reefton, is engaged to be married to Miss Mirfin of Reefton.

A very pretty wedding, and one that excited great interest in the district, took place at St. Peter's Church, Takapuna, the contracting parties being Miss Williamson, eldest daughter of Mr Charles Williamson, Takapuna, and Mr Warren Blyth, of Greenhithe. The little church was beautifully decorated by the Lake residents with clematis, ferns, white camellias, and azaleas, and crowded with friends of the happy pair. The officiating ministers were the Rev. Joseph Bates and Rev. H. S. Davis. The service was a choral one, Mr C. R. Williamson, brother of the bride, presiding at the organ. The bride looked lovely in a white silk, with long round train, trimmings of orange blossoms and clematis. The bridesmaids were Miss Florence Williamson Miss Blyth, and Miss Amy Brett. The two former had on pretty dresses of salmon pink Alpine silk, hats of fancy golden straw trimmed with gold ribbon and roses to match dresses. Miss Amy Brett's dress was cream Alpine silk handsomely trimmed with gold galon, stylish and becoming hat of brown fancy straw, trimmed with cream and grass. Many of the guests wore handsome dresses, conspicuous amongst them being Mrs Philcox, a handsome black silk with gold trimmings, bonnet to match; Mrs Lennox, black silk dress, exceedingly pretty black and gold bonnet; Mrs A. Ashton wore a golden-brown merveilleux silk, and very stylish bonnet of gold and black; Mrs H. Brett had on a very handsome black moiré antique, with gold brocaded front, becoming bonnet of gold and black. There were also present Mrs Ashton, Miss Moon, Mrs Quick, Miss Ashton, Mrs McKean, Miss Ferguson, Mrs Millar, Miss Brett, and Miss M. Lennox. The happy pair left for Howick, where they are to spend their honeymoon. The guests, numbering over fifty, were after the ceremony, suitably entertained at the residence of the bride's parents, 'Earnscleyffe,' Takapuna. The wedding presents were numerous and costly. In the evening a party for the young friends of the bride and bridegroom was held at 'Earnscleyffe,' when all present enjoyed a merry evening in celebration of the happy event.

MURIEL.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 15.

Did I not remind you that men were 'deceivers ever?' And has not the rejection of the Female Franchise Bill by our honourable and gallant Upper House proved the truth of my words? Ah, well, 'the day will come.'

I have little news for you this week. Alas! there have been so many deaths amongst our friends that quite a gloom has been cast over gaieties and private entertainments. The funeral of Mr Frank Dawson was attended by a very large number of young men from town, besides older friends. The little church of St. Luke's was completely filled. The coffin, which was a handsome one of polished kauri with silver handles, was carried from Captain Dawson's house to the Church, where the first part of the service was held. The little graveyard is at the east of the sacred building, and here, by his mother's side, Mr Frank Dawson was laid. The flowers that were sent by his very numerous and sorrowing friends were something quite unique. There were two massive wreaths of violets quite half-a-yard in diameter, and very thick and rich. Camellias, azaleas, white stocks, heath, migonette, and violets were simply heaped in various devices on the grave. We shall all miss him very much.

But life is not all sorrow, and despite the gloom, the tickets for 'Princess Ida' are selling rapidly, as the opera promises to be a great success.

I hear there is a dance in Remuera, but I fear I cannot get particulars for you in time for this letter.

Our hunting season is drawing to a close, and we are making the most of the too-quickly-departing Saturdays. Hares are conspicuous by their absence. We waste no precious time now in looking for shy pussies, but start a drag at once. The last meet was at Panmure, and the usual visitors and members assembled to see the fun and to be seen. For you know, Bee, that a pretty woman with a good figure shows to advantage on horseback. I saw Mrs Bews, Mrs Bloomfield, the latter riding Mr Halstead's horse; Misses Buckland (3), Banks, Percival, Garrett, Dunnet, Dartmoor, Ireland (2), Kerr-Taylor (3), Hesketh, Wilkins; Messrs Percival, Garrett, Shera, Yonge, Lockhart (who seems to have recovered from his broken collar-bone), Stubbins, Gilmore, Ware, Bloomfield, Stewart, Tonks (2), Kerr-Taylor, Dunnet (2). I missed the genial face of our gallant colonel. Amongst those driving I saw Misses Gould, Grey, and Yonge, who seemed to be having a very good time looking on; Mrs D. Tonks and family with Mrs Browning; Mr Halstead and his wife in a dog-cart; Mr Bloomfield and Miss Ruck, and also Mrs Ireland and family. For the first drag we had nothing but walls of every description—a delightful series of jumps. The second was through Sylvia Park, where the fences were very stiff. They were Hobart Town four railed, and too well made to allow any chance of *their* smashing if your horse's feet touched them. No, horse and rider must come to grief, not the fence. Very few followed. Three ladies gallantly started—Mrs Bloomfield, Miss Kerr-Taylor, and Miss Dunnet. The latter was riding her father's horse, who was somewhat too much for her to hold. When he became unmanageable she was heard to say: 'It's no use, I can't hold this gentleman.' Only one lady kept on, and she bravely followed her brother, who came to grief himself at one of the fences. She, though narrowly sharing his fate at another, held her own to the end, winning some flattering remarks on her riding, which her modesty would not like me to repeat, I am sure. Mr Shera was riding Mr Lockhart's Eros. The animal at first ran away with its rider, and then decided it could go even faster without him, so quietly disposed of him, and enjoyed a good gallop. Meantime poor Mr Shera wandered disconsolately about looking for his treacherous steed. Mr Kettelwell lamed his horse, and was forced to ride along the roads to catch a glimpse of hounds and red coats disappearing over hill and dale. One bad accident happened to Mr Paul (winner of the point to point steeplechase). He was riding at what looked like racing pace, which is very dangerous, and more so when your horses are tired, as his

was, because we had had a very stiff day of it. His horse fell over the last wall and rolled upon him. He lay unconscious for some time, but he recovered, and I hope there will be no ill effects, and I hope also it will be a lesson to many others. We rode through Otahuhu, and a drag was then laid from there to the Royal Oak, Onehunga. Many started, but only a few came in at the finish. Only one lady again was seen to last through this. It was the best and stiffest hunt we have had this season. Many came to grief, and many a stone wall was partly demolished.

A most enjoyable juvenile party was given by Mrs H. Laidlaw Thompson at her residence, The Firs, Ellerslie. About sixty invitations were issued, and the whole affair was a brilliant success. The decorations were most effective, consisting of quantities of flowers, ferns, and pot plants, brilliantly lit up with fairy lamps and Chinese lanterns. The verandah was enclosed, and lined with South Sea Island Tappa. The hall, drawing room, and other rooms thrown open were also decorated, the effect upon the juvenile guests as they arrived being most bright and pleasant. The music, consisting of two violins and harp, performed beneath a bower of evergreens, was excellent. Some of the dresses were exceedingly pretty. Miss Thompson wore a lovely dress of white crêpe; Miss K. Thomson looked pretty in pink silk; Miss McMillan had on a handsome green plush with pink sash. Miss White (Ellerslie) was most effectively dressed in scarlet; Miss Kate Hay looked very handsome in pink, with bouquet of white arums; Miss Alice Morrin looked very well indeed in an uncommon brown velvet costume; Miss Winifred Russell looked exceedingly well in blue; Miss Grace Russell had on a very elegant old gold with Watteau back; Miss Sybil Davis looked charming in a flowered delaine, which was most elegant; Miss Mayne wore a pretty blue dress; Miss Marshall looked very well in white net over pink; Miss Law wore black and gold; Miss Elliott, very pretty white costume; Miss D. Thomson had on a charming white dress with pink trimmings. A most pleasing feature of the evening was the *minuet de la court*, most gracefully danced by Misses Thompson, M. Law, K. Thompson, and D. Thomson.

HINEMOA.

WELLINGTON.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 11.

One of the most successful festivals ever held by the Girls' Friendly Society has just taken place at the Lodge, when Lady Onslow presented the prizes for needlework, Bible questions, etc. Mrs J. E. Fitzgerald, the President, took the chair, and Archdeacon Stock gave a most interesting address. The Countess spoke a few kind and encouraging words, and also presented thirty volumes of Miss Young's works to the Society for the library. Several musical items were given by Mrs England, Mrs Kemp, Miss Kemp, Miss Grant, and Miss Williams, and a pleasant evening was spent.

Of course we have been to see and hear Williamson's Juvenile Opera Troupe. Everyone else has been too, I think, and they have gained in popularity each evening. Thus far they have only had one opera, 'La Mascotte,' and this they are evidently very proud of, for they have given us no less than six, if not seven, performances of it, so the change to 'Mikado' will be very welcome. Miss Everett seems to be the best actress in the company, but little Miss Stevens is my favourite. She is so tiny, and goes through her part of the Princess with such a piquante air, and to see the childish face above her bridal robes appeals to all. She first comes out and sings 'In old Madrid,' and wears the daintiest little black velvet riding habit, just showing a pale blue satin skirt embroidered with gold, and wears a large velvet hat covered with feathers, and carries a whip; but she looked prettiest of all in the last act, in a short red petticoat, full white chemisette, and black velvet zouave jacket and little red cap, and carries a tambourine, which she poses gracefully while she dances. Miss Everett's first dress is a sort of Patience style, with big hat with flowers and short striped petticoat, and then she wears a pink silk evening dress with train, and afterwards she appears in a bridal toilette. Master Stevens acts the King very cleverly, and dresses the part well. Master Quealy is not as good, but his 'make up,' I think, is better. The clever marching of the children was very much admired, especially when they threw red, yellow, and blue lights on them, causing their sabres and shields to glitter again and again with very pretty effect. The scene in the second act is very picturesque. They certainly deserve patronage, and seem to have got it liberally throughout New Zealand. Amongst the audiences during the week have been Lady and Miss Hector, Mr and Mrs G. Beetham, Mr and Miss Buller, Miss Reynolds (Dunedin), the Misses Harding, Mr and Miss Dransfield, Mr Walrond, Mr J. and the Misses Mills (Dunedin), Mrs and the Misses Gore, Mr and Mrs Edward Richardson, Miss Richardson, Mr and Mrs Burns, Miss S. Graham, the Misses Halse, Mr and Mrs Reynolds (Dunedin), Mrs and Miss Coleridge, Mr and Mrs Travers, Mr and Mrs De Castro, Mr and Mrs Mantell, etc.

A very good entertainment has just been given at St. Mark's schoolroom in aid of the choir fund. It consisted of vocal and instrumental music, and statuary and *tableaux*. Two *tableaux* consisted of scenes from 'Pgmalion and Galatea,' two very amusing ones being 'The Three Old Maids of Lee,' and then 'The Three Young Maids of Lee.' Five scenes from Burns' 'Auld Robin Gray' were excellent, Mrs Lucas (Miss Florence Nightingale) singing the solo parts, and others given were 'Victory,' 'Faith, Hope, and Charity,' and 'The Angel Reapers.' Mrs Lucas was encored for her song, 'The Children's Home,' and gave 'Comin' Thro' the Rye.' Mrs Peter Webb sang, and also Mr Gooder, Mr J. E. Page, and an instrumental trio was played by Miss Kebbell, Miss Pilcher, and Mr A. Hammerton, and a quartette for voices was sung by Madames Meek and Webb, and Messrs Hueston and Plimmer. The accompaniments were played by Misses Page and Hardwick, who also supplied pianoforte solos. There was a large audience, and the whole affair was very well managed.

We have lost another of our old colonists in the person of Mrs Daniel Riddiford, who died very suddenly. It appears she was perfectly well the day before, and spent a convivial evening with several of her young relatives, but was seized with a sudden attack of bronchitis early the following morning, and died before her medical man (Dr. Kemp), had arrived. Miss Willis, her grand daughter, and Mr Arthur Cooper, her grandson, were both staying in the house at the time. The funeral took place from Mr Ed. Riddiford's place, Woburn, at the Hutt, and was very largely attended, the Rev. Mr Still and the Rev. Mr Fancourt officiating. Mrs Riddiford will be greatly missed in every way, and especially in all charitable works, of which she was a strong upholder and generous donor. She leaves six daughters and three sons, all of whom are married, and most of them living near to where their mother lived. She was an excellent correspondent, and all her near relatives received a letter from her regularly every week, and up to the very last took an active interest in all those around her.

We are to lose the Earl and Countess of Onslow for a short time. They are going to Otaki to visit the Maori tribe, and are to be accompanied by the Ladies Dorothy and Gwendoline Onslow, and little Lord Huia, and Sir Walter and Lady Buller, Miss Buller, and Mr Walrond. Captain Guthrie has gone to Australia to be present at some race meeting (I am dreadfully ignorant as regards the sporting world, or I would know which meeting), and is accompanying Mr Gollan, of Hawke's Bay, who has taken his horses with him. Lord and Lady Onslow went to McCollus stables one morning before they left to see Mr Gollan's horses, which have excited much admiration here.

There has been nothing exciting this week, but I will be able to tell you about Mrs J. P. Maxwell's dance next week, and later on about Miss Noake's musical recital.

The two latest engagements are those of Mr J. H. Cock, formerly of Nelson, and Miss Spensley, so well known in musical circles in Christchurch; and Mr T. Wilford, son of Dr. Wilford, of the Hutt, and Miss Georgie McLean, daughter of the Hon. George McLean, of Dunedin.

RUBY.

NAPIER.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 9.

It has been so very warm lately I have seriously been thinking of donning a summer gown. However, it is just as well not to begin to change one's clothes too soon, for it has come on quite wintry again, and to-day we are all glad of our furs.

The last of the Cinderella dances will be coming off shortly. I hear this one is to eclipse all the rest, so I hope to tell you all about it in a future letter.

Mrs Cornford gave a large children's dance. There must have been fully seventy little ones there, and they did seem to enjoy themselves, but who could help doing so with such a splendid hostess as Mrs Cornford? The rooms looked lovely, the supper-room especially, and the children did full justice to all the good things provided for them. Amongst the older children were the Misses Balfour (2), Baker, Roy, and Heath. Miss Balfour looked so pretty in yellow; Miss Annie Cornford also looked charming. The dance broke up at a reasonable hour, and the children all agreed that there never had been such a jolly ball. Do you know, Bee, the way the children dance is wonderful. Some of we elder ones might well take a lesson from them; their steps are so even, and they are so polite to one another.

We are so glad to learn that Mrs Rhodes is better. She was so unwell at one time, it was thought advisable to send for Miss Rhodes, who was on a visit to Mrs J. Wood, at Nelson, but, fortunately, when she arrived home, Mrs Rhodes was much better, and has not continued to improve until quite lately, when she has not seemed quite so well again. She is such a dear old lady, and is so much liked. We shall be so glad when she is herself again.

We had a splendid concert at the Athenæum Hall. Miss Large sang so sweetly, and, of course, was encored. It is such a treat to listen to her. Mrs Sheath was also in splendid voice, and sang some very pretty songs. Miss Hitchings played nearly all the accompaniments in her usual excellent style. She looked very nice in black. I must not forget to tell you that a gentleman named Mr Ferguson sang. I think he is a new-comer. His song took immensely, and you would have laughed if you had seen him pretending to be shy. I don't believe he was really shy, and his singing was much admired. One of his songs was 'The Bogie Man,' the audience being convulsed with laughter. You know, Bee, I don't think we girls should get *all* the praise. I think the men should sometimes be admired, especially when they deserve it. Amongst the audience we noticed Mesdames Balfour, Logan, Kettle, Weber, Parker, Frazer, and the Misses Fulton, Balfour, Hitchings (2), Rhodes (2), Gleeson, Roy, and several others.

I expect I shall have a wedding to tell you about shortly. Miss Roy is to be married to Mr S. R. Kennedy, and I am afraid we are not as delighted as we ought to be about this wedding, for what we Napier people are going to do without Miss Roy I really do not know. She is a most accomplished pianist, and sings well, and is always ready to assist at any concert got up for a good object. Most of our little ones, and indeed, some of our big ones, too, owe their good dancing to her excellent tution. Her sister, Mrs Heath, will miss her terribly. I hear Miss Lascelles is to be one of the bridesmaids.

There is to be a large Athenæum ball—a calico ball. It is to be held in the Garrison Hall, and I believe crowds are going to it.

I noticed Miss Hitchings looking very charming in fawn skirt, red blouse, fawn jacket, stylish black hat lined with red; also Miss Chapman in grey gown, stylish hat; and Miss Hamlin, fawn gown, large hat with feathers.

GLADYS.

HASTINGS.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 8.

The Gymnasium closed last evening with a very pleasing entertainment. I was not there, unfortunately, but was told that everything passed off most satisfactorily. The competition for the medal took place, and some very good exercises were gone through, especially on the parallel bar. Mr Charlton, from Te Aute, was the judge, and his decision gave universal satisfaction. Eleven young men competed (although one of them was put out of it by having his toe hurt), and as two of them, Mr Warne and Mr Olsen, got the same number of marks, it was decided to still further test them on the bar. However, it was found impossible to decide which was the better of the two, and in order to get over the difficulty, Mr Fraser generously offered to give two medals instead of one. His offer was received with great applause. Mrs Hobbs gave away the medal to Mr Warne, and I suppose Mr Olsen will receive his when it is made. Everyone sang, 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow,' and the proceedings terminated with some wonderful performances on the bar by Messrs Charlton and Hodge, the former wearing a most elaborate costume of pink fleshings with red velvet trunk and collar, and high boots covered with gold spangles. Mr Murdock proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Fraser, which was unanimously carried, and during the uproar Mr Fraser fled. We are all sorry there are to be no more of these popular entertainments, and shall look forward with pleasure to the opening of next season.

I am very glad to say that the cricket season is coming on. The cricketers had a meeting a week or so ago, and arranged all sorts of nice things for the coming season. I believe there is to be a sort of large tent put up for the ladies, which will be most acceptable. Mr C. Loughnan, the secretary, gave out that the piece 'Engaged' would very likely be reproduced before long. This is good news, and I have no hesitation in saying that if it is played again either in Napier or Hastings, there will be a crowded house.

Our tea-meeting takes place just now, and won't there be a gathering, especially of small fry. After the tea, I believe we are to have a great treat in the musical line, as most of our leading amateurs have promised to sing. There ought to be a 'bumper' house, as the charge for admission to the concert is only sixpence. I will tell you about the tea and conversazione in my next letter.

Miss St. Hill has returned from Wellington. She looks very handsome in a dark green costume, large dark green hat with cock's feathers; Mrs Sunderland (Gisborne) looks very nice in a stylish navy gown, large black hat with feathers; Mrs Joe Williams, dark grey gown, sealette jacket, stylish bonnet; Miss Humpheries, very stylish navy blue gown, tight-fitting jacket, small close-fitting hat; Mrs Harry Nelson, navy blue costume, small boat-shaped hat; Mrs Donnelly, black gown, white vest, black jacket, white chic hat, black band; Mrs Howard, handsome dark green cloth gown, richly trimmed with very handsome dark red and green plaid, French bonnet of dark green plush, covered with marigolds; Miss Greenwood, grey gown, sealette jacket, small black hat with black pom-poms; Mrs Vickerman, dark skirt, heliotrope blouse, black jacket, black chic hat; Mrs Loughnan, brown gown, fawn jacket, brown chic hat with brown band.

DOLLY.

AN ELECTRIC HOUSE.

THE most interesting portion of the World's Fair at Chicago, as far as ladies are concerned, will be the electric house, which sounds as if it might almost be a practical illustration of how to manage an establishment without servants.

It is to be a miniature house, worked entirely by electricity, which is to be the motive power for the bells, the lights, the doors, and the burglar alarms, to at once illuminate the house in case of attempted ingress. The rooms are warmed by electric radiators, and cooled by electric fans.

But the most marvellous part is that relating to the cooking. It is to be conducted on an electric range in a kitchen at the top of the house, and the dishes are to be lowered to the dining-room by an electric dumb waiter, and washed afterwards by an electric dish washer, in which a child can wash 10,000 dishes a day. The washing, ironing, and scrubbing of the floors and woodwork, and even the cleaning of the windows will be performed by electricity. Everything which in an ordinary house is relegated to the dusthole is also immediately destroyed by electricity.

My only fear would be that, living in a house so laden with electricity—for even the library contains little phonographs for sending verbal messages to friends—I should, one day, find myself so highly charged that I might be unconsciously executed, and, perhaps, spirited away by electricity before any of my friends could know anything about it.

THE LONGEST DAY.

IT is quite important when speaking of the longest day in the year to say what part of the world we are talking about, as will be seen by reading the following list, which tells the length of the longest days in several places. How unfortunate are the children in Tornes, Finland, where Christmas day is less than three hours in length.

At Stockholm, Sweden, it is eighteen and one-half hours in length.

At Spitzbergen the longest day is three and one-half months.

At London, England, and Bremen, Prussia, the longest day has sixteen and one-half hours.

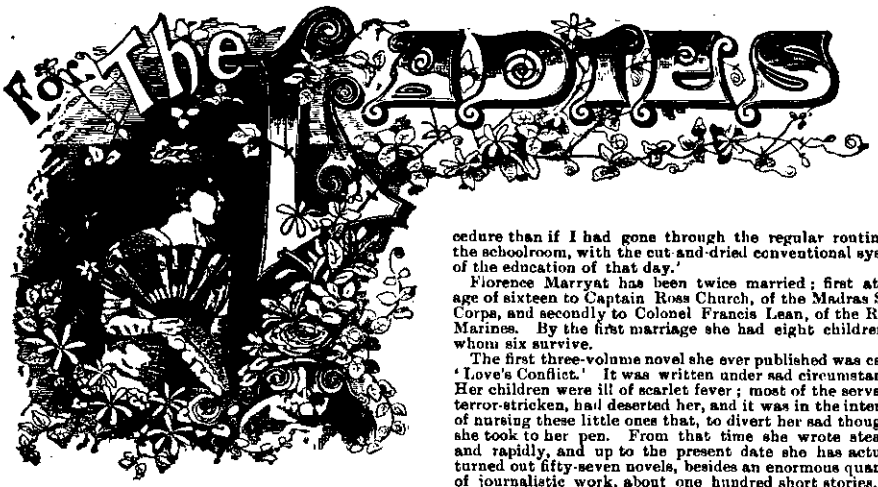
At Hamburg, in Germany, and Dantzig, in Prussia, the longest day has seventeen hours.

At Wardbury, Norway, the longest day lasts from May 21st to July 22nd without interruption.

At St. Petersburg, Russia, and Tobolsk, Siberia, the longest day is nineteen hours, and the shortest five hours.

At Tornea, Finland, June 21st brings a day nearly twenty-two hours long, and Christmas one less than three hours in length.

At New York the longest day is about fifteen hours, and at Montreal, Canada, it is sixteen hours.



NOTABLE LADY AUTHORS.

MISS FLORENCE MARRYAT.

BATTLING with a fierce snowstorm, and a keen east wind, which drives the flakes straight into your face like repeated stings of a small sharp whip, you experience a sense of relief on turning into Miss Florence Marryat's pretty, picturesque little house in St. Andrew's Road, West Kensington. Two bright red pots filled with evergreens mark the house, which is built in the Elizabethan style of architecture, with a covered verandah running along the upper part. By a strange coincidence, the famous authoress has settled down within a stone's throw of the place where her distinguished father—the late Captain Marryat, R.N.—once lived. Until three months ago, there stood in the Fulham Palace Road, a large handsome building enclosed in ten acres of ground, which was first called 'Brandenburg Villa,' and was inhabited by the celebrated singer Madame Sontag. It next fell into the hands of the Duke of Sussex, who changed its name to Sussex House, and finally sold it to his equerry Captain Marryat, who exchanged it with Mrs Alexander Copeland for the Manor of Langham, in Norfolk, where he died. For some years past Sussex House has been in Chancery, but now it is pulled down; the land is sold out in building plots and the pleasure grounds will be turned into the usual streets and rows of houses for the needs of the ever-increasing population. The study, or as Florence Marryat calls it, her 'literary workshop'—is very small, but so well arranged that it seems a sort of *multum in parvo*, everything a writer can want being at hand. It has an indescribable look of snugness and comfort. The large writing table is well-filled, and on it lies a heap of MS., and your eye first catches the figures 536 on the top page, betokening the fact that yet another new novel is under weigh. A massive brass inkstand, bright as gold, is flanked on each side by a fierce-looking dragon. Two of the walls are lined with bookshelves from floor to ceiling, filled with books which must number many hundreds of volumes. Over the fireplace hangs an old-fashioned round mirror set in a dull yellow frame, mounted on plush, around whose broad margin is displayed a variety of china plates, picked up in the many foreign countries which Miss Marryat has visited, and the effect is particularly good. The room is lighted at the further corner by glass doors opening into an aviary and conservatory, which is bright with many red-berried winter plants; this little glass-house opens on to the big kennels where Miss Marryat's canine pets are made so comfortable.

But the door opens. Enter your hostess with two ring-doves perched familiarly on her shoulder. She is tall in stature, erect in carriage, fair in complexion; she has large blue eyes—set well apart—straight, well-formed eyebrows, and an abundance of soft fair fluffy hair. She is dressed very simply in a long black tea-gown with Watteau pleat, very plainly made, but perfect in cut and fit, and looking quite unstudied in its becoming graceful simplicity.

Florence Marryat is the youngest of the eleven children of the late well-known author, Captain Marryat, R.N., C.B., F.R.S. Her mother, who died at the good old age of ninety — in full possession of all her faculties — was a daughter of Sir Stephen Thairp, of Houston, Linlithgow, who was for many years H.B.M. Consul-General and *Chargé d'Affaires* at the Court of Russia. One side of the little study is dedicated to the relics of her father, and in the centre is his portrait, surrounded by his trophies and memories. The picture is painted by the sculptor Behnes, in water-colours, and represents a tall, fair, slight, though muscular-looking man leaning against the mast of his ship, Ariadne, dressed in the full uniform of those days, a long-tailed coat, white duck trousers, and cocked hat held under his arm. Two smaller pictures of him are pen-and-ink drawings by Count D'Orsay and Sir Edward Belcher respectively.

Born of such a gifted father, it is small wonder that the child should have inherited brilliant talents. She was never sent to school, but was taught under a succession of governesses, and 'on looking back,' she says with compunction, 'I regret to remember that I treated them all very badly, for I was a downright troublesome child. I was an omnivorous reader, and as no restriction was placed on my choice of books, I read everything I could find, lying for hours full length on the rug, face downwards, arms propping up my head, with fingers in ears to shut out every disturbing sound, the while perpetually summoned to come to my lessons. I may be said to have educated myself, and probably I got more real learning out of this mode of procedure than if I had gone through the regular routine of the schoolroom, with the cut-and-dried conventional system of the education of that day.'

Florence Marryat has been twice married; first at the age of sixteen to Captain Ross Church, of the Madras Staff Corps, and secondly to Colonel Francis Lean, of the Royal Marines. By the first marriage she had eight children, of whom six survive.

The first three-volume novel she ever published was called 'Love's Conflict.' It was written under sad circumstances. Her children were ill of scarlet fever; most of the servants, terror-stricken, had deserted her, and it was in the intervals of nursing these little ones that, to divert her sad thoughts, she took to her pen. From that time she wrote steadily and rapidly, and up to the present date she has actually turned out fifty-seven novels, besides an enormous quantity of journalistic work, about one hundred short stories, and numerous essays, poems and recitations. She says of herself, that from earliest youth she had always determined on being a novelist, and at the age of ten, she wrote a story for the amusement of her playfellows, and illustrated it with her own pen-and-ink sketches, (for, be it known, the accomplished authoress has likewise inherited this talent from her father, and to this day she will decorate many a letter to her favourite friends with funny and clever little illustrations and caricatures). But she wisely formed the determination that she would never publish anything until her judgment was more matured, so as to ensure success; that she 'would study people, nature, nature's ways, and character, and then she would let the world know what she thought,' and in this piece of self-denial she has shown extreme wisdom, and reaped her reward in the long record of successes that she has scored, and the large fortune she has made, but which, alas! she no longer possesses. 'Others have spent it for me,' she says, plaintively; but she adds, generously, 'and I do not grudge it to them.' Part of it enabled her, at any rate, to give each and all of her children a thoroughly good education, and she is proud to think that they owe it all to her own hard work. Miss Marryat is always especially flattered to hear that her novels are favourites with women, and she had a gratifying proof of this when visiting Canada in 1885. She was waited on by a deputation of ladies, armed with bouquets and presents, to thank her for having written that charming story called 'My Own Child.'

'Gup,' which had an extensive sale, is entirely an Anglo-Indian book, not so much of a novel as a collection of character sketches and tales, which her powers of observation enabled her to form out of the life in Indian stations. For the benefit of the uninitiated, the word 'Gup' shall be translated from Hindustanee into English; 'Gossip.' 'Woman Against Woman,' 'Veronique,' 'Petronel,' 'Nelly Brook,' and 'Fighting the Air,' were amongst the earliest of the eighteen novels that she brought out in the first eleven years of her literary career. These, together with her 'Girls of Feversham,' have been republished in Germany and America, and translated into Russian, German, Swedish, and French. Miss Marryat says: 'I never sit down deliberately to compose or think out a plot. The most ordinary remark or anecdote may supply the motive, and the rest comes by itself. Sometimes I have as many as a dozen plots, in different stages of completion, floating in my brain. They appear to me like a set of houses, the first of which is fully furnished; the second finished, but empty; the third in course of building; till the furthest in the distance is nothing but an outline. As soon as one is complete, I feel I *must* write it down; but I never think of the one I am writing; always of the next one that is to be, and sometimes of three or four at a time, till I drive them forcibly away. I never feel at home with a plot till I have settled the names of the characters to my satisfaction. As soon as I have done that they become sentient beings in my eyes, and seem to dictate what I shall write. I lose myself so completely whilst writing, that I have no idea, till I take it up to correct, what I have written.' Judging by the great heap of MSS. alluded to on the writing-table, there seems but little for the writer to correct. At your request she hands you half-a-dozen pages, and you notice but three alterations in the lot; the facile pen, the medium of her thoughts, seems to have known exactly what it had to write. The novel is called 'The Risen Dead,' and is being written by request of the *Oracle*, and is to be in three volumes. Her four latest novels, 'On Circumstantial Evidence,' 'Mount Eden,' 'Blindfold,' and 'Brave Heart and True,' were written in eighteen months. 'Tom Tiddler's Ground' is the history of her own adventures while in America. Many of her books have been dramatised, and at one time nine of these plays were running simultaneously in the provinces. She says, 'The most successful of my works are transcripts of my own experience. I have been accused of caricaturing my acquaintances, but it is untrue. The majority of them are not worth the trouble, and it is far easier for me to draw a picture from my own imagination, than to endure the society of a disagreeable person for the sake of copying him or her.'

But Miss Marryat's talents are versatile. After a long illness, when her physicians recommended rest from literature, believing an entire change of occupation would be the best tonic for her, she went upon the stage—a pursuit which she had always dearly loved—and possessing a fine voice and great musical gifts, with considerable dramatic power, she has been successful both as an actress and an entertainer. She wrote a play called 'Her World Against a Lie' (from her own novel), which was produced at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, and in which she played the chief comedy part, Mrs Hephzibah Horton, with so much skill and *aplomb*, that the *Era*, *Figaro*, *Morning Post* and other papers, criticised her performances most favourably. She also wrote 'Miss Chester' and 'Charmyon' in conjunction with Sir Charles Young. She was engaged for the opening of the Prince of Wales' (then the Princes') Theatre, when she played 'Queen Altemire' in *The Palace of Truth*. She has toured with D'Oyly Carte's *Patience* companies, with George Grossmith in *Entre Nous*, and finally with her own company in *The Golden Goblet* (written by her son Frank). Altogether Miss Marryat has pursued her dramatic life for fifteen years, and has given hundreds of recitations and musical entertainments which she has written for herself. One of these last, called 'Love Letters,' she has taken through the provinces three times, and once through America. It lasts two hours; she accompanies herself on the piano, and the music was written by George Grossmith. Another is a comic lecture entitled, 'Women of the future (1991); or, what shall we do with our men?' and she has made many tours throughout the United Kingdom, giving recitals and readings from her father's works, and other pieces by Albery and Grossmith.

For the last seven years Miss Marryat has never looked at a criticism on her books. She says her publishers are her best friends, and their purses are her assessors, and she is quite satisfied with the result. She has an intense love of animals, and asks if you would object to the presence of her dogs, as this is the hour for their admittance. On the contrary, it is what you have been longing for, and two magnificent bulldogs of long pedigree, are let in. Ferocious as is their appearance, their manners are perfect, and their great brown eyes seem human in their intelligence as each comes up to make your acquaintance. Meantime the doves have gone peacefully to sleep, each perched on a brass dragon, and the dogs eye them respectfully, as if they were all members of 'a happy family.'

A neat little maid comes in with a tea-tray, but ere she is permitted to lay the prettily embroidered cloth, your hostess asks you to look at the table, which is a curiosity. It is a small round table, made from the oak planks of the quarter deck of H.M.S. Ariadne. It was sent to her by a gentleman who never saw her, with a letter saying that she would prize the wood over which her father's feet had so often trod. It bears in the centre a brass inscription, as follows:—'Made from the timbers of H.M.S. Ariadne, commanded by Captain Marryat, R.N., C.B., 1828.

Miss Marryat, probably wishing to pay you a peculiar honour, pushes her own special revolving writing chair to you; but no, you had surreptitiously tried it whilst waiting for her, and unhesitatingly pronounce it to be the most uncomfortable piece of furniture ever made. It is constructed of wood, is highly polished, and has a hard seat, hard elbow rests, and a hard unyielding back. She laughs heartily, and declares she will hear no word against her 'old armchair;' she says she has got used to it, it has been like herself a great traveller, she has written in it for twenty years, and it is a particular favourite. Miss Marryat wears a diamond ring, which she tells you has a history and is very old. During the first Burmese war in which her father was engaged, the natives were in the habit of making little slits in their skin, and inserting therein any particular stone of value they wished to conceal. One of these men was taken prisoner, and on being searched, or felt over—for there was not much clothing to search—a small hard lump was found on his leg, which at once revealed the presence of some valuable. A slight incision produced a diamond, which was confiscated, set, and presented by Captain Marryat to his sister-in-law, Mrs Horace Marryat, whose only son, Colonel Fitzroy Marryat, gave it to his cousin, the authoress.

She takes you into the adjoining room to see two oil-paintings of wrecks, *chef d'œuvres* of the great Flemish seascape painter, Louis Boeckhaussen, and valued at a high figure. There is a story attached to these also. They belonged originally to the Marryat collection at Wimbledon House, and were given to her brother Frederick by his grandmother on his being promoted to be first lieutenant of the Sphynx, and were hanging in his cabin when that ship was wrecked off the Needles, Isle of Wight. They remained fourteen days under water, and when rescued were sent to a Plymouth dealer to be cleaned. Lieutenant Marryat, for his bravery on that occasion, was immediately appointed to the Sphynx's twin vessel, the ill-fated Avenger, who went down with 380 souls on the Sorelli rocks.

After this catastrophe, the dealer sent the paintings to the young officer's mother, saying it was by his instructions, and that he had refused to take them to sea again, as he declared that they were 'much too good to go overboard.' Miss Marryat also possesses a painting by Cawno, from 'Japhet in Search of a Father,' which was left to her by the will of the late Mr Richard Bentley, the publisher, and this she prizes highly. She has several presentation pens, one of porcupine quill and silver, with which her father wrote his last five novels, another of ivory, coral, and gold, inscribed with her name and presented by Messrs Macniven and Cameron; a third of silver, and a fourth of gold and ivory, given by admirers of her writings; fifthly, and the one she values most and chiefly uses, a penholder of solid gold with amethysts, which belonged to an American ancestress of the family, for Miss Marryat's parental grandmother was a Boston belle. This was a tribute from her American relations when she crossed the Atlantic, with the words that she was 'the most worthy member to retain it.' As she leaves the room with you, she is surrounded by a noisy group of tiny black rough terriers, one of whom, 'Jane,' is a special favourite. When you look surprised at the number of her doggy friends, you make her laugh. 'They are not all kept entirely for amusement,' she tells you. 'I sell the puppies, and they fetch large prices. It is quite the fashion to be in trade nowadays, you know. One lady runs a boarding-house, another, her emporium for furniture, a third, her bonnet shop, a fourth, her dressmaking establishment, so why not I, my kennels? I love dogs better than bonnets, or chairs, or people, and so I derive pleasure as well as profit from my particular fancy, and I should be lonely without these pets.'

But, as though talking of old reminiscences, had changed her mood from gay to grave, she asks you to look at a few very special treasures in her writing room. 'I call this my room of home memories,' she says with exceeding softness and pathos. 'There are my children's pictures; those,' pointing to a small shelf, 'are my best friend's books. *Here* are portraits of all whom I love best, my living, and my dead!'—*Lady's Pictorial.*

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.*

Queries and Answers to Queries are always inserted as soon as possible after they are received, though, owing to pressure on this column, it may be a week or two before they appear.—ED.

QUERIES.

FURNITURE.—Can you oblige me with any hints on furniture polishing and on floor-staining?—SPRING.

ANSWERS TO QUERIES.

'Disdain.'—The great thing to observe in cooking tripe is to let it simmer very gently for some hours, a thing cooks so often fail to do. Some persons like tripe served in one large piece, and others prefer it cut up in square pieces; but that, of course, is simply a matter of taste. Take the tripe and well wash it in cold water, then put it into a stewpan, cover it with cold water and well season it with salt. Bring the water to boiling point, and then strain it from the tripe and well rinse in cold water and wipe it. Then cut it up. For one pound take three or four good-sized onions, and put them into a stewpan with the tripe, add a little salt and pepper and a pint of milk; bring the milk to the boil, and then let it simmer for three hours very gently; take the tripe out of the pan, and rub the sauce and the onions through a fine hair sieve; return the purée to the pan, and add a dessertspoonful of flour, which has been mixed with a little cold milk, and an ounce of butter; let the sauce boil a few minutes, then add the tripe, and when it is thoroughly heated arrange in a pile on a dish and pour the sauce over it; and, I need hardly add, serve it very hot.

'Stupide.'—Is not that rather a hard *nom de plume*? For pigeons, truss the birds as if they were going to be braised, and put them into a stewpan, with a little butter or grease; add a bunch of herbs and three ounces of raw bacon chopped up in small dice shapes, and two onions cut up into small pieces; put the cover on the pan, and let the contents fry until they are a nice brown; then add half a pint of stock, and let them simmer for three-quarters of an hour with a buttered paper over them. The stock will probably reduce during the time the pigeons are being cooked, and you must add a little more. When cooked remove the trussing strings or the skewers, place the birds on nicely-fried croûtons and after removing the fat, reboil the gravy, and then pour it round the birds.

MAGIC-LANTERN SLIDES. — The only pigments available are the transparent and a few of the semi-transparent. Beginning with the best for the purpose, the transparent include Prussian blue, gamboge, carmine, verdigris, madder brown, indigo, crimson lake, and ivory black. The semi-transparent include raw sienna, burnt sienna, cappah brown, and vandyke brown. No particular method of mixing the colours is requisite. Ordinary oil or water colours will do, but they must be ground extremely fine. The pencils must be small, and their points unexceptionable. The best vehicle to use for thinning the colours is ordinary megilp, and not a drop more than is necessary should be added, for if the colours are made too thin they will run into each other and spoil the painting. If water colours are preferred, the best medium for laying on the first wash of colour is a hot solution of transparent gelatine. When this is dry and cold it admits of shading and finishing without being disturbed, provided the pencil is handled gently and the medium be cold water. The oil paintings are not usually varnished, but the transparency of the water colours is heightened by a thin coat of the purest mastic varnish In colouring the pictures the quality of the light which is to show them must be considered. If the lime light is employed, colour as nearly as possible to nature. The rays of light from an oil lamp are greatly deficient in blue, the yellow preponderating: so you must arrange the tints accordingly. For instance, the greens must be bluer than natural, the yellows incline to orange, and all shades of violet eschewed.

RECIPES.

WHITE SOUP.—Fowl, weighing three or four pounds; three quarts cold water; one tablespoonful salt; six peppercorns; one tablespoonful chopped onion, and two tablespoonfuls chopped celery. Singe the fowl and wash the outside thoroughly. Cut off the legs and wings; cut through the thin flesh below the end of the breast-bone down to the back-bone on each side, then separate the back from the breast at the joint, and remove all the internal organs. Do not forget the kidneys lying in the hollow of the side bone, and the lungs in the ribs. This is the quickest way to dress a fowl when it is not to be served whole. Separate the neck and ribs from the breast. Wash each piece quickly in warm water, using a little soda or charcoal, if there be any sour or tainted odour. Put all but the breast on to boil in cold water. Let it come to a boil quickly (because we wish to use the meat as well as the water) and remove the scum. Then add the breast, also the salt and vegetables. Let it cook gently but continuously, until the meat is tender; the time depends upon the age of the fowl. Skim out the chicken, remove the meat from the bones and lay it aside to be used for croquettes, salads and other made dishes. Put the bones, skin, and any inferior portions of the meat into the liquor again, and simmer until the bones are clean, the gelatinous parts are dissolved and the water is reduced one-half. Strain through a fine strainer and set away where it can cool quickly. It should form a jelly when cold, and, if the fat is not removed, it will keep for several days. This is the stock for the basis of a great many delicious soups. One of the most palatable and most quickly made is the following:—One quart white stock; one pint of cream or milk; one heaping tablespoonful corn-starch, or two tablespoonfuls flour; one saltspoonful white pepper; one-quarter saltspoonful cayenne; one scant teaspoonful salt, and one tablespoonful butter. Remove every globule of fat from the stock and put it on to boil with the milk or cream, in a granite pan. Mix the salt and pepper with the flour or starch. Melt the butter in a smooth saucepan; when bubbling, add the flour mixture and stir thoroughly until well mixed and foamy. Dip out a little of the boiling stock and stir it into the butter; stir rapidly as it thickens quickly, then add more stock and stir until it is smooth and free from lumps. Keep on adding stock until it is thin enough to pour easily, then turn the whole into the remainder of the stock and mix it thoroughly. If it be too thick, add a little more stock or milk, and if too thin, reduce it by longer boiling, or add one egg. The egg should be well-beaten in a large bowl, and a cupful of the hot soup poured into it and well mixed. Then strain it into the hot tureen, and strain the remainder of the hot soup into it. If the beaten egg be stirred directly into the hot soup over the fire it will curdle. Add more seasoning if needed, and if celery was not used in making the stock, you may add a little celery salt now, if you like the flavour. This soup should be thick and smooth, like thin cream, without a suspicion of fat, and so delicately seasoned that the chicken flavour is not disguised. Served with 'crisp crackers,' it may well be called the 'Queen of Soups.'

A USEFUL WRAP.

THE illustration shows one of the new pretty circular cloaks. It is made of blue cloth (corn-flower blue) gathered into a velvet yoke; a pretty ruche goes around the throat. The hat is of cloth, with fawn feathers.

SEPTEMBER.

BEHIND THE SHOWERS.

SHALL we love not the smiling of this month
Because of the teardrops it brings?
Oh, this earth would be Paradise nearly,
If we'd look at the bright side of things.

Patrick was numbering his family for the census-taker. 'There's a b'y,' he said, 'and a b'y and a b'y; meself, me wife and a b'y; and three great grown girls—and a b'y.'

FEMALE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

THERE are certain subjects which are absolutely necessary for girls to learn, but about the well or ill doing of which men are not often found competent to judge.

We do not for one moment desire to see ladies take the places of men as School Inspectors, but we do think that they might, with advantage, co-operate with them in the work. At one time there was a great deal said against the election of Lady Poor Law Guardians in England; but now we hear little or nothing in its disfavour, for the place has been tried, and proved, as its supporters expected, eminently successful. It surely stands to reason that women must know and understand the work and requirements of their own sex better than men—the very cleverest of them—possibly can; and for this simple reason, because they have learned from experience, and, as we all know, an ounce of practice is worth pounds of theory.

Women are always appointed as teachers in girls' and infants' schools, and it has never been denied that they have done the work well and efficiently, and therefore it does seem rather absurd to have the work done during the term by girls, under the care and tuition of women, inspected and judged by a man.

Take, for instance, the matter of needlework. It is of the greatest importance that girls should learn to use both scissors and needle well, if they are to become useful and efficient members of a household. Now, what do men know of the mysteries of measuring, stitching, and felling! How can they judge of the beauties of a button-hole, or the elegances of an elaborate darn? We very much doubt whether one man out of twenty can tell the difference between sewing and stitching, and probably the fingers of School Inspectors have never held a needle, except, perhaps, to sew on a button, a work upon which we have seen some men expend an enormous amount of time, energy, and temper. And yet men are considered by those in authority thoroughly competent to judge of the progress and proficiency made by hundreds of girls in this particular branch of their education. We have no wish or intention to exaggerate in this matter, 'nor set down aught in malice': we merely state facts that are apparent to all who choose to look and think for themselves.

Again, there is music. Now, very few boys, taking them generally, learn this. Of course, if any lad shows a particular taste or aptitude for it, he is taught, and nowadays it is becoming the fashion to teach boys to play some instrument, generally the piano or violin; but at one time music was very seldom taught to boys. We are not sure, but we believe that candidates for the post of Government School Inspectors are not required to show that they possess any knowledge or taste for this particular accomplishment, and yet they will have as one of their duties, to pass judgment and give praise or blame, as the case may be, upon the manner in which children have been taught, and the way in which they have profited by their tuition in music.

Almost all ladies have been taught music, more or less, and therefore have some knowledge of the subject, and are to a certain extent competent, or at any rate more competent, to judge of the school children's performances than a person who has been brought up in total ignorance of the subject.

In infant schools women are the best teachers. They have, for one thing, more patience than men with the ways and doings of the little ones. The secret of this success is, we think, that they are more in sympathy with them, for in the hearts of all true women there is the motherly element, which brings them into such close touch with the tinies, who require very careful treatment and management.

To keep the attention of small children without wearying them, and to develop their minds without straining them, is not an easy task, and yet it is one which every teacher of an infant school has to try and accomplish.

Those who have to do with forming the laws and regulations connected with the education of the young are beginning at last to awaken to the fact that teachers and pupils alike are not mere machines—the one to wind, the other to be wound up, to a certain pitch or standard of excellency, but individuals, with tastes and requirements alike to some extent, but still each differing from the other in many ways.

A teacher of girls or infants would work all the better if she found that the Inspector did not merely examine and criticise the work, but also took an interest in the method by which it had been done, and who would also show and express sympathy with the hopes and anxieties that are inseparable from the work, if carried out honestly and conscientiously; and this would be the case if, instead of as at present, the Inspector were an intelligent, educated gentlewoman, with a practical personal knowledge of the subjects she was called upon to judge.

A woman can speak more openly and plainly to one of her own sex than she can to one of the lords of creation, especially if that one be of a higher rank in life than herself.

Are there not sub-inspectors as well as inspectors? If so, surely it would be an experiment worth trying to appoint a lady to the post, and give to her the inspection of the girls' and infants' schools and needlework, while her superior does the same duty for the boys' schools. That the work would be done more thoroughly and effectually we fully believe; and there would be no difficulty in getting competent persons to fill these posts, for there are many—too many, alas!—highly educated, conscientious gentlewomen anxious to obtain employment in the present day, and this surely would give them an opportunity of using their talents not only for their own, but also for the good of their fellow-creatures.

Wherever the tree of benevolence takes root it sends forth branches above the sky.

It has been discovered that Rudyard Kipling's grandfathers on both sides were Wesleyan ministers. His father is an accomplished artist who formerly held the position of art director in India. A pretty Indian village named Rudyard, in which the son was born, supplied him with his first name. The elder Kipling is now decorating a ceiling for Queen Victoria at Windsor.

ON GENTLEMANLY MEN.

BY A WOMAN.

MEN are always pitching into us. Let one of the badly-treated women say a few words on the behaviour of the stronger sex.

I was walking up the street the other morning, and I encountered a heavy swell. He was tailor-made, and his hatter was a genius. The swell had lately visited the barber, who had got up his moustache to perfection, and his hair was scarcely visible. His collar was steel in its stiffness, his tie and gloves and cane quite the latest. It was muddy, and nearly across the path was a small lake of about a yard wide, and broad in proportion. A few inches of dry land were on the inner side of the path, whilst a muddy road flanked the outer edge of the puddle and pavement. Two things this young gentleman could have done. He might have waited a minute—he didn't look the sort of man whose time was worth a great deal either to himself or to any one else—or he might have gone outside, and thus left me the dry scrap of pavement. But he quietly took it himself, carefully lifting his stick out of the reach of the water. I only wish he had heard my remark. It was short but it summed up that man.

Later in the day I passed the same spot, and met a rough-looking working-man. He took in the situation at a glance—dry corner, wet puddle, muddy road—and, like the gentleman he was, he stepped out into the highway, and was rewarded by the pleasantest smile I could arrange for at such short notice.

I meet gentlemen in position and boors in manners, who never lift their cigars as they pass a lady, and I meet men with whom the *gentlemen* would not condescend to shake hands, who remove their pipes or carefully turn their heads that no smoke shall annoy the dame or demoiselle they are encountering.

There are men who pride themselves on their incivility to women, who think it clever, and a proof of their superiority to be absolutely discourteous to any woman with whom they come in contact. It is manly to let people see that you are absolutely indifferent to the rules of good society in your treatment of that inferior animal—woman. If she be a spinster, she may have designs upon you in a matrimonial way. If a married woman, she is quite as dangerous, for she thinks she can do anything with impunity. She may even get you talked about. Therefore, cowardly man, keep women at a distance; they are too good for you.

Then there is the equally objectionable man who is so excessively gentlemanly. He fusses after the ladies, pays them bushels of inane compliments, assures them he only lives on the hope of meeting them again on the morrow, makes love in sickening indifference to married and single ladies, and is the disgust of all sensible women.

Then we all know the sycophant. Ugh! How he praises your baby, your house, your gown, if married. If unmarried, he is not so obtrusive, for you can't ask him to afternoon tea or to dinner, and his remarks on the beauty of your garden, which, alas! he is too far off to see, the excellence of your music, which at this distance he cannot hear, do not elicit usually a request to come out this evening and see and hear for himself.

There is the pompous man, who thinks his position entitles him to the admiration and respect of all women. Then there is—but oh, dear! there are such numbers of nasty men! And especially those who sit quietly down, and sneer away in gentle meandering, watery streams at all sorts and conditions of women. Because one woman has once found she could not endure this man after having tried to do so during a brief engagement, the jilted one thinks himself entitled thenceforward to view the whole sex with jaundiced eyes, and to let no opportunity pass of running them down, individually and collectively.

Bah! Frequent abuse of this kind has a tendency to rebound on the abuser, and we women shrug our shoulders and laugh. 'Poor so-and-so at it again. Has he had a fight with his landlady, or has his laundress retained some of his garments? Or, do you think he has proposed again, and been again rejected?' L. F. R.

AMONG THE RUINS.

A VOICE amidst grey ruins clearly singing,
While lengthening shadows o'er the sand-flats fall,
And a wan moon like a white pall is flinging
A sad and sombre lustre over all.
What burthen hath that song which might enthral
The desert ghouls to listening mutely glad?
What meaning bears its message musical?—
'While life hath love, shall song be wholly sad?'

Hist! Are there roses midst those ruins springing?
Is that the nightingale's voluptuous call?
Can it be dew on those scant grass-tufts stringing,
In the chill moonlight, gems imperial?
Ah, nay! But while snake-slow the shadows crawl
From mound to mound with perished verdure clad,
Still sounds that voice with joyous swell and fall—
'While life hath love, shall song be wholly sad?'

What voice? None knows. That rapturous carol ringing
From forth the ruins hath no name at all;
But not the lark through the sheer blue upwinging
Hath song so clear or so ecstatical.
Shapes of delight, odours ambrosial
Rise in the desert, and its spectres sad
Shrink to their lairs, and may no more appal.
'While life hath love, shall song be wholly sad?'

Who hears that voice is never Sorrow's thrall,
'Midst wastes with shadows thronged, with ruins clad;
'Tis as an echo of Hope's clarion call—
'While life hath love, shall song be wholly sad?'

HOW TO PRESS FLOWERS.

THE New Zealand bush abounds in lovely flowers; some of them can be obtained nowhere else. A search for them will well repay your trouble, dear reader, and possibly might also prove a source of profit. I see that in the World's Fair to be held in Chicago, pressed flowers are to be amongst the exhibits. Why should you not send some specimens.

On your next ramble in the bush, take along one of those long, japanned-tin botanist's boxes, or else a light basket. Have a layer of damp moss in your receptacle, and put your plants away as soon as possible. Choose the choicest specimens—and several of one sort will not come amiss. Gather the shapeliest leaves of the trees, sprigs of moss, and any miniature leaves that you think will retain their beauty after being dried, and specially keep a lookout for ferns. Some plants are very small, and it is best to dig such up by the roots—it will be all the more interesting to have the whole plant. It will be prudent to take along a large, thin book, which can be tightly strapped together, as you may want to press some of the most delicate ferns immediately. Have the covers perforated with large holes to admit the air. You can buy all sorts of botanist's portfolios; but a couple of thin boards you can readily make yourself, will answer every purpose. Put thirty or forty sheets of drying paper between the covers, and fasten a couple of strips of leather so as to form a convenient handle. Be very careful in laying your specimens between the leaves to have every flower separate and smooth.

After some pleasant hours in the woods you will come home with your basket full of all kinds of plants and flowers. To preserve the delicate colours of the latter, it is necessary that they should be dried at once. Place them on your drying-paper and carefully arrange every flower, smoothing out all wrinkles. If any petals have dropped off, set them in place with a little mucilage.

Some flowers cannot bear the touch of a warm hand, and these you will find wilted. They may be restored by

sprinkling with luke-warm water, and laying them away over night in a cool, dark place. If you are in a hurry, cut off part of the stems of the wilted flowers and place them in a vase of hot water, where they will straighten in a few hours.

After arranging your specimens on the drying-paper, lay several sheets over and under them and put in a press or under a heavy weight. You will never regret the money invested in a press. Twelve hours after pressing, change the papers, and press again. In a few days your plants will be ready to lay away, but be careful to keep under pressure until perfectly dry, or your larger flowers will mould or shrink, and thus lose all beauty.

In mounting my specimens I use heavy mounting paper, 11½ x 16½ inches, but a beginner would, perhaps, do well to start with 'binder's paper,' which is cheaper and just as suitable. A little mucilage may be put on the plant here and there, or you may fasten it by pasting narrow strips of paper across it.

When your mounting is finished, write under each specimen the date when it was found, the place, name, genus and species, the colour, and the familiar name. The sheets may then be placed in portfolios, according to genera, or may be arranged so that the specimens from one place are together.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

NEWSPAPER notoriety is an evil not confined to the United States. A German paper reports this dialogue:

Customer (reading a newspaper): 'Here I see I am referred to in the paper again.'

Landlord: 'Indeed! What do they say about you?'

Customer (reading aloud): '"At the close of last week Berlin numbered 1,573,421 inhabitants." I am one of that number.'

LONDON AND PARIS FASHIONS.

NEW GOWNS FOR A GERMAN COUNTESS.

(SEE FASHION PLATE, PAGE 425).

SOME very beautiful gowns have recently been made for a German Countess. They are so novel in design, and so tasteful in colouring that they reflect the greatest possible credit on the well-known firm by whom they have been executed. Sketches of these gowns will be found on page 425.

No. 1 has a bodice and train of terra-cotta brocade, with lovely designs in a mixture of réséda and gold. The front of the skirt is of réséda bengaline, daintily draped and finished round the hem with a deep frill of chenille, over a flounce of bengaline. The bodice is arranged with a vest of silk, buttoning down the front, while the sleeves are trimmed in quite a novel manner with points of piping, arranged one below the other, in the manner shown in the sketch.

No. 2 is an exceedingly handsome gown made in a combination of plain black velvet, and old rose and black velvet brocade. Down the back of the gown there is a graduated pleat of black velvet, with breadths of brocade on either side bordered by a very effective trimming in chenille. Round the hips there is a girdle of chenille fringe to correspond, the front of the dress being prettily draped, and arranged over a vest of plain satin.

No. 3 is a beautiful gown, with a bodice and train of iris brocade on gold, in lighter yellow and brown. At the throat and sleeves are ruffles of old-rose chiffon, while the basque of the bodice is outlined by a plaited silk girdle, which is tied with long ends reaching to the hem on one side of the skirt. The front of the gown is arranged with a tablier of brown velvet, cut in square points, over small flounces of gold-coloured silk. The demi-train is fastened on to the bodice at the back.

HERE ARE A FEW HINTS FOR A HUNT BALL.

The walls should be pretty thickly covered with foliage, and the corners festooned with trails of ivy. Coloured Chinese lanterns hung on tendrils of ivy are suspended from the ceiling with a particularly soft and pretty effect. The mirrors at either side should be appropriately surrounded with saddlery, while ornamental shields bearing such a happy motto as 'Good Luck' wrought in stirrups and enclosed in a horse-shoe greet all the guests.

I give you a few *chic* dresses worn at a recent hunt ball. A brunette wore a lovely dress of yellow brocade. The bodice was trimmed with chiffon and pearls, and bunches of yellow feathers were in the skirt. The skirt had a short train and was bordered with a little frill. Short trains were much worn. They are very inconvenient in a ball room; but that must be forgiven because they are so much more becoming than short-all-round dresses. A well-known beauty was in pale mauve, the only mauve dress in the room. It was of Sicilian silk, and trimmed with chiffon of the same colour, and bunches of Neapolitan violets. Round the waist were three wide silver bands, which were becoming to her slight figure. One lady was in white, with a small under-flounce and large shoulder-bows of pale blue, while another was simply and plainly dressed in white. I liked a charming dress of heliotrope brocaded with gold, and handsomely trimmed with Honiton lace. Another *chic* gown was yellow tulle, embroidered with a fern like design in green silk; she carried a large bouquet of white roses. Nearly half the men in the room sported their 'pink,' which, as usual, added greatly to the pretty effect of the ball. One lady was in dull heliotrope satin, curiously made with huge paniers. It was a very striking dress, and was trimmed with dull green velvet and the new jewel trimming.

Have you heard of the new sensible costume for wet weather? It is a short warm skirt which needs no holding up at all, for the simple reason that it reaches only within five inches of the ground. The skirt is worn over 'knickers' of tweed to match the gown, lined with red flannel, and is in every respect entirely desirable, being at once neat and smart-looking, healthy and warm. The skirt is lined inside with mackintosh to a depth of six or seven inches, and worn over gaiters of tweed made to reach the knee. These gaiters have an excellent effect, as they quite take off from the short appearance of the skirt, while they add considerably to the warmth of the dress. The bodice looks best in habit cloth, with zouaves of tweed, worn with an outdoor jacket lined with box-cloth. Mrs Hancock lately displayed this costume, and lectured on its good qualities, at a drawing-room meeting held at her own house. Since then, she has worn the dress in London, both for walking and shopping, without attracting any special attention. The costume in question, which is strongly recommended by all the leading physicians on account of its warmth and lightness, was made by Mdme. Goldschmidt, the original inventor of those shooting and walking skirts which have been so wonderfully successful.

AN ODD WEDDING PARTY.

WHAT must have been an odd and amusing party assembled recently at a town in the north of England for a marriage ceremony. The bridegroom was a solo-player on the euphonium, and stood six feet one inch in his stockings; the bride, on the other hand, was only two feet eight inches in height, which means that she was just as tall as a large St. Bernard dog. The gentleman who undertook the office of 'giving away' the bride had no arms, but he signed the marriage certificate notwithstanding, holding the pen between his teeth. The bride's lack of stature was amply compensated for by the noble proportions of the principal bridemaid, who was a professional giantess; another of the bridesmaids was a 'fire queen,' while the 'best man' (who ought to have been a dwarf, to balance things), measured seven feet ten inches in height.

Ladies' STORY Column.

THWARTED.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

BEFORE going out for her morning ride, Jessie Lane always went to her father's study to bid him good-bye, and get her usual kiss.

She was the only child at home. The sweet mother she had loved so well had now been dead five years, and Jessie was the idol of her father's heart.

As she opened the door of the study, he looked up and smiled and held out his hand.

'As pretty as a picture,' he said, 'and I am not the only one who thinks so either.'

Jessie blushed, and perching on her father's knee, took a big spice pink from her belt and pinned it into the lapel of his coat.

'Had another offer for me, papa,' she laughed. 'Well, tell the man just what I asked you to tell Mr Rodman—that I am too fond of my home and my father to marry any one just yet.'

'But if I should tell you I wished you to do so, Jessie?' said the father.

As he spoke she noticed that his lips were white, his cheeks pallid, and that he seemed to have aged suddenly.

He had not looked well for some days, and it occurred to her that he might fear some fatal illness and wish to see her married before he left this world.

At this thought, her own face lost its bright rose tints, and tears filled her eyes.

'Papa!' was all she could say, as she hid her face on his shoulder.

'My dear, marriage is the usual fate of woman,' said Mr Lane, with a tremor in his voice that Jessie had never heard before, 'and you must consider this offer for my sake. Casper Paul is madly in love with you; he asked me to tell you so, and I ask you to accept him.'

'Oh!' said the girl, much relieved, 'it is a joke. I never was so frightened in my life.'

'It is no joke, darling,' said the father. 'I mean what I say.'

Jessie sprang from his knee and stared at him with wide open eyes.

'Casper Paul!' said she. 'A clerk in your office! One you do not even think well of at that! A man with nothing to recommend him in manners or appearance! Papa, you don't mean it?'

'I do,' persisted Mr Lane. 'I was a poor clerk myself in the old days when your mother married me, and you have beauty enough for two. The young fellow's passionate adoration has touched a romantic spot in my old heart. Can't you overlook his deficiencies and give me a "yes" for him?'

'I had much rather die!' Jessie answered. 'I am trembling all over. I cannot bear it much longer. Don't tease me any more.'

'I won't,' said the old man. 'Of course, it is a senseless joke. Kiss me and go for your ride. There—there. How could you think me in earnest?'

Jessie kissed her father, but her mind was not relieved. His manner was very strange, his face pallid, his voice full of misery, his laugh a mere mockery. An impression that her father's mind was unstrung came upon her as she took her way downstairs, and she turned back, feeling that she could not leave him so, and ran to the study door, pulling it open suddenly.

As she did so she saw a sight that she never forgot in all her life.

Her father stood in the middle of the room holding a revolver to his forehead. To spring toward him, to snatch the weapon from his hand, was the work of an instant.

As she clutched it it went off. There was a crash—the bullet had passed through the window-pane—the great sheet of plate glass was shivered to atoms. The servants rushed in affrighted.

'I've been handling a pistol against papa's orders,' Jessie said. 'No one hurt, but I'm too nervous to go out. Tell John to take the horses back to the stable.'

With the comments and exclamations to be expected, the servants retired. Father and daughter were alone. He sat in a great arm-chair, his eyes closed, his hands clasped together. She knelt down before him, her cheek upon his shoulder.

'Papa,' she said, 'tell me the truth. What has happened? And what has Casper Paul to do with it? Are you going to fail? But, if so, how could my marrying Casper Paul help you? He is only a poor young man, without power or influence.'

'Little do you know his power, child,' said the old merchant. 'There is no money in the question. I would beg in the streets rather than give you to Casper Paul. There, ask no more. The time will come when you will regret that you hindered a deed which, terrible as it seems, is better than what will come. Child, I cannot tell you.'

'You must, papa,' she said. 'What is the use of love if it fails one at such a time? Tell me what has happened or what you imagine. Perhaps it is some fancy that I can prove untrue.'

The idea that her father's brain was touched had again seized her—he understood that as she spoke.

'I am not insane,' he answered, 'though I have enough upon my mind to make me so. Jessie, I am a criminal. My crime is known to Casper Paul. He has me in his power.'

'A criminal—you?' she gasped. 'What is your crime?'

He answered one awful word:

'Murder!'

And now Jessie thought that she knew that he was mad. She flung her arms about him.

'Dear papa,' she said, 'dismiss this idea. *You* kill any one? You've dreamed it—you fancy it. People often have delusions. This is one. Let me send for Dr. Balm; it is a fever or something. You haven't killed any one.'

'My dear child,' the merchant answered, 'it is only too hideously true. You know that I have a hasty temper, that I speak furiously at times; and you know of my miserable half-brother, the disgrace to our family, Dick Lane. Always bringing shame upon my mother in his boyhood, always coming to me for money, which he drank and gambled away as soon as he got it.'

'But you sent him away, you gave him enough to live on in Canada,' the girl gasped. 'You saw that he was settled there in comfort.'

'Yes, I did all that man could do,' said Mr Lane. 'But a week ago he returned as poor as ever, worse than ever. He came to the office; I sent him away; he returned. This time I drove him forth.

'"Dare to come to me again," I said, "and I'll kill you." All my clerks heard me, Casper Paul heard.

'"I beg pardon, a threat like that might be used against you if anything should happen to that gentleman," he said.

'"The sooner that what you call 'something' happens to that fellow, the better for the world," I said.

'A day or two after a holiday came—24th May—you remember. The clerks were off. It was quite inconvenient that they should be, and in the afternoon I went down to the office to do what I could myself.

'After I had been alone there for some time, Casper Paul entered. He said that he felt as though I needed him, and I did.

'I felt pleased that he had come. We worked away together until it was time to light the gas. Even the janitress and her family were away; the place was deserted.

'Casper had gone to another room to get some matches, when I heard a shuffling step upon the floor, and turned and saw Dick, who had made his way up the stairs somehow.

'"Out of this room!" I cried.

'"Just a minute, Brother Tom," said he.

'He put his hand upon my arm. In my rage I struck him. He fell like a log. As he did so Casper ran into the room; he stooped over him.

'"You've killed him, sir," he said.

'I was horror-stricken. I could not believe that I had committed murder.

'"Call a doctor," I said.

'"It's no use, sir," Casper said, "he is quite dead. Your having threatened him before the clerks would be against you. His neck is broken, it must have hit against the brass rail."

'He showed me his hand, red with blood; there was blood upon the floor, also.

'"Come," he said, "we don't want any one to see this. I'll drag him out into the alleyway. There's no one in the janitress' place, and the police will find him and think he is a tramp that has fallen down the stone steps there."

'"No, no," said I. "What I should do is to give myself up."

'"Having threatened to kill him, that might mean the gallows, sir," he said.

'I knew he was right. I hid my face and let him do what he would. He dragged Dick's body out somehow, and came back and washed up the floor, and then he made me go home, calling a cab for me.

'"You see," he said, "a valuable life like yours, sir, ought not to be imperilled for a beast of a creature like that."

'I thought him my friend at the time, but the very next day he began to show what he meant, and at last he told me plainly that for such a service he deserved a proportionate reward. I knew that I was in his hands, and I said: "Name it."'

'He asked for me?' gasped Jessie.

'Yes,' replied her father. 'I admit that he told me that he loved you beyond all expression; but he added "And of course your son-in-law would become your partner." I begged him to take half my fortune instead. He answered that he could not live without you, and swore to tell the truth if you refused him, to testify against me so that I should have no possibility of escape. You see, my child, it would have been better had I killed myself.'

She threw her arms about him.

'No, papa,' she said. 'You have a great burden to bear. I will share it with you. I will marry Casper Paul, if it is the only way to save you.'

'God blees you, my angel,' the father said. 'But after all, the young fellow is no monster, only an ordinary young business man.'

He breathed a great breath; he had taken hold of life again. And life is so sweet, death so mysterious, he was almost happy once more.

As for Jessie, she made no promise whatever. When Casper came she allowed him to say what he chose, and answered nothing.

Then the wedding-day was set, the cards sent out, everything was settled.

Miserably Jessie went about the preparations for the wretched wedding-day, wishing that she had never been.

She had been one day to talk to a poor woman who embroidered beautifully and had pleaded for work, when a strange thing happened. As she stood near the poor woman's window, she saw Casper Paul standing at the window of a rear house opposite. Drawing back her head she watched him. He was talking angrily to some one just out of sight; he doubled his fist and shook it furiously. His voice crossed the space between the houses, but she could only hear an oath and an angry 'if you dare.' Then there came the crash of a door, and he appeared at the entrance of the building and hurried through the alley.

Ten minutes after this, while she was still wondering what it all meant, he reappeared, carrying two bottles which evidently contained liquor. She heard the door crash to again, a little more loud talking, then Casper came out of the house once more, with a key in his hand, and this time went entirely away.

What did this mean? Jessie asked herself. Then a sudden hope leaped into her heart. It was that Casper might have a secret of his own, which, if she could learn, might give her power over him. Perhaps he kept a wretched wife in that miserable room.

His whole manner, and the way he looked about him, seemed to prove that he was afraid of being seen at the door.

She looked at her watch, it was just five o'clock of a Saturday afternoon.

'May I come on Monday at this time with more work?' she asked the embroiderer.

'Indeed, I shall be glad of it,' said the woman.

Jessie went her way—her cab waited at the corner. It was only a hired one, and could have told Casper nothing if he had seen it.

On Monday she came again, and was rewarded by another glimpse of Casper with a basket in his hand. He entered the hallway as before.

Determined to learn the truth, if possible, she bade the poor seamstress a hasty good-bye and hastened to the entrance of the rear building. Having groped her way upstairs, she paused before a rickety door on the first landing and listened. Casper Paul was talking.

'What's the matter?' he was saying. 'Haven't you all you can drink?' A husky voice was heard to answer something.

'Not a bit like a prison,' replied Casper.

As he uttered these words Jessie opened the door and entered.

What she expected to see she could not have said, but the sight that caught her eye was one that utterly amazed her.

Sitting at a table on which food and drink were spread, was her father's half-brother, Richard Lane, his bloated face as unprepossessing as ever, but evidently as well as usual.

He staggered to his feet as he saw her.

'My niesh,' he cried. 'Hullo, washermatter? Tom knocked me down; but let bygones be bygones. Did he send any money?'

'Idiot!' said Casper.

'So!' said Jessie, 'This is your miserable trick? You have been playing on my father's fears all this while; enjoying his misery, hoping to win me by such evil means, but Heaven has thwarted you. Were you in the trick also, Uncle Richard?'

'Bit of fun,' gabbled Richard. 'Wanted to scare Tom; Casper said it would do him good.'

'Casper!' repeated Jessie with a touch of scorn.

'All is fair in love as in war,' said the young man. 'I loved you, Jessie, I loved you.'

She motioned him out of her way and passed him, leading her miserable uncle by the hand. For once in his life the poor creature was sure of a welcome from his brother.

Casper remained where they left him. Late that night some neighbours found him lying on the floor a pistol in his hand, quite dead.

CARE OF THE FEET.

FAITHFUL care of the feet has more to do with good looks than most young ladies are inclined to believe.

They must be kept warm and comfortable by proper coverings, and by daily bathing and rubbing.

No part of the body requires bathing more than the soles of the feet.

The pores here are very active, and should be kept open.

All hardening and callousing of the feet should be avoided if possible.

If the feet are given to excessive perspiration, a few drops of ammonia should be added to their daily bath of water.

If they burn or are very tender, bathe them in weak alum water.

The water should always be warm.

Cut the nails carefully, shorter than the finger nails.

If they break, rub on mutton tallow before going to bed, wrapping the toes in soft linen cloth.

Corns may be nipped in the bud by a prompt treatment with kerosene oil.

Cut the corns down as much as possible, without making them sore, then rub on the oil night and morning.

If the corns make their appearance between the toes, wet a piece of tissue paper with the kerosene, and put this between the toes over the corns.

Keep it there all day whi the feet are dressed, and renew it night and morning.

If the corns are young, they will speedily vanish.

Those of long standing will hold out longer, but finally succumb.

The beauty of the foot does not depend, as so many think, upon its small size, but rather upon its slenderness, height of instep, and perfect arch, and upon its firmness and colouring. Beauty is opposed to a tight boot.

Any foot looks better when the shoe fits perfectly than when either too tight or too loose.

A tight boot makes the face red—not a pretty flush which might be welcome, but a dull, purplish red, which is not at all becoming.

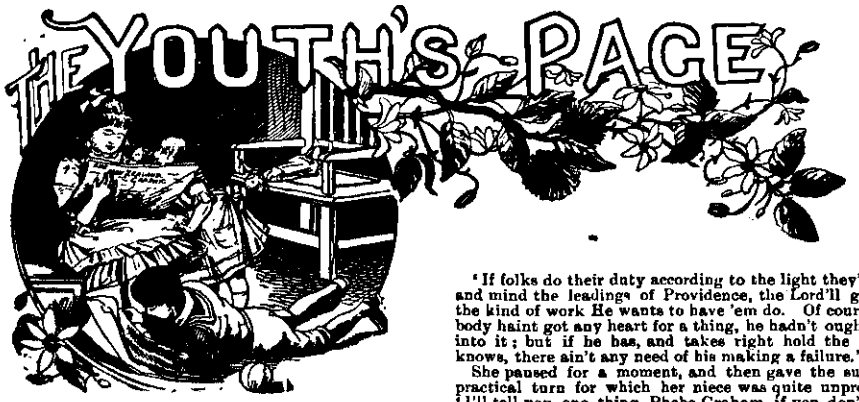
But a very loose boot is almost as bad for corns as a tight one, as the rubbing will produce hard spots.

Moderate heels should be worn. It is not easy to walk in shoes with no heels at all, and high heels are not only uncomfortable and bad for the health, but they destroy all grace of movement.

If the feet are long and slender, wear front-laced or button boots.

If short and plump, boots laced at the side will make them look more slender.

LONDON AND PARIS FASHIONS.—NEW GOWNS FOR A GERMAN COUNTESS.—SEE PAGE 423.



PHEBE AND THE PHRENOLOGIST.

THE shop windows in Birchville were gay with posters. They were not in the least like those which announced the coming of a circus, and the oldest inhabitant could not remember to have seen anything of their sort before.

At the top was the picture of a human head with a mild but animated countenance. Here, however, its resemblance to the ordinary head ceased; for the crown, instead of being adorned with anything suggesting hair, was platted off into small sections, labelled 'Veneration,' 'Approbation,' 'Acquisitiveness,' and the like.

Below this enigmatical wood-cut was the announcement, in very black letters, that 'J. Manville Herring, the greatest living phrenologist,' had arrived in Birchville, and was prepared to disclose to each citizen, by cranial examination, his or her exact character. The importance of the examination was set forth more fully in smaller handbills, headed 'Know Thyself,' which were sprinkled plentifully about in door-ways.

Great was the sensation that followed. 'The new science,' as the posters called it, was discussed by the loiterers at the post office, and by the ladies at the sewing society.

But it was among the pupils at the Birchville Academy that it gained most credence. It seemed to their youthful minds quite within reason that science, which has discovered so much, should have devised this time-saving method of reading human character, once for all.

There was not one who took the matter quite so much to heart as Phebe Graham. Her own eager, faulty little self had always been a most interesting subject to Phebe, and she longed inexpressibly to know what the phrenologist would say about her.

Moreover, Phebe had ambitions. In her secret heart she cherished a dream of doing something else than housework when she was a woman; but it was a dream in which no one encouraged her.

It seemed to Phebe not impossible that this acute phrenologist, if he had the opportunity, might make some suggestions as to the true bent of her talents which would open her Aunt Eunice's eyes, and make that good woman a little less irritable if she found her niece scribbling away in the corner of the garret when she might have been darning stockings.

Phebe thought the matter over, as she took the long walk home from school one night, and arranged a little plea by which she hoped to win her aunt's consent.

After supper, as she stood at the sink wiping dishes, she remarked, in a casual manner, 'Do you know, Aunt Eunice, there are ever so many people going to that phrenologist, and they say it's perfectly wonderful the way he tells them all about themselves!'

'H'm!' said Aunt Eunice. '"A fool and his money are soon parted."'

Phebe flushed a little. 'I don't see what there is foolish about it,' she said. 'Everything he tells them is true. It seems as if he could look right into people's minds. It's just as if he had known them all their lives.'

'I don't believe a word on't,' said Aunt Eunice, scraping fiercely at the dish she was washing. 'It don't stand to reason that a perfect stranger can come up to you, and just by feeling round the top of your head tell all about you. The Lord didn't make folks to be found out that way.'

'Well, but, Aunt Eunice,' said Phebe, a little vexed, 'I should think people who have been to him ought to know, and they say he tells perfectly. Isert Fry had an examination, and his mother owned up that she couldn't have told as much about him as the phrenologist did.'

'H'm!' said Aunt Eunice, again. 'Well, I never did think Mrs Fry had much sense about that boy.'

After a moment she demanded sharply, 'And what good would it do if he could tell folks all about themselves? They ought to know their own faults already, and the less said to 'em about their good points the better. I tell you, Phebe, I haint a mite of patience with it.'

'But, Aunt Eunice,' protested Phebe, 'he tells people more than just their faults and virtues. He shows them what kind of work they are best fitted to do. There are thousands who fail in life just because they try to do things they were never designed for.'

Aunt Eunice did not answer, and Phebe went on.

'Mr Herring says that is why there are so many unsuccessful people in every kind of business, and that what folks need more than anything else is to have somebody put them on the right track while they are young.'

Phebe had revolved this little speech on her way home, and felt that she had made a strong point; but Aunt Eunice shook her head inexorably.

'If folks do their duty according to the light they've got, and mind the leadings of Providence, the Lord'll give 'em the kind of work He wants to have 'em do. Of course if a body haint got any heart for a thing, he hadn't ought to go into it; but if he has, and takes right hold the best he knows, there ain't any need of his making a failure.'

She paused for a moment, and then gave the subject a practical turn for which her niece was quite unprepared. 'I'll tell you one thing, Phebe Graham, if you don't learn to put your mind on your work and stop dreaming over it, you'll never amount to anything. Here you've been wipin' on that nappy for the last five minutes and you haint got it smooth an' shiny neither. Put it back in the pan and give it another rinsing.'

Phebe obeyed with a dejected expression. It was clear that with Aunt Eunice's consent she would never enjoy a phrenological examination. For a moment the good woman, who had stood to her in the relation of a mother ever since she could remember, seemed to her a sort of dragon, keeping her back from the tree of knowledge.

She wiped the rest of the dishes in silence, and then stole out to the barn to confer with Ted.

Ted was her brother, a year or two older than herself, and though Phebe sometimes considered him the greatest trial of her life on account of his propensity to tease, she could not help appealing to him for sympathy at a time like this.

He was giving the cattle their last feed for the night, whistling cheerfully as he went from stall to stall.

Phebe watched him for a few minutes in melancholy silence. Then she burst out, 'O Ted, I do wish Aunt Eunice wasn't so set against my having a phrenological examination!'

'What do you want of one anyway?' asked Ted, bluntly. 'I wouldn't give the fellow a wisp of hay for all he could tell about me.'

'Why, Ted,' said Phebe, 'can't you see that it might be worth something to you if a person should point out your strong qualities, and show you what you could make of yourself if you tried?'

'I know what I mean to make of myself,' said Ted, sturdily, 'and I wouldn't thank any stranger for putting in his advice.'

Phebe made a gesture of despair. 'Well, Ted,' she said, rather bitterly, 'everybody doesn't feel as certain as you do, and some people—have aspirations.'

The last clause was unlucky. Ted's eyes gleamed with sudden mischief.

'Yes,' he admitted with a reflective nod, 'some people aspire to write poetry and keep their diaries in rhyme for weeks at a time. I tell you, Phebe, it's a clear case what a body's cut out for when they can make up such verses as—'

'Ted!' shrieked Phebe, putting both hands over her ears.

But Ted was not to be headed off. He went on without mercy:

'"To-day, alas, that cruel Ted
Killed a poor blue jay,
Dead, dead, dead."'

Even with her ears closed Phebe knew perfectly what he was saying.

'Ted Graham, you're mean!' she cried, her eyes flashing. 'You know you stole my diary and read it when you had no right to. Besides, that was the worst rhyme in it. That's why you always torment me with it.'

She fled from the barn back to the house, resolving not to say another word on the subject to her unfeeling relatives.

But the next day put a different phase upon the matter. There was news at school that J. Manville Herring was to give a free lecture at the town hall the following evening. The citizens of Birchville, one and all, were invited to attend.

Phebe's hopes revived. Perhaps Aunt Eunice could be induced to go, and the strong arguments which the phrenologist would surely put forth in behalf of his science might have a convincing effect.

But Aunt Eunice could not be induced to go. She declined to be enlightened on a subject for which she declared that she cared no more than for the man in the moon. However, she consented that Phebe should hear the lecture, and, as Ted showed no very lively desire to accompany her, suggested that the girl should spend the night in town with her friend May Allen.

Phebe wore her best dress to school the next morning, and through the day could scarcely study for thinking of the great event of the evening.

Long before it was time for the lecture to begin, she and May, with Lu Brown, another special friend, were in the hall, seated well to the front, where they could be sure to see and hear everything.

The small room filled rapidly, and when, at eight o'clock, the lecturer stepped upon the platform, it was a good audience which gave him greeting.

He was well provided with charts and diagrams, and the manner in which he demonstrated his theory seemed to Phebe, at least, in the highest degree convincing.

After an hour of fluent discourse the lecturer paused and said:

'Now, my friends, to test the truth of what I have been saying and my own power as a teacher of this great science, I propose that some of you come forward and take a phrenological examination. I shall be most happy to give it to you free of charge.'

There was a minute of silence. Then a foolish titter ran around the room, but no one started.

'Don't be backward,' said the orator, encouragingly. 'I assure you it is not a painful ordeal.'

Still no one started. The phrenologist sent a keen glance around the room, and his eyes fell upon the three girls seated in the front row.

'My young friends,' he said, bending towards them with a persuasive smile, 'will you do me the favour to step forward to the platform? I am sure there can be no better subjects in this room than yourselves.'

The girls looked at each other with startled faces, and Phebe's grew for an instant decidedly pale.

The lecturer saw the hesitation, and went on more coaxingly than before:

'Of course, I should not have time to read your characters in detail, but I could outline, in a general way, your special gifts. You are young and hopeful. It might be of lasting service to you.'

Phebe's heart began to flutter. She had not a doubt that he was right in the last suggestion. Still, it was not she who made the first move forward. Lu Brown put up her hand and began to whisper.

'Come on, girls,' she said, her black eyes dancing. 'Let's all go up together. He won't dare to say anything bad about us, and 'twould be lots of fun.'

Lu had always been a leader among her mates. She liked to do striking things. When she rose and gave a determined little pull at May's sleeve, May started, and Phebe, gasping a little, followed.

'I thank you, young ladies,' said the phrenologist, impressively.

He set three chairs for them on the platform, and invited them to take off their hats quite as if he were receiving them in to his parlour. The girls did as requested, and sat blushing like three peonies.

Phebe, for her part, felt very foolish. She had a distinct impression that it was not a nice thing to do, this going forward to be talked about in the presence of others, and she was glad Ted and Aunt Eunice were not there.

The examination began with Lu, and whether the phrenologist read it in the conformation of her brain, or drew his conclusions from the very poise of her head and the expression of her bright fun-loving eyes, he quickly credited her with the energetic and venturesome qualities which her schoolmates knew so well.

Pretty, gentle May came next, and certainly he did not miss the mark when he spoke of her generous disposition and good-natured fondness for pleasing everbody. He even dwelt a little on her excellence as a scholar, which made Phebe open her eyes and wonder what he would say about her. She had always had to help May with her grammar lessons and with the greater part of her essays.

Poor Phebe! she was destined not to hear anything from the phrenologist on that point. Perhaps, having bestowed so much praise on the others, he felt that it would be well to make a little variation in her case.

Perhaps, as she afterwards reflected, her style of wearing her hair gave him a better chance to discover her cranial defects. It was not crimped or coiled like the others, but drawn straight back from her forehead, and cut off just below the tips of her ears, in the manner which Aunt Eunice considered most appropriate for a girl of fifteen.

The phrenologist felt her brown head solemnly. Then he cleared his voice and began in an impressive manner:

'Order is Heaven's first law, but it is evidently not the first law of the young person on whose head my hand is now resting.'

Phebe felt herself flush to the very roots of her hair. It was true enough that order was not one of her strong points. To have a place for everything and keep everything in its place, was, in her opinion, the hardest commandment which had ever been added to the decalogue, and was the one in which she most constantly failed.

After dwelling at some length on the importance of order, the phrenologist proceeded to point out a graver fault.

'It is a common error among young people,' he said, 'to be somewhat too fond of their own sweet wills. In the case of our young friend, that fondness would seem to be peculiarly strong; and I should be unworthy of my profession,' he continued, with a firm, but fatherly accent, 'if I did not warn her against the danger of following too obstinately her own inclinations, instead of accepting the judgment of those who are older and wiser.'

The fire in Phebe's cheeks burned ten times hotter than before. It seemed to her that the worst must be said of her now, but the examiner had still another point to make.

'A strong will and an impetuous temper do not always go together,' he continued, 'but in this subject we find both combined, each in a marked degree. I do not find here the evidence of a disposition which cherishes resentment, but our young friend is liable to hot and hasty outbursts of temper, in the course of which she is likely to say things which she has cause to repent of at her leisure.'

Phebe writhed in her chair. She bit her lip and clenched her small hands desperately.

From the time of stepping on the platform she had not been able to lift her eyes. Something at this instant seemed compelling her to do so. She looked across the audience, and there, at the back of the hall, leaning easily against the door, stood Ted Graham!

She remembered now that she had heard the door open just as the phrenologist began to talk about her. No doubt her brother had entered then, and had heard every word.

Phebe started up and walked straight down the aisle, amid a profound silence, her grey eyes looking almost black, and a little red spot burning fiercely on each cheek.

'Ted,' she whispered, as she came up to him, 'let's go home!'

Ted nodded, and they passed out of the door together.

'What in the world did you come for?' she demanded, when it had closed behind them.

'To hear the nice things that were being said about you, of course!' gurgled Ted, who seemed to be undergoing some kind of inward convulsion. Then, straightening himself, he managed to say more soberly, 'Why, you see Aunt Persis and the children came over from Goodrich this afternoon, and we thought you'd better come home.'

'Well, I'm glad of it,' said Phebe. 'I wouldn't stay with May now for anything.'

When they were seated in the waggon she asked piteously, 'Ted, are you going to tell every word of this as soon as you get home?'

'Not if you don't want me to,' said Ted, generously. 'But I say, Phebe, what made you go up? I could have told you all that, and so could Aunt Eunice.'

Phebe groaned.

'Oh, it was dreadful to go up there! I know it; but I had no idea he'd go into things the way he did. What he said about the others was nice,' she added, bitterly.

'He didn't have time to get to your good points. Perhaps if you had stayed he might have brought in something about the poetry,' said Ted.

Phebe was afraid he was going to recite that rhyme again, but he refrained, and on the whole she felt that his behaviour was very good.

He kept his promise and said not a word of the affair to Aunt Eunice, but he reserved the right to make a private allusion to it himself now and then.

If his sister appeared with a hole in her glove he was apt to remark, in an oracular manner, 'Order is Heaven's first law,' and the glove was sure to be mended. If she showed signs of a gathering temper, he was certain to draw down his face, extend his hand, and observe solemnly, 'Our young friend is liable—,' at which point Phebe usually bit her lip and kept silence.

Really, though not in the way she expected, perhaps the queer little phrenological examination was not without its benefits.

CHARLOTTE M. VAILE.

STAMPS.

A STAMP which is worth considerably more than its weight in gold is a curiosity which is certainly worthy of comment and description. It will be news to most people that such a stamp is in existence, and we have no doubt that our readers will be interested to know that a very rare specimen, valued at £250, and dear to the heart of any enthusiastic stamp collector, is now in the possession of Mr J. W. Palmer, the famous dealer in stamps, of 281, Strand. It is an American 'used' stamp, Brattleboro', 1846, and Mr Palmer claims for it that it is the rarest specimen in the world. Those of our readers who interest themselves in stamp-collecting should make a point of seeing a useful little monthly publication, entitled *Bric-à-Brac*, edited and published by Mr Palmer, and sent post free for sixteen pence per annum to any address in the Postal Union.

KIND-HEARTED LADY: 'What's the matter, little boy?'

Boy: 'How would you like to wear your long-legged brother's pants cut down so the bag of the knees came out at your ankle!'

'SOMEBODY PAYS.'

A DRUGGIST in one of our large cities said lately, 'If I am prompt and careful in my business, I owe it to a lesson which I learned when I was an errand boy in the house of which I am now master. I was sent one day to deliver a vial of medicine just at noon, but being hungry, stopped to eat my luncheon.

'The patient, for lack of the medicine, sank rapidly, and for some days was thought to be dying.'

'I felt myself his murderer. The agony of that long suspense made a man of me. I learned then that for every one of our acts of carelessness or misdoing, however petty, some one pays in suffering. The law is the more terrible to me because it is not always the misdoer himself who suffers.'

This law is usually ignored by young people. The act of carelessness or selfishness is so trifling, what harm can it do? No harm, apparently, to the actor, who goes happily on his way; but somebody pays.

A young girl, to make conversation, thoughtlessly repeats a bit of gossip which she forgets the next moment; but long afterward the woman whom she has maligned finds her good name tainted by the poisonous whisper.

A lad, accustomed to take wine, persuades a chance comrade to drink with him, partly out of a good-humoured wish to be hospitable, partly, it may be, out of contempt for 'fanatical reformers.'

He goes on his way, and never knows that his chance guest, having inherited the disease of alcoholism, continues to drink, and becomes a hopeless victim.

Our grandfathers expressed this truth in a way of their own,

'For the lack of a nail the shoe was lost,
For the lack of the shoe the rider was lost,
For the lack of the rider the message was lost.
For the lack of the message the battle was lost.'

Our blindness to the consequences of our shortcomings is a merciful provision of God. Who could look composedly upon the rank outgrowth of all his vice and folly from childhood to middle age?

But though we do not see it, we do well to remember that it is there; and to remind ourselves at the beginning of every day, that each careless act, each unkind word in it, will be paid for, not by us, perhaps, but in the want or pain of some one.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

STOP HIM.

ONLY a rush and scamper
Through the busy street,
And men are calling after
A runaway horse so fleet.

Only a stupid lamp-post,
Not wanted in the day,
And parts of a bright new sulkey
Are scattered by the way.

Only a brave young laddie,
Who springs out to its head,
And runaway horse much panting,
So quietly now is led.

Only a crowd of people,
Who tell you o'er and o'er,
That runaway horse has promised
He will never do so any more.

Masterton. M.A.P.

SNOW-FLAKE FAIRIES, OR HOW THEY FOUND THE RED CAP.

IT was a stormy day, toward the middle of July and Nellie Field was sitting in an arm chair by the window, watching the snow fall. She was wishing she had not such a cold, so that she could be out with some of her friends, when an unusually large snow-flake came on the window, and Nellie almost fell off her seat in astonishment, for there beside the snow-flake was a tiny man, no taller than your little finger-nail, dressed all in snow. Indeed, he himself seemed to be made of snow, and in one hand he held a little icicle.

'Why,' cried Nellie, 'who are you? Where did you come from?'

'My name is Lightfoot, and I am one of the messengers sent by the King of the Snow-flakes to find his little red cap, which he lost in a very unaccountable manner the other day,' said the little man. 'He has promised to give his daughter in marriage to anyone who can find it, and the Princess is very beautiful I can tell you, so I guess there is not one in the whole kingdom who is not out searching for it to-day. I loved the Princess even before the King said this, and I am bound to have her.' Lightfoot nodded his head emphatically. 'But I must be going, for I haven't any time to spare. Good-bye.'

'Oh, wait, please,' cried Nellie, eagerly; 'take me with you. Perhaps I can help you to find the little red cap.'

'All right,' said Lightfoot, good-naturedly. 'But you can't go like this. You could never fly through the air as I do in this shape. Wait a bit and I will change you.'

So saying, he waved his wand, and Nellie found herself outside of the window. She felt very cold, and, looking down, she saw she was just the height of the little white man, and was wrapped in a soft, snowy cloak just like his.

'There you are,' said the little man, merrily, 'and now we will have to wait here till my friend, Mr Snowbird, comes along, for we snow fairies cannot fly upward. It is *my* opinion (confidentially) that the King's red cap is not where he supposes it to be, so we are going to get on Snowbird's tail together, and he will carry us away toward the Ice King's Palace. The Ice King has a spite against our King for some reason, and, as I said before, it is *my* opinion that he has the cap. Our King prized it more than he would have had it not been red, for everything in the Snow World, which is in the clouds, you know, is white. But here is Mr Snowbird, and we must go.'

So Nellie and Lightfoot jumped on his tail, and Nellie wanted to cuddle down among his soft feathers, but Lightfoot would not let her, 'because,' he said, 'if you did, you would get warm and melt, and then where would you be?'

'We are ready now, Mr Snowbird,' said he, 'and we haven't any too much time, so please hurry up.'

So Mr Snowbird, who was very kind and good-natured, shook his feathers (which, by the way, nearly knocked Nellie off), and away they went, up, up through the air.

Nellie caught her breath. It was delightful, and yet it seemed so queer to be no larger than the snow-flakes, and to be riding on a bird. She noticed now that on each snow-flake was a little man exactly like Lightfoot, and she wondered that she had not seen them in other snowstorms.

Up, up they went. The air was white with the falling snow, and Nellie felt very little, as indeed she was. Up, up, and on, on, Nellie and Lightfoot chattering merrily all the time, till they saw in the distance the Ice King's palace.

'I must put you down here,' said Snowbird, 'for if I should go any nearer I would be frozen to death.'

So he flew down to the ground (which was not ground at all, but only a cloud), and Lightfoot and Nellie got off. Nellie was sorry, for she thought it was a great deal better than a sleigh-ride.

'Here we are!' said Lightfoot, merrily. 'Now we will wait for a Breeze I know to pass, and he will blow us to the castle over yonder. Then I will go in, demand the cap, carry it to the King, and get the Princess. Do you see?' said the jolly elf, with a flourish.

'But perhaps the cap isn't there, after all, and if it is, I don't think it's likely he'll give it to you,' said Nellie.

'Perhaps so,' said the little man, cheerfully, 'but there's nothing like trying, you know. Oh, here comes Breeze. Breeze, my friend, will you carry us to the Ice King's palace?'

'With pleasure,' replied Breeze, politely.

Nellie found herself being carried through the air with a gentle, swaying motion. On they went till they came to the palace, and Breeze, bidding them good-bye, went his way.

They were standing at the door of a magnificent castle, built of ice. The sun shining on it made it look so dazzling that Nellie could hardly bear the glare, but it was very beautiful for all that. Around the door were men in armour of ice, who, when they saw Nellie and Lightfoot, and learned that they wanted to see the Ice King, told them in cold, stiff voices to enter.

Nellie was a little frightened, but Lightfoot soon reassured her, and they went together into the palace. It was very cold, and even Lightfoot shivered. They found themselves in an immense room, at the end of which was a throne built of ice, on which sat the Ice King. He was surrounded by courtiers and guards, who all looked very fierce, but the King himself did not seem at all formidable, and Nellie soon lost her fear. Indeed, he reminded her a little of her grandfather, with his white hair and beard, and he had a very pleasant smile upon his face. He and his subjects seemed to be discussing something of very great interest, and sure enough he held in his hand the little red cap.

Lightfoot advanced boldly, with Nellie close beside him, and the King seeing them, held up his hand for silence, and asked them what they wanted.

'The King of the Snow-flakes has lost his red cap,' said Lightfoot, bowing, 'and so I made bold to come and ask your Gracious Majesty if you had it, and finding you have, I most humbly entreat you to give it to me.'

The King smiled. 'Well, my fine little fellow,' said he, 'I cannot readily give up such a valuable treasure as I find this to be, for it is a magic cap; yet as you have been so brave, I will give it to you if you will bring me a yellow rose from any part of the mortal world as quickly as you can.'

'But your Majesty knows that no roses grow in the mortal world in winter-time,' said Lightfoot sadly disappointed, 'Nevertheless, I will do my best,' and he and Nellie left the castle very much downhearted.

When they were outside of the gates Nellie's face brightened, and she said:

'Never mind, Lightfoot, I know where we can get a rose in the winter-time—in some hot-house.'

'You do!' cried the little man, eagerly. 'You do! Good! We will go there at once. Here comes a bird. Mr Bird, won't you take us to the mortal world, to some hot-house? If you do I will grant anything you wish.'

'Certainly,' said the bird, and in a very short time they were there.

Having granted the favour which the bird wished for, Lightfoot said: 'Now the next question is, how to get in there and out again without being seen or melted.'

'I know,' said Nellie. 'You can change me into my own shape again, and give me something to pay for the flower, and I will get it for you.'

'A good idea,' said Lightfoot, and giving her a little magic thimble, he waved his wand, and, hey—presto! Nellie was herself again, standing inside the hot-house.

She was made invisible, of course, or she would have been seen. She picked the flower and put the thimble in its place. The fairy waved his wand, and she was outside of the window again, but with the flower beside her.

'Good!' cried Lightfoot. 'Here is a sister of our old friend Breeze. She will take us to the Ice King.'

Breeze's sister was very obliging, and in less time than it takes to tell it they were at the palace again. She waited outside for them, and when they came out, proud and happy, with the red cap between them, she was just starting off with them when they heard a great noise, and turning, saw the Ice King and all his courtiers watching them, and cheering with all their might for the brave little fairy.

Lightfoot was very merry, and so was Nellie, and she was very sorry when she found herself on her own window again.

'Good-bye,' said she; 'I hope you will get the Princess.'

'So do I,' said Lightfoot.

Then he waved his wand, and Nellie found herself in her chair inside the window, just as she was before. She rubbed her eyes and found it was all a dream.

A SUCCESTION.

SHE had lingered long by the window-pane,
And watched with her childish, impatient eyes,
The countless drops of the beating rain,
And the leaden, relentless skies.

At length, when the dreary day was done,
She told her thoughts in the twilight grey:
'You know there's a bureau in Wellington,
Where weather is stowed away.

'And when it's so stormy and cold and wet,
I wonder what they are thinking about,
Not to open some other drawer and get
A different weather out!'

HATTIE LUMMIS.

THE NEW HORSE.

JACK was the new horse, whose coming into the stable was the talk of the day, for within a week Jack had gotten away from his master, run several miles, and smashed a carriage into kindling-wood.

Harry always led the horses from their stalls down to the water trough, saw that they drank all they wanted, and led them back again. Harry was big enough to do such tasks, but not big enough to understand what a fiery-tempered horse might do.

Harry went to Jack's stall, took the halter strap in his hands, and started for the water trough. Jack was in high glee. He reared up on his hind legs, lay down and rolled, and got up and kicked as high as the barn-yard fence.

Just as his hind feet went up he seemed to see little Harry trembling violently at the end of his halter strap. He stopped suddenly, walked quietly to the trough, drank, and let Harry lead him back to his stall without another antic.

And then Harry's father, his brother Tom, and Jim, the groom, breathed more easily.

SURE CURE.—'What are we going to do with baby?' asked a mother of her little four-year-old daughter, as they were chiding the younger ones for getting into the sugar-bowl. 'I don't know,' said the four-year-old, 'unless you put her in the bag when you drown the cat.'

THE GENTLE LEADER.

He was a mighty, rolling river,
  She was a little, rippling rill;
He was a mountain naught could shiver,
  She was a tiny, shifting hill.

He was a lion, loudly roaring,
  She was a lambkin, born to love;
He was an eagle, proudly soaring,
  She was a gentle, cooing dove.

He was a sturdy oak, defiant,
  She was a slender, clinging vine;
He was a brave and brawny giant,
  She was a wee thing feminine.

Ah! but the day when they went shopping,
  She was the one who took the lead;
She was the earth, so far o'ertopping
  Him that he seemed a mustard seed.

DIDN'T PHASE JOHNNY.

'I AM truly sorry, Johnny,' said the friend of the family, meeting the little boy on the street, 'to learn that your father's house was burned down yesterday. Was nothing saved?'

'Don't you waste your grief on me,' replied Johnny. 'All of paw's old clothes were burned up in that fire, and maw can't make any of 'em over for me this time. I'm all right!'

HIS BAROMETER.

A GENTLEMAN riding on horseback one fine summer day was accosted by a herd boy in the following manner:—'Sir, ye'll hae to gallop a' your pith, or ye'll be drowned afore ye gang a mile.'

The gentleman at the time paid little attention to what the boy said, but had not rode far till he was assailed with a tremendous shower, as the boy had foretold, which set the traveller a-wondering how a herd boy knew the weather better than himself; he immediately put about and inquired of him how he came to know the weather so well.

'If ye gi'e me a ha'f-a-croon I'll tell ye that,' said the boy.

'Well, my good lad,' said the gentleman, 'be judicious, and here is half-a-crown for you.'

'Weel, man, to be serious wi' you, we ha'e an' auld broon cow. Whenever she turns her tail to the wun', it's aye sure to be rain soon.'

SUBURBAN RAILWAY STATION.

JONES: 'What a lucky fellow you are, Brown. You always seem to catch your train with such ease. You never rush up at the last moment like most of us.'

Brown: 'There you quite make a mistake, my dear fellow; my misfortune is really worse. I never catch my proper train. You always see me waiting patiently for the next.'

SHE DIDN'T COME ON.

A GAY fellow, who had taken lodgings at a public-house and got considerably into debt, absented himself and took new quarters. This so enraged the landlord that he commissioned his wife to go and dun him—hearing which, the debtor declared publicly that if she came he would kiss her.

'Will he?' said the lady, 'will he? Give me my bonnet, Molly; I will see whether any fellow on earth has such impudence!'

'My dear,' said the somewhat jealous husband, 'pray do not be too rash: you do not know what a man may do when he is in a passion.'

A PLACE FOR HIM.

'I DON'T know what to do with the boy,' said the discouraged father. 'He is industrious enough, but he isn't truthful. He'd rather lie than go fishing. I never believe a word he says unless I know it to be true beforehand.'

'I need a young man,' said the guest, the proprietor of a baking powder factory, eagerly, 'in my advertising department.'

DOCTOR AND PATIENT.

PATIENT: 'But, Doctor, didn't you strictly order me to avoid all excitement?'

Doctor: 'Certainly! In your state the least excitement is most injurious, and may lead to the very worst consequences.'

Patient: 'Then, why on earth did you send in that long bill of yours yesterday?'

A CLEAR MOON.

A LITTLE boy of five years' old stood with his father in the door way, looking at the moon, and spoke of its brightness. 'Yes,' said his father, 'it has not been so bright for some time.' 'Papa,' said the little fellow, 'I guess God's washed the moon, hasn't he?'

A DISMAL OUTLOOK.

TOMMY BINGO: 'There is another fellow in the next room with sister.'

Featherstone (waiting for audience): 'Do you know who he is?'

Tommy: 'No, I don't know who he is, but just before he came she had the big arm-chair moved in there.'

DEEPER AND DEEPER.

FENDERSON (who has just been introduced): 'Delighted to meet you, I'm sure! My friend Jones often speaks of you. It was only the other day he said, "Mrs Louisburg is such a fine, motherly lady."'

Miss Louisburg (with a faint suspicion of annoyance on her smiling face): 'How droll! Your friend Mr Jones was probably speaking of my mother. I'm Miss not Mrs Louisburg.'

Fenderson (much agitated): 'Oh! I beg pardon. But, really, is it possible you have a mother living?'

TOO MUCH.

'BUT I had asked you, darling. Why, then, didn't you keep our engagement secret for a little while?'

'I couldn't, Edward. That hateful Miss Oldish said the reason I wasn't married was because no fool had asked me, so I up and told her you had.'

STOOD THE TEST.

MRS GOFREQUENT: 'You needn't grumble about the price of this bonnet, Alfred. It was the finest one on the street yesterday.'

Meek Husband: 'How do you know, my dear?'

Mrs Gofrequent: 'How do I know? I met Mrs Gadabout while I had it on and she didn't speak to me.'

A HUMOURIST'S TRIALS.

A HUMOURIST lecturer relates this incident: I gave the show in the hotel dining room and everybody roared with laughter, except one awfully sedate looking man. I tried my funniest gag upon him, and was wild to awaken a gurgle or at least a smile, but all in vain. His face was as solemn as a tombstone through it all. After the show, however, fancy my surprise to see the melancholy cuss come up and give me a congratulatory shake. 'I must thank you, sir, for a very pleasant evening. Your performance was very clever. I almost laughed, sir.'

MISCELLANEOUS.

HE (at 11.45 p.m): 'Time waits on no man.' She: 'I don't blame it. It would lose lots of sleep if it waited on some persons I know.'

PROFESSIONAL JEALOUSY.—Mrs Keneen: 'They called in Dr. Piller to set Jones's leg.' Dr. Keneen: (a rival of Piller): 'Piller set a leg! Why, he couldn't set a hen.'

Weeping Wife: 'Oh, doctor! Is my husband very ill?' Doctor: 'Well, yes, my dear madame. But console yourself; his disease is of high scientific value!'

She: 'You never hear of women cashiers embezzling or running off with their employer's money.' He: 'Not often; but when it does happen they take the employer too.'

A Fierce Subscriber: 'Sir, cuss your paper! Send it to h——' Editor: 'Thomas, change the gentleman's address. If Uncle Sam makes connections you'll find your paper there.'

A correspondent asks us, 'What is love?' A recently-married member of the staff replies: 'Love is an extravagant desire on a man's part to pay a woman's board and lodging bills.'

AT AN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.—Professor: 'What is the best time for gathering apples?' Young Student: 'Please, sir, when the farmer's back is turned and there is no dog in the orchard.'

Fair Mistress: 'Bridget! Why—what—how dare—aren't you ashamed to wear my hat?' Bridget: 'Och, an that I am, moi lady, for sure I didn't know it was last year's fashion till I wint into the park this mornin'.'

The Preacher: 'Well, Sam, how have you been getting along since your conversion?' Sam: 'Oh, fust rate, sah—fust rate. Me and de whole family has quit lyin' swearin' and stealin' in a great measure.'

Wellington Reporter: 'Shocking accident in the city this morning. A house collapsed—twelve people killed.' Wellington Editor: 'Oh, well, nobody cares. The censusis over now.'

'You have spurned me!' he cried bitterly; 'I will go into the busy world. I will fight and win. My name shall be known and my riches envied—' 'Then,' she interrupted, 'try me again.'

City Editor: 'The street is all excitement. An electric-light wire has blocked traffic, and no one knows whether it is a live wire or not.' Editor: 'Detail two reporters to go to the wire immediately—one to feel of it, and the other to write up the result.'

WHAT OUR ARTIST HAS TO PUT UP WITH.—Our Artist: 'Well, how do you like the portraits, Miss Bunny? The sitters are all old friends of yours, I believe?' Miss Bunny (triumphantly): 'Yes; and only think, I've actually managed to guess them all.'

THEY WERE ALONE.—Miss Tarrier (archly): 'Oh, Mr Mushbrain! what a flatterer you are. Now I am certain you know no end of girls who are prettier and wittier and more accomplished than I.' Mr Mushbrain: 'Oh, yaas, of cawse. But theah not heah to-night, y'knaw.'

They were talking confidentially of the present and the future with that sublime happiness which only love at 20 knows. 'What is wealth or station,' he remarked, trying to bring in some poetical quotation on the subject, 'the idea that to be happy one must be born with a silver spoon in his mouth.' 'Any metal would suit me, Robert,' she whispered appprovingly, 'so long as we had ice cream to eat with it.'

Young artist to (friend who had recently furnished bachelor's apartments): 'Charley, dear boy, I admire your taste. I see you have a little thing of mine hanging there. Friend: 'No, did you paint that,' Young artist; 'Yes; I'm proud to say it's from my brush. By the way, Charley, if it's a fair question, what did the dealer charge you for it?' Friend: 'Well—er, to tell you the truth, old man, the dealer threw that picture in.'

IN WHICH?

LAWYER: 'Well, Hodges, have you brought your father's will with you?'

Hodges (perplexed): 'I know I had it when I left oome, but I ain't got it noo.'

Lawyer: 'You must go back for it quickly. You probably left it in the public house.'

Hodges (more perplexed): 'No doot, but I wish I could remember in which.'