

the king of providers was not to be consoled. He replied, 'My lord, your goodness overpowers me. I know that the roast was wanting at two tables.' 'No such thing,' said the Prince, 'don't trouble yourself, everything is all right.' In the evening the fireworks failed, which was an additional annoyance. At four o'clock in the morning Vatel made the rounds to see if the fish of the last day had arrived. He found only one porter and asked him, 'Is that all?' 'Yes, sir' was the reply, for the man was not aware that Vatel had sent to all the seaports for supplies. He met a friend and said: 'Sir, I shall not survive this affront. I have honour and reputation to lose.' His friend laughed at this, but Vatel, going to his room, took his sword, and, placing the hilt against the door, ran it three times through his body, the third wound only being mortal. A little later fish arrived in abundance from all the seaports, and when they looked for Vatel to make the distribution they found him on the floor in a pool of blood. The Prince wept, as much from disappointment as from grief, for he depended on Vatel to successfully entertain the King; but the festival went on all the same, the body of Vatel having been taken to the parish church for interment.

### ONE NOBLE NERO.

In the year 1871 the steamship Swallow left the Cape of Good Hope bound for England. Among the passengers was a child of two years and a nurse. The lady had also brought with her a huge, handsome Newfoundland dog.

The voyage had lasted about six days. No land was visible, and the island of St. Helena would be the nearest point. The day was a beautiful one, with a soft breeze blowing, and the sun shining down brightly on the sparkling waters. A large and gay company of the passengers were assembled on the deck; merry groups of young men and girls had clustered together; now and then a laugh rang out, or some one sang a gay little snatch of song, when suddenly the mirth of all was silenced by the loud and piercing scream of a woman.

A nurse who had been holding a child in her arms at the side of the vessel had lost her hold of the leaping, restless little one, and it had fallen overboard into the sea—into the great, wide Atlantic Ocean. The poor woman, in her despair, would have flung herself after her charge had not strong arms held her back. But sooner than it can be written down something rushed quickly past her: there was a leap over the vessel's side, a splash into the waters, and then Nero's black head appeared above the waves, holding the child in his mouth.

The engines were stopped as soon as possible, but by that time the dog was far behind in the wake of the vessel. A boat was quickly lowered, and the ship's surgeon, taking his place in it, ordered the sailors to pull for their lives. One could just make out on the leaping, dancing waves the dog's black head, holding something scarlet in his mouth. The child had on a little jacket of scarlet cloth, and it glistened like a spark of fire on the dark blue waves.

The mother of the child stood on the deck, her eyes straining anxiously after the boat, and the black spot upon the waves still holding firmly to the tiny scarlet print. The boat seemed fairly to creep, though it sped over the waves as it never sped before.

Sometimes a billow higher than others hid for a moment dog and child. But the boat came nearer and nearer, near enough at last to allow the surgeon to reach over and lift the child out of the dog's mouth, then a sailor's stout arms pulled Nero into the boat, and the men rowed swiftly back to the ship.

'Alive?' shouted every lip as the boat came within hail of the steamer; and, as the answer came back, 'Alive!' a 'Thank God!' came from every heart.

Then the boat came to the ship's side. A hundred hands were stretched out to help the brave dog on board, and 'Good Nero!' 'Brave dog!' 'Good fellow!' resounded on every side. But Nero ignored the praise showered so profusely on him. He trotted sedately to the child's mother, and with a wag of his drooping tail looked up into her face, with his big, faithful, brown eyes, as if he said, 'It's all right; I have brought her back safe.'

The mother dropped on her knees on the deck, and, taking his shaggy head in both hands, kissed his wet face again and again, the tears pouring down her face in streams. Indeed, there was not a dry eye on board. One old sailor stood near with the tears running down his weather-beaten brown face, unconscious that he was weeping.

Well, Nero was for the rest of the voyage the pet and hero of the ship, and he bore his honours with quiet dignity. It was curious, however, to see how from that time on he made himself the sentinel and body guard of the child. He always posted himself at the side of the chair of any person in whose arms she was, his eyes watching every movement she made. Sometimes she would be laid on the deck, with only Nero to watch her, and if inclined to creep out of bounds, Nero's teeth fastened firmly in the skirt of the flock, promptly drew her back. It was as though he said, 'I have seen in you enough, Miss Baby, to save you once, but as I may not be so lucky again I shall take care you don't run any such risks in the future.'

When the steamer reached her destination Nero received a regular ovation as he was leaving the vessel. Some one cried, 'Three cheers for Nero!' and they were given with a will. And 'Good-bye Nero,' 'Good-bye, good dog,' resounded on every side. Everyone crowded around to give him a pat on the head as he trotted down the gang plank. To all these demonstrations he could, of course, only reply with a wag of his tail and a twinkle of his faithful brown eyes. He kept close to the nurse's side and watched anxiously his little charge's arrival on dry land.

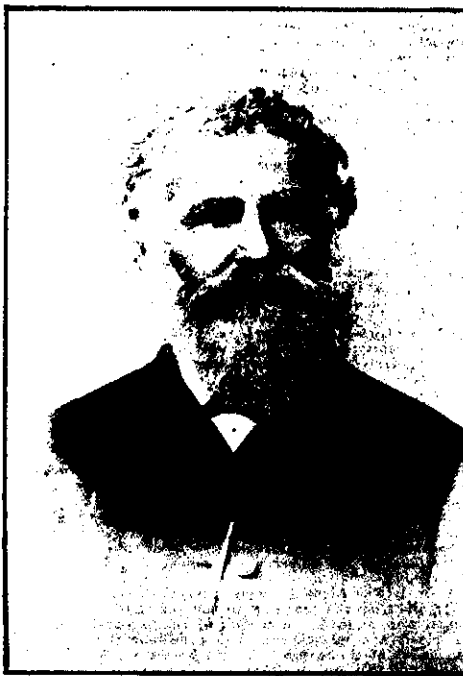
He was taken to the home of his little mistress, where he lived, loved and honoured until he died of old age, with his shaggy grey head resting on the knee of the child (now a woman) that he had saved. His grave is in an English churchyard, in the burial plot of the family to which he belonged, and is marked by a fair, white stone, on which is engraved, 'Sacred to the memory of Nero.'

His portrait hangs over the chimney-piece of an English drawing-room, beneath which sits in a low arm-chair a fair-haired girl, who often looks up at Nero's portrait as she tells how he sprung into the Atlantic Ocean after her and held her until help came.

## CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL.

### THE MAYOR AND TOWN CLERK.

MR WILLIAM PRUDHOE, who was elected to the position of Mayor of Christchurch for the year 1892, was born in Sunderland, County Durham, England, on the 14th January, 1832, and is consequently now 60 years of age. In his native town he received an ordinary education, and was in due time apprenticed to the building trade. Being possessed of the enterprising spirit which characterized most of the early colonists, he at the age of 27, resolved to emigrate to New Zealand, and accordingly took passage with his wife and children in the *Regina*, a barque of some 650 tons. After a voyage of 96 days—in



C. H. Manning. photo. Christchurch.  
C. H. PRUDHOE, ESQ.  
Mayor of Christchurch.

which the splendid provision made for the comfort of passengers in the ships of to-day were conspicuously absent—he landed at Lyttelton in the month of December, 1859. The tunnel which connects Lyttelton with Christchurch was not at that time in existence, and the journey had to be made in a small steamer by way of Sumner and the river Heathcote to the steam wharf. The distance of four miles from the latter to the city in embryo had to be



C. H. Manning. photo. Christchurch.  
F. T. HASKINS, ESQ.  
Town Clerk, Christchurch.

covered by shanks' pony. Christchurch in its infancy had no knowledge of coaches, trams, or trains, but the difficulties which the early colonists had to encounter did not deter the subject of this sketch from making his way. In the City of the Plains he made his home, and followed his occupation, and from time to time was entrusted with the erection of prominent buildings. In that city, persevering, and gradually making his way he has remained ever since. For the past nine years he has occupied a seat in the City Council, and during the last five years has acted as one

of the City Representatives on the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board. As a member of the Relief Committee of the latter Board, and as Chairman of the Works Committee of the City Council, he devoted a large amount of time to the interests of the public. In November last the ratepayers, desiring to recognise the faithful and painstaking labours performed by Mr Prudhoe, elected him to the honourable position of Mayor. He is also a prominent member of the Orange Society, and has held the post of Grand Master to the Middle Island of New Zealand.

### THE TOWN CLERK OF CHRISTCHURCH.

MR F. T. HASKINS, the present occupant of the post of town clerk at Christchurch, is one of the oldest residents in Canterbury, having arrived there in the year 1854. He first appeared in connection with municipal affairs as assistant to the town clerk and collector. This was in the year 1866. His appointment to his present office took place sixteen years ago in 1875, and his continued occupancy of it shows that the way in which he fulfils his functions is appreciated by the community which retains him in it.

### WHAT WOMEN EAT.

MRS HENRY FAWCETT has asserted that women would never be able to emancipate themselves so long as they were content with a meal composed of buns and tea. Whatever may be meant by the 'emancipation of women,' and whether the majority of the sex yearns for 'emancipation' or not, there is a distinct want of character and dignity about a lot of women seated at marble tables, munching dyspepsia-provoking plum cake, and sipping equally unwholesome, and more unpalatable tea from thick, white bowls, facetiously termed 'tea-cups.' The bread-and-butter shop is to the woman what the wine-bar is to the man, though not so much so. 'Another cup of tea, please, and a buttered scone,' says she, 'Just one more brandy and soda and a cigar,' says he, and they both wonder why dyspepsia is so prevalent. Such forms of feminine dissipation as I have described are, I admit, excusable, if not actually necessary, in the afternoon, provided the cake and the tea are wholesome concoctions. It is no good crusading against a custom that is as national as that of taking baths or playing tennis or cricket. But what I do vehemently protest against is the humiliating spectacle of women and girls who could afford to do better, lurching, or even dining off tea and cake, with an ancient egg, or a wad of hard ham or tinned tongue, as a *pièce de résistance*. In these days when women have to act and think for themselves, and often for their husbands and brothers, they must fortify their constitutions; and generally those who take mid-day meals of such an unsubstantial order are bread-winners, or, at any rate, busy women. It is not necessary that a woman should eat a big rump steak, and drink a bottle of claret or a tankard of ale, in the middle of the day; but it is desirable, in the interests of her health and of her womanhood, that she should cultivate a *mens sana in corpore sano*. Moreover, there is such a want of ambition about the bun and about drinking thick and flavourless tea, or so-called coffee, that might just as well be sold as cocoa or pea-soup, or anything else. In the well-to-do class that does not patronise the bread-and-butter bear-garden, the same indifference to the quality and quantity of food often prevails. When the husband has been dining at his club, I hear the wife priding herself on the scrumpy meal she has had. Contrast the dinner of the averagely well-to-do maiden lady and that of the equivalent bachelor.

### BEYOND.

Look at that dear old lady,  
In kerchief and in cap,  
Her snow-white hair just peeping out,  
Her glasses in her lap;  
A far-off look in her dim blue eyes  
After her morning nap.

'Yes, I'm ninety, sir, jaat ninety,'  
She says in her childish glee,  
'I hope your folks at home are well,  
'Where'er your home may be;  
I think I've seen your face before;  
Do you remember me?'

'Yes, mother—don't you know me,  
Your boy, the last but one?  
My home is just across the way,  
Facing the setting sun;  
And I've seen you ev'ry day, mother,  
Almost, since life begun.

The dear old face looks doubtful,  
The aged lips move slow—  
A faint spark lights the dim, blue eyes,  
Under the hair of snow.

'If you are John, my second son,  
Pray tell me where is Joe?'

'Dead, mother—dead and buried  
This many and many a year.  
You know that you were his nurse, mother,  
And would have no stranger near?  
We used to talk of his kind deeds  
In the twilight, mother, dear.'

'No.' Feeble mem'ry flickers,  
Then dies, and in its place  
There comes a glow—not of this world—  
Into the dear old face.  
The light of peace—eternal, sure,  
Born of a life long race.

'So you passed yourself as a widow while you were away, eh?' said Mr Briggs to his spouse, who, by the way, is rather good looking. 'You ought to be ashamed of yourself, but I suppose you are not.' 'Of course I am not,' was her reply. 'I did so merely on Johnny's account.' You have no idea how kind all the gentlemen were to him.