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PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Topics of the Week.

SOCIETY'S SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

SINCE their arrival in Wellington, His Excellency the Governor and Lady Glasgow have been resting quietly, which must be a welcome change from the continuous public exertions. On Christmas Day there was merely a family dinner party at Government House, but they are sufficiently numerous in themselves to prevent any question of dullness arising. Besides, the whole party is noted for its geniality and cheerful brightness.

A SMALL contingent of the Government House party honoured the Dampier Company at their opening performance of 'Robbery Under Arms.' The play went very well, and the acting was excellent.

SIR CHARLES LILLY was present at the Catholic sports on Boxing Day, and was loudly cheered and welcomed to Wellington. He replied thanking them and saying that in all probability he would finally settle down in New Zealand.

ALL the churches were beautifully decorated for Christmas, but the congregations were not large, in Wellington at least. Mr Tallis Trimnell was unable to conduct as organist at St. Peter's, owing to serious illness.

A SMALL picnic arranged by the Misses (Walker) Johnston, and Izard, Wellington, on Boxing Day, was somewhat marred by the wind. The destination was Kandallah, and the excursion would have been delightful but for the disagreeable weather. The party went into the bush where they were comparatively sheltered, though the trees moaned and groaned continuously. Here they gathered ferns and other forest trophies. Mrs Charles Izard acted as chaperone. Others of the picnickers were the Misses Izard, Johnston (four), Cooper, Richmond, Williams, etc.

THE cry of 'no news' is getting somewhat of a chestnut. Wellington echoes the Dunedin note, though it cannot account for the quietness on Scotch grounds. Town is very dull, nearly everyone being in the country. The theatre, occupied by the Holloway Dramatic Company, has been doing good business, the house being packed every night during the holidays. The Dampier Company with 'Robbery Under Arms' have also done very well.

IN Auckland the holidays were busier and brighter than they have been for years. The races were magnificently patronised on Boxing Day, and the Ellerslie course looked quite at its best. The victory of St. Hippo was, of course, an immensely popular one in Auckland, not merely because of the money won, but because Mr L. D. Nathan is so popular a man and so excellent a sportsman. Few who were they and saw the race will easily forget it, and the Nathan party must have felt proud indeed as cheer after cheer went up, first at the splendid appearance of the favourite in the preliminary canter, then at the magnificent and absurdly easily-achieved victory, and finally at the magic words 'All right'—loudest then and most deafening of all. It was a grand race won by the grand horse of a worthy owner. It is now opined that St. Hippo will go for the Melbourne Cup, and I certainly hope so. He will carry plenty of good wishes and a pot of New Zealand money if he goes to the post at Flemington.

THE immense concourse of people at the Ellerslie Races, Auckland, on Boxing and New Year's Day, could not fail to impress visitors as to the vast numbers of well-to-do inhabitants in this highly-favoured and picturesque locality, so renowned for the beauty of its scenery. The lawn at this time of the year looks strikingly pretty, although somewhat robbed of its verdant beauty by the dry weather. Choice pot plants were massed about everywhere, and flowers of every tint, twined and growing artistically up the sides of the entire length of the spacious grand-stand, which is, by the way, quite equal, if not superior, to any in the colony. The rich, handsome, and varied costumes worn by the ladies lent an indescribable charm to the whole scene. A day spent at the Ellerslie Races is, indeed, most enjoyable, provided you don't go too heavily on the totalisator or the wrong horse. Races, like balls, cause after regrets, heartaches, and headaches.

MRS D. B. CRUICKSHANK 'Craig Hall,' Remuera (Auckland), gave a most delightful tennis party for young people. The dresses worn upon this occasion were both stylish and pretty, and the hostess, who was gowned in a handsome black silk, had spared no trouble in her efforts to promote the enjoyment of her young guests. Sad to relate, Mr Walter Stubbing was one of them, and no one who saw him bright and smiling could have surmised for one moment that, concealed by a society mask, lay hidden the severe mental depression and agony of mind which only two days afterwards led him to take his own life. As a rule suicides receive little sympathy, but there is not one of his many friends who would not have done a great deal to save the life he thought so lightly valued.

FEW men have so worthily won the esteem and respect of their fellow townsmen as Mr Edwin Hesketh, whose name is a by-word in Auckland for probity, high-mindedness, and hospitality. It is therefore not surprising that both he and Mrs Hesketh should have been the recipients of well nigh countless congratulations on the occasion of the celebration of their silver wedding. If Mr Hesketh is one of the best respected men in Auckland, Mrs Hesketh is undoubtedly one of the most popular and successful hostesses, and the balls and parties at the beautiful house, 'St John's Wood,' are invariably amongst the pleasantest of the season. The silver wedding was there celebrated on December 27th with all due *eclat*, a host of people accepting the invitations and turning up to wish the host and hostess another decade of happy life together. The weather was not too kindly, but everyone enjoyed themselves hugely. Hunter's band was stationed under the trees, and the music was quite delightful.

POLO is immensely popular in Auckland this season as a rule, but the holidays offered too many attractions in other directions to admit of a large attendance at the Saturday's play. Nevertheless, an excellent game was enjoyed by Doctors Sharman, Purchas, Forbes, Messrs Lockhart, Wansborough, McKellar, Gilmore, Noble, Buddle, etc. Amongst the few spectators were Mrs Walker (Ellerslie) and her daughter, the Misses Firth, Hesketh, Forbes, etc.

THE rain on the second holiday last week in Auckland damped a good many pleasure-seekers. Picnic parties suffered most. What would certainly have been a most charming expedition of this nature came to grief in consequence of the drizzle all the afternoon. Mrs A. Kerr-Taylor and a number of young people proposed a picnic to Waitakerei. They, however, only got as far as Baxter's, where the unfavourable condition of the atmosphere detained them under shelter of a large tree all the afternoon. They were very merry, notwithstanding, one gentleman from town displaying considerable histrionic ability in the way of recitations and tales.

AMONGST the guests were the four Misses Scherff, Dr. Atterbury, Mr A. E. Gilmore, Mrs Bilborough, two Messrs Parsons, Mr McKellar, Miss Devore, Mr Collins, Miss Sellers, two Messrs Hazard and their sister, two Misses Kempthorne and a brother, Miss Dawson and three brothers, three or four Misses Kerr-Taylor, Mr Bassett, Mr Gifford, and two other gentlemen whose names have not transpired. The womenfolk were cotton gowns and waterproofs with pretty summery hats, while mackintoshes and light tweeds or flannels distinguished the men.

'MOUNTNESSING,' one of the large boarding houses in Auckland, had a somewhat gloomy Christmas, owing to the suicide of Mr Stubbing, a well-known society man and efficient teacher of music. It appears that the unfortunate fellow was subject to fits of depression, and being weary of life, ended it with prussic acid. Mr Stubbing looked a very much younger man than his years, which were on the wrong side of forty. Most people would, at first sight, have said he was only twenty-five, or at most thirty. He was a pleasant and accomplished conversationalist, played very agreeably, and was very popular amongst the set with whom he spent most of his time. His death created a profound sensation, mingled with intense surprise, when it was known that he had sought his own life. A letter to a friend, Jim, read at the inquest, was not without pathos, and one can but feel profoundest pity for a man, who in the very prime and vigour of life, feels so weary as to destroy himself.

THE Choral Hall, Auckland, was, of course, greatly overcrowded on the public performance of the 'Messiah' by the Choral Society. The members deserve the thanks of the community, at least those who turned up did. Many were too lazy or too pleasantly occupied to do so. These deserve a certain amount of censure, for the least people can do who take up a thing is to carry it out properly. The soloists and the conductor too may justly complain of a want of respect to themselves. Each one on these occasions is apt to think only of themselves, and that their absence cannot much matter. This is wrong. Individually they may not be much good, but those who slip up engagements of this sort at the last moment are seldom people of individual value. Collectively their absence may, however, make all the difference.

THE Otago team of cricketers were not supposed to have had enough exercise at cricket in Auckland, so a little more was arranged for them by their fair friends in the shape of a dance in the Masonic Hall, Princes-street. The Misses Wilkins are credited with much of the getting-up of the affair, very ably assisted by many lady friends. The dance was a subscription one, but very enjoyable for all that. A description of the dresses is unavoidably held over until next week.

THE conversazione of teachers in the Choral Hall, Auckland, on December 28th, was a very successful affair, Mr Draffin giving some very interesting exhibitions of thought-reading, and Mr M. R. Keesing displaying to the wonderment of all his extraordinary powers of memory. Some three hundred numbered cards were distributed, and on request, by merely mentioning the number, he told all that was written upon the card. As on some of these were words in seven languages and figures representing billions, the correct replies he gave were loudly applauded. In the adjoining rooms were displayed microscopes and other interesting exhibits. Sir George Grey sent his regrets in a very pleasant letter. Dr. Laishley filled the chair to the general satisfaction of all.

FOR the future, 'Topics of the Week' will be written in the 'Personal' style and signed 'The Flaneur.' Those willing to contribute paragraphs will address them to the editor.

TO any lover of botany, the reckless manner in which ferns of all kinds, branches of evergreens, shrubs, and flowers, are handled during the Christmas season, must cause a thrill of sympathetic agony to shoot through his frame. These plants are things of beauty and a joy—for a short hour or two—thus abused. In this warm climate, it is simply ridiculous to deck our churches with masses of lovely flowers and tender ferns on Christmas Eve, leave them all night without water, and expect them not to present a wilted and day-after-the-ball appearance on Christmas morning. It seems to me to be the height or depth of childish folly to dot the wreaths of evergreens with floral trophies, which, parted from the parent stem, die in an hour or two.

THE whole system of colonial decoration when Christmas Day comes in midsummer is at fault. Why cannot a few neat tins be procured, wreathed with ivy, tastefully arranged with choice flowers—for the best would then be given gladly—and used for adorning our churches, instead of the old-fashioned, evil smelling mycrocarpa, firs, pines, etc., dying and dead ferns and flowers, which, to those who attend divine service on Christmas evening, present a deplorable spectacle, mingled with depressing odours of mis-used and badly-treated gifts. Dame Nature is lavish in her floral and horticultural productions in these favoured isles, but is that any reason why we should so stupidly waste them?

EXCEPT for the races and kindred public functions, very little has been going on in the social world during the holi-

days. Society is resting, and for a week or two there will be few functions of a private character to chronicle. The exodus has set in with tolerable severity in all the principal cities, most of the best-known people having taken country houses, and gone to rusticate and recuperate after the wear and tear of the spring and early summer—a very trying part of the year.

AMONGST the most successful dances of the past year, that of Mrs Otterson, at her residence, Avonbank, Fendalton, must certainly be reckoned. Mr and Mrs Otterson are well used to entertaining, and when they undertake to give a large party, it is a foregone conclusion that it will be a success. The dance on Boxing night amply justified all favourable prognostications. It was an unqualified success. The whole house was tastefully decorated with beautiful flowers and foliage. The drawing-room, where Mrs Otterson received her guests, looked lovely with masses of pink flowers, the lights all shaded with various harmoniously-blended colours. The verandah was enclosed, and made a most acceptable retiring place, full of cool nooks, for the heated dancers.

THE dining-room was transformed into a fairy bower for the ballroom, and Fleming's band supplied the music. Just off the ballroom a most welcome refreshment *salon* had been arranged, where various novel delicacies had been provided, besides other delicious old favourites of supper-consumers. This room was very inviting, shaded lights, flowers, palms, etc., adding to the attractions of the table.

MRS HELMORE'S garden party at Christchurch was a very smart affair. About two hundred guests were present The grounds are particularly lovely, sloping as they do from the terrace on which the house stands, down to the gently-flowing Avon. Several novelties in the way of games were introduced. For the May-pole dance, at a given signal, Fleming's band played a lively air and sixteen young ladies, attired in modern costume, emerged from the shrubbery and danced several pretty figures, twining and untwining many-coloured ribbons faultlessly. It was quaintly picturesque, and the delighted guests insisted upon its repetition. Tennis, croquet, and other games passed the charming afternoon all too quickly.

ON Thursday night Mrs W. D. Meares entertained about two hundred guests at a splendid ball at her residence, 'Tootooma,' Christchurch. The new large ball and supper-room built for the occasion and adjoining the dining-room, were opened. The latter room was used as a reception room, and gave a splendid view of the ball-room. The decorations were carried out by White and were simply superb. The walls were draped with red and old gold, mirrors were placed at intervals, and nikau palms, native honeysuckle, etc., all added their beauty and fragrance.

THE drive was carpeted, and formed a splendid promenade. There were numbers of seats under the trees, and the garden was lighted by Chinese lanterns. The music was Fleming's best, the 'Ta-ra-ra' polka being charming. Light refreshments were served throughout the evening, and at midnight a splendid champagne supper was sat down to by the guests. When the ball at length broke up, hot soup was administered to speed the parting visitors, who expressed their enjoyment of this added thoughtfulness.

VIOLET VARLEY and Miss Graupner, Riley, Syd Deane, Bracy, and the rest of the Comic Opera Company are having a glorious wind-up for the New Zealand season in Dunedin. 'Ta-ra-ra-boom-de ay' is the rage in the South as it was everywhere, and the chorus have been hospitably entertained by various of the gilded youth. Miss Varley is first favourite, and received perfect ovations in the 'Old Guard,' 'Gondoliers,' and 'Pepita.' The company declare themselves desolated, as they say in France, at having to leave this colony, where everyone is in good spirits. Auckland was the slowest place they struck, not only for business, but for pleasure. It was not till the last week that the Auckland boys seemed to pluck up courage to do any entertaining, though the Bank of New Zealand did its best to encourage the ballet. No example could be better than that of a general manager, and if the 'boss' entertains the principals, the clerks should feel justified in giving the chorus and dancing girls a show.

IN Dunedin at Christmas the usual holiday weather prevailed—that is to say, the rain descended in perfect torrents, completely spoiling the holiday, and putting a stop to everything. Inscrutable are the ways of Providence, but most inscrutable of all is the weather clerk. Ever since the last holiday Dunedin has enjoyed the most perfect Italian skies and warm suns, but immediately people got a chance to avail themselves of it the windows of heaven were opened, and the watering pot brought out again. One can only hope that Dunedinites are of a philosophic turn of mind. Such conduct on the part of the weather might be conducive to paganism in a less enlightened community. The inhabitants of the Southern Edinboro' have not even the consolation of the African potentate, who when the weather goes radically wrong beheads the gentleman in charge and makes it warm for his successor till fine days or clouds, as the case may be, come again.

INDEPENDENTLY of this, however, the Christmas season in Dunedin was painfully dull. My correspondent declares dolefully things were never so quiet. Most of the people who entertain were out of town, and the opening of the tennis tournament was spoilt by the incessant wet. Rain was also responsible for the fact that the garden party which was to have closed the function could not take place. A juvenile dance was given by Miss Cargill, of the Cliffs, one night, but with this exception there has not been a private entertainment.

THE animality of human nature is well brought out by a tragedy in Idaho. Those who are familiar with Landseer's works will recall the expressive force of his 'Challenge' and 'Combat.' A pair of stags fight their battle of rivalry out in fierce conflict, not made more fierce by the painter than it is in nature. Sometimes these fights between the antlered or horned species occur in the presence of the female, who meekly looks on at the deadly grapple of her suitors, and quietly surrenders her affections to the winner. Near Gold Hill there has been something of the same kind enacted between two stock-raisers and a prepossessing widow, who was housekeeper to a man not in the quarrel. Each of the stock-raisers had proposed, and been accepted, and when they found out the duplicity of the widow they prepared for battle. They met at her house and fought out their quarrel with long knives, the widow looking on quietly from a doorway. The combat was altogether deadly, and when eventually the duellists fell in their agony the cause of jealousy rushed to the side of one of the dying to bestow upon him an embrace of parting devotion. The ungrateful man may have supposed that his hated rival was about to have another prod at him with his bowie. The widow may be inclined to believe this also, because the moment she was by the duellist's side he slashed off her nose with a dexterous flash of his knife, and picked out one of her lovely eyes with the point, so that it will twinkle no more for anybody. The action of the widow resembles that of the doe which tenderly licks the wounds of the conqueror, and laments not those of the vanquished. Such is the struggle for the survival of the fittest.

THE rage for progressive euchre parties has at last come to Nelson, and a very jolly evening was spent in this way at Mrs R. Kingdon's. Some of the lucky few who were present were Mr and Mrs J. Sharp, Dr. and Mrs Hudson, Mrs L. Adams, Misses Jones (two), Curtis, Mackie, Hill (Auckland), Mr Jones, and Dr. Cressey.

VERY gay the Nelson College looked with all its bunting displayed and its grounds brightened by the many pretty gowns worn by all the vast assemblage who rolled up in goodly numbers to witness the annual sports at this institution. Afternoon tea and delicious cakes were hospitably dispensed by Miss Bell and enjoyed by all present. After a keen contest between five boys the senior cup was finely won by Blick, who beat the second boy by one point, chiefly owing to his excellent jumping. The junior cup was also closely contested, and resulted in a win for Mules (II). The prizes were presented to the successful competitors at the close of the afternoon by Mrs Chatterton, who was herself presented with a lovely bouquet tied with the college colours, dark and pale blue ribbons, by the smallest pupil attending the college.

A GREAT treat was enjoyed by those who were present at the performance of the 'Messiah' by the Nelson Harmonic Society. The conductor, Mr Fell, is certainly to be congratulated upon the success of the oratorio. Taken as a whole it has seldom been performed here with greater success. The soloists were Mesdames Houlker and Percy Adams, and Miss Baigent, and Messrs Kempthorne, Lucas, and Grace, and these names alone speak for the immense pleasure the large audience must have derived from hearing the solos alone without the choruses, which, by the way, were all sung with vigour, and evident enjoyment to the singers themselves. The Theatre Royal was well filled, and among the audience were Mesdames Sealy, Watts, Bunny, Raine, Mackay, Mules, Chatterton, Duff, Richmond, Fell, Pitt, Renwick, Nalder, Grace, Locking, Misses Duff, Richmond (two), Fell, Hunter-Brown, Renwick, Huddleston, Pitt Browning, Wood, Heaps, Boor, and Locking.

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES were observed in several social circles in New Plymouth. A delightful dance was given by Mr and Mrs Fookes, who possess all the qualities that are most desired in a host and hostess. The floor was in excellent dancing condition, the supper good, and the garden, lit up with Chinese lanterns, exceedingly pretty and alluring.

ANOTHER of the land marks of the year to look back upon will be the dance given by the captain and officers of the ship 'Jessie Readman' to Marlborough folk generally. Eighty invitations, printed in gold on cream paper, were sent to Blenheim alone, most of which were accepted, though only six out of the eighty thought proper to fulfil their engagements, thus putting the hospitable ship's company to a great deal of unnecessary trouble and expense. The Picton folks made amends for other shortcomers, and the dance was one more of the number of successful events to be noted in the annals of Picton.

THE hall was handsomely decorated with flags and evergreens, lycopodium wreaths festooned round the room, and from lamp to lamp, along the centre of the hall, gigi and tree ferns, bouquets of flowers, and art muslin, and Captain Burton's motto, '*Semper viator per mare*,' crowning the whole over the stage arch. The ship's company were ably assisted by the Picton ladies, so I need say nothing about the supper or table decorations, these as usual were perfect; but I must mention the 'claret cup,' of which all partook, and which was Captain Burton's own special brew. The rosy dawn was lighting up the horizon ere the end of the programme came, which was an illustration of *Semper viator per mare*.

MY Picton correspondent writes: 'Father Kerrigan and Father Aubrey—to whom the thanks of the community at large are due—have been visiting the Maoris at Hetane and other stations of the Sound and Port Underwood. They are of opinion that the serious nature of the outbreak of typhoid is due in a great measure to bad ventilation, improper food, and ignorance on the part of the natives of the art of nursing.'

IN Hastings the breaking-up of the Heretanga School was a most successful affair, a large crowd of fashionably-dressed people being present. Mr Fraser, the head-master, is a finished gymnast, and trains the boys excellently in this department, so that these exercises were most interesting and amusing to the spectators. The prize-giving, which took place the day after the gymnastic competition, proved that capital instruction is afforded in this school to boys from all parts of the colony, one of the largest prize-winners hailing from Oamaru.

THE American 'gentleman' is said to indulge rather freely in all places and at all times in the not too elegant habit of spitting. At last American women are awaking to the extreme nastiness of the habit. I hear that in New York they are busy organising an Anti-Expectoration Association. Perhaps this characteristic of a free and independent manhood may account to some extent for American women appropriating husbands from the English side of the Atlantic.

KOWALSKI, musician and wit, leaves Sydney shortly for France. At M. Wiegand's recent gargantuan supper, Kowalski (*loq.*): 'The chef is at least my equal. I try to please the ear; he pleases the estomac—a much larger order to fill.' Natu-rally!

THERE was a rush to Melbourne Princess's on the night following the announcement of Fred Leslie's death. An idea that the girls would sport tights of sable hue had circulated abroad, and many of the audience evidently anticipated a display of sentiment. Nothing unusual occurred, though. Burlesque doesn't offer opportunity for suggestions of sorrow, or perhaps the sorrow had had time to abate. Fred Leslie died of typhoid fever, a disease which lurks in sewer-gas and such things to capture men who have 'lived high.' It was probably the effect of bad drains, acting upon a constitution attenuated by good drains, that removed poor Fred. His death, following upon Nellie Farren's break-up, sets one thinking of those café days in Melbourne and Sydney, whereat a party of four would 'put away some seven or eight bottles of wine and spirits without turning a hair.

THE FLANEUR.

INTERPROVINCIAL CRICKET.

OUR notes on the Auckland-Otago match are too lengthy for insertion in this issue, but will appear next week.

'THE SOVERAINE WEED:' ITS HISTORICAL AND POETICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

Sublime tobacco—which from east to west
Cheers the tar's labours or the Turkman's rest;
Which on the Moslem's ottoman divides
His hours, and rivals opium and his brides:
Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,
Though not less loved in Wapping or the Strand:
Divine in hookahs, glorious in a pipe
When tipped with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe.
Like other charmers wooing the caress,
More dazzlingly when daring in full dress,
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
Thy naked beauties—give me a cigar!
LORD BYRON, 'The Island.'

THE Soveraine Weed' as the author of the 'Faery Queen' calls the tobacco plant, thrives in nearly every part of the globe. Amongst narcotic plants it occupies a place similar to that of the potato amongst food plants. It is the most extensively cultivated, the most hardy and the most tolerant of change in temperature, altitude, and general climate. The plant was formerly grown in many parts of England, particularly in Yorkshire, but now we believe its cultivation is restricted to half a pole 'in a physic or university garden, or in any private garden for physic or chirurgery.' The plant itself is probably a native of America. At all events it was extensively cultivated and used by the inhabitants of various parts of that continent long before its discovery by Europeans. The aborigines of tropical America must have rolled up their tobacco leaf and dreamed away their lives in smoky reverie ages before Columbus was born. When in 1492 the great discoverer put his foot on the American soil there came towards him, as his son narrates, savages who had in their mouths tubes made of tobacco leaves—tubes which glowed with fire at one end and the smoke of which they imbibed. And from these aboriginal cigars, which in Hayti were called tobagos, came the name of tobacco.

To Europe came the living plant about the middle of the sixteenth century, being brought from Brazil to Lisbon. From Lisbon it found its way to Paris by means of Jean Nicot, the French Ambassador at the Portuguese Court, who sent it to Queen Catherine de Medicis as a panacea. After Nicot the plant received its botanical name Nicotiana. When Sir Walter Raleigh brought the plant from Virginia to England in 1586, whole fields of it were already under cultivation in Portugal. It is probable that the cultivation of this plant in Europe preceded the potato by from 120 to 140 years.

ON ITS INTRODUCTION INTO EUROPE

every effort was made by writing imposts and bodily punishment to restrict or to put down its use. In Russia smoking was absolutely prohibited, the knout being the punishment for the first and death for the second offence. In one of the cantons of Switzerland it was placed next to adultery in the list of offences. In 1684 Pope Urban VIII. issued a Bull excommunicating all persons who used tobacco in any form or shape in the church. It is said that more than one hundred books were written condemnatory of the use of the fragrant weed, foremost among them being the celebrated 'Counterblasts to Tobacco,' by our English Solomon,

King James, with his wide-frilled breeches,
Who held in abhorrence tobacco and witches.

The Royal author thus describes the habit so prevalent in 'these degenerate days':—'It (smoking) is a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fumes therefrom nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless.' There is an old tradition of the Greek Church which ascribes the inebriation of the patriarch Noah to the temptation of the devil by means of tobacco, so that the king was not altogether without authority for the Stygian parentage which he assigns to its fumes. In similar terms Sir William Vaughan thus speaks of the custom:—

Tobacco, that outlandish weed—
It dulls the spirit, dims the sight;
It robs a woman of her right.

But even in those early days tobacco had its admirers as well as its haters, and in spite of Royal and priestly fulminations the use of the 'golden leaf' extended far and wide, as we learn from Aubrey, who, writing of smokers in 1680, says:—'The first had silver pipes, but the ordinary sort made use of walnut shell and a straw. I have heard my grandfather say that one pipe was handed from man to man round the table. Within these thirty five years 'twas scandalous for a divine to take tobacco. It was then sold for its wayte in silver. I have heard some of our old yeomen neighbours say that when they went to market they culled out their biggest shillings to lay in the scales against tobacco; now the customers of it are the greatest His Majesty hath.' Thus it hath been said, or rather sung—

Tobacco engages
Both sexes, all ages,
The poor as well as the wealthy,
From the court to the cottage,
From childhood to dotage,
Both those who are sick and healthy.

THE POETS AND TOBACCO.

It is very interesting to note what the poets have to say about the weed. The myriad minded Shakspere, strange to say, has no mention of it in his plays, but nearly all his contemporaries mention it. The majority of our poets were smokers. Milton dearly loved a pipe, Addison, Congreve, Phillips, Prior, and Steele smoked prodigiously, while Pope and Swift took snuff, as did also the 'Great Cham.' Sir Walter Scott, Campbell, Moore, Byron, all indulged in the use of 'the pungent nose refreshing weed.' Tennyson, according to Carlyle, 'floats in and out in a great element of tobacco smoke—a wide, breezy comfortable figure of a man, not easy to awaken, but great when he is once aroused.' Several of the poets have preserved their appreciation of tobacco in the beautiful amber of verse. In *Once a Week*, 1867, is a poem, by F. C. Burnard, entitled,

THE OLD SHEPHERD ON HIS PIPE.

When I smoke I sees in my pipe
Sometimes of life, a type,
An' I think as my lipe I wipe—
A talking as in my way—
'Here's the spirit in this red coat
That puts the life in the bowl,
In the fire I sees the soul
Imprisoned in the clay.'

Mayhap I sits in my room,
In the winter evening's gloom
And as I think of man's doom,
My spirit a'most it clashes.
For I says when I stops my breath,
And the pipe goes out, 'that's death.
We're dust, as the parson saith,
And then I knocks out the ashes.'

The above verses in the journal named are accompanied by a full page engraving, drawn by C. Keene, showing 'The Old Shepherd' in deep thought still holding his pipe after having 'knocked out the ashes.' In the 'Smoker's Guide, Philosopher, and Friend,' by Andrew Steinmetz, is a poem by Kemble, entitled

THE INDIAN WEED.

This Indian weed now withered quite,
Though green at noon, cut down at night,
Shows thy decay.
All flesh is hay,
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

The pipe so lily-like and weak
Does thus thy mortal state bespeak:
Thou art e'en such—
Gone with a touch!
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

And when the smoke ascends on high,
Then thou beholdst the vanity
Of worldly stuff—
Gone with a puff!
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

And when the pipe grows foul within,
Think on thy soul defiled with sin;
For then the fire
It doth require!
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

And sweet the ashes cast away,
Then to thyself thou mayest say,
That to the dust
Return thou must!
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

PROSE WRITERS AND THE PIPE.

Literary men have generally taken kindly to the pipe. Charles Lamb was at one time a great smoker, and once, in the height of his smoking days, was puffing strong coarse weed from a long clay pipe in company with Dr. Parr, who was careful in obtaining finer sorts, and the Dr. asked him how he acquired this prodigious power.' Replied the gentle Elia, in his stuttering manner, 'By t—t—toiling after it, as some men t—t—toil after virtue.' Carlyle and his pipe were inseparable friends. When at some health resort the Chelsea sage had called in a local Æsculapius, he said, 'Doctor, I'll do anything ye say, but ye mann na tak away my pipe.' Charles Kingsley used to smoke a respectable 'churchwarden,' and in his 'Westward Ho!' speaks of it as 'a lone man's companion, a bachelor's friend, a hungry man's cordial, a wakeful man's sleep, and a chilly man's fire.' Bulwer, in his 'Night and Morning,' exclaims 'A pipe—it is a great comforter, a pleasant soother—blue devils fly before its honest breath. It ripens the brain, it opens the heart, and the man who smokes thinks like a sage and acts like a Samaritan.' James Payn tells us that Harriet Martineau, under the advice of some scientific person, tried smoking. He had the privilege of providing her with some very mild cigars, and many and many a summer night they sat together for half an hour or so in her porch at the Knoll smoking. 'She only tried this remedy for a few months, but she fancied it had a beneficial effect upon her hearing. For my part I enjoyed nothing so much as these evenings. It is my fixed opinion that the conversation of even a dullard is mitigated and rendered tolerable by tobacco—he can't talk long without letting his cigar out for one thing, and there is less temptation to him when he has a cigar in his mouth to talk at all for another—while all that is thoughtful in a man is brought to the surface by that benign influence, and one hears him at his best.' 'The pipe,' writes William Makepeace Thackeray, 'draws wisdom from the lips of the philosopher, and shuts up the mouth of the foolish; it generates a style of conversation, contemplating, thoughtful, benevolent, and unaffected. I vow and believe that the cigar has been one of the greatest creature comforts of my life, a kind companion, a gentle stimulant, an amiable anodyne, a cementer of friendship.' Mr Jerome K. Jerome thinks so much of his pipe that he has actually dedicated his book, 'Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow,' to it in the following words:—

To
the very dear and well-beloved
Friend
of my prosperous and evil days:

To the Friend
who, though in the early stages of our acquaintanceship did
oftimes disagree with me,
but since became to be my very warmest comrade.
To the Friend
who, however often I may put him out, never (now) upsets me in
revenge.
To the Friend
who, treated with marked coldness
by all the female members of my household, and
regarded with suspicion
by my very dog, nevertheless seems
day by day
to be more drawn by me, and in return to
more and more impregnate me with the odour of his
Friendship.
To the Friend
who never tells me of my faults,
never wants to borrow money, and never talks about
himself.
To the companion of my Idle Hours,
The soother of my sorrows,
the confidant of my joys and hopes,
my oldest and strongest
Pipe.
this little volume
is
gratefully and affectionately
dedicated.

The question—

IS SMOKING BENEFICIAL?

Is one which it is very difficult to answer. By the non-smokers it is said that it causes blindness, palpitation of the heart, paralysis, diseases of the teeth, mouth, and tongue, dyspepsia, and diarrhœa. The smokers, on the other hand, assert that you may smoke to all eternity without in the slightest degree injuring your health—in fact, you are likely to improve it. So they sing in the words of the old song—

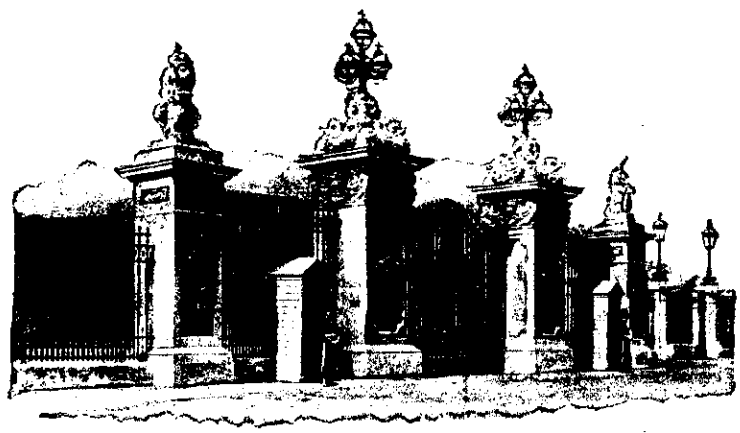
It helpeth digestion,
Of that there's no question;
The gout and the toothache it eases;
Be it early or late,
'Tis ne'er out of date;
He may safely take it that pleaseth.

Or else exclaim with Burton, in his 'Anatomie of Melancholy:' 'Tobacco—divine, rare, excellent, tobacco—which goes far beyond all the panaceas, portable gold and philosopher's stone, a sovereign remedy for all diseases.' Therefore, this controversial point as to the effects, injurious or otherwise, of the love of the weed is best left to the individual judgment. All argument on the topic only serves to show the truth of the adage that 'one man's meat is another man's poison.'

The Stables of the Queen of England.

BY CHARLES S. PELHAM-CLINTON.

No one walking in the garden of Buckingham Palace would believe that one of the largest stables in England lies behind the high mound of earth excavated from the ponds that look so charming to the eye. The rampart is covered with trees, which help to hide the buildings. The Queen hardly ever uses Buckingham Palace nowadays except on state occasions, and the palace and grounds have rather a deserted appearance. Such is not the case, however, with the Queen's stables known as 'The Royal Mews,' which adjoin the palace, though apart from it in management. The head functionary of the Royal Mews is the Master of the Horse, at present the Duke of Portland. The salary attached to the office is two thousand pounds per annum and the right to stable a certain number of horses in the Royal Mews. The office goes with the government, and is always given to a man of rank and wealth as well as great political influence.



THE GATES OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

The main entrance to the stable is through the handsome gateway that opens on Buckingham Palace Road. The gates are very solidly built, and have considerable pretensions to art. A sentry from the Buckingham Palace guard is always outside these gates. In the quadrangle formed by these gates and the archway leading to the main courtyard are the offices of Mr William Norton, the superintendent of the Royal Mews, with those of the Duke of Portland and his lieutenant, Sir George Maude. The main part of the work of arrangement and management falls on Sir George Maude and Mr Norton. The former selects all the horses, arranges the processions, and has the general ordering of affairs, while Mr Norton looks after the minor details. To Mr Norton is due the excellent appearance of the royal carriages, which always attracts the attention of those who have an eye for these details. Mr Norton was for many years in the Royal Horse Artillery, and has occupied his present position for over thirty years. Some idea of the work required in managing such a large affair as the Queen's stables can be inferred from the fact that there are one hundred and ten horses in the stables, and eighty men employed as coachmen, grooms, and outriders. It argues well for the pleasantness of the royal service that servants of twenty-five years' standing are common, and there are plenty who can boast of twice that number of years in the service of the Queen. A household medal is now given for over twenty-five years in the royal service, with a clasp for every ten years after that number.

The head coachman, Mr G. Payne, whose portrait is given, has been for fifteen years in his present position, and has served the Queen for over fifty years. He always drives the state carriage in which Her Majesty sits, and handles the ribbons over the famous 'creams.'

We enter the Royal Mews through the main gateway, which is surmounted—as may be seen in the illustration—by a large clock that chimes the hours. The whole Mews was designed by John Nash, of Dover, Kent, who also designed the palace. The work was completed in 1825. The courtyard is about four hundred feet square. The right side is taken up by the royal carriages. Opposite these are the stables for the chargers, the harness-room, and several stables of carriage-horses. Opposite the entrance are the 'creams' and 'blacks,' and the celebrated thirty-two-stalled stable.

I suppose in no stable in the world can such a collection of horses be seen. All are over sixteen hands high, and most over sixteen and a-half. The general colour is bay or brown, and white legs or feet are conspicuously absent. The animals are all given names that commence with as many letters of the dealer's name as practicable, as a record of their purchase. Thus 'Blackbird' and 'Blackcap' were both purchased from a dealer Blackman, and 'Jonquil' came from Jones. All the names are placed on iron plates above the racks. The floors of the stables are all sanded in patterns, and the straw litter is finished off with a neat straw plait. Against the posts—as can be seen in the picture of the 'creams'' stable—are neatly arranged sheafs of straw. There is a foreman in charge of each stable, and to every eight horses a coachman, who has under him a competent number of men and an assistant coachman.

The horses are all clothed alike in neat red, white, and blue rugs of a small check pattern, bound with red. The initials V.R. are on the quarters, and the quarter-cloths have the same initials with no display. The price of the horses varies from one hundred and fifty pounds to two hundred and fifty pounds apiece. They must be young and pass a vigorous veterinary examination. After being purchased they are thoroughly trained. The chargers have a special drill in the riding-school, over timber walls and hurdles, and are also taught to 'stand fire.'

The coachmen have four liveries apiece,—the state livery, which is a mass of gold; the epaulet livery, which is but a little less costly; the ordinary scarlet livery; and the plain black livery with white waistcoat, that is used on ordinary occasions. All the men live in the rooms above the stables, and almost a military discipline is maintained.

The first stable on the left contains eight good-looking bays and browns, that are used in the smaller carriages. Other small stables are passed, all in perfect neatness, and then comes the chargers' stable. In it are many grand horses, particularly the big sixteen and a-half hands bay horse 'Sunrise,' that the late Emperor of Germany rode in the Jubilee time. All chargers are perfect and will stand with their noses close to the largest guns when they are fired, and not twitch an ear. The next stable contains the small chargers, all about fifteen and three-quarters to sixteen hands, and equally well-broken. Among them is the charger that the ill-fated Prince Rudolph rode in the Jubilee time. Indeed, all of the horses in these stables have some special associations connected with the Royalties who have been on their backs.

In the equerries' stable the horses are a trifle smaller than most of the others. On this side of the square also is the state harness room—a very interesting apartment. On the left hand is the 'creams'' state harness. The leather is red morocco, and the heavy plating is gilt on a brass foundation. The weight is no less than one hundred and twelve pounds. This harness never leaves Buckingham Palace, and is used only on state occasions. The gilt crests and arms are of beautiful design and work, and the whole effect is superb. Hardly less handsome is what is known as the 'black horse state harness.' This is made of black leather, and the crest and royal arms are of brass; the trappings of this are covered with crests, and the effect is very beautiful. The weight of a single set is eighty pounds.

In the same room is kept the state harness made for George IV. in 1812, when he was Regent, which has never been re-leathered since it was made. It is extraordinarily massive and handsome, the royal arms are very beautifully cut, and the leather is as good now as it was three-quarters of a century ago. It weighs one hundred and twelve pounds a single set.

In the thirty-two-stalled stable are thirty-two fine-bred horses from sixteen and a-half to seventeen and a-quarter hands, all glistening bays so perfectly matched that almost any four could be placed in front of a carriage. The perfect ventilation disposes almost entirely of any stable odour.

The other half of this wing is occupied by the 'creams' and 'blacks,' all stallions, over sixteen hands, and the wheelers sixteen and a-half. The heavy, massive harness and the peculiar colouring of these horses make them look much smaller than they are.

The breed originally came from Hanover in 1820; and the stud at Hampton Court, where they are bred, is the only pure specimen of the breed. Since their sojourn in this country not a mixed-coloured animal has been born, which augurs well for the purity of the breed.

They are of a curious cream colour, with very silky manes, and tails almost touching the ground. Their eyes are white, with pink centres, and their noses are pink, almost like human flesh. They are very tractable and sagacious, and I was told by Mr Norton that they have wonderful memories. Of course they are used only on great state occasions, and the effect of the eight horses, with their massive, handsome harness, attached to the gilded coach, is very fine. 'Oreo' is the handsomest of the 'creams,' and is a very intelligent animal.

STABLE OF THE STATE 'CREAM' HORSES.

Opposite the 'creams' are the eight 'blacks.' The wheelers are no less than seventeen and a-half hands in height. They also came from Hanover in the year 1820, and a special breed is maintained at Hampton Court.

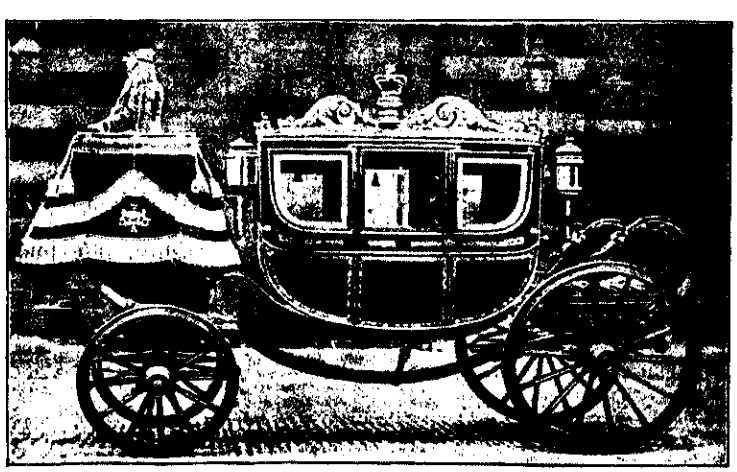
Their coats have a marvellous gloss, and their jet-black tails touch the ground. The effect would be a good deal heightened if the red harness was used with the black horses, and the black harness with the 'creams,' but the opposite is the rule.

The 'blacks' are used on minor state occasions, and by the Prince of Wales when he holds a *levee* or appears at any state affair for the Queen. 'Zulu,' the wheeler is one of handsomest of these, and is seventeen and a-half hands in height.

The archway between the 'thirty-two stalled' and 'creams'' stable leads to the loose boxes and the Master of the Horse's stable.

The whole of the side of the yard opposite the harness-room is occupied by the coach-houses, in which upwards of thirty state and semi-state carriages are kept. The centre of interest is, of course, the state coach built in 1761, and which is known as 'the glass coach.' It is the most superb carriage ever built, and was designed by Sir William Chambers. The paintings on the panels are by the celebrated artist Cypriani, and are so valuable that five thousand pounds were offered for the panel on the back by a *connoisseur*.

The front panel represents Britannia sitting on a throne, holding in her hand a staff of liberty, attended by Religion,



THE QUEEN'S COACH.

Justice, Wisdom, Valour, Fortitude, Commerce, Plenty, and Victory presenting her with a garland of laurel. In the background is a view of St. Paul's and the river Thames.

The back panel is Neptune and Amphitrite, issuing from their palace in a triumphal car drawn by sea horses, and attended by Winds, Rivers, Tritons, Naiads, and bringing the tribute of the world to the British shore.

The doors also have symbolic paintings, and the panels on either side represent the liberal arts and sciences. The panels over the paintings are of plate glass. The whole of the carriage and body is very richly ornamented with laurel and carved work, handsomely gilded. The length is twenty-four feet, the width eight feet three inches, the height twelve feet; height of hind wheel, six feet; length of pole, twelve feet four inches; and the weight is four tons.

The carriage and body of the coach are composed of four large tritons, who support the body by four braces covered with red morocco leather and ornamented with gilt buckles. The two figures placed in front of the carriage bear the driver, and are represented in the action of drawing by cables extending round their shoulders and the cranes, and sounding shells to announce the approach of the monarch of the ocean; and those at the back carry the imperial fasces topped with tridents. The driver's footboard is a large scollop shell, ornamented with bunches of reeds and other marine plants. The pole represents a bundle of lances; the splinter bar is composed of a rich moulding issuing from beneath a voluted shell, and each end terminating in the head of a dolphin; and the wheels are imitated from those of the ancient triumphal chariot. The body of the coach is composed of eight palm-trees, which, branching out at the top, sustain the roof; and four angular trees are loaded with trophies allusive to the victories obtained by Great Britain during the late glorious war, supported by four lions' heads. On the centre of the roof stand three boys, representing the genii of England, Scotland, and Ireland, supporting the Imperial crown of Great Britain, and holding in their hands the sceptre, sword of state, and ensigns of knighthood. Their bodies are adorned with festoons of laurel, which fall from thence toward the four corners.

The inside of the body is lined with rich scarlet embossed velvet, superbly laced and embroidered with gold, as follows: In the centre of the roof is the star, encircled by the collar, of the order of the Garter, and surmounted by the imperial crown of Great Britain, pendant the George and Dragon; in the corners the rose, shamrock, and thistle, entwined. The rear lounge is ornamented with the badge of the order of St. Michael and St. George; and on the front the badge of the order of the Guelph and Bath, ornamented with the rose, shamrock, and thistle. The rear seat fall has the badge of St. Andrew, and on the front the badge of St. Patrick, adorned with the rose, shamrock, thistle, and oak leaf.

This coach is hardly ever taken out of the house now, and, indeed, until it was brought out to be photographed for this article, it had not been out for over a decade. It sways a great deal when in motion, and its immense weight makes it cut very much into the ground, while the length makes it very hard work to turn it. As a work of art it has no equal. The whole effect is more beautiful than can be described. It cost nine thousand pounds. The last time the Queen used it was twenty years ago, when she opened Parliament in state.

The state coach used nowadays is not by any means so splendid an affair, but it is a very handsome carriage. The panels are dark blue, and have the royal coat of arms painted on them. The top is richly guilt, and the carving represents a crown. The hammercloth is crimson and gold. Four flunkies stand on the little platform at the back, and Mr Lane, the coachman, sits in state on the seat in front. This coach was used by Her Majesty two years ago, at the Jubilee, when the 'creams' made their latest appearance in public. The carriage cost two thousand pounds.

There are six other state coaches in scarlet and gilt, and the rest of the carriages are painted dark blue, and can be used open or shut, as the Queen prefers.

The whole collection of carriages and horses is a most interesting one, and it is surprising that it has so few visitors.

The Royal Mews can always be visited in the afternoon by an order from Sir George Maude, and many passes are issued to foreigners and country people; but Londoners very seldom take advantage of the opportunity to inspect this wonderful home of the Queen's horses. Perhaps they would go oftener if it were known that the admission card contains this sentence: 'It is particularly requested that visitors will not offer money to the servants.'

ODE TO TOBACCO.

Thou who when fears attack
Bidst them avaunt and black
Care, at the horseman's back
Perching, unseatest,
Sweet when the morn is grey
Sweet when they've cleared away
Lunch; and at close of day
Possibly sweetest.

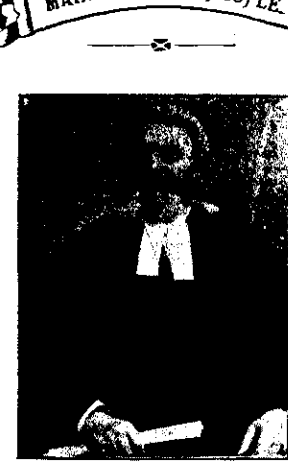
I have a liking old
For thee, though manifold
Stories, I know are told
None to thy credit;
How one (or two at most)
Drops make a cat a ghost
Useless except to roast,
Doctors have said it.

How they who use fusees
All grow by slow degrees
Brainless as chimpanzees,
Meagre as lizards,
Go mad and beat their wives,
Plunge (after shocking lives)
Razors and carving knives
Into their gizzards.

Confound such knavish tricks,
Yet know I five or six
Smokers who freely mix
Still with their neighbours.
Jones (whom I'm glad to say
Asked leave of Mrs J——)
Daily absorbs his clay
After his labours.

Cats may have had their goose
Cooked by tobacco juice,
Still who deny its use,
Thoughtfully taken?
We're not as tabbies are,
Smith takes a fresh cigar,
Jones the tobacco jar,
Here's to their bacon.

MAINLY ABOUT PEOPLE



Kinsey, late Price & Co., photo., Wellington.

SIR JAMES PRENDERGAST.

AMONG the men who have been of use to New Zealand as occasion served and opportunity offered, Sir James Prendergast may be reckoned as occupying a seat in the first row. Sir James is a son of a man well known in England, Sergeant Prendergast, who was Judge of the Small Debts Court for the City of London. Probably from his father the son inherited a taste for law. At all events, that was the profession he adopted. In April, 1856, Sir James was called to the Bar, and for some time he practised his profession in the Old Country. Afterwards he came out to this colony, and settled in Otago. He was subsequently offered the position of non-political Attorney-General. After this he attained his present elevation, being appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

HIS HONOR has been chosen Acting Governor for this colony on the following occasions with marked success:—Between the arrival of Sir Hercules Robinson, who succeeded the Marquis of Normanby as Governor of New Zealand, and the departure of the latter, His Honor, Chief Justice Prendergast acted as Administrator from February 21st to March 27th, 1879. Between the departure of Sir Hercules Robinson and arrival of Sir Arthur Gordon, September 9th to November 29th, 1879, Sir James Prendergast was Administrator. Also from June 24th, 1882, to January 20th, 1883, between the departure of Sir Arthur Gordon and the arrival of Sir William Jervois. Again Sir James acted as Administrator from March 19th to May 2nd, 1889, between the departure of Sir William Jervois and the arrival of the Earl of Onslow. And this last year from February 25th to June 7th, between the departure of Lord Onslow and the arrival of the Earl of Glasgow, Chief Justice Prendergast was Administrator of the affairs of this colony.

MR WHITE, of the Railway Department, Picton, has painted a picture of H.M.S. Goldfinch, in Picton harbour, which he is sending to Lieut. Commander Floyd, as a memento of the visit to Picton. Marine subjects are Mr White's strong points, and in this little picture, which is about 16 inches by 12, the shades and shadows of the Sound are beautifully delineated. The ship is anchored, as it were, in a pellucid lake, Wilkinson's Peninsula being the nearest point, whilst across the Sound 'The Rocks,' Captain Kenny's run is shewn, Mount Stokes in the far away distance, and the Penguin steaming up the harbour. The captain's gig is being pulled towards the ship, and two gulls are fluttering over the last meal of the day in shallow water.

AN excellent organ recital was given in St. John's Church, Waikouaiti, by Mr G. H. R. Fenton in connection with a special service in aid of the Maori Mission. The three voluntaries were particularly good.

A PARTY of gentlemen went down to Kawau on a yachting cruise for the Christmas holidays. Amongst them was Mr Hugh Harrop. On the return trip they called at Waiwera, running thence up to Auckland, where the party arrived thoroughly drenched with the rain.

MR SAMUEL VICKERS, of Albert Park, Auckland, has just celebrated his ninetieth birthday, and has gone off on a trip as hale and hearty as many a man thirty years younger.

MR AND MRS H. RAWSON, of Wellington, and Dr. and Mrs Ernest Rawson, with a large yachting party, are spending the holidays at Picton.

FATHER SAUZEAU, who was one of the early colonists' and was extremely respected and liked by others besides the Roman Catholics (to which denomination he belonged), died rather suddenly at Wellington on Christmas Eve. Father Sauzeau was a Frenchman, and only fifty-eight years of age, having come to New Zealand in 1862. He met with a severe buggy accident at Waipawa some time ago. This induced dropsy, from which complaint he died at the Presbytery. He was a most zealous pastor, and a true and earnest worker amongst the poor. The funeral was a very large one, most beautiful wreaths being placed on the coffin.

IN Christchurch, St. Michael's parish is about to suffer a great loss. The Rev. Walter Harper, after much pressure, has consented to resign the incumbency and take charge of and control the services at the Cathedral, subject to the Bishop, and become principal Upper Dean of Christ's College. It is said the change will not take place until after Bishop Julius returns from England.

OUR ONLY DAY.

WERE this our only day,
Did not our yesterdays and morrows give
To hope and memory their interplay,
How should we bear to live?

Not merely what we are,
But what we were and what we are to be,
Make up our life—the far days each a star,
The near days nebulæ.

At once would love forget
Its keen pursuits and coy delays of bliss,
And its delicious pangs of fond regret,
Were there no day but this.

And who, to win a friend,
Would to the secrets of his heart invite
A fellowship that should begin and end
Between a night and night?

Who, too, would pause to prate
Of insult, or remember slight or scorn,
Who would this night lie down to sleep with hate,
Were there to be no morn?

Who would take heed to wrong,
To misery's complaint or pity's call,
The long wail of the weak against the strong,
If this one day were all?

And what were wealth with shame,
The vanity of office, pride of caste,
The winey sparkle of the bubble fame,
If this day were the last?

Ay, what were all day worth
Were there no looking backward or before—
If every human life that drops to earth
Were lost for evermore?

But each day is a link
Of days that pass and never pass away;
For memory and hope—to live, to think—
Each is our only day.

JEROME K. JEROME ON CATS.

NOTE an old Tom, slinking home in the early morning, after a night spent on a roof of bad repute. Can you picture to yourself a living creature less eager to attract attention? 'Dear me,' you can all but hear it saying to itself, 'I'd no idea it was so late; how time goes when one is enjoying oneself? I do hope I shan't meet anyone I know—very awkward, it being so light.'

In the distance it sees a policeman, and steps suddenly within the shelter of a shadow. 'Now, what's he doing there,' it says, 'and close to our door, too. I can't go in while he's hanging about. He's sure to see and recognise me; and he's just the sort of man to talk to the servants.'

It hides itself behind a post and waits, peeping cautiously round the corner from time to time. The policeman, however, seems to have taken up his residence at that particular spot, and the cat becomes worried and excited.

'What's the matter with the fool?' it mutters, indignantly; 'is he dead? Why don't he move on? He's always telling other people to. Stupid ass!'

Just then a far-off cry of 'Milk' is heard, and the cat starts up in an agony of alarm. 'Great Scott, hark at that! Why, everybody will be down before I get in. Well, I can't help it. I must chance it.'

He glances round at himself, and hesitates. 'I wouldn't mind if I didn't look so dirty and untidy,' he muses; 'people are so prone to think evil in this world.'

'Ah, well,' he adds, giving himself a shake, 'there's nothing else for it; I must trust in Providence, it's pulled me through before; here goes.'

He assumes an aspect of chastened sorrow, and trots along with a demure and saddened step. It is evident he wishes to convey the idea that he has been out all night on work connected with the Vigilance Association and is now returning home sick at heart because of the sights he has seen.

He squirms in, unnoticed, through a window, and has just time to give himself a hurried lick down before he hears the cook's step on the stairs. When she enters the kitchen he is curled up on the hearthrug, fast asleep. The opening of the shutters awakes him. He rises and comes forward, yawning and stretching himself.

'Dear me, is it morning then?' he says drowsily. 'Heigh ho! I've had such a lovely sleep, cook; and such a beautiful dream about poor mother.'

Cats! do you call them? Why they are Christians in everything except the number of legs.

Tennysons' Last Poems.

IN the numerous appreciations of Tennyson that have appeared during the last month or so, nothing in the work of the late Laureate has been so much remarked as the variety of its contents—a variety specially notable in the case of so finished an artist. The small volume which has just been issued, seems to present in little a curiously faithful image of the whole work of which it is the epilogue as well as the epitome. 'The Death of Œnone' is one of those classic monologues (a form originally invented by Landor in the 'Hellenics') of which the exquisite 'Œnone' of 1832 is perhaps the most famous, as it is certainly one of the most beautiful. 'St. Telemachus' and 'Akbar's Dream' might be compared, after a fashion, with such pieces as 'St Simeon Stylites' and 'Lucretius,' in which the monologue and short narrative poem deal with graver themes of religion and philosophy. 'The Bandit's Death' and 'Charity,' in their different ways, belong to the series of little ballad tragedies of which 'Rizpah' is the supreme example. 'The Churchwarden and the Curate' is a dialect poem after the manner of 'The Northern Farmer.' 'The Dawn' and 'The Making of Man' have something in common with both the temper and the form of some of the fiercer parts of 'Maud' and the more prophetic parts of 'Locksley Hall.' A voice spake out of the skies' recalls the earlier lilt, 'Flower in the crannied wall;' there is a dedication to the Master of Balliol, which reminds one of the lines to the Rev. F. D. Maurice; there is, finally, one of the official pieces in a brief lament on the death of the Duke of Clarence. Such variety in the work of a poet past eighty is itself enough to give extraordinary interest to a volume holding such 'infinite riches in a little room.' That any of the work published now can seriously compete with the earlier verse which it recalls is not to be expected. Much of it gives the effect of a careful tracing rather than of an original design. But the pattern chosen is generally a beautiful one, and the tracing is done with admirable art.

The poem on Œnone is dedicated to the Master of Balliol in some graceful stanzas:

Dear Master in our classic town,
You, loved by all the younger gown
There at Balliol,
Lay your Plato for one minute down,

And read a Grecian tale re-told,
Which cast in later Grecian mould,
Quintus Calaber
Somewhat lazily handled of old;

And on this white midwinter day—
For have the far-off hymns of May,
All her melodies,
All her harmonies echo'd away?—

To-day, before you turn again
To thoughts that lift the soul of men,
Hear my cataract's
Downward thunder in hollow and glen,

Till, led by dream and vague desire,
The woman, gliding toward the pyre,
Find her warrior
Stark and dark in his funeral fire.

The story of Œnone's death follows, in the main, the version 'somewhat lazily handled' by Quintus Smyrnæus in the tenth book of his tiresome epic. To Œnone, dreaming of the Paris once 'beauteous as a god,' comes Paris, 'lame, crooked, reeling, livid,' and prays her to heal the poisoned wound of which he is dying. She bids him die; he goes from her, a shadow sinking into the mist; and out of the vague terror of a dream she wakens beneath the stars.

What star could burn so low? not Ilion yet.
What light was there? She rose and slowly down.
By the long torrent's ever-deepen'd roar,
Paced, following, as in trance, the silent cry.
She waked a bird of prey that scream'd and pass'd;
She roused a snake that hissing writhed away:
A panther sprang across her path, she heard
The shriek of some lost life among the pines.
But when she gain'd the border vale, and saw
The ring of faces reddened by the flames
Enfolding that dark body which had lain
Of old in her embrace, paused anu then ask'd
Falteringly, 'Who lies on yonder pyre?'
But every man was mute for reverence.
Then moving quickly forward till the heat
Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice
Of shrill command, 'Who burns upon the pyre?'
Whereon their oldest and their boldest said,
'He, whom thou wouldst not heal!' and all at once
The morning light of happy marriage broke
Thro' all the clouded years of widowhood,
And muffling up her comely head and crying
'Husband!' she leapt upon the funeral pile.
And mixed herself with him and past in fire.

In 'St. Telemachus' we have the story of the hermit through whose death—a voluntary martyrdom—the gladiatorial fights were put an end to at Rome. The story is told briefly, pointedly, with admirable art, yet, after all, coldly, without a thrill. It has beautiful passages—this, for instance, telling of the anchorite in his desert, and of the call to Rome:—

And once a flight of shadowy fighters crost
The disk, and once, he thought, a shape with wings
Came sweeping by him, and pointed to the West,
And at his ear he heard a whisper 'Rome'
And in his heart he cried, 'The call of God!'
And call'd arose, and slowly plunging down
Thro' that disastrous glory, set his face
By waste and field and town of alien tongue,
Following a hundred sunsets, and the sphere
Of westward-wheeling stars; and every dawn
Struck from him his own shadow on to Rome.

The decorative qualities of the poem have much of the old beauty: but it lacks humanity, the touch of nature. 'Akbar's Dream' is a monologue spoken by the great Mogul Emperor, 'whose tolerance of religion and abhorrence of religious persecution put our Tudors to shame'—to quote from the eight pages of notes which accompany the fourteen pages of verse. The poem is somewhat after the model of Browning; but it has not that mastery of material, that skill in grouping, which we find in all Browning's monologues. It is not really interesting, and it requires the eight pages of notes. Does any really successful poem require notes? The style, too, is somewhat rugged and uneven; as in this curious passage, for instance:—

If every single star
Should shriek its claim 'I only am in heaven,'
Why that were such sphere-music as the Greek
Had hardly dreamed of. There is light in all,
And light with more or less of shade, in all
Man-modes of worship; but our Ulama,
Who 'sitting on green sofas contemplate
The torment of the damn'd' already, these
Are like wild brutes new-caged - the narrower
The cage, the more their fury.

In 'The Bandit's Death' and 'Charity' we get some of the human feeling which we have noted as lacking in 'St. Telemachus.' Both are written in the metre of 'Rizpah,' that fine flexible long line which Tennyson has fashioned to such wonderfully expressive uses. 'The Bandit's Wife' is a version of a story told by Scott in his last journal, and it is dedicated to Scott in four rather bad lines, historically interesting, no doubt, as a record of literary sympathy. 'Charity' is a striking episode of modern life. A woman tells to a man, who is offering her 'dresses and laces and jewels, and never a ring for the bride,' the story of her love for another, how he deceived her, how he married an heiress, and how after his death in a railway collision the widow came to her:—

She watch'd me, she nursed me, she fed me, she sat day and night by my bed,
Till the joyless birthday came of a boy born happily dead.

And her name? what was it? I ask'd her. She said with a sudden glow
On her patient face 'My dear, I will tell you before I go.'

And I, when I learnt it at last, I shriek'd. I sprang from my seat,
I wept, and I kiss'd her hands, I flung myself down at her feet.

And we pray'd together for *him*, for *him* who had given her the name,
She has left me enough to live on. I need no wages of shame.

She died of a fever caught when a nurse in a hospital ward.
She is high in the Heaven of Heavens, she is face to face with her Lord.

And he sees not her like anywhere in this pitiless world of ours!
I have told you my tale. Get you gone. I am dressing her grave with flowers.

In 'Kapiolani,' and the pieces which immediately follow it, we find ourselves in quite another atmosphere. 'Kapiolani' (the name of a chieftainess who won the cause of Christianity in the Sandwich Islands 'by openly defying the priests of the terrible goddess Peelè') is a curious metrical study—extremely long and extremely short dactylic lines, rhymeless except for the somewhat hazardous rhyme of 'Hawa-i-ee.' Hazardous also is the third line in the opening stanza of a very fervent piece called 'The Dawn':—

Red of the Dawn!
Screams of a babe in the red-hot palms of a Moloch of Tyre,
Man with his brotherless dinner on man in the tropical wood,
Priests in the name of the Lord passing souls thro' fire to the fire,
Head-hunters and boats of Dahomey that float upon human blood!

These experiments on rhyme, or rhythm, and on the discretions of poetical style are somewhat frequent in Lord Tennyson's new volume. They do not seem to us to be uniformly successful, and there are, occasionally, lines which are very hard to scan. No fewer than three poems, it is curious to note, are written in the form of Omar Khayyam's quatrain, but in long lines. It is only occasionally that we get a really simple metre; but, as it happens, one of the most charming and original poems in the volume, the haunting little lyric 'The Wanderer,' is written in the simplest of all measures:—

The gleam of household sunshine ends,
And here no longer can I rest;
Farewell!—You will not speak, my friends,
Unfriendly of your parted guest.

O well for him that finds a friend,
Or makes a friend where'er he come,
And loves the world from end to end,
And wanders on from home to home!

O happy he, and fit to live,
On whom a happy home has power
To make him trust his life, and give,
His fealty to the halcyon hour!

I count you kind. I hold you true;
But what may follow, who can tell?
Give me a hand and you—and you—
And deem me grateful, and farewell!

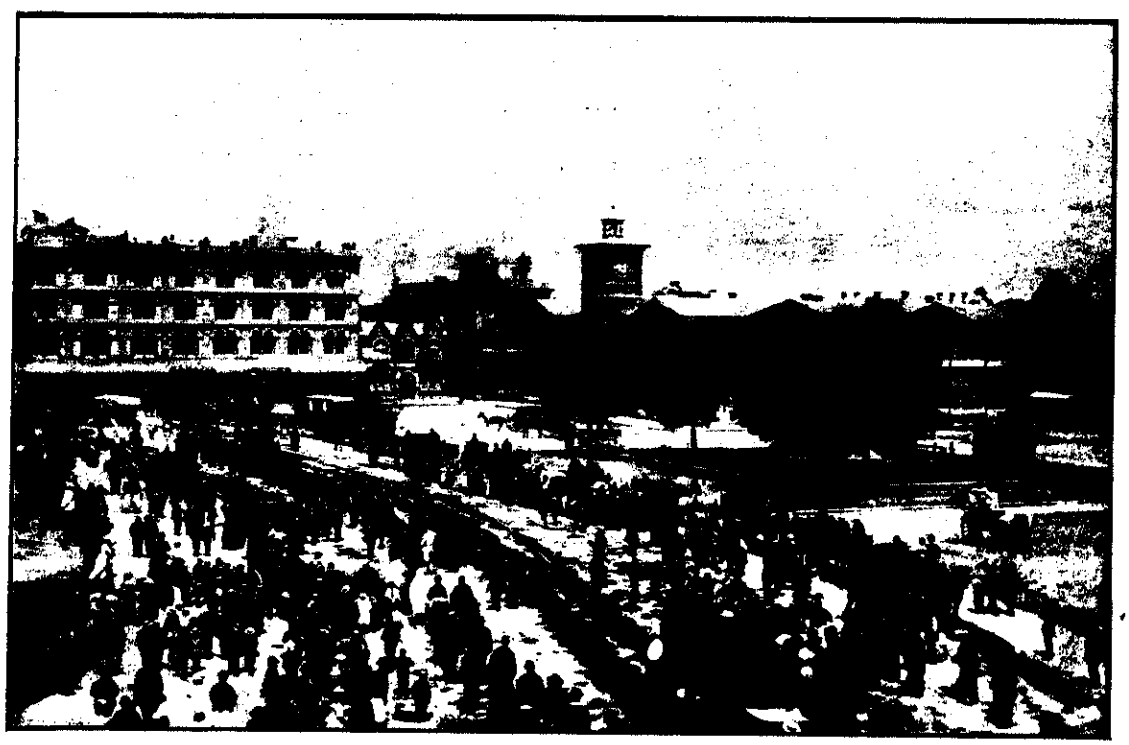
So confidently, with such happy assurance, could Tennyson speak of life. How confidently he looked forward to death, let this poem—which might well be the epilogue of a life—assure us:—

Will my tiny spark of being wholly
vanish in your deeps and heights?
Must my day be dark by reason, O ye
Heavens, of your boundless nights,
Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and
your fiery clash of meteorites?

'Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the
limit of thy human state,
Fear not thou the hidden purpose of
that power which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor
the silent opener of the Gate.'

The volume contains nothing in this kind quite so striking as the 'Crossing the Bar' requiem; but it includes the beautiful 'Silent Voices,' which is likely to be almost as popular.

'The Death of Œnone, Akbar's Dream, and Other Poems. By Alfred Lord Tennyson. (London Macmillan and Co. 1892.)



Standish and Preece. CHRISTCHURCH EN FETE. *photo., Christchurch.*

(Cathedral Square on a holiday.)

CARRYING OUT THE WILL.

'I HEAR that rich uncle of yours is dead and buried, Terence?'

'He is, Miles.'

'And what sort of a will was that he made? The idea of leaving instructions to have £7,000 buried with him! And you were the executor?'

'Faith, that I was.'

'And did you follow out the provisions of the will?'

'I did that.'

'And was it gold you put in the coffin?'

'It was not.'

'Silver?'

'Devil a haporth.'

'Paper money?'

'Not a whit.'

'And what then?'

Sure I signed a cheque payable for the amount, and stuck it in his fist when they closed the lid.'

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

WISDOM, says Juvenal, frequently conquers fortune.

Silence is a virtue in those who are deficient in understanding.

Obedience to duty, at all costs and risks, is the very essence of the highest civilised life.

We have all of us, sneered Rochefoucauld, sufficient strength to bear the misfortunes of others.

Fame is like a river that braveth up light things and drowns those that are weighty and solid.—BACON.

As we pity the blind and lame, so those who are blinded and maimed in the faculties which are supreme should be pitied.

'The holiday spirit is an all-pervading one,' remarked a father, as he bought his little boy a sixpenny toy; 'but it costs money.'

We suppose that the only real pleasure that can be felt by the collector of antique furniture is to realize how uncomfortably somebody else used to live.

There are three classes into which all the women past seventy that ever I knew were to be divided:—1. That dear old soul; 2 That old woman; 3. That old witch.—COLERIDGE.

The truly great man is he who does not lose his child-heart. He does not think beforehand that his words shall be sincere, or that his actions shall be resolute; he simply always abides in the right.

ABOUT SNAPPISHNESS.—Married couples that coo as harmoniously as ringdoves in public are sometimes mere snapping-turtles behind the scenes. Mrs Candle, according to her own account, was as mild as a zephyr in society, but she was a white squall in a nightgown when she 'turned in.' Her lectures were all 'snap,' and it is surmised that the whole celebrity they acquired when printed was mainly attributable to the force and accuracy with which they illustrated the experience of thousands of married men. Unfortunately for the peace of families, all husbands are not Candles. Some of the persecuted—perhaps the majority of them—instead of taking refuge in assumed deafness, retort violently, and hence domestic tempests fierce and frequent. This is bad. A mild answer turneth away wrath, and absolute silence generally cools if it does not extinguish it. We suggest the former as the best remedy. Husbands should be considerate. Their helpmeets have much to try their tempers. The home department is not an Elysium, as the 'man of the house' would find to his sorrow if he were to try it for a single day.

ABOUT ALPHABETS.—It isn't always a hard thing to learn the alphabet, nor on the other hand, is it always easy. It all depends upon the country you were born in and the size of the alphabet used there whether it comes hard or easy. To those of you who know only one alphabet—the one that contains 26 letters from A to Z—this sounds like an absurd sort of thing to say; but in reality it is not. The Sandwich Island boy, who has only his own alphabet to learn, has a much easier time getting his lessons than most of us have, for his alphabet contains but 12 letters, while the Ethiopic and Tartarian boy—poor fellows!—have to learn 202 letters before they can truthfully say that they know their alphabet. Other alphabets have letters as follow: The Burmese, 19; the Italian, 20; the Bengalese, 21; the Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldee, Samaritan, and Latin, 22 each; the French, 23; the Greek, 24; the German and Dutch, like our own, 26; the Spanish and Sclavonic, 27 each; the Arabic 28; the Persian and Coptic, 32; the Georgian, 35; the Armenian, 38; the Russian, 41; the Muscovite, 43; the Sanscrit and Japanese, 50; and, finally, the Ethiopic and Tartarian, as we have already seen, 202.

A DANGEROUS CONSPIRATOR.—Probably no well-meaning poet was ever more taken by surprise than was M. Péchantré, a gentle and mild mannered French dramatist of the 17th century, who was one day arrested for high treason as he was peacefully eating his dinner at a village inn. The landlord of the inn where he was in the habit of dining discovered on a table a piece of paper on which were written some unintelligible phrases, and below, in a plain, bold hand, 'Here I will kill the king.' The landlord consulted with the chief of police. Clearly this clue to a conspiracy ought to be followed up. The person who had left the paper had already been remarked for his absent air and gleaming eye. That man was Péchantré. The chief of police instructed the landlord to send for him the next time the conspirator came to dinner. When Péchantré was shown the evidence of his guilt he forgot the awful charge against him, and exclaimed, 'Well, I am glad to see that paper. I have looked everywhere for it. It is part of a tragedy I am writing; it is the climax of my best scene, where Nero is to be killed. It comes in here; let me read to you,' and he took a thick manuscript from his pocket. 'Monsieur, you may finish your dinner and your tragedy in peace,' said the chief of police, and he beat a hasty retreat.

CONCERT EXPERIENCES.—A prominent singer, who began his career in giving concerts about the country, has some extraordinary experiences in towns where such entertainments were of rare occurrence. One night, when he was persistently applauded, he returned to sing a second song, but was surprised by a stentorian voice from the audience: 'Oh, we don't want nothin' new! Sing the fust piece over again!' At another time the audience was so wildly appreciative that it refused to consider the concert at an end, and clamoured loudly for 'just one more.' It was given, and then another demanded. Patience failed the singer at this point, and he begged his manager to go before the curtains and state that he really was unable to sing any more. And thus was the statement worded: 'Ladies and gentlemen, Mr Martin can't sing no more to-night. He can't, honest. His wind's give out!' A similar story comes from another singer, who could not refrain from telling it, although her 7 year old niece, a fastidious little lady, pronounced it 'not a very pretty story, auntie!' The lady had been taken ill after eating some decoction of ancient lobster at the hotel, and sent her manager word that she really could not sing. He accordingly appeared before the disappointed audience, and announced: 'Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Merriam ain't here to-night. She couldn't come. She ain't in fit circumstances to sing. She's eat some bad lobster, and it's troubling her!'

BOOKS AND BOOK-MEN.

MR DU MAURIER.

WE colonials chiefly know Mr George Du Maurier through the pages of *Punch*, in which he weekly satirizes the manners and customs of London society. It may be thought, therefore, that he is misplaced under the heading of this column. But all who have read 'Peter Ibbetson,' a very quaint and decidedly clever novel, will admit that the well-known artist has a right to be dubbed a bookman. He is, moreover, at present engaged on another novel, which will, his friends hope, make his name as famous in connection with the pen as it has been with the pencil. Mr Du Maurier has a great advantage in being able to illustrate his own books. The illustrator is too often at utter variance with the writer, and most readers of fiction must have time and again marvelled at the apparent utter inability of the artist to grasp what picture the author meant to call up. So much is this the case that illustrated books are generally detested by imaginative people, who suffer acutely when their ideal of the hero is ruthlessly slaughtered by some villainous picture.

LOVERS of Dickens whose appetite for reminiscences is unsatiable, will read with delight the new memoirs of the great master by Miss Maimie Dickens, his daughter.

DICKENS was the man who was always in time. Unpunctuality, indeed, was *the* sin against Dickens:—'There never existed, I think, in all the world, a more thoroughly tidy or methodical creature than was my father. He was tidy in every way—in his great, generous, and noble mind, in his handsome and graceful person, in his work, in keeping his writing-table drawers, in his large correspondence—in fact, in his whole life. I remember that my sister and I occupied a little garret room in Devonshire Terrace, at the very top of the house. He had taken the greatest pains and care to make the room as pretty and comfortable for his two little daughters as it could be made.

'EVEN in those early days he made a point of visiting every room in the house once each morning, and if a chair were out of its place, or a blind not quite straight, or a crumb left on the floor, woe betide the offender. And then his punctuality! It was almost frightful to an unpunctual mind! This again was another phase of his extreme tidiness; it was also the outcome of his excessive thoughtfulness and consideration for others. His sympathy, also, with all pain and suffering made him quite invaluable in a sick-room. Quick, active, sensible, bright and cheery, and sympathetic to a degree, he would seize the "case" at once, knowing exactly what to do, and do it.'

MISS DICKENS corrects the impression that her father was a *gourmet* who constantly revelled in dainty dishes:—'In very many of my father's books there are frequent references to delicious meals, wonderful dinners and more marvellous dishes, steaming bowls of punch, etc., which have led many to believe that he was a man very fond of the table. And yet I think no more abstemious man ever lived. In the "Gad's Hill" days, when the house was full of visitors, he had a peculiar notion of always having the menu for the day's dinner placed on the sideboard at luncheon time. And then he would discuss every item in his fanciful humorous way with his guests, much to this effect: "Cock-a-leekie? Good, decidedly good. Fried soles with shrimp sauce? Good again. Croquettes of chicken? Weak, very weak; decided want of imagination here," and so on; and he would apparently be so taken up with the merits or demerits of a menu that one might imagine he lived for nothing but the coming dinner. He had a small but healthy appetite, but was remarkably abstemious both in eating and drinking. He was delightful as a host, caring individually for each guest, and bringing the special qualities of each into full notice and prominence, putting the very shyest at his or her ease, making the best o' the most humdrum, and never thrusting himself forward.'

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

HERCULITE, a new French explosive, is a yellowish grey powder, composed of sawdust, camphor, nitrate of potash, and several substances that are kept secret. It cannot be fired by sparks, flame, or detonation. At a trial, a half-pound charge of the compound was inserted in a blast hole about four feet in depth, tamped with sand and earth, and fired by a special igniter. A block of stone about 30 tons was displaced.

DIETETIC VALUE OF CHERRIES.

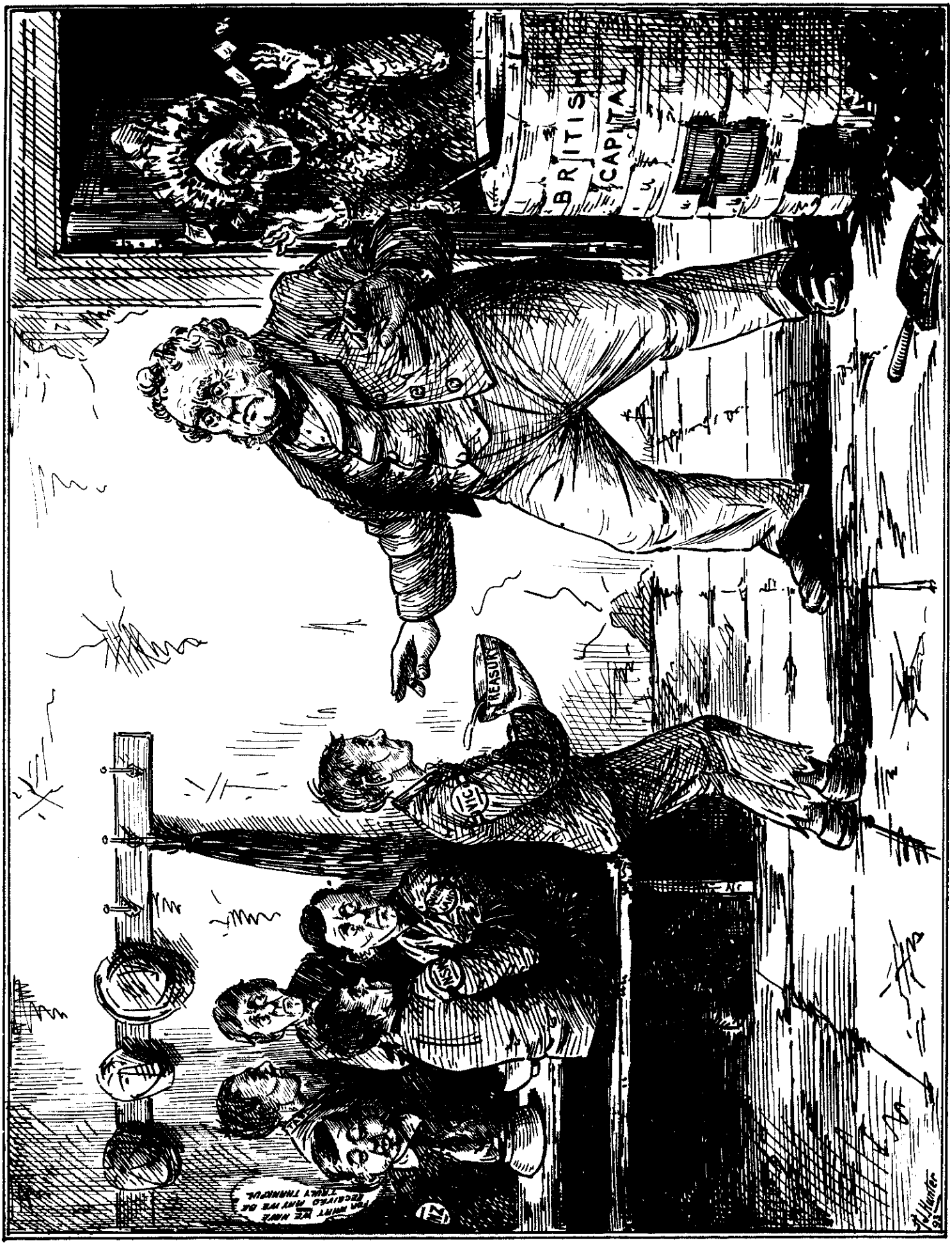
The fruit of the ripe cherry is rich in juice. Of 100 parts between 70 and 80 consists of pure distilled water of nature, with over 18 parts of sugar, and 2 of malic acid. The effect of its juice is invaluable either in health or disease, and when partaken of freely through the season, cannot fail to purify the blood in a very marked manner indeed. Dry wholemeal bread and cherries during the summer heats especially, will keep the blood cool, and tone up the system more effectually and naturally than can be done by other means. A complete change to a natural diet says one writer, can only be made in the warm season. Perhaps, when cherries ripen is a more suitable season than any other. No repast can be more simple, natural, and agreeable. A few cherries and a little bread suffice to replace the used-up tissue. How pure and artistic, how in the highest degree humanising, is such a meal. Such diet as this is an effectual remedy for obesity, besides being productive of health and strength. For the sedentary man the use of fresh fruits becomes a necessity. Their acids are foes to liver and kindred complaints, they dissolve the obstructions which induce disease, and, in one word, tend to prolong life. The cherry is remarkable for the fact that it generally contains more sugar than most other English fruits, some authorities stating the sugar to be equal to 10 per cent. in fully-matured dessert cherries. In Germany the children of the fruitgrowers and peasants absolutely live on bread and cherries in the season, and it is a fact that at this time they are said to enjoy better health and spirits than at any time of the year.

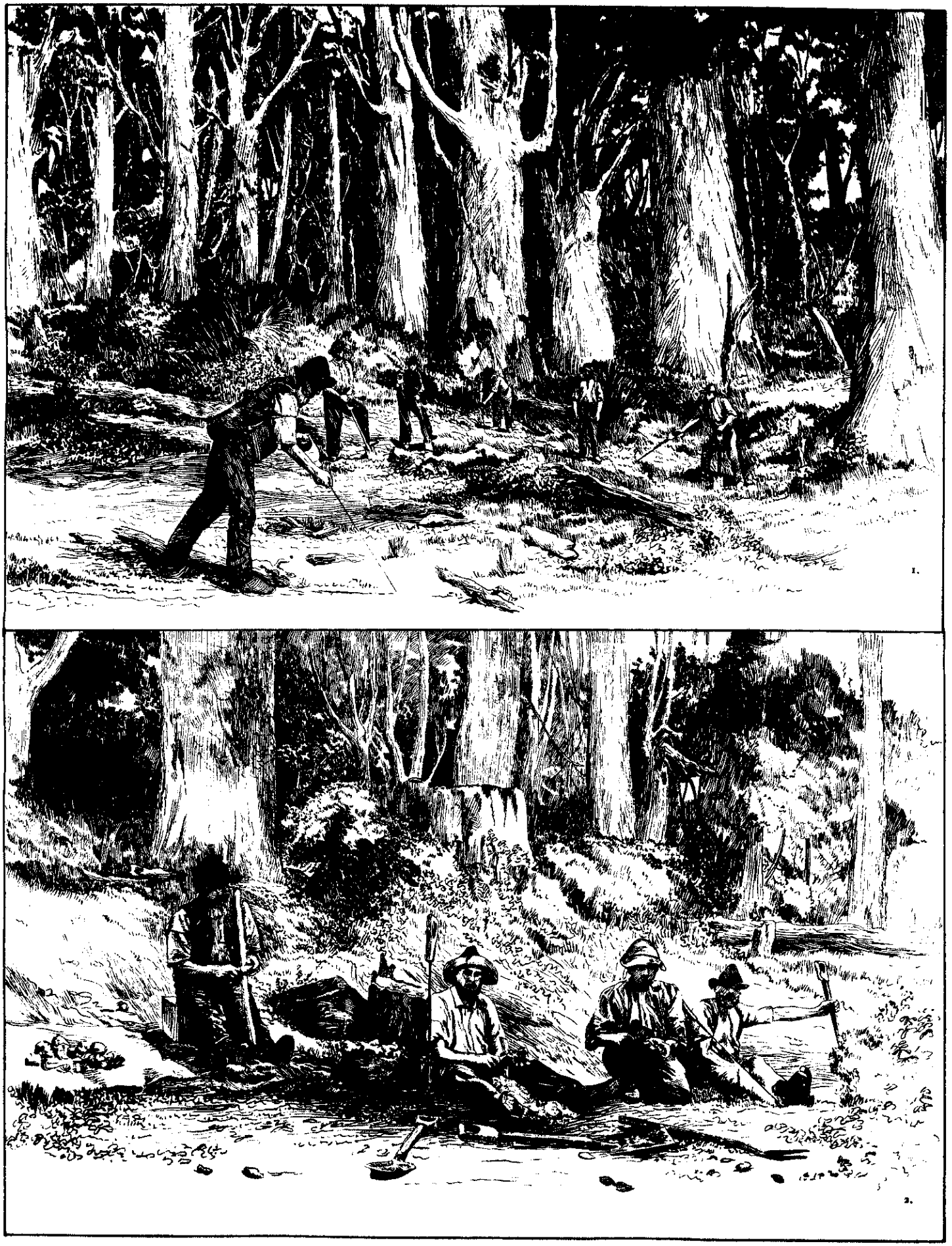
SOMNAMBULISM.

Memory is responsible for many of the phenomena of somnambulism. A distinguished physician once dreamed that he was listening to a remarkable piece of music performed by some singers. He remembered the melody on awakening, and was so delighted with it that he wrote it down. Several years afterward, as he was turning over some old sheets of music that he had never seen before—as he thought—he came upon the very melody he had dreamed. He could not remember that he had ever seen or heard this melody except in his dream, and yet it is beyond doubt that he had heard it, that he had forgotten it, and that it had been reproduced in his dream in the manner recorded. A servant girl, while in a somnambulistic state, wrote down the pages of an astronomical treatise with calculations and delineations. It was found that this was taken from the Encyclopædia Britannica which she said she had read in the library. But when awake she could not recall a word of it. De Boismont mentions the case of a widow who was sued for a debt of her deceased husband, which she knew was paid. But she could not find the receipt. Greatly disturbed, she went to bed and dreamed that her husband came to her and said that the receipt was in a velvet bag in a hidden drawer in his desk. This was found on waking to be the case. Of course, she had known of the hiding, but had forgotten. The physiologist Burdach was told one morning that his wife had been seen the night before walking on the roof of the church. He took the opportunity at her next sleep to question her, when she gave a full account of her proceedings, and mentioned having hurt her left foot by a nail on the roof. When awake she was asked about the wound in her foot, but could give no explanation. Instances of this sort seem to show that we possess a latent memory, the contents of which partially return in dreams, sometimes with and often without recollection.

WHAT ALL SHOULD KNOW.

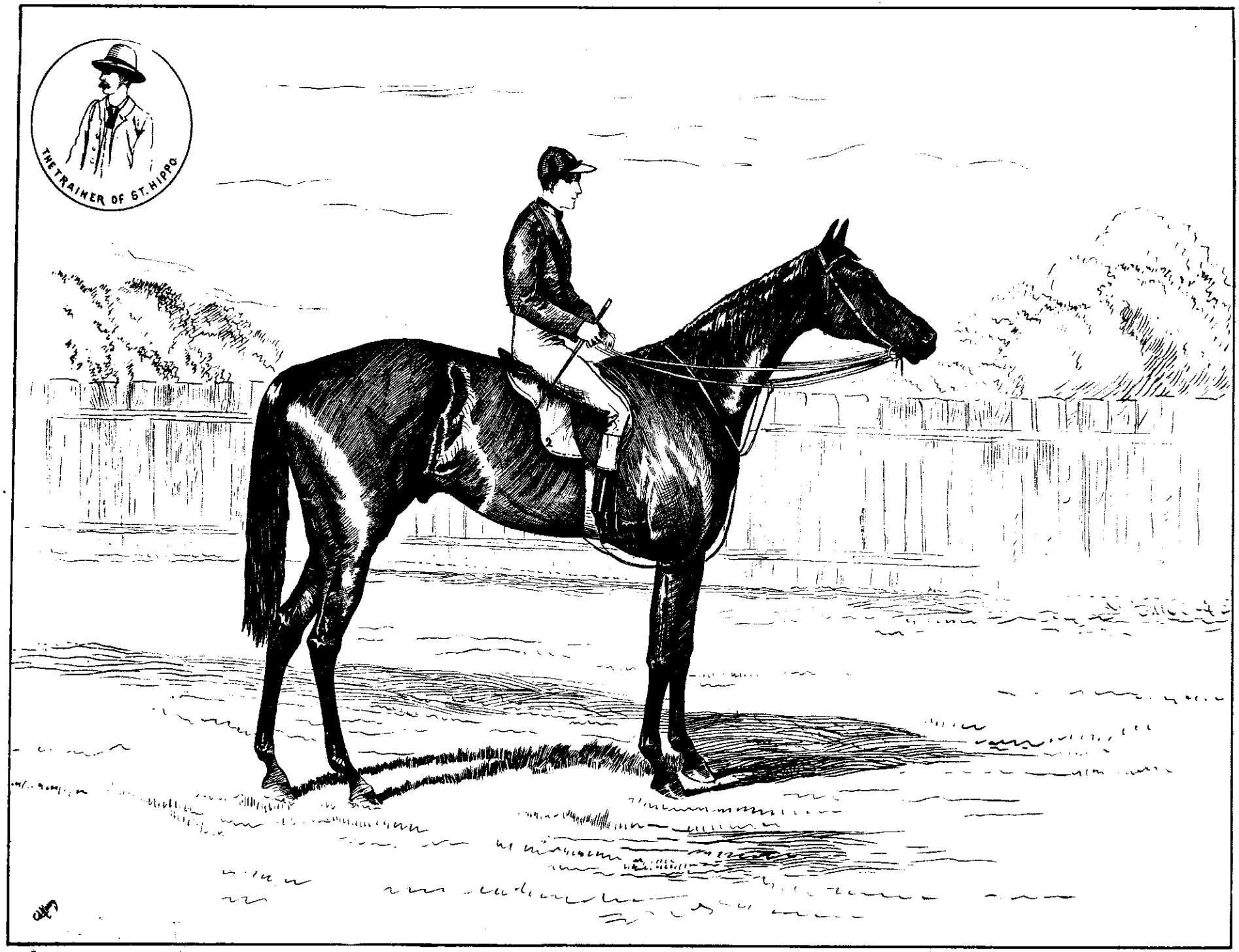
When the brilliancy of your diamonds is dimmed or your gold ornaments become tarnished it is not necessary to hurry off to the jeweller. With a little care and attention you may restore their beauty and save delay and annoyance. With a good nail brush and a box of bran you may do wonders. Carefully brush the diamonds with soapsuds and rinse in cologne water. Then place them in the box of bran and shake them thoroughly. You will be surprised at the brilliancy they will acquire. By drawing a slip of tissue paper through the interstices of rings or brooches, you can remove any particles of bran which may adhere to the ornaments. Cut stones should never be wiped after being washed. Rinse and place in sawdust until they are quite dry. If your opals have been scratched, you can renew their polish by rubbing with oxide of tin or putty spread on a chamois skin and moistened. Afterwards polish with powdered chalk and then wash the opal with a soft brush. Amber, when tarnished, should be rubbed with pulverised chalk and water; then with olive oil and dried with a woollen cloth. Pearls may be kept from tarnishing by shutting them up in a box of ashwood. Gold ornaments should be washed in soapsuds and rinsed in pure water. Cover with sawdust and leave until quite dry, then rub them with a chamois-skin. Silver filigree ornaments when tarnished should be washed in a weak solution of potash, then rinsed in a water composed of one part salt, one of alum, two of saltpetre four of water. Rinse again in cold water and dry with a chamois skin. Oxidised silver should be cleaned with a solution of sulphuric acid, one part to forty parts of water. Nickel and silver may be kept bright by being rubbed with a woollen cloth saturated in ammonia water. Ivory may be cleaned by rubbing with a brush dipped in hot water and then sprinkled and rubbed with bi-carbonate of soda.


BRITISH CAPITAL
TREASURY
I'M WHAT WE HAVE RECEIVED ANY PE OF THEY THANKFUL



GUM DIGGING IN NEW ZEALAND.

1. At work on a Kauri Forest Clearing. 2. Scraping the Gum.



MR. L. D. NATHAN'S BAY COLT, ST. HIPPO, 3 yrs.,

THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

1. Some people went touring in the Southern Alps. 2. While others preferred the pleasures (or otherwise) of camping on the coast. 3. Our Artist's little holiday.

COOKING—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

COOKING means, in every grade of its application, from the poorest to the richest, that the best natural use shall be made of the materials employed; that the peculiarities of each one of them shall be developed, not distorted; that whether they be cheap or dear, coarse or delicate, whether the result be a peasant's broth of potatoes and leeks or a sauce for Lucullus, the dish prepared shall be itself and nothing else, with all the special characters that its elements can be made to evolve by treatment intelligently devised and carefully applied. The true national uses of

THE ART OF COOKERY

do not lie in its scientific and expensive applications (if they did, cookery would be closed to all but the rich), but in the preparation, in a cottage or a palace, of every article of food, whether alone or in combination with others, in such a fashion that it shall retain the individuality that nature gave it, the full essence that belongs thereto, the properties, the aroma, the action on the palate that are specific to itself, and which ought to distinguish each dish from every other. Bad cooks are unable to bestow this character on their work; each of their productions resembles every other more or less, in utter contradiction to the fundamental law that every dish shall be itself alone, with no echo from elsewhere. When that result is obtained, no matter where or in what, in the simplest as in the most complicated work, true cookery has been applied. In England, however, the distressing error prevails generally that cookery implies the

FABRICATION OF SWAGGERING DISHES,

and that no one can be a good cook who does not possess acquaintance with such concrete. The Belgians and the Germans (especially the South Germans), are probably at this moment the most improving cooks in Europe, precisely because they perceive and apply the law of individuality, which alone can give true variety in cookery. It is because it is not, and cannot be, applied when many contradictory dishes are being prepared in the same kitchen—each one infecting the air with its own smell, combining that smell with the others, and forming in each dish a mixture of them all—that hotel and restaurant-cooking is generally so detestable. The cabbage soup of a cottage (you may see it simmering all day in almost every hut in France and Germany) stews in pure air; it remains itself, untouched by, unpolluted by, the hundred damaging contacts of the atmosphere of a great kitchen, and, for that reason, all

TRUE CRITICS OF COOKERY

will declare it to be a far more thorough representative of the first principle of the art than any of the hundred *plats* sent up from a reeking basement in Paris. It is on the golden rule of simplicity and unity that every national system of cookery should rest. Each system may differ as much as it pleases in its details from the others, provided it agrees with them on that one point. It is by adhering to that rule that many Continental women, despite the comparatively limited materials at their disposal, obtain the truest and the most numerous forms of variety of food; while we, now that we are beginning in our turn to want variety, are content to obtain it, not from cookery, but from mere abundance of supply.

A FADED ROSE.

I TOOK up a book in a twilight room,
And from the leaves fell out a red rose,
Scentless and wither'd in the dim grey gloom,
Wrapp'd with its tales of long vanish'd woes.
Glowing with beauty it once bloom'd fair,
Stately and proud, on a bending bough.
Queen of the flowers in the summer air,
Ah, what a wraith is left of it now!

The room fades into an old garden fair,
With winding alleys and leafy trees;
Perfum'd breezes laden the slumbrous air,
And the soft crooning of humming bees.
'Be true, my sweetheart,' a lover once said,
'For true am I as the sky above!'
But oh, he is gone, and the days are dead;
There is naught left in the world to love!

The roses bloom fair on the red rose tree,
In scented wreaths hang the twining vine,
And the ghost of a day has come back to me,
In the faint pale sheen of white moonshine.
But ah! What is this? 'Tis a voice, a call!
And love has come back from days of yore—
Love, with his beauty, with his tales, with all,
But the rose said, 'He is here no more!'

I awake from my dream in the dusk of day,
With the faded rose in the twilight room,
Dead as the past as the swallows own lay,
And dark as my heart in its shrouded gloom.
Never for me will the red roses twine
Around the tree in the sweet old way,
Never the same droop the clusters of vine,
For dead as this rose is my heart to-day.

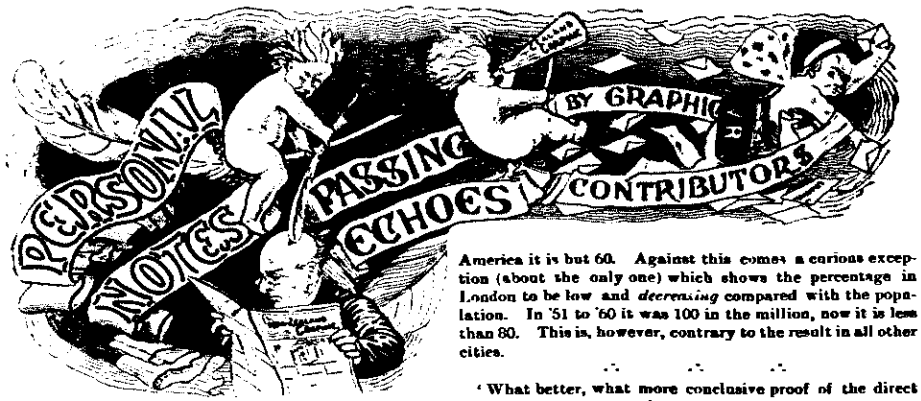
MAGNIFICENT JEWELS.

THE finest pearl in existence is one which the French traveller Tavernier sold in the seventeenth century to the Shah for £108,000, and which is still the property of the Persian Crown. The Imaum of Muscat possesses a pearl of 12½ carats, perfectly transparent, which is estimated at £32,000; while the Princess Youssoupoff has one still more valuable, which formerly belonged to Philip IV. of Spain, who bought it in 1620 for 80,000 ducats. Leo XIII. has a pearl which has for over a century been in the Vatican, and which is valued at £16,000.

With regard to pearl necklaces, that of the Empress Frederick, composed of thirty-two pearls, is valued at £30,000, which is about £3,000 more than the appraised value of the Queen's necklace of pink pearls, at one time exhibited among the Crown jewels at the Tower. Baroness Gustave de Rothschild has a necklace with five rows of pearls, which is worth £40,000, and her cousin, Baroness Adolphe, has one still more valuable, both ladies adding to them when a really fine pearl comes into the market. The Empress of Russia has a necklace of pearls with seven rows, but the stones are considered not to be quite so fine, while the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia has a necklace with six rows worth £30,000.

With regard to the most celebrated diamonds, such as the Regent, the Nancy, the Kohinoor, etc., the first named has for the last five years been on view at the Louvre, and is estimated at £125,000; while the Sancy, after having belonged to the Princess Paul Demidoff, passed into the hands of Sir Jamsetjee Jejheeboy, of Bombay, who gave £20,000 for it. The Orloff, originally bought for £90,000 by the Prince of that name as a present for the Empress Catherine II., is now among the Russian Crown jewels; while among the Austrian Crown jewels is the Florentin, valued at £104,000; while the Rajah of Golconda (from whence originally came the French Regent) has the Nizam, valued at £220,000, another Indian Rajah owning the Star of the South, for which he paid £160,000.

The Great Mogul, which the Shah of Persia named Deriai, or 'Ocean of Light,' has never been valued, but the largest diamond of all belongs to the Rajah of Matam, in the island of Borneo, who declined an offer from the Dutch Government of two warships and £32,000 in specie. King Charles of Portugal has a very fine diamond, weighing 205 carats; and the Empress Eugenie, who has sold so many of her jewels, still has a comb in diamonds said to be unrivalled for lustre, and a great length of vine and fruit designs done in diamonds, which are of dazzling beauty when worn at night.



The New Zealand Graphic

AND LADIES' JOURNAL.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 1893.

SUICIDE, horrors, sudden deaths, and calamities, are, according to rule, the gruesome and unsavoury story of the holiday weeks and what is known as the 'festive season.' Christmas after Christmas, New Year after New Year, the columns of the daily papers, after suspending operations for a few brief hours, reappear replete with tales of human vice and misery, glutted with horrors, and plethoric with stories of suffering from all parts of the globe, so that the legend 'Peace upon earth, goodwill to men,' appears neither more nor less than a convenient butt for the sneering witticism of the cynical unbeliever and dart of the agnostic. Death, hand in hand with Santa Claus, would form a fitting cartoon for the week, and the breath of the 'valley of the shadow' is on our faces at the threshold of the new year. The boating calamities are large after any public holiday, but it is during the Christmas vacation that fatalities of other descriptions seem so specially prevalent.

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The suicide of Mr Stubbing, a music master and well-known society man in Auckland, on Christmas morning, has caused almost greater surprise than sensation, for there seems at first sight to have been but the most flimsy and unsubstantial motive for an act which religion and law have designated as a crime. After such an event people invariably remember numbers of small circumstances and characteristics which seem to have pointed clearly and inexorably to the accomplished result. These reminiscences must not be too seriously regarded, since it is only human nature to unconsciously exaggerate and embroider such things, and in such connection to merge fancy into fact. So far as the facts brought out at the inquest are concerned, the unfortunate man sought voluntary death for the simple reason he himself has given—that he was tired of life. There is no reason to suppose that he was gravely embarrassed financially, or that he was suffering from fear of detection and exposure—the most frequent causes of suicide. He suffered, so 'tis said, from fits of depression, but this may be said of an enormous percentage of the human race who never dream of suicide. There is no solid ground for supposing for one instant that this life was taken for any other reason than that its owner was weary of it, and saw no reason why he should longer endure what had become distasteful to him.

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This case is not moreover a singular one. On the contrary it is a type of suicide becoming year by year more common, advancing, as suicide as a whole advances, in direct ratio with the progress of civilization and the spread of education. The statement is sufficiently startling, but most thinking men have long since recognised it as a truism. Statistics prove beyond the possibility of question that the frequency of suicide in civilised communities shows a growing and uniform increase, so that generally voluntary death since the beginning of the century has increased, and goes on increasing more rapidly than the geometrical augmentation of the population and of the general mortality. From 1851 to 1860 the yearly suicides in England were 65 per million of the population; from 1871 to 1877, 67 per million; and in the two years from 1885 to 1887, 80 in the million. In Austria for the same periods, the rising scale is still more terribly rapid, the jump being from 45 to 122, and then to 159.

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Morselli, in his standard work on suicide in the International Science Series, says: 'It is those countries which possess a higher standard of general culture which furnish the largest contingent of voluntary deaths. Although sometimes great differences may be observed in degree of instruction, but equal intensity in the suicides, yet the geographical distribution of these violent deaths goes, in a general way, *pari passu* with instruction. The Germanic people are the most cultivated of all European nations, and the rate in Frankfort is 344 in the million; in Rio Janeiro in South America it is but 60. Against this comes a curious exception (about the only one) which shows the percentage in London to be low and *decreasing* compared with the population. In '51 to '60 it was 100 in the million, now it is less than 80. This is, however, contrary to the result in all other cities.

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'What better, what more conclusive proof of the direct relation between suicide and general culture can we have than that drawn from the contemporary increase of the former in civilized countries step by step with the latter? The increase of madness advances,' Morselli relentlessly goes on, 'with that of education, and it is not surprising that the same occurs with regard to suicide. Broad asserted many years ago that it was possible to deduce the average of self-sought deaths in a given country from the number of pupils in the public schools. He was confirmed in this opinion by Balbi, who published lengthy statistics, of which we quote two instances. In 1863 64 the scholars being per hundred 5 44, the suicides per million were 29 2; in 1877 the scholars had increased to 7·45, and the suicides to 40·6. Nor is this all; the periodical press is, so it is claimed, the surest expression of general culture and education, and it can be clearly proved that here, too, the tendency to suicide increases in direct ratio with the number of periodicals published in a country.'

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The explanation of this is, of course, that the cause of suicide in civilized communities is invariably mental strain, and that mental strain will naturally increase with education, which breeds new desires, new ambitions and consequently new worries and anxieties. Those who care to go further into the question to verify our figures and study this particular branch of the question cannot do better than consult Morselli's work.

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The whole statistics of suicide are, in fact, most curious and of great interest and importance. Most people have a very natural impression that the predilection towards suicide would be more severe in winter than at any other season, the gloomy weather, dull days and depressing atmosphere all seeming more likely to tend that way than the bright spring and summer weather. The exact opposite is the case. Suicide is more common in the summer in all countries of the world except Norway and Holland, where the spring season is the most fatal. The changes of temperature in summer are far more sudden, and this has, according to Morselli, a vast amount to do with it. In connection with this, by the way, it is impossible not to reflect how much the frequent and sudden changes in the weather, which have during the last few weeks aroused universal comment in Auckland, had to do with the death of the young music master on Christmas morning.

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The regularity of the suicide seasons and the monthly distribution of suicide is too great for it to be attributed to chance or human will. As the number of violent deaths can be predicted from year to year with extreme probability so can the average suicide of the seasons be foreseen, and these seasons are so constant from one period to another as to have almost a specific character from a given statistical series. Mulhall in his splendid dictionary of statistics gives the following figures:—In the United Kingdom: Spring, 336: Summer, 372; Autumn, 264; Winter, 238. Very few who seek their own lives do so from midnight to morn. The greatest number choose the hours from 6 a.m. to noon in the morning, after that from six in the evening to midnight is the favourite time, the afternoon and night being eschewed.

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If we glance for a moment at those most predisposed to voluntary death, it is a somewhat painful fact to realise that suicide is far more frequent in the army than amongst civilians. Dr. Ogle's paper on the subject shows that for the twenty-six years ending 1885, there were 42,650 suicides, and that per million between the ages of twenty-five and sixty-five there were 1,249 soldiers, the general average for other trades and professions being 222, miners being lowest with 74. Lawyers were 408, and doctors 472; brokers, 376; while two curious instances are milkmen with the high average of 353, and hairdressers, 364. The labouring man is low in the list, 177; gardeners, 157; and policemen, 201. Had we space it would be of considerable interest to discuss these figures, and to quote further those of other trades and professions. One can understand hairdressers being liable to suicide—the razor constantly at hand in moments of temptation, but it does seem strange that the milkman should be more prone to self-destruction than a schoolmaster or a printer, a baker or a clerk. Were the subject less grim one might suggest poisoning themselves with their own milk.

In all cases, suicide mortality is greater by almost half from the ages of 45 to 65 than from 25 to 45, and this leads us to inquire into the physical and moral causes of the crime. For inquest and merciful purposes, it has been held in England for many years, that to commit suicide a man must be mad, but this, of course, is not a ground that can be tolerated in an enquiry into the actual causes of suicide. Undoubtedly there are many suicides committed under mental aberration, but there are others, planned and carried out with such calmness and determination as utterly preclude all supposition of insanity. The determination is formed and the act committed with a coolness only to be inspired by most perfect logic. Let us again consult Morselli's careful statistics. We shall find that out of 9,450 cases in Prussia, madness was responsible for 295 suicides. Like poor Mr Stubbing, 119 were 'weary of life.' Passion engulfed 21, vices 99. Money troubles drove 34 to do themselves to death; remorse, fear of condemnation or shame, 125; domestic affliction 125, and so on. These were all men. As might be expected, the woman table is different. After 484 for mental disease, shame follows with 131, while financial disorders only troubled eight to death, and domestic troubles drove 50 out of the world.

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One class of people which gives few suicides consists of those devoted to religion. Especially is this the case among women, nuns, convent maids, and lay sisters, and it is seen on enquiry that religious sentiment has less to do with this than retirement and removal from the disappointments and passions of the laity. Catholics are far less prone to self-destruction than Protestants, and Jews than Catholics—the number per million of inhabitants being Catholics, 58; Protestants, 190.

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A very interesting point is whether suicide and crime advance concurrently. The different and irregular information which we possess of criminal statistics affords scant help towards making exact deductions. Nevertheless it seems briefly possible to investigate whether the general progress of crime corresponds to that of suicide, and whether there is any relation between the two kinds of social phenomena. While suicide increases every year throughout France, Belgium, Austria, Bavaria, Germany, etc., crime also increases; but in England crime has decreased, and is decreasing yearly, but suicide, except in London, is advancing. In France the advance in suicide is moreover altogether out of proportion to that of crime. The increase in crime has been normal, that of suicide frightful. Mulhall points out that the number of yearly suicides has doubled itself in thirty-five years. In 1850 there were 103 deaths from self-destruction, and in '85, 205 killed themselves. It may therefore be held that suicide does not always increase in the same ratio as crime, but that where the annual average of voluntary deaths offers a very perceptible increase, a synchronous increase of crime is generally seen.

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Hanging is the most common mode by which men commit suicide, drowning and shooting with almost equal frequency the next, cutting or stabbing the next, and taking poison the next. Females most frequently take their lives by drowning or by taking poison, next by stabbing or hanging, but only four times in 131 cases which have occurred during the last nine years by shooting. It may be mentioned that suicide by shooting is much more common now than formerly, the number of cases in the ten years ended with 1890 being three times as numerous as in the previous ten years.

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It has been pointed out that suicide is a more terrible destroyer of human life than war, for whilst during the first fifty years of the Queen's reign war occasioned 52,000 deaths of subjects of the United Kingdom, and 316,000 deaths of subjects of France, Germany and Austria, suicide claimed 77,000 victims in the first-named country, and 610,000 victims in the other three countries named.

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A glance at ourselves in the matter and we have done with a somewhat morbid subject. In ten countries of the world, the proportion of suicides is greater than in New Zealand, but we, like the other Australian colonies, rank high on the black list. We are 8·8, in 100,000 persons living, and in the United Kingdom they are only 6·9, and in Russia 2·9. On the other hand, in Saxony the proportion is 30·1 to 100,000. We are below most of the other Australian colonies, Queensland having 13·7; Victoria, 11·8; Western Australia, 11·8; New South Wales, 9·5; South Australia the same as ourselves, viz., 8·8, while Tasmania is one of the lowest in the world with 5·3. May the year we have just entered on be phenomenal in the low average of suicide cases all over the world, but specially with us.

W. G. R.

BLENHEIM IN FLOOD TIME.

ONE OF ITS CELEBRITIES.

IT is to be hoped that some good Blenheimite, whose feelings are wounded by pictures being given of that pretty little township at the untoward but picturesque time, will immediately send us some sketches of the prettiest parts of the town and surroundings for reproduction in these pages, that pictures may appear of Blenheim as she is. We are indebted for our views to Mr Marcy, whose photographs would do credit to some of the most famous firms in the English metropolis. On the occasion of the visit of the M.H.R.'s to Blenheim 'Bird's-eye,' whose admirable Parliamentary Silhouettes are well known to GRAPHIC readers, sent us an amusing pen and ink sketch of a well-known citizen of Blenheim. It arrived, however, somewhat late, and was held over till a future occasion. It is herewith given with the views. 'Birds's eye' has assured us that the sketch will be most laughed at and appreciated by those most nearly concerned.

The accompanying portrait is that of a well-known Blenheim celebrity, Mr Sutherland John McAlister, auctioneer and contractor, and one of that pretty inland town's most *substantial* citizens—he weighs about twenty-three stone. The story goes that when Mr McAlister was a youth he could hide behind a clothes prop, but nowadays, so abnormal has been his development, a cartload of clothes props could safely hide behind him, as will be evident to the reader who glances at his photograph. Mr McAlister is a man of genial temperament and large hospitality, which latter is freely placed at the disposal of the visitor to Blenheim, and anyone who calls there without making his acquaintance has missed one of the main attractions of the place.

Marcy, photo. *Benheim.*

MR S. J. MCALISTER.

Mr McAlister is one of a family of twelve children who, with their parents, came to the colony in 1862. He is now forty-four years of age, having been born in the year 1848, at Clyth, Caithness, Scotland. His early youth was spent on a sheep and cattle station, but at the age of eighteen he joined the Telegraph Department, and displayed such unusual adaptability and expertness that his rise in the service was phenomenal, and at the age of twenty one he was appointed Inspector of Telegraphs for the provinces of Marlborough, Nelson, and Westland, a position he retained for fourteen years. Having decided to settle in Marlborough about the time the amalgamation of the Post and Telegraph Departments took place, he was then appointed Chief Postmaster at Blenheim, a post he filled for five years, resigning it voluntarily on account of ill-health brought on by the sedentary nature of the employment; since which he has followed the business of auctioneer, land agent, contractor, etc. Mr McAlister resigned from the civil service with twelve months' leave of absence on full pay in lieu of a pension, his length of service being several years short of the pension term, besides receiving the most flattering testimonials from the Department. In addition to these credentials Mr McAlister holds, and is justly proud of, a complimentary letter from Sir Julius Vogel acknowledging in cordial terms the great assistance rendered by him in the introduction of the Duplex System of telegraphy now in vogue in the colony.

Mr McAlister has filled many important positions in Marlborough, including the Presidency of the Marlborough Agricultural Association, and is largely interested in pastoral pursuits, for, being a man of immense energy, he runs a big station in addition to his other varied occupations. He is a fluent speaker, also, and sighs to exercise his gifts in this direction on the floor of the Wellington Kororerium, to which he naturally believes he would bring considerable weight. He contested the last general election unsuccessfully, but that notwithstanding, it is whispered that he means to try his luck next time, prompted, as all disinterested candidates are, by a feeling that it is a thousand pities that the colony should be deprived of so wide a knowledge and extensive a perception of her requirements. Should he succeed, I would respectfully suggest to him that, in order to intensify the impression he will undoubtedly make upon the House, he should share his benen with the member for the Taiera.

Bank N.Z. Litchfield and Sons. Masonic Hotel.

Marcy, photo. BLENHEIM IN FLOOD. *Blenheim.*

(Taken from the Market Place, looking south.)

Marcy, photo. ANOTHER VIEW. *Blenheim.*

(Taken from Scotch Church looking South.)

READY WIT.

THE faculty of being equal to the occasion is a valuable one to its possessor. A young clergyman attended a small party one evening. After participating in several games, one of the young ladies asked if he would say yes to any question he was asked. 'I will,' he replied. Then and there the mischievous girls commenced to try and corner him, but were unsuccessful. At last one, more bold than the rest, dropped on her knees before him and said, 'Will you marry me?' 'Oh, yes; but where is the bridegroom?' was the ready answer. Actors often find themselves in positions where ready wit saves them from serious embarrassment. At a provincial theatre, the curtain, when lowered at the end of an act, did not drop the whole length, but remained suspended half-way. On the stage lay stretched a solitary dead man. As all endeavours to lower the curtain failed the corpse at length got up, and said in sepulchral tones, 'No rest in the grave,' and dragged the curtain to the floor. But the youngest person on record who possesses the ready wit which turns defeat into victory is a child of five living in the pine woods of Florida. Rehearsal being in progress for a Sunday school concert, her teacher entrusted her with the recitation of a verse. The important day came; the church was crowded, and the little girl felt considerably fluttered. When at last she mounted the platform the sea of faces turned expectantly towards her, drove from her mind the verse which she knew so well that she had been saying it in her sleep. But she was not the child to give way to defeat without a struggle. If she could not think of that verse she could of another, and so while the congregation was hushed to catch the first syllable from her faltering lips, she piped up in a shrill treble:—

'Needles and pins,
Needles and pins,
When you get married the trouble begins.'

In one respect, at least, her recitation was the success of the afternoon.

THE SHEARER'S TAKE-DOWN.

A SPORTING STORY.

MR JACK BOLTON woke one morning a few weeks before Christmas with a frightful headache. He sat up in bed, and casting his eyes round the somewhat scanty furniture of his room at the bank endeavoured to recollect what day it was and what on earth he had been up to the night before. By degrees he remembered first that it was Sunday morning (thank Heaven!), second that the night before had naturally enough been Saturday night, and that there had been a meeting of local racing men for the purpose of arranging the preliminaries of the Christmas races. Jack remembered having gone there, and of having assisted at the deliberations of the assembled sports. He also clearly remembered having made a brilliant address on the propriety of giving a race ball, and on his proposal being carried by acclamation he had invited the whole meeting to drink at his expense. Further proceedings were rather misty, and it required some careful tracing to follow his movements from one event to another through the haze of tobacco smoke and the fumes of alcohol which seemed to have settled in his head, and to have closed down on the last few hours of his life like a thick fog. Suddenly Mr Bolton jumped from his bed with an oath—only to throw himself back on it again with a groan – for flashing through the haze of last night's proceedings came the awful recollection that he had made a most idiotic wager of a level £200 with Mick Flannagan, the sporting publican of the place, that he would find a horse in the district to beat his (the said Mick's) crack mare Sheelah on Boxing Day, the date fixed for the Christmas meeting.

Now Mr Jack Bolton, though of the mature age of twenty-two years, and occupying the exalted position of accountant in a country bank, knew as little about horse-racing as he did about tiger-shooting, believing both to be dangerous amusements, with little to choose between them. Mr Michael Flannagan, on the other hand, was forty-five years of age, a publican, strongly suspected on account of his name and accent of having been born on Erin's Isle, and a thorough adept in all the sharp practices and clever devices necessary to ensure a successful career in the lower class of sporting circles. He was a good judge of a horse's capabilities, an excellent trainer, and certain to do all he knew to make money by means either fair or foul. Among his accomplishments he was a caution at poker, and at cribbage he was considered invincible, his luck, according to the opinion of the innocent uninitiated, being something extraordinary. In fact, fortune seemed to favour Mr Flannagan in everything, as he was seldom known to lose, but when he did he paid his money down on the spot. This was just the sort of man Jack had bet with; and, when two men so differently endowed make a wager, it is not difficult to point to the probable loser. On Bolton's mind on that unhappy Sunday morning descended the blackness of desolation, for he saw no hope of winning; indeed, he did not know where to get a horse good enough in the district—and, if he lost! Well, he had not £50 of his own in the whole world, and Flannagan was just about as likely to let him off as an alligator would be to let go his hold of a fat Chinaman. Two hundred pounds is not much of a bet as bets go nowadays, but it is a deuce of a thing for a man to pay when his father, like Jack's, is a country parson with a large family of younger children depending on him, and who has old fashioned notions about the wickedness of betting at all, and strong opinions of the ungentlemanly conduct of a man who makes wagers which he has no means of paying in the event of luck going against him. There was also the awe-inspiring general manager to be considered, a man with his cold, gentlemanly way of intimating that he would advise Mr Blank to forward his resignation to the company, as he had rarely heard of a young gentleman who is in the habit of making heavy bets on sporting events attaining any position of importance in banking business. All these reflections passed through Bolton's mind as he lay groaning upon his bed, and although there were probably men in Australia in much deeper trouble and distress on that sunny Sunday morning, poor Jack did not think so, and was about as completely miserable as any young fellow could wish his worst enemy to be.

After indulging for a considerable time in vain regrets, and heartily cursing his folly and the drink which caused it, he rose, dressed himself with shaking hands, and giving a last look at his dissipated reflection in the glass, Jack betook himself, headache and all, into the street of the small town and off to his particular chum's quarters at the rival bank. Bolton's chum was one Parker, a man a year or two older than Jack, and ages more experienced. He was, taking him all in all, a very good specimen of his class, kindly, easy tempered, not deficient in pluck, with an amount of confidence in and respect for himself closely bordering on conceit, which is not altogether a bad feature of character, for it tends to keep the youth from doing that which is questionable or that may appear so. Parker, unlike Jack, had spent Saturday evening at the doctor's singing duets with the medico's pretty sister. He was up and dressed when Jack arrived, and although not of a very religious turn of mind, he was whistling part of the church service while looking through some old letters in his desk.

'Hallo, Jack, old chap, how goes it?'

'Good morning, Parker.'

'What's up, Jack? You look a bit off! Been looking on the wine when it is the colour of Scotch whisky, eh?'

'Parker, I am afraid I got tight last night, and, what is worse, I have made an awful mess of it—made a stupid wager for a large amount with Flannagan, and upon my soul I feel inclined to shoot myself for being a confounded ass.'

'Steady, old man; don't talk rot. You are seedy, though; so just take a sup of J. R. D., and let me hear all about it. Two heads are better than one, anyhow.'

Jack did as he was told, and related as far as he could remember the events of the night before. There was not much to tell. After the meeting, he had with one or two others accompanied Mr Flannagan to his hotel, and there, under the influence of alcoholic beverages, he became, like many more young men when tipsy, inflated with ideas of his own importance; and if under the circumstance he had been taken down by Mr Flannagan for a moderate amount, it would have served him right. Two hundred pounds, however, was beyond a joke, and so thought Parker, who remarked, 'A man must pay for being a fool, the same as for any other luxury, but they have overcharged you, old fellow, and we must get the price reduced if possible.'

'I suppose,' said Jack, 'there's no chance of Flannagan——'

'Drawing the bet?' Parker interrupted. 'No, I think not, and it would not look well to humble yourself to ask him, but I'll sound him quietly and let you know. I am afraid he knows that your governor would sacrifice everything to save you the disgrace of the sack, which would be inevitable if the yarn gets to the chief's ears, and I can just tell you quietly that Flannagan, from some cause or other, is hard up just now. Some of his paper came back from below the other day, and it took all he knew to fix it up.'

McKENZIE WENT AN EXPERIMENTAL TRIAL GALLOP.

After an hour's further discussion, during which Jack Bolton did not receive much consolation, but still the mere fact of having confided his trouble to another seemed to have lightened his heart, he walked home with a more jaunty step than he had walked out.

According to promise Parker called on Mr Flannagan, at the Harp of Erin Hotel, next day. He found the gentleman sitting in front of his bar reading an account of the latest international prize fight, and evidently just after breakfast. The hotel had a strong odour of stale beer and whisky. Several works of art adorned the walls, and consisted of portraits of celebrated race horses, a picture of the great fight between Heenan and Tom Sayers, with key to same, and a few coloured cartoons from some political print representing the bloody-minded Saxon in every possible variety of ignominious disgrace, with a light-hearted gentleman in a red waistcoat and knee-breeches triumphantly dancing on his dishonoured person.

After exchanging the usual compliments, Parker cautiously approached the object of his mission—very cautiously indeed, but it was no use. Flannagan came to the point at once and said, 'I suppose he wants to cast off. Is that his little game?'

Parker replied, 'Well, you know the young gentleman was drunk. There is no doubt of that, Mick, and if he loses I don't know how he is to pay.'

'See here, now,' rejoined Mick, 'if I lose I'll pay. If he loses, be jabers, I'll make him pay or leave his billet. Pretty sort of a man he is to come blowing around making wagers and wantin' to crawl out of thim. The bet's made, signed, and witnessed, and by all the goats in Kerry he'll have to stand to it.'

This was final. There was no hope from Mr Flannagan, and Parker left the Harp of Erin with a secret feeling that he would like to test the durability of Flannagan's neck.

It wanted but then three weeks to Boxing Day, and Bolton had abandoned all hope, and had by Parker's advice written home to his father a full account of his foolish transaction. He had received a reply, a sorrowing letter, to say that by the day mentioned the money would be at his disposal, but that in order to procure it sacrifice would have to be made; and all this added to Jack's previous load of self-reproach to such an extent that a speedy exit from this world would not have had the ordinary amount of terror for him. He was young, full of life and health, but he realised the disgrace that had overtaken him. If he could but obtain a horse to beat Flannagan—but then it must be owned by someone in the district, and where was there an animal good enough to live a mile with Sheelah with 8st. up. He tried to relieve his gloomy feelings with a long walk, and Jack struck out from town, past the mines on the hill, and away across the flat beyond the creek towards the station. It is a fact—and anyone who will pause to reflect on his own past will easily remember instances of it in his career—that when things are bad, and apparently at their very worst, something happens to show a man the way out. Often he takes the right road, without knowing why, and on looking back he cannot remember just were the turning point was nor what led him to it, the incident was in itself so trivial. It was so in this case. Jack had wandered on and on, wrapped in gloomy thoughts, taking little notice of anything, until he had reached the crossing-place of a small shallow creek, about two miles from town. Here the trees formed a pleasant shade, and the clear water gushing over the little gravelled shallow crossing sounded pleasant and refreshing after the experience of the hot, dusty road. He stopped to drink, and stood looking at the water and at the road beyond where it ascended the opposite bank and on towards Rosella Station. As he stood thus a sudden breath of air—a tiny summer whirlwind—lifted a stray envelope lying on the opposite side, and, after playing with it in a purposeless manner, brought it across the yard or two of water and laid it gently at Jack's feet. There was nothing startling in this, but Jack's fairy god must surely have been in that wind, for the torn envelope was the finger post that directed him to turn off from the road to ruin. Scarcely thinking what he was doing, he stooped and picked it up. It had evidently contained a Christmas card, and was from England, addressed to 'Henry Dixon, Esq., Rosella Station, Woodville, near Queensland, Australia.' Vague no doubt the address was, but as near as the good people of England usually get to a colonial address. 'I thought Dixon was in Scotland,' said Jack to himself. 'Lucky beggar! Young, good looking, plenty of money, he can go where he likes. Haven't seen him since he, Parker, and myself were at the Grammar School together. Wonder if he remembers us. Our ways have diverged since then; he used to go in hot for cricket, and I hear he has been a successful racing man since, and, good heavens! he might have a horse that could beat Sheelah.' Back rushed Jack to town with all the impetuosity of youth to impart his new idea to Parker.

It was rather a dash to his feelings to see how coolly Parker took the matter. 'He may help you, Jack, old man. He was a good old sort at school; but men alter when they have faced the world for even a few years, and you must remember he left some time before you, and may have forgotten us both. However, keep your tail up, we'll try.' They soon ascertained that Dixon was at Rosella, one of several stations he owned, and would stay there over the Christmas holidays. There was no time to be lost, so the two friends set out at once to see him. It was evening when they reached Rosella, and as they rode up to the gate of the home paddock the sun was setting behind the western hills, throwing the verandah of the home station house into delightful shadow. The figure of a man without coat or waistcoat was seen to climb down from the hammock and take a survey of the intruders through a field glass; and by the time they had reached the garden gate, the figure — Harry Dixon himself—was there to meet them. Did he know them? He did, and was boyishly glad to see them. It is not the pleasant flower-strewn paths of life that sour a man, but the hard, uphill struggle against fate, and the latter had not been Dixon's experience. He was the same Dixon as of old; and, after a few preliminary references to old times and friends, Parker, in his usual straightforward manner, told of young Bolton's fix. Dixon looked grave and said, 'It is awkward. I am almost a stranger here myself, Jack, and you must have the money to stake before when?'

'Before this day week.'

'And you absolutely have not anything with four legs to give you even a show for your money?'

'No, not even a billygoat.'

'Nice young goat you must be yourself. What, by all that's wonderful, could you have been dreaming about?'

'I was tight, Dixon—tight as a bottle.'

'Then you had better let drink alone in the future, my boy. I could hardly imagine a man being such an owl if he had swallowed a whole distillery. However, that is not the question now. You two stop here all night. Say no more about it and we will try to hit on some plan in the morning.' Dixon had already an idea, small and undeveloped, but likely to grow into something tangible. His principal idea in asking them to stay all night was that he might see whether Jack Bolton's trouble was the result of a sheer accident and unlikely to happen again, or whether he was one of those unlucky people who are apparently always falling into pits to be dragged out by their friends. Happily the result of his observations that night was satisfactory. Jack forgot his trouble, but was not unduly merry, and he showed when speaking of old friends that his heart was in the right place, and that it would be no end of pity to let him go down. Next morning just after daybreak Dixon walked into his bedroom and said:

'Jack! I will try to pull you through this fix, but I want your word of honour that it is the last of the kind you will indulge in.'

'I give you my word, Dixon, whether you help me or not.

'That will do then. This Flannagan appears to me to be a mean dog to take advantage of your being in liquor, and although I want to help you first, I want to take him down as well, just as a lesson, but the immediate question to consider is, what about the horse that is to be the "take-down." Now, listen. I will lend you £150 to relieve your old governor, and I believe I have a horse on the station that I am pretty certain is a flier. I got him from a shearer about eight months ago. There is a mystery about him that I suppose will never be cleared up. "Martindale," of the *Town and Country Journal*, one of the most experienced sporting writers in Australia, entertains a fancy that he is identical with a celebrated Ballarat horse which was backed to win a ton of money on the Melbourne Cup. That horse, when under a cloud, caused by the dishonesty of his owner, not himself, was spirited away. It is impossible to say whether this fellow is the same, as not only have the brands been altered, but he has in several other ways been disfigured

and presents a ragged appearance. He came into the shearer M'Devitt's possession away in the vicinity of the Richmond Downs, and after that he was used to carry M'Devitt's swag, but he was always on hand as a 'take-down,' and won many matches against the cracks of Central Australia from the Flinders River, through Hughenden, Muttaburrah, Forest Grove, and along the Thompson, Barcoo, and so on to Thorgodindah. I had a fancy for the old fellow, and, fortunately for you, Jack, I took him out of the grass paddock a fortnight ago and have worked a good deal of the grass stomach off already. I had a turn on him yesterday, and from the way he shaped, even with my heavy weight up, I am inclined to think that he can beat Flannagan's mare any distance, from a furlong upwards. However, no stone must be left unturned, and as Tommy M'Kenzie is not far away, I will send for him to train and ride Eureka on the day of the match.'

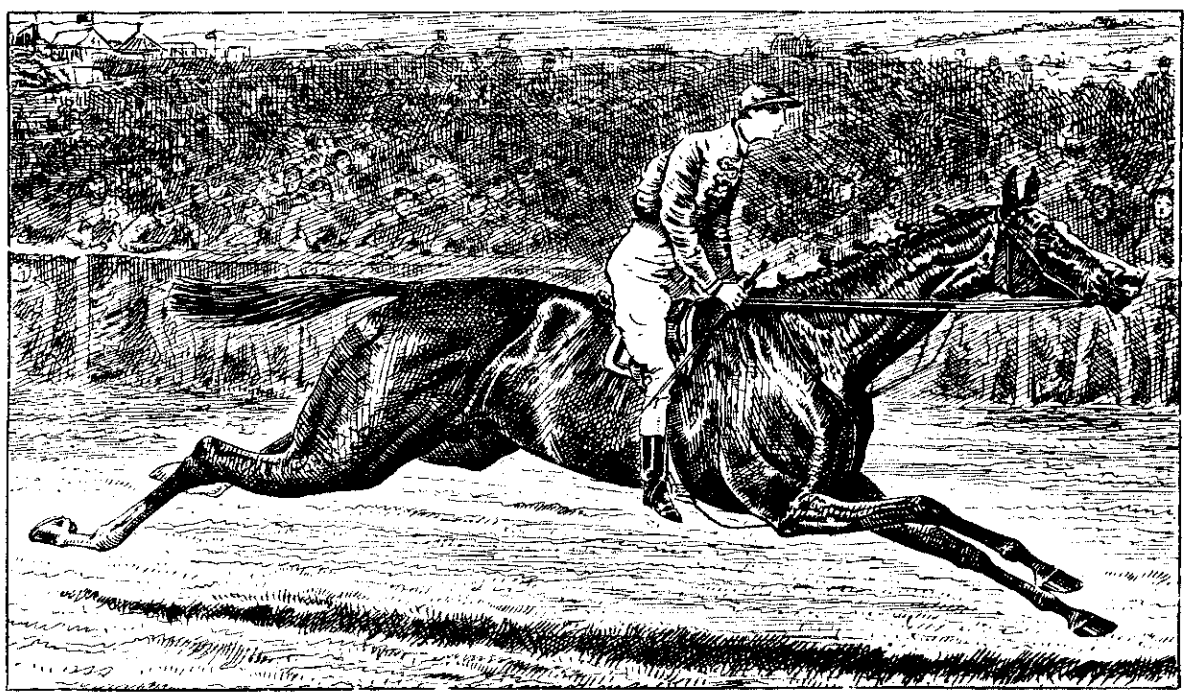
Parker, Bolton, and Dixon soon after inspected Eureka, but the two former knew very little about horses and wisely refrained from criticism. But he had four legs, and that was what Jack a few hours before had despaired of getting. Tommy M'Kenzie was soon on the spot, went a bare back gallop just by way of experiment, and declaring himself delighted took over his charge, and set about the work of getting him ready. Meanwhile Mr Michael Flannagan had heard, as indeed had everyone around town, that Mr Dixon was at the station, but they did not dream of his being able to supply something to beat Sheelah, nor did Mr Flannagan know of Jack and Parker's visit to the station, so that it was rather a staggerer when on the day appointed Jack with exquisite coolness deposited with the stakeholder £200 and nominated Mr Harry Dixon's b g Eureka, aged, to do battle for him against Sheelah, on December 26. All that the Flannagan fraternity (yclept 'the push') could ascertain about Eureka was that he had been on the station for months and the black boy from Rosella testified in his own way to Eureka's worth by saying: 'Eureka boodgery merri mukie. My word! Boodgery.' All went well and Tommy M'Kenzie had made surprising improvements in his charge.

Christmas Day had arrived, and Harry Dixon had got together a pleasant little party at the station, including Parker, Bolton, the doctor, his sister, and Miss Bella Sutherland. The latter was a friend of the medico's sister, and to judge from the earnest expression of her beautiful blue eyes, she took an extraordinary interest either in Jack or the match between Sheelah and Eureka—perhaps in both. If caresses form an important part of a horse's training, then the idolatry of the doctor's sister and her fair friend must have made the condition of Eureka something perfect, and on the point of condition Tommy M'Kenzie was pleased. 'If I had had him longer I could have made him better,' he said; 'but he is one of the easiest horses to train I have ever had, and my straight griffin is that when the Irishman twigs him galloping the last two furlongs of the race to morrow he will rush off home to drink his own tanglefoot, and smash his own glasses. The party at the Harp of Erin were also confident, and business was more brisk than usual because of the arrival of a few spielers. No race meeting would be complete without the three card man and the men and their buttoners who cajole money from the country simpletons by informing them that it is 'the fairest game on the course; the father can play with the son and the son can play with the father.' They patronised Mr Flannagan, who styled them 'gintlemen,' and confidently advised them to have their 'bit' on Sheelah on the following day.

The weather on Boxing Day was blazing hot, but the great majority of the townspeople patronised the races, which were held on a well marked bush course. There were no stands, but Harry Dixon's party obtained an excellent view of the racing from their vehicles, which had been drawn up under the shade of a gum tree. Most of the races were for saddles and bridles, and the event of the day was the match between Sheelah and Eureka. It was the fourth race; and, when the cowbell warned the competitors to saddle up, it was easy to see that the station party were strongly moved, but their excitement was surpressed. Even Harry Dixon, who had not missed a Melbourne Cup for years, was moved as he had never been at Flemington. It was not because of his hope that his horse would gain the honour of victory; it was more because he wished to defeat Flannagan and save his young friend. He had but little doubt that Eureka would win, but still he was excited, and the fact that Flannagan and the starter appeared pretty thick, and that he had noticed them indulging in a whispered conversation, did not improve his mood. 'Look out for that starter, Tommy. I do not half like him, so do not let him catch you napping.' These words were addressed to the jockey, and the horses went to the post, while Harry Dixon strolled back to his party.

The course was a mile round, and the horses were started nearly opposite to Dixon and his friends. The starter fiddled with the horses in such a strange manner that Dixon was glad that he had warned Tommy, but a moment afterwards a sharp clear oath signified the fact that the flag had been dropped when Eureka's head was turned the other way. Tommy was quick in getting his horse round, but the mare was off with a lead of a dozen lengths. Wrath was unmistakably marked on the countenances of Parker, Dixon, and Bolton, while that of the ladies was expressive of dismay, which was slightly relieved when they heard the crowd heartily hoot the starter. There was but little relative difference in the position of the horses in the first furlong, and Jack groaned as he had done a hundred times since he had made his stupid bet, but he and the rest of the party were now aroused by Harry Dixon's word, 'By Jove, it's not all over yet! He's going up.' It was true, as the gap between the pair had been reduced to seven lengths as they passed the half mile post, and although Tommy was keeping Eureka going he did not have him at his top. 'Oh, catch her,' sighed little Bella Sutherland; and Eureka seemed to hear her, as he commenced to run in real earnest, and, amidst the intense excitement of all, he was almost on terms with the mare as they turned their heads for home in the straight. The race was evidently all over now, as Tommy was sitting comparatively still, while the other jockey was riding all he knew. When Tommy, therefore, moved on him Eureka went clean away from Sheelah, and won by three lengths. Harry Dixon had evidently not quite recovered his good temper, and snarled, 'A good job he won by so much, because the judge, like the starter, may belong to the Flannagan push.'

The station party sobered down to quiet joy, Parker and Dixon were unfeignedly delighted, and bright teardrops glistening on Bella Sutherland's silken eyelashes showed how truly her sympathy had been enlisted for Eureka—or was it for Jack? If so, Jack was more to be envied now than he was when he made his silly wager. He felt a free man again, and was filled with feelings of gratitude towards all his friends and to Eureka, 'the shearer's take-down.'—*Atlas*, *in Town and Country Journal.*



EUREKA CANTERED IN AN EASY WINNER.

Loyalty to truth requires that as much attention be paid to giving sufficient force and strength to our words as to refraining from giving too much. Yet very intelligent, careful people frequently do not see this; and, in their anxiety to avoid the exaggeration which they so much despise, they fail to give that force and vigour to their words that truth demands.

'You must be very polite to succeed in this business,' said a barber to his young apprentice. 'Always wear a pleasant smile, and try to flatter everybody.'

'I'll do my best, sir,' replied the apprentice; 'but how am I to flatter a bald headed man?'

'Easy enough,' replied the barber. 'Just ask him if he doesn't want his hair cut.'

MR IRVING ON THE STAGE.

THE editor of the *Nineteenth Century* has hit upon quite a novel idea. He has actually got somebody to write about the drama who knows something about it—in fact, no less a person than Mr Henry Irving, who deals with 'Some Misconceptions about the Stage,' and says several things of interest.

THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH STYLES.

Mr Irving is by no means inclined to agree in the common opinion (that is, of persons who are not actors) that there is no such thing as good dramatic elocution on the English stage.

When we are asked why we do not recite our Shakespeare as we would Racine, we may well rub our eyes in wonder. 'Those days are past, Floranthe!' The classic correctness of Racine's verse—which the French believe none but a Frenchman can understand—is wholly opposed to the freedom of that of Shakespeare, which therefore requires a totally different method of delivery. Although the march of Shakespeare's verse should be most delicately preserved, it is 'flat burglary' to demand for it the recitation of Racine. Only bad actors and schoolboys support this dreadful practice. The greatest French actors have shaken off the trammels of tradition, and have adopted a more natural delivery of tragic verse. 'There is not a scene-shifter, madam,' said Dr. Johnson to Mrs Siddons, 'who could not recite "To be or not to be" better than Mr Garrick. His excellence was in the interpretation of nature and true conception of character. There lies the secret of the actor's success. Garrick supplanted the dull declaiming of Quin, as did afterwards Edmund Kean the declaimers o his day. Recitation, no matter with what spirit it may be delivered, is but a bastard substitute for truthful interpretation of Shakespeare's verse. In the expression of character, rhythm is subordinate to dramatic significance, and except in the most rhetorical passages, every sentence should be expressed as a new thought, and every thought with a varied intonation.

TABLEAU OR DRAMA.

Mr Irving deals with the question of accessories and scenery, and maintains that the great actors and managers of the past would undoubtedly have compassed the magnificence of the Lyceum revivals if they could. Shakespeare himself yearned for better conditions than those of his own day:—

> Where—O for pity!—we shall much disgrace
> With four or five most vile and ragged foils
> The name of Agincourt.

And Mr Irving points out that Garrick spent a great deal of money on scenes and 'sets' as elaborate as they could be made in his time. But Mr Irving is quite at one with his critics in thinking that 'the play's the thing,' and not the costumes and dresses; and he gives the following illustration. 'I remember,' he says, 'with keen pleasure a performance of the "Merchant of Venice," which the Lyceum Company gave at West Point before the chivalry of Young America. Never did actors play to a more alert or enthusiastic audience, and never did actors respond with more fervour to stimulating sympathy. And yet we acted in Elizabethan dress, the conventional dress of Shakespeare, and we had no scenery whatever—a board with the name of the supposed scene chalked upon it, "A Street," "Portia's House," and so forth, being, as in olden time, the only pictorial aid to the imagination.

Moreover, he points out that the Lyceum 'Hamlet' and 'Merchant of Venice' were mounted with comparative simplicity, and were quite as successful and effective as any of the series.

Mr Irving 'rounds on' the novelists, poets, dramatic critics, and others who have lately been scolling at the stage and all who are concerned with it in this country, in a very spirited fashion.

I have been accused of treating criticism of the stage in a pontificial spirit; but there is so much infallibility abroad

that the actor is in no danger of suffering from odious comparisons. Mr Barlow is, I am told, a minor poet, and in his character he naturally deplores the absence of 'appreciation of poetry in the public.' Then he suggests that art is vanishing from the stage because we are in process of being 'democratised.' Incapacity to speak Shakespeare will, I suppose, culminate some day in manhood suffrage. Mr Barlow devotes a page to trivialities concerning what appears to have been a uniquely bad mannered audience at a French play, and then deduces the conclusion that they demonstrate 'our lack of artistic instinct.' These things are unworthy of notice, except as illustrations of the boundless comprehensiveness which distinguishes the casual critic of the drama. The popular taste for the theatre is heterogeneous. It is gratified in some ways which, perhaps, are no more artistic than certain novels not dignified with the name of literature, though having thousands of readers. I am not aware that this phenomenon is peculiar to this country. But, when I survey the extensive area of theatrical enterprise, I see a great deal of admirable talent, both in the drama and its interpreters, and a very large measure of public appreciation for artistic effort. Nobody except Mr Barlow suggests that the prosperity of the music hall is a stigma on the theatre. Under no conditions can there exist more than a limited number of theatres in which dramatic art, properly so called, can be said to be paramount. There are many places of entertainment, excellent of their kind, from which the genuine art of the stage must be dissociated. But in this limited number of theatres may be seen plays, destitute, it is true, of the pessimism of Ibsen or the moral squalor of Zola, yet abounding in delicate observation and broad views of humanity. They are comparatively few, perhaps; but a wide experience of dramatic authorship has taught me that to write a good play is one of the most difficult achievements, and demands a combination of talent, thought, and patience not often surpassed by the novelists who have been telling us, somewhat superfluously, why they do not work in a medium which is absolutely strange to them.

NELSON is looking quite deserted, so many familiar faces missing. Among others Mrs and Miss W. Atkinson left last week for Napier, where they remain for the holidays. Misses Gibson, Watson, Higgins, and Gribben have also gone for their well-earned holiday. Mrs Houlker left us for a few days for the Empire City, where she took part in the 'Messiah,' but has now returned in time to take part in the same oratorio in Nelson, much to everyone's delight. It is always a pleasure to welcome back old friends, and this was afforded all Mrs Hackworth's friends, she having come to pay a long visit to her relatives here. Mr Isaacson, who left Nelson for England some two years ago, has also returned, having been unable to resist the delight of spending some months in our lovely climate. Miss Kay, of Masterton, is visiting her sister, Mrs Thompson. Miss Duncan, of Wellington, is at present the guest of Mrs Dodson, she looks stylish in a fawn gown with Zouave jacket and full white front, large hat with white ostrich feather. Miss Hill, from Auckland, is a guest of Mrs Roger Kingdon; she looks well in a black skirt, black and white shirt and corselet belt.—*Tu*.—In Napier: Mrs Walter Tabutean was looking immensely well in town recently. She was gowned in bright pink gingham, skirt made with three tiny frills round the hem, bodice with frills on forming a sort of very low berthe; with this becoming costume was worn a small black hat; Mrs Hamlin appears to advantage in deep cream crepon, small and stylish bonnet; Miss Rees wears a pale blue gingham gown, large white hat with feathers; Mrs Bowen looks very charming in a pretty blue gingham gown, trimmed with cream lace, large white hat; Mrs Horace Baker looks so stylish in a lovely gown beautifully made, exquisite little French bonnet, with pale pink osprevs.—*Tu*.—In Hastings: Miss Tipping looks well in a dark kirt, blue spotted blouse, Swiss belt, black hat with yellow ribbon; Mrs Tipp ng wears a crushed strawberry skirt, white blouse, black Bond-street hat; Mrs Bicknell, a stylish blue gingham gown trimmed with white lace, large white hat; Mrs G. P. Donnelly has recovered from her indisposition, and is looking very nice in dark skirt, stylish shirt, jacket, white sailor hat with white band

EVASION.

SCHOOL BOARD OFFICER: 'Good morning, Mrs Higgins. Your little daughter has not been at school for two weeks.'

Outspoken Mrs Higgins (outspokenly): 'It's a lie. She's bin at school for over four years. Started going when she was four, an' she's turned eight now.'

(Slams the door in his face.)

Lands and Survey Office,
Auckland, December 28, 1892.

IT is hereby notified that Lot 85, Section 2, Parish of Opaheke, advertised to be offered for sale by Public Auction, at this Office, on Wednesday, the 11th January, 1893, is Withdrawn from sale.

GERHARD MUELLER,
Commissioner Crown Lands.

Engagements

THE Rev. Arthur Williams, of Te Aute, is engaged to Miss Leslie Thompson, step-daughter of Mr A. V. McDonald, so well and so favourably known in Hawke's Bay, and formerly of Auckland.

MR ALLAN, of Edenham, is engaged to Miss Blyth, of Auckland, who has been on a long visit to Hawke's Bay.

MISS LILY HILL, second daughter of Mr Shirley Hill, Mt. Eden, Auckland, is engaged to Mr Cole Baker, of Rama Rama.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

A VERY brief account only of the wedding of Mr John Myers, second son of Mr Judah Myers, of the firm of J. Myers and Co., Wellington, to Miss Julia Levi, daughter of the late Mr D. Levi, of Napier, was given last week. Fuller particulars now to hand describe the bridesmaid's dresses. Miss Levi looked well in white and heliotrope pongee silk trimmed with lace and silk to match, white feathered hat; Miss P. Myers wore pretty cream cashmere embroidered in gold silk, cream feathered hat; Miss M. Myers, cream silk striped delaine, cream feathered hat; Miss Edie Myers, a cousin of the bridegroom from Brisbane, Miss Eleanor Myers, Miss Isaacs, all wore cream costumes; Misses Daisy Isaacs and Leila Levi were in white Indian silk, with lace and ribbon, picture feathered hats, tan shoes. Each of the bridesmaids had a brooch and bouquet from the bridegroom. Mrs Levi was handsomely attired in black silk with jet and lace, cap of white relieved with petunia; Mrs Myers, beautiful grey costume, passementerie trimming, bonnet *en suite*; Miss Myers, cream and gold; Mrs P. Levi, elegant fawn cloth and green silk, bonnet *en suite*. There were some splendid presents. Amongst the cheques was one from Mr Judah Myers for £500.

FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1893.

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

'Return to Thy Rest, O My Soul.'—Psalms cxvi.

(BY REV. CHARLES R. CURREY.)

Invocation.

ONWARD, upward, tireless voyaging,
Vastest realms of space unknown,
To the Throne of God aspiring,
Spirit, seek thy native home!
Born of Light, effulgent, purest,
Kindled from the flame divine;
Fadeless, quenchless, spotless, brightest,
Glorious, thou may'st ever shine.

Argument.

Long estranged by vapid pleasures,
Vain and fleeting as the wind;
Mocked by failing earthly treasures,
Canst thou leave them all behind?
Pained and wounded, saddened, weary,
Burdened, stricken, sore oppress;
Haste thee, from a life so dreary,
To the bliss of lasting rest.

Gleaming beauty, ornate grandeur,
Nature's wonders rich unfold;
Charm the sense with changing splendour,
Woo the spirit from its goal;
Siren songs, seductive, baneful,
Echo o'er the streams of Time;
Spacious joys, unreal, deceitful,
Leave but aching void behind.

Grand achievements, gorgeous trophies,
Monuments of matchless skill;
Learning, genius, wisdom, prowess,
Vaunt the majesty of Will;
But the Spirit's noblest yearning
Rests not at a meaner shrine;
Than unfading and enduring,
Blessed, immortal and divine!

Apostrophe.

Spirit, gain supernal height,
Range the Universe around;
Sweep empyrean in thy flight,
Deepest Oceans, anxious sound;
Search through Truth's mysterious volume,
Scan the cycles as they roll;
All respond with adoration,
Thy only Rest is God, O soul!

Auckland, New Zealand, December 25th, 1892.

SOCIETY GOSSIP.

AUCKLAND.

DEAR BEE, JANUARY 2.

The dresses worn at the Ellerslie Races on Boxing Day were unusually handsome. Amongst such a crowd of beautifully-dressed ladies it is quite impossible to give an accurate description of the many lovely gowns donned upon this auspicious occasion, so I will just give a few of the most striking. Mrs (Col.) Dawson (the President's wife) looked well in white with canary-coloured trimmings; Mrs L. D. Nathan, very handsome sprigged silk covered with rich black lace, bonnet with apricot flowers; Mrs Gordon, steel grey; Mrs H. Lewis, grey, velvet belt *à la Suisse*; Mrs Broham, figured biscuit tussore silk; Misses Baker, grey, with white fronts; Mrs Edward, slate colour, ruby trimmings; Miss Buckland, grey, with white trimmings; Miss Minett, fawn and blue stripes; Miss Thomson, stylish grey; Miss Kilgour, white; her sister, cream; Mrs Boodle, electric blue silk; Mrs Morton, black, with cream vest; Miss King, cornflower blue, with guipure embroidery; Mrs Thompson (Green Lane) was gowned in a handsome brown silk, cream and brown brocaded front, brown bonnet; Mrs T. Morrin, white and blue flowered delaine trimmed with blue silk, blue and white toque to harmonise; very stylish; Mrs Kerr Taylor, a charming combination of black silk velvet and apple-green silk, parasol and bonnet of the latter shade; her daughter looked very nice in navy blue with straps taken over the shoulders, white yoke and sleeves, navy hat with navy and white ostrich tips artistically blended; Mrs Worsp, a beautifully brocaded heliotrope satin, parasol and bonnet to match; Mrs Ching, an exquisite costume of green flowered shot silk and fawn lace, fawn and green bonnet, parasol *en suite*; Mrs Tewsley, cream dress, moss green velvet corsage and sleeves, toque to match (very pretty dress); Mrs Bloomfield was as attractive as ever in grey bengaline, grey silk front, black hat trimmed with grey ostrich feathers, parasol harmonising with dress; Mrs Arthur Taylor, handsome dark green silk; her sister, Miss Von Sturmer, cream crepon, orange sash, hat trimmed with latter shade; Miss Worsp, pale green laced corselet dress, white silk yoke and sleeves, white hat and ostrich tips; Miss Way (Christchurch), white, yellow vest, black sash, white hat with touches of yellow; the Misses Percival, one in grey, pale pink yoke and sleeves, grey hat, wreath of pale pink roses; her sister wore white dress and hat, pink wreath also; Miss Dunnet, grey, black lace hat; Mrs Goodhue, black and green flowered delaine, hat to match; Mrs Alfred Nathan looked splendid in a lovely fawn silk, trained, elaborately finished with steel trimming, fawn bonnet pale pink tips, tiny gold flower at the back (evidently French millinery); Mrs (Major) George, rich satin de Lyons, black silk mantle, black jet bonnet; Mrs Cottle, dark red silk, trained, trimmed with fawn lace, fawn bonnet, variegated green and red wreath, fawn silk and chiffon parasol; Miss Moss Davis, heliotrope cashmere gown, silk sleeves to match the fawn lace cape, and bonnet to harmonise; her daughter looked pretty and stylish in pink; Miss Ireland wore a beautiful dress of pale heliotrope, hat and parasol to match; Mrs Fred Shariard, a most becoming grey dress and hat; Mrs Dufaur (nee Miss Masefield), grey dress, steel trimmings, hat *en suite*. Miss Lawford, white, green velvet yoke and sleeves; Mrs Harry Jackson was handsome in stylish grey dress and hat; Miss Bursill looked exceedingly well, her pretty figure shown to advantage in a perfectly fitting white muslin, corselet laced bodice, hat and parasol *en suite*; Miss Rookes wore white; Miss Macdonald (Parnell), heliotrope flowered delaine heliotrope hat and parasol to match; Mrs Forbes in white, which suited the wearer admirably; Miss Forbes, a very becoming yellow and yellow costume; Miss Blanche Banks, navy, white front, navy sailor hat; Miss E. Banks looked remarkably well in pale green Liberty silk; Mrs McLauchlin, handsome black silk, jet trimmings and bonnet; Mrs Ranson was in mourning; Miss Shenherd, black silk brocbe, black lace hat; Mrs H. Nolan, a confection of rose pink Liberty silk, the draperies being of blue and pink stripes, these colours blended in bebe ribbon rosettes on the shoulder, large white Gainsborough shaped hat (altogether a striking costume); Mrs Waddel, a pretty Tuscan shade of dress, beautifully embroidered with silk violets, bonnet combined to match; Mrs Ralph Keesing, white zephyr striped with pink, a becoming black lace hat artistically mixed with bebe maize ribbon; Miss Mair, Tussore silk costume, ivory hat with black velvet; Miss B. Devore was prettily frocked in ardoise with tiny hat of a creamy tint; Mrs Alexander, a beautiful gown of beige corduroy, the feathered bonnet matching, dainty parasol frilled with chiffon; Miss Pearce, beaded Liberty silk, hat *en suite*; Mrs Devore was handsomely gowned in black silk, black lace mantle, jetted bonnet brightened by a bit of fraise colour; Miss Wilkins, a combination of petunia bodice and sleeves, her white Rigano jacket, white straw hat trimmed with petunia bebe ribbons; Mrs W. Geddis looked pretty in an ivory gown spotted with heliotrope, large picturesque hat; Miss Johnston was in grey with white feathers in a grey hat; Miss Jervis, also grey; Miss MacIndoe, pretty ficelle dress trimmed with guipure lace on the yoke and belt, ficelle coloured hat with tips; Miss May Harper, pale straw-coloured costume, straw hat.

During the time the 'Silver King' was being played in the Opera House, I noticed Miss McDonald, who looked pretty in black net with bunch of red ribbons on shoulder, grey opera cloak; Mrs Worsp, prune flowered muslin; Mrs H. Jackson, elegant cream gown; Miss Worsp, neat fitting navy and her sister looked well in white muslin; Miss Kilgour, grey with white vest; her sister was garbed in a pretty gown of white; Mrs Otway, handsome dress of black satin and black lace; Miss Otway, becoming frock of white nun's veiling; Miss Percival, looked nice in white crepon; Miss King, stylish gown of pink nun's veiling relieved with fawn lace, handsome dark red opera coat; Misses Harding, striking gowns of black velvet trimmed with white lace, lovely white opera coats edged with white fur and pink velvet; Miss Girdler, striped grey gown, white blouse; Mrs Young, handsome black costume; Mrs Aitken Carrick looked well in grey with fawn silk vest.

Mr and Mrs Matthew Clark, arranged a very pleasant expedition on one of the holidays to the Ostrich Farm. Unfortunately, the showery weather rather spoilt the outing. Mr and Mrs A. Clark, Miss Stewart, Mr and Mrs McMillan, etc., were of the party.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE OTAGO MATCH

was fine, and there really ought to have been more ladies present than there were. I noticed a few dresses—Mrs Neil (junr.), very chic costume of grey, with grey silk vest and cuffs, satin ribbons to match on hat and skirt; Mrs Blair, blue and white flowered sateen, black lace sleeves and yoke, small sailor hat *en suite*; Mrs Walker, lavender fancy material, pretty black bonnet, and lovely little sunshade of chiffon; Miss Walker, black and white French muslin, large white rough straw hat trimmed with white silk bows; Miss M. Cashel, pretty salmon pink crinkled zephyr, large white hat; Miss Wylde-Brown, white embroidered gown, white lace hat with pretty pale green ribbons; her sister was in grey; Mrs Hitchcock, grey cambric gown with point lace trimmings, sweet little grey bonnet; Miss Bedlington, black cashmere skirt and jacket, pretty white spotted muslin blouse, small black hat with yellow flowers; Miss Hooper, grey and white flowered gingham; her sister, grey skirt and white blouse; Miss P. Buckland, black costume, black hat with crushed strawberry trimmings; Miss Way, navy serge skirt, blue and white shirt, small gem hat trimmed with dark blue and white; Miss Halday, blue-grey and white striped zephyr, cream hat trimmed with cream silk and ostrich feathers; Miss Banks, dark blue skirt and Eton jacket, pretty little frilled blouse, white hat trimmed to match; Miss Courtayne, charming costume of grey and white check tweed, white vest, and very pretty grey hat; Miss King, large blue and grey striped dress, the yoke and Swiss belt of dark blue, large black hat with yellow roses; Miss Percival, pretty flowered grey costume, black lace hat finished with red; Miss Dunn, pretty grey tweed gown finished with grey ribbons, large black lace hat; Misses Firth, black skirts, white blouses, small white straw hat with red and black bands; Miss Clayton, pale blue and white costume; Mrs C. McCormick, black gown, white gem hat with large white silk bows; Mrs Richardson, black with tiny white stripe, black bonnet; Miss Stewart, cream skirt, pale blue silk blouse with cream guipure lace yoke; Miss Quinn, white serge costume; Mrs Earl, black and white spotted cambric, pretty black bonnet

Miss J. McDonald, pretty pale blue and white costume, large rough straw hat trimmed to match; Miss O'Reilly, black ground with small white spot, black lace yoke and cuffs, small black hat; Miss Armstrong, silver grey costume; Miss O'Brien, white dress, large white hat with green; Miss J. Ireland, dainty white gown, the yoke and a greater part of the skirt being of very fine lace, white hat covered with ostrich feather, tan gloves; her sister, Miss Lilly, blue and white striped zephyr, dark blue sash, and large straw hat trimmed with dark blue.

Mr and Mrs Alfred Nathan have just returned from their trip to England. Both are looking very well. Mrs Nathan's dress at the races on Boxing Day was the handsomest on the lawn.

'Subscriber,' Remuera.—Your story referred to in last week's issue is not suitable for the GRAPHIC. The household hints are most useful and acceptable.—LADY EDITOR.

MURIEL.

WELLINGTON.

DEAR BEE, DECEMBER 30.

There is generally some good concert to describe here. I hope you are not weary of them.

MR ARTHUR SALVINI'S SECOND CONCERT

proved universally a great success, but there was not nearly as good an audience as its merits demanded. The affair took place in Thomas' Hall, which is excellent for sound. Mr Salvini fairly surpassed the most sanguine expectations. He has quite recovered from his attack of influenza, and was in capital voice throughout. Everyone was delighted, and he was encored for everything, many standing up the more to show their pleasure. There was a very enthusiastic and appreciative audience. His finest song was 'Sound the Alarm' (Handel), which was a great triumph. He also sang 'There is a Flower that Bloometh,' 'Let me like a Soldier Fall,' 'Twenty Years Ago;' a duet by Mr Salvini and Mr John Prouse, 'The Moon Has Raised Her Lamp Above,' was splendidly sung. Mr Prouse also sang 'Flight of Ages' and 'Star of Bethlehem,' both magnificently sung. Mr McDuff Boyd gave two lovely violin solos. Miss Trehair-Osborne sang even better than usual. Her best item was 'Vi Ravisso,' and Mrs Perrin sang beautifully 'Sing, Sweet Bird,' and 'Best of All.' Miss Jessie Wilson, who has attracted some attention in musical circles lately, sang very sweetly, giving 'Douglas Gordon' and 'The Dance.' A quartette, 'Buona Notte,' was splendidly rendered by Mrs Perrin, Miss Trehair-Osborne, and Messrs Prouse and Salvini. Mr John Maginnity played all the accompaniments. This was altogether one of the best concerts we have enjoyed for a long time.

Mr, Mrs, and Miss George and Captain Cameron all leave for England early in 1893. Mr Arnold Izard leaves for England by the next direct boat to pursue his studies. Miss L. Halse has gone to Dunedin to visit Mrs Fergus. Miss M. Quick has also gone to Dunedin to stay with Bishop Nevill. Mr and Mrs Arthur Pearce are spending the holidays at Lowry Bay.

RUBY.

CHRISTCHURCH.

DEAR BEE, DECEMBER 28.

Quite one of the nicest dances of the season was that given at Avonbank. But I must tell you of the

DRESSES AT MRS OTTERSON'S BALL,

the one I refer to. Mrs Otterson wore white striped satin, and looked lovely; Mrs Pilman, an exquisite dress of palest salmon pink and silver brocade, chiffon trimming, and bunches of pink roses; Mrs Heaton Rhodes, handsome white satin brocade with rich lace; Miss Rhodes, white satin, black velvet sleeves; Mrs Lascelles, pale blue silk, pink trimming; Mrs Archer, black silk and lace, trimmed with heliotrope; Mrs Fenwick (Dunedin), lovely dress of white satin, Watteau bow, trimmed with heliotrope; Miss Campbell, effective gown of green silk, with puffed sleeves of pink silk and ruching at the foot, bands of pink velvet on the bodice; Miss Maude Helmore, pretty pink silk with passementerie, corselet bodice. Others there were Miss Baynton, Mrs Ogle, Mrs Lomax Smith, Misses Cowlishaw, Gray, Hutton, Guy, Reeves, E. Tabart, Stopford, Clarke, Turnbull, Moorehouse, and Pickering.

At

MRS HELMORE'S DELIGHTFUL GARDEN PARTY

the hostess wore navy silk, black lace mantle, and bonnet; Miss Helmore, cream gown, yoke of heliotrope veiled in lace, Watteau bow; Miss M. Helmore, cream with coloured stripes, green velvet trimming, swathe belt; Mrs Pitman, black silk figured grenadine over pink silk with ruches of the same, small bonnet to match; Miss A. Rhodes, heliotrope crépon trimmed with black, hat, Empire style; Mrs P. Campbell, dark green costume, passementerie trimmings, black hat with clusters of roses, velvet strings; Miss Gray, pretty white muslin figured with heliotrope, silk swathe belt, large white hat with heliotrope; Mrs C. Clark, claret ottoman cord and brocade dress, lace mantle; Mrs MacRae, vieux rose figured cashmere; Mrs Gould, black silk jetted mantle Mrs Tibart, black silk, lace mantle and bonnet; Miss Tibart, fawn striped dress.

Another dance, this time

A BALL GIVEN BY MRS MEARES,

who looked exceeding well in brown velvet, trimmed with soft pink silk; Miss Meares, very charming pale pink silk, bodice puffed with white sleeves of the same; the Hon. Mrs Parker, white silk trimmed with lovely lace, diamond stars; Mrs Stead, black silk and lace, diamond ornaments; Mrs Wills, pink satin brocaded with lover's knots and puffed sleeves of claret velvet; Mrs Heaton Rhodes, cream brocaded merveilleux; Mrs Thomas, cream satin, made with corselet bodice; Mrs Denniston, light olive green silk, gold trimming; Mrs A. Anderson, pale blue satin; Mrs Common, vieux rose satin, Vandyke lace; Mrs Mairne, dull green brocade; Mrs J. Peacock, black satin, pink and white cap; Mrs Graham, black, trimmed with lace and jet; Miss Garrick, pale heliotrope and silver; Mrs Chambers, pale blue; Miss A. Meeson, electric blue trimmed with gold braid; Miss Kinsey, lemon-coloured surah; Miss Baynton, vieux-rose silk, corselet bodice, jewelled trimming; Miss Way, yellow silk, black lace; Mrs Rhind, black silk and net, steel-dotted; Mrs W. Cotterill, Mrs Gibbs, Misses Cowlishaw, Turner, Black, Loughnan, Ronalds, Blouse, Thomas, Wittnall, Reeves, Hardy, Johnston, Maude, Bullock, Tabart, Messrs Peacock, Gibbs Common, Hodgson, Buchanan, Webb, Lane, Wood, Deamer, Weston, and many more, including several officers of H.M.S. Goldfinch.

Mrs Rhodes, Elmwood, Miss Rhodes, and Mr and Mrs Heaton Rhodes have just returned from England looking all the better for their trip.

Bishop and Mrs Julius, one son and two daughters leave in the Doric next week for a trip Home. They expect to be absent about six months.

DOLLY VALE.

PICTON.

DEAR BEE, DECEMBER 27.

That delightful dream of the past, the

'JESSIE READMAN' DANCE

displayed some pretty dresses. Amongst them were, Mrs Powell, in cream satin with cherry-coloured chiffon and ribbon; Mrs Gregg (Mahakipawa), rich black lace and cardinal ribbons; Mrs Rutherford, pink satin and chiffon, with bouquet and neglige of pink and white roses; Mrs Beauchamp (Anikiwa), handsome black silk with white lace; Mrs Herbert Godfrey, black silk and scarlet chiffon; Mrs H. C. Seymour, black merveilleux with puffings of black chiffon, and pink roses; Mrs Welford, in pink and white chiffon; Mrs Falconer, black silk and lace; Mrs Laery, electric blue silk with yoke, corselet belt, and bows of black velvet; Mrs Fitzgerald looked very nice in black silk and soft pretty white lace; Mrs Fell, black silk and gold; Mrs McIntosh, black moire and cream satin front; Mrs Allen, black with salmon pink ribbon bows, and flowers to match in her cap; Mrs Andrews, black and pink silk bows and sash, with jewelled star in her hair; Mrs Gudgeon, black silk, white chiffon and pink roses. All the girls looked fresh and bright, and pretty, and their dancing was much admired by one or two strangers present. Miss Mary Seymour was the belle of the room, both for her good dancing and pretty dress, which was of cream Liberty silk with foot-frill of lace just a shade darker than the silk, bertha and sleeve frills to match, and cream roses, bouquet of convolvulus and jasmine; Miss Williams looked very handsome in black and yellow silk, Watteau bow; Miss Linton, soft white muslin, ribbon bows; Miss Beauchamp, pale blue gauze over white, with bows and puffs; the Misses M. Linton, pretty pink muslin with puffs and frills; M. Speed, cream Liberty silk with broad Watteau bow of white watered ribbon; K. Seymour, lemon silk with Medici collar, flowers to match; L. Card, pretty blue zephyr frock with bows and frills; Miss Hay, pink with Watteau bow to match; Miss L. Falconer, white tulle; Miss Webster looked so pretty, and was much admired in a soft shade of pink gossamer, with chiffon and ribbon bows to match; her sister was in fawn, with pink vest and ribbon bows; Miss Laery, in *eau-de-nil* gauze and pink ribbons; Miss Lloyd and her sister both wore pretty fawn costumes; Miss A. White, pretty pale blue frock, with frills and short puffed sleeves; Misses Clare Kenny and Nora Kenny were dressed alike in costumes of brown with white embroidery; Miss Waddy looked elegant in cream veiling with foot-ruching, and prettily puffed bodice and sleeves; Misses A. Scott, cream silk frock with puffed bodice and sleeves; J. Seymour, white Liberty silk made bebe fashion, which style suits her; A. Falconer, biscuit brocade with Watteau bows of cardinal silk and cardinal chiffon frills; Misses Greensill, silver broche; and S. Greensill in cream veiling in which she looked very nice; Miss Carey, cream silk with ribbons to match; Misses Eyes in fawn silk, the foot frill caught up with ribbon bows; Miss Nora Allen in black lace with pink chiffon frills and pink ribbon sash. The ball windows were wide open, and the flags waving too and fro kept the room pleasantly cool, so that dancing in such warm weather was not too much exertion. Signor Vanini discoursed the music, and the following gentlemen found energy enough to enjoy twenty-four dances without counting extras:—Captain Burton, Messrs Fox, Snappe, Cupar, Jarvis, Arthur, Walker, Keegan, Haslett, Rutherford, Waddy, Gudgeon, Fell, S. Fell, Smith, Dunn, Arrowsmith, Conolly, E. Conolly, W. Baillie, T. Baillie, Kenny, Rev. Aitkens, Card, Andrews, Fulton, Markham, White, J. S. Allen, Carey, Duncan, Christopher, and Powell.

Wishing you, dear Bee, the compliments of the season.

JEAN.

NELSON.

DEAR BEE, DECEMBER 24.

Among those present at

THE ANNUAL SPORTS AT THE BOYS' COLLEGE

were: Mrs Perry Adams, in a lovely gown of thick shot corded silk made with a ruching round the hem and the bodice trimmed with ecru lace, a small bonnet of sage green to match the gown, and this completed one of the most elegant costumes on the ground: Mrs Sclanders, in a grey costume, with small grey hat having a spray of crimson roses: Mrs Preshaw, black costume, long lace mantle, small black bonnet; Mrs Leggatt, in a pretty costume of flowered green silk, small cream and gold bonnet; Mrs Duff, spotted muslin, black bonnet; Mrs Trolove, black costume; Mrs J. Wood, white cashmere with bands of dark green ribbon velvet, Eton jacket, black hat: Mrs Wood, black gown and bonnet; Mrs Thornton, tailor-made gown of soft cloth, soft white hat with feathers; Mrs Mirams, fawn cloth gown, black and white bonnet; Mrs Holloway, grey gown, black lace mantle and bonnet; Mrs Mules, grey tweed, black mantle and bonnet: Mrs Tomlinson, Mrs Pearson, blue checked gown, white frilled blouse, Zouave jacket, long silk sash, small sailor hat: her sister, Miss Browning, wore a similar costume: Miss Wood, grey costume, shot silk vest and sleeves, white hat with ostrich feathers; Miss Boor, sweet gown of striped lilac and white crepon, simple white hat; Miss Watson, fawn checked costume, white bonnet with wheat: Miss Gibson, white embroidered muslin, brown hat with buttercups; Miss Gribben, fawn gown, dark brown silk vest, white hat with wreath of roses; Miss Heaps, spotted muslin, white hat with blue silk: Miss Atkinson, grey gown, white straw hat; Mrs Grace (Wanganui), flowered muslin, grey cape, black and gold bonnet; Mrs Glasgow, rich black silk gown and black lace mantle, small black and gold bonnet; Mrs Chatterton, white embroidered muslin and corselet belt, small white bonnet.

A most enjoyable afternoon was spent by all those who witnessed the second match between the Nelson and the Brook Lawn Tennis Clubs. It was a warm afternoon, and the courts, as usual, were looking beautifully green. Among those I noticed during the afternoon were Mrs Roger Kingdon, in an elegant toilet of shot corduroy poplin with trimmings of dark red silk, large hat with wheat; Mrs Pitt, black striped muslin, lace mantle, black bonnet with lilies of the valley; Mrs Bunny, Mrs Mackay, pale heliotrope with waistcoat of cream embroidered with gold, *chic* little bonnet of heliotrope velvet; Mrs L. Adams, becoming fawn crépon gown with Empire belt of shot silk, large white hat; Mrs Ledger, grey gown, long lace mantle with Watteau pleat of silk, elegant little bonnet of black with touches of green bebe ribbon; Mrs H. Dodson, Mrs Wix, Mrs Pearson, Mrs Roberts, Mrs Preshaw, Mrs Thornton, tweed skirt, pretty pink flowered silk blouse, white hat with pink silk; Miss Heaps, blue spotted muslin, sailor hat; Miss Jo Pitt, cream flowered muslin, sailor hat; Miss Browning, Miss Mackay, Miss Kay, and Miss Ledger, all wearing tennis dresses; Miss Roberts, in a large black and white checked gown, black and white hat; Miss Duncan (Wellington), very stylish costume of fawn cashmere with Eton jacket, and front of white frilled muslin, large hat with ostrich feathers; Miss Huddleston, pink flowered muslin, Swiss belt and collar and cuffs of brown velvet, black lace hat with red and white roses; Miss Forbes, grey costume, grey hat with pink roses.

Two very enjoyable concerts were given last week, one at the Boys' and one at the Girls' College. Almost the same singers sang at both. Of those taking part were Mesdames Houlker, Percy Adams, Misses Mackay, Gibbs, Jackson, and L. Fell, and Messrs Fell, Kempthorne, Joynt, Grace, etc.

On Friday evening

THE PRIZES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

were presented by Mr Evans to those who were lucky enough to have gained any among the pupils of both Girls' and Boys' Colleges. Quite a crowd assembled in the Provincial Hall to witness this ceremony. I noticed Mesdames Atkinson, Fell, Richmond, Sclanders, Mules, Watts, Bunny, Percy Adams, J. Sharp, Renwick, Locking, Pitts, Heaps, Mackie, Webb, Bowen, Chatterton, Beavis, Hackworth (Riverton), Sealy, Tomlinson, Blackett, Mirams, and Misses Fell, Pitt, Huddleston, Chatterton, Atkinson (two), Wood, Richmond (two), Higgins, Bell, Sealy, Cuthbertson, etc. Excellent addresses were given both by the lady principal, Miss Gibson, and the principal, Mr Joynt.

As usual at this time of the year, the colleges are looking quite deserted, and not only the colleges but numerous family residences, the occupants of which have gone to spend the holidays camping out, or into the country.

Before closing this letter, Bee, let me wish you a bright New Year.

PHYLLIS.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

DEAR BEE, DECEMBER 26.

Christmas is over, and all our pretty decorations have faded. But we still remember the pleasant dissipations of the week, amongst them being

MRS FOOKES' DANCE.

Of the pretty dresses Miss Fookes and Miss Ethel Fookes were most tastefully attired in white, as also were the twins (Miss Margaret and Miss Gracie Fookes); Miss Constance Bayly wore a very pretty white dress; Miss Carrie Bayly, blue; Miss Rennell, Miss Ella Rennell, black; Miss Bird, white and pink; Miss Em. Hamerton, red; Miss I. Hamerton, green; Miss K. Marshall, pink; Miss Stuart, pink; Miss A. Stuart, white; Miss A. Rennell, white; Miss R. Rennell, pink; Miss Glynes, white; Miss Standish, pink; Miss N. Webster, white; Miss Pratt, cream and crimson; Miss Florrie Webster, black and scarlet; Miss Annette Webster, pink; Miss Mee (Timaru), crimson; Miss H. Hursthouse, white; Miss Valentine, black velvet; Miss MacTaggart, white; Miss Kirkby, white; Miss E. Carthew, white; Miss Cliff, delaine; Miss Arrow, black and red; Miss Lettie George, delaine; Messrs A. Hempton, Rolleston, Broad, Lightfoot, Hoby, Teed, P. Webster, Okey, Morey, MacTaggart, Shaw, Bowen, Hamerton, Wilson, Glynes, Dalziel, Kirkby, Fookes, Rennell, Carthew, Standish, and many others whose names I have forgotten. Dancing was kept up with much spirit till the small hours, when the visitors left after having spent a most enjoyable evening.

The ladies' dance and Mrs Standish's dance I shall have to tell you about next week, as I must catch this mail.

At the breaking up of the New Plymouth High School a large concourse of people assembled. Among those present were Mesdames Prudham, Cornwall, MacDearmid, Roy, C. Govett, Weetman, Mitchell, Fookes, Drake, Robinson, Webster, Capel, Hursthouse, Hodsworth, Misses Hadsworth, Govett, MacKellar, Humphries, Hursthouse, H. Hursthouse, Skeet, Dalziel, Stapp, Marshall, K. Marshall, I. Hamerton, Mee, A. and M. Webster, Capel, Pratt, and a great many others.

HILDA.

SATURDAY NIGHT.

THERE is a restful sound about the mention of Saturday night.

To the rich man who lolls about all the week, trying to make the slow hours pass somehow, it may not mean much; but to the man who works ten hours a day for six days out of the seven it has a significance. It means rest.

It means going to bed without setting the alarm clock so that it will ring out and get the house astir at five o'clock.

To the busy toilers in our factories and workshops, Saturday night comes as a blessed relief—a break in the weary monotony.

The loose ends of the week's work are gathered up. The housewife sets the goodly array of eatables in the cupboard, and thinks, 'To morrow I will rest.'

She draws her basket of mending toward her with inward satisfaction, and darns the stockings and sews on the buttons with a sense of relief.

She will rest to-morrow!

The children will put away their toys and their school-books, and gather round the fire to read the NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC, and look at the pictures.

Saturday night! No more work for thirty-six hours! Thirty-six hours of sixty minutes each!

No more money making, no fretting, no business cares, no trying to make books balance—nothing but rest!

The husband is tired; he has worked hard.

He has earned the rest which is coming.

He puts on a clean shirt, combs his wet locks, and sits down to the supper which labour has given him the right to eat, and the ability to eat without killing him with indigestion.

And the way the viands disappear is a sight to make a dyspeptic howl with envy.

On Saturday night our friends drop in, and talk over the news, and tell us what is in the papers, and compare notes on the weather, and give us a detailed history of the way Aunt Maria had the toothache, and what the dentist said, and how Uncle John had an attack of influenza, and what cured him.

And we urge them to stay longer, for it is Saturday night, we tell them; and we walk down to the gate with them, remark on the beauty of the night, and wonder if it will rain to-morrow.

And we go to bed, tired but happy, and reflect that we can lie in bed till we really have rested, for to-morrow is Sunday, and Sunday is the day of rest.

COURTSHIP AT THE CHURN.

BY S. K. BOURNE.

HE—O, leave that hateful churning!
For your company I'm yearning!
How reluctantly I'm turning
To the woods and fields away!

SHE—Pray do not stand and tease, sir!
Go as quickly as you please, sir!
Do not wait at all for me, sir,
I must stay and churn to day.
Hark! I have begun already,
And the cream says 'Flap a-tap,'
And my arm is strong and steady,
'Flap a-tap, a-tap, a-tap.'

HE—Will it take you all the day, dear?
Can I help you if I stay, dear?
Come and welcome back the spring, dear,
Welcome back the lovely spring!

SHE—Oh, I fear 'twill be too late, sir,
And too long for you to wait, sir,
Better seek some other mate, sir,
I've no time to laugh and sing!
See! how rapidly I'm turning!
And the cream says 'Flop a top;'
Oh, I love the work of churning!
'Flop a-top, a-top, a top!'

HE—Dear, you know how I adore you;
How my heart is longing for you,
Since the time when first I saw you
Full of girlish life and joy!

SHE—Do not speak of trifles now, sir:
Say good-bye, and make your bow, sir.
Sentiment I can't allow, sir,
Work must all my mind employ.
Hark! I do believe I hear it!
For the cream says 'Flump a-tump,'
And the butter sure is near it!
'Flump a-tump, a-tump, a-tump!'

HE—Your indifference is killing!
And your answers, hard and chilling,
Show too well a heart unwilling;
I will leave you to your churn!

SHE—Really now, 'twas all in fun, dear;
See, my work is almost done, dear;
And my heart is fairly won, dear,
Take it for your own!
Yes, my heart is in a flutter!
For the cream says 'Swish a-wish!'
And—Hurra! there comes the butter!
'Swish a-wish, a-wish, a-wish!'

Ladies' Home Journal.

TWINS.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

TWINS? Oh, how lovely! And *so* alike!' That was what people used to say of Dot and Dimple Willis, when they were babies, wheeled about in their perambulator by a nurse, and young ladies generally ended with, 'Please let me kiss them, for young ladies know that they never look to better advantage than when they are caressing children.

As they grew older, little school girls, still just alike, old gentlemen used to pat them on their heads as they trotted along, and single little girls—so to speak—used to wish they were one of a pair, and when they were young ladies, they looked so lovely dressed just alike, usually in the palest colours, or in white, and always wearing bracelets.

When they were in morning dress, and did not wear their ornaments, one could see that Dimple had a brown mole on her arm.

This was the only distinguishing mark apparent at first sight to strangers, and as the girls were very proud of their strong resemblance to each other, Dimple naturally concealed it on full-dress occasions, though it was a very pretty mole, and only made the round, white arm look whiter.

By the time the twins were eighteen years old, they had, as people said, 'a great deal of attention,' but as no one knew which he admired most—Miss Dot or Miss Dimple—the attentions never culminated in offers of marriage.

The young men married young ladies with more individuality, and as a witty spinster remarked, the others were not even jealous.

How could they be of two of a kind, especially as this was not a land of Turks or Mormons?

Mrs Willis, the respectable mother of the twins, had begun to consider this matter gravely. She had now been a widow for ten good years, and her income, originally small, had been lessened by an ill-considered speculation. Her one hope was that her lovely girls would marry well, and it sometimes entered her mind that twin spinsters of forty-five, dressed alike and with frizettes of the same pattern might not be as interesting as were twins of eighteen.

'I must settle them while they are young,' she continually declared to herself, but grave doubts at times beset her mind, as the youth of Silverbridge selected plainer partners and left Dot and Dimple still buds ungathered.

It was young Mr Rushmore, very young Mr Rushmore, who had just come into his old grandfather's fortune, who was at first more puzzled by the curious resemblance between the twins than any one else had been. He thought them beautiful, but called them Miss Dot and Miss Dimple indiscriminately.

It was plain to Mrs Willis that if there had only been *one* Miss Willis he would have proposed to her—it was plain to the girls also. They were fond of each other, very fond. Twins are always supposed to be. But each desired to be Mrs Rushmore, Mrs Philander Rushmore.

Their mother had taught them to look on marriage as young men look on going into business. They were scarcely to blame if Mr Rushmore's lands and cash occupied a position in their musings. The only difference between their views of the question was that Dimple rather disliked the man himself while Dot liked him. Dimple, for her part, admired an immense and very serious young man named Tompkins, who used to call occasionally, mention the weather, look solemnly at Miss Dot for a long while, and then turn quite around in his chair, look still more solemnly at Miss Dimple for a still longer while, breathe a deep sigh and remark that 'he must go.'

Why Dimple admired him, unless it was for his size, I cannot tell, but the fact remains. Still, Tompkins made no offer, and one day, Dot having gone to pay calls with her mother, Rushmore called unexpectedly.

It happened that Dimple was watering the geraniums in the window-boxes, and that she had taken off her bracelets.

The pretty brown mole on the lovely white arm struck Philander's fancy immensely.

The oftener he looked at it the more certain he felt that Miss Dimple was much the more charming.

He ventured a compliment. He took advantage of his opportunity and squeezed Miss Dimple's hand.

Subsequently, having decided that he was certain of his feelings, he was about to make his offer upon the spot, when the voices of the other ladies were heard at the door, and he had only time to request that Miss Dimple would 'see him alone next Thursday afternoon.'

'If you wouldn't mind walking in the pine wood, quite by yourself at four o'clock,' he said, 'I want to say something, very—very confidential.'

Dimple understood, and promised to walk in the grove, and neither was aware that just behind the portiere that veiled the door, Dot was listening to every word.

Dot, who liked Philander Rushmore very much indeed, and who knew that Dimple did not like him, and who knew also that she would accept him for his 'gold and gear,' and who knew also—for she saw him kiss it—that that little mole had done the business. That and being alone for the very first time with one of them.

And Dot went away and wept, and then dried her eyes and began to think and think.

And Dimple did not confide in her, which she thought treacherous, and when Mr Tompkins called, and stared and sighed and departed, Dimple said:

'Oh, what a different person *he* is from Philander Rushmore, so manly!'

Thursday came. On Thursday afternoon about two o'clock, Mrs Willis, advised by Dot, went to call on the minister's wife, who was not well.

A little later, Jemima, the servant, was sent to the milliner's to match an impossible shade of velvet with an impossible width of ribbon—still by Miss Dot, and when the house was empty of all but themselves, it was Dot who led the way to the room that the sisters shared and began to try on the new hats they intended to trim.

'There are some fashion-plates on the top shelf of the long pantry,' she said, 'and the loveliest style—don't you remember that high trimming?'

'Oh, yes,' said Dimple, 'I'll get the book.'

She slipped into the pantry as she spoke, and, Dot, with the toe of her tiny boot, pushed the door too.

The door fastened with a spring and was not to be opened from within, but there was a window high in the wall at the other end of the pantry, which gave plenty of light, and Dimple, who thought that the door had blown to, did not disturb herself. She wanted to get the talk about the bonnets through and get away alone to the pine wood.

She found the book at the bottom of the pile, and had tapped on the door in order to be let out, when she heard Dot's voice out of doors, calling her name.

'Dimple,' she heard her cry, 'Where are you, Dimple?'

The voice vanished along the garden path. The window was above Dimple's head, the door was not to be opened.

She looked at her watch. Time was flying, but surely Dot would come back to look for her—surely she would think of the long pantry. She looked at her watch again.

'I shall not meet Philander in the pine wood if she does not,' she said to herself.

She sat down upon a box that was in the pantry and waited her sister's return.

'Perhaps it is providential,' she said to herself. 'What good would money be if the man that goes with it is so utterly uncongenial as Philander is?

'For dear mama's sake I should feel bound to accept him—and now I cannot help myself. He'll be offended—he is easily huffed. If it were Mr Tompkins, now, I should want to break the door down. Poor Mr Tompkins, he is so bashful.'

She sighed a little, and in a few minutes looked at her watch again; it was past four.

'I suppose Dot thinks me drowned in the cistern by this time. Poor girl,' she said, and sat patiently on the box, thinking principally of Mr Tompkins, until five o'clock, when the servant's return led to her release.

'I've been locked up here for a long while,' Dimple said, as she adjusted her hair before the glass, 'and I fancy Dot is searching for me everywhere.'

'I saw nothing of her, miss,' replied the girl, 'and I didn't get the ribbon, and Mr Tompkins is below asking for you.'

Dimple blushed, and went down to see Mr Tompkins, leaving her bracelets on the bureau.

All alone for the first time. Was it that, or the little, round, brown velvet mole, or the sweet look she gave him, or all combined?

Tompkins, the bashful and undecided, suddenly grew bold, and felt able to make up his mind. Before they had chatted fifteen minutes he made this remark:

'One so seldom gets a chance, and now we are by ourselves, I want to say I am awfully fond of you. If you could like me well enough to be my wife, I should be the happiest man alive.'

'Really, Mr Tompkins,' Dimple cried. We leave the rest to the reader's imagination.

Meanwhile Dot had made her way to the pine wood, where in five minutes Philander Rushmore put in an appearance.

Dot wore long gloves on this particular day. Philander looked at her and thought her prettier than ever.

'Oh, you will, won't you?' he asked, in a hurry. 'That was what I wanted to say, you know.'

'Really I do not comprehend, Mr Rushmore,' Dot cried.

'Don't you; oh, but I thought you would. I thought I made it clear—marry me, I mean. Won't you? I'm out of my mind about you—say yes.'

Dot looked doubtful.

'Please say yes,' said Philander.

'Well—yes,' whispered Dot.

As she spoke she pulled off her gloves. Philander stared at the pretty arm, and saw no little brown mole upon it.

'Miss Dot,' he began.

'Yes. You must make sure of our names now,' said Dot, 'or perhaps you've made a mistake—don't mind confessing.'

Her heart was beating wildly. Oh, she did like him. Her eyes said so, her voice said so.

Philander, who was staring at her in a startled fashion, suddenly went down upon his knees before her.

'I'll tell you the truth,' he said. 'At first I could not make up my mind, but I am sure now. You never looked at me like that before—you never seemed so lovely. Dot, I adore you.'

'Dot,' cried a voice; 'where are you, Dot?'

'Dimple,' said Dot, turning pale. But just then two figures appeared at the entrance of the wood, Dimple and Mr Tompkins arm in arm. Dot gave one look, then ran into her sister's arms, and Dimple whispered in her ear:

'Oh! Dot, I've been shut up in the pantry for hours. The door blew to—but really, I consider it providential, though I can't tell you why just yet. Dot, I am engaged.'

'So am I,' whispered Dot.

I scarcely think their confidence went any farther, but I am sure that though they have both been married many years, they still agree in the opinion that the events of that day were providential, however they were brought about.

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LONDON AND PARIS FASHIONS.—THE MOST RECENT FASHIONS IN MILLINERY.—SEE PAGE 22.

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.

RULES.

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

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

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

ANSWERS TO QUERIES.

PEACH PIE ('Windsor').—Peal and stone sufficient soft or ripe peaches to make three pints. Make a crust like buttermilk biscuits. In the bottom of a yellow baking dish sprinkle flour, a little sugar, and crumbs of butter. Roll out a crust and cover the sides of the dish. Now spread carefully a layer of peaches, then the flour, sugar, and butter, till the pan is full, with the butter next the top crust, which must be carefully fastened about the edge of the pan. Cut a hole in the crust, pour in a cupful of warm water and set in the stove. An hour is sufficient for cooking. Two cupfuls of sugar and one of butter are required. Eat hot, without sauce.

GRAPES ('Querist').—Stem and wash the grapes, take the skins off, cook the pulp until soft, sift through a colander, to get the seeds out, add the pulps and skins and weigh; put them in a porcelain kettle and allow one pound of sugar to three of fruit; cook five minutes and can. Some allow half as many pounds of sugar as fruit. Canned grapes should be used the first year, as they are not as good when kept longer. For spiced grapes, take the skins off, cook the pulp until the seeds separate, put through a colander, add the skins and pulp, allow half a pound of sugar to every pint of fruit and about half a pint of vinegar to four quarts of fruit; use ground cloves and cinnamon to your taste, boil slowly one hour; watch closely, as it is liable to burn; put into jars to use with meats.

RECIPES.

FOWL A LA DELHI.—Cut a large fowl into joints, place them in a deep frying pan with a gill of salad oil, an onion chopped very fine, a sprig of thyme, and one bay leaf; sprinkle some seasoning over, and let fry a light brown. Remove the thyme and bay-leaf pour off the oil, add half a pint of tomato sauce, a tablespoonful of walnut ketchup, and half a pint of stock broth. Simmer together for fifteen minutes, then lift out the joints on a hot dish, add a pinch of curry powder to the sauce and reduce it one-half by boiling. Pour the boiling sauce over the fowl, and serve at once with ham cut in thin, small slices and handed.

CROUSTADES DE GIBIER.—Boil some potatoes till tender, drain well and pass them through a sieve, mix in a lump of butter, a little grated nutmeg, and enough yolks of eggs to form a light paste. Flatten this out to about a coupleof inches in thickness, then, when cold, cut it into cylinders with a plain round cutter, egg and breaderumb each one, mark it on the top with a smaller cutter, then fry them in hot butter or lard. Remove the tops, take out some of the inside with a small spoon, and fill in with a purée of game.

GOOSEBERRY TARTLETS WITH CREAM. — Rub four ounces of butter in eight ounces of flour, add the yolk of an egg, and sufficient cold water to mix into a firm paste, roll out the fifth of an inch thick, cut out sixteen pieces, lay them in patty-pans, press them out from the centre with a small pad of dough, notch the edges with the back of a knife, place in each tartlet eight gooseberries, sprinkle with water, then add to each one-half ounce of powdered white sugar, and bake in a moderate oven. When baked, take them out of the pans, and let them get cold; whisk a gill of cream quite stiff, sweeten it with a little white sugar, divide into two portions, colour one with a little cochineal; place some cream on each tartlet, half red and half white; send them to table on lace papers on glass or silver dishes.

RASPBERRY ICE CREAM.—Mix well together one pint of cream, one-half pound of fine raspberries, four ounces of white sugar, and a little milk and cochineal; then strain through a fine sieve into the freezer; as the mixture freezes, occasionally cut it down from the sides with a broad knife to keep the ice quite smooth; when frozen thoroughly, fill an ice mould, and bed it in ice until wanted, then turn out on a silver dish, and garnish with white flowers and fern leaves.

LONDON AND PARIS FASHIONS.

THE MOST RECENT FASHIONS IN MILLINERY.

(SEE ILLUSTRATION PAGE 21).

A PRETTY hat or bonnet has an irresistible attraction for a pretty woman. There is a little alteration in the styles of millinery items which is, considered generally, an improvement.

Hats are not quite so flat as formerly, and the crowns are a little more roomy. The tall, wired-up effects lately seen in the backs of hats and bonnets now generally appear in front. Broad bows are often placed in front, sometimes mingled with feathers, adding greatly to the breadth at the sides. Buckles are very large and showy, mostly made of rhinestones, gilt metals, or iridescent pearl. Feathers may be disposed of in all sorts of eccentric ways, even trailing down over the ears. The most fashionable colours are green, yellow, heliotrope, and white.

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Very stylish are the ideas this week in the way of head-covering.

No. 1, hat-bonnet in drawn areophane, trimmed with black moiré ribbons and black ostrich tips; narrow strings.

No. 2, hat in black chip, with a sea-green velvet bow in front and a spray of mauve lilac at the back. The brim is lined to match the bow.

No. 3, poke hat in fine black straw, trimmed with rose du Barri moiré ribbon, with black tips.

No. 4, bonnet in white guipure lace, trimmed with olive-green velvet bows and mauve pansies. The strings, which are tied under the right ear, are also of narrow olive-green velvet.

The ever-popular little toque still holds its own. The decorated and modernized sailor hat is as firmly established to-day as it has been ever since the memory of women not yet gray haired. Some of the prettiest sailor hats are of white felt trimmed with white velvet and black ostrich tips.

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There is still infinite variety in dresses. One of the newest and prettiest gowns is made of a novel material, a deep red voile, with a double stripe of black and cream upon it interwoven in some peculiar manner which gives it the appearance of velvet. This is made in the Princess style with the stripes going downwards, a tiny black satin quilling round the hem; and over the shoulders fall two straight scarves of black chiffon edged with lace, not meeting in front but drawn into the waist with a black satin band terminating at each side with rosettes. This is very graceful and quite new. Another elegant gown is made of dark blue tucked voile with big sleeves of black silk and a frill of cream lace round the shoulders manipulated to form epaulettes. A pretty evening dress is made of black striped moirè, with a low bodice trimmed with black guipure and long scarves of yellow chiffon and a sash of yellow velvet.

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A pretty travelling dress for a bride is of blue and brown material, with brown velvet zouave over a silk vest of a pretty shade of turquoise blue, the skirt having a ruching of brown velvet, with hat to match.

PERSIAN FASTING.

DOCTOR WILLS, in his 'Persia as it is,' devotes one chapter to the great fast of the month of Ramazan. Mohammed called fasting 'the gate of religion,' and Mussulmans in general reckon it as 'one-fourth of the faith.' During the sacred month all persons except travellers, the sick, the aged, young mothers and young children, must fast from daybreak till sunset. Daybreak is specifically defined in the Koran as the time in the early morning when by natural light a white thread can be just distinguished from a black one. In a Mohammedan fast no one eats, drinks or smokes from daybreak till sunset.

The month is a lunar one, and begins when two credible witnesses—who must be males and of middle age—have seen the new moon. When Ramazan falls in summer, the going without water in the daytime for a whole month becomes a terrible deprivation, especially to the labouring people. Many of the rich take a journey, and so avoid the fast; but on the other hand, the very religious people add to their penance by fasting for several days prior to the commencement of Ramazan.

Those who can afford to do so turn night into day, and by going to bed at dawn, and getting up late in the afternoon, escape the greater part of the suffering of the fast.

An hour before daybreak watchers ascend the roofs and minarets, and shout, 'Oh, ye faithful, now is the hour for water and opium!' A light breakfast is then hastily swallowed, with a farewell cup of tea and a pipe. Then most people take a deep draught of water, and the aged of both sexes gulp down a small pill of pure opium, and at the sound of the morning gun all who are not prevented by the nature of their employment compose themselves to sleep.

All business is at a standstill. Most of the shops are closed altogether, or are opened for a few hours only. The government offices are shut save for an hour or two, and all business that can be put off is postponed till after Ramazan.

As sunset approaches the streets are thronged. The cook-shops are surrounded by a hungry crowd. As the moment for the sunset gun draws near, the itinerant pipe-seller places the moistened tobacco on the heads of his numerous hubble-bubbles, fans his little charcoal fire, and his customers grasp the desired pipe.

Bang goes the gun! Fire is placed on the water-pipes or hubble-bubbles; the slices of meat are almost scrambled for, and the sweetmeat-seller has a lively business.

Ramazan is the month of entertainment among the Persians. Invitations are issued for guests to pass the night with their host, and storytellers are in great request.

How strictly the more devout Mussulmans observe the fast is shown by the fact that they are careful not to swallow even their own saliva. When riding or passing through a dusty place, such enthusiasts tie a veil over their faces, lest they should swallow nourishment which might be floating in the air.

Although the sick are especially exempted from feasting, Doctor Wills says that they often prefer to die rather than avail themselves of the right to eat and drink.

THE WORK CORNER.

HANDKERCHIEFS.

MOST ladies like nice handkerchiefs; but they are so expensive, particularly in the small towns, that a good supply of a really fine article is not within the reach of all who would appreciate them. But very dainty ones may be made at home, and the work is really pleasant, though rather tedious for weak eyes and weak nerves.

Linen lawn is nicest for this work, and India linen, or a fine white lawn is also nice. One yard will make four. Cut them straight, first drawing a thread to cut by. Have them eighteen inches square before drawing the threads to mark the hem, for which draw out two threads all round, an inch or an inch and a quarter from the edge. Of course, all depends on the size of the hem. Turn down the hem and hem-stitch. As all my readers may not understand hem-stitching, a few words of instruction may be acceptable. Begin by fastening your thread firmly, hiding the knot from view. Pass the needle under four threads (where the threads are drawn out), draw thread and needle through, over the finger on which the work rests, then pass the needle under the sewing-thread into the hem—not through the under-side.

For drawn work, draw out ten threads (or about that number). Use thread No. 100. Fasten thread firmly in the hem on the wrong side of the work, then lay the thread across the middle of the drawn work, and with the needle take up about eight threads; bring the needle up so that the thread is around it, forming a knot when drawn closely. Keep the thread over the middle of drawn work so that the work will be even.

It is not wise to strain one's eyes counting threads; one more or less cannot be seen, nor will so small an error make the article less beautiful.

Another way of marking these handkerchiefs is to mark the edges in squares or scallops, then buttonhole-stitch them all round. After the buttonhole work is completed, cut the cloth away.

Some very beautiful handkerchiefs are made of white China silk. The edges are done in buttonhole stitch with white embroidery, or knitting silk. An elaborate monogram may be embroidered in one corner; or floral designs may be done in embroidery, if liked. But plain or embroidered they are very pretty and serviceable.

ELZA RENAN.

MATCHES AND PINS.

MATCHES and pins being among the most common things in daily use, it is seldom that any thought is bestowed upon them. Matches that are ignited by friction were first made in 1829, before which time they were made to catch fire from a spark struck from flint or steel—a very inconvenient method. It is hard to say how many millions of matches are made in a day, but when the number of people that use them is reckoned, the total sum is appalling. Probably in the city of London alone over twenty million matches are used every twenty four hours. But matches are such little things that nobody ever seems to think of them. From an ordinary three-inch plank 186,000 matches may be made, yet even at that rate the lumber used in the match business attains enormous proportions.

Pins are mentioned as far back as 1483, but not until the beginning of this century were they manufactured by machinery. The old way of making each pin by hand must have been very tedious, and it is not likely that people were so careless with them then, as they were much more expensive than now. It has often been wondered what becomes of the pins that are lost, but it is hard to say. There are fourteen distinct operations in making a pin, and lots of trouble attached to the process. Pins are made of brass, and then tinned and blanched, and millions of them are manufactured daily. As a pin can be used more than once, the number used does not equal that of matches, but still miles upon miles of wire are used annually in their manufacture. Like matches, they are little things and not thought much of; but when you need a pin or a match, and there is none to be found, then you realize what an important part they play in daily life.

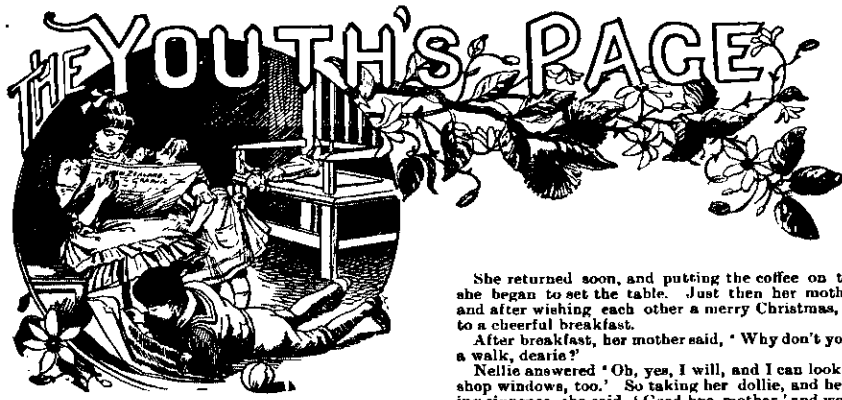
A WELCOME.

GIVE me your hand. Oh, brother! see where rises
The bright New Year, clad in her pearl-white vest,
Her golden hair, that veils the sweet surprises
Held to her heart, streams o'er the sunset west,
Hiding the year that all too slow is dying,
Drying the tears that we therein have shed;
Her laughing voice doth sound above the sighing
That comes from those who'd mourn the year just dead.

Why should we mourn? True, some have gone before us;
Of them we know naught, save they've gone away.
Their voices failing from the merry chorus
That once was wont to greet the rising day!
Their hands no longer with our hand-clasp meeting,
Their feet no longer pausing at our door,
Still they are gone; so why should we be 'greeting?'
We live, we love, and hail New Year once more.

True, in the year that now dies sad and lonely,
Our hearts were wrung, and disappointments lore
Was ours most fully; things we deemed most holy
Showed their real selves, their great and secret sore.
Were we not foolish thus to vex and whimper?
Life has for us exactly what we take.
If for a smile she gives a vacuous simper,
Are hearts so brittle that at this they'd break?

The bells are tolling; dead he lies! Arisen,
Our sweet young Queen holds out her pretty hands.
Let Hope once more unlock our self-made prison,
Let us arise and face Life's robber bands!
Smile with the tear, pain, pleasure mixed together,
Come with the fair year that was born to night!
There's nothing new; only can we say whether
Our sky shall be o'ercast or clearly bright?



THE TWO ALMANACS—1892-1893.

A FABLE.

UPON a desk it chanced one day,
Two almanacs together lay—
One of the present year, and one
With date of the old year, just gone—
When, slightly raising up his head,
The latter to his neighbour said :
'Dear neighbour, for what crime have I
Deserved my altered destiny?
My master used to honour me,
Each moment of the day would he
Turn over and consult my page.
But now, alas! in my old age,
Dishonoured to the dust I'm thrown,
While he hath eyes for thee alone.'
The other then, in page and rim
Quite fresh and new, thus answered him :
'Thou art not of this age, my friend,
And of thine own there is an end.
Sunday with us, as thou mayest see,
Is only Saturday with thee.
Thou art, poor friend, a day too late——
Thou must blame nothing but thy date ;
And if, thanks to my own, I'm now,
What thou wert once, yet I must bow
To the same lot—to have lived my time
Of twelve months more, my only crime!'
Thus all things change and pass away
In this frail world. To outlive one day
Is to be dead ; nothing is wrong,
And men are charmed, just so long
As we can serve them. Let us lose
Our usefulness, and we abuse
And call them ingrates. Be content,
Men of bygone age, of power spent ;
Old servants, veterans, human flowers
Of withered beauty ; lovers, ye
Who mourn your mistress' perfidy—
All are old almanacs.

TWO SIDES OF A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY A YOUTHFUL CONTRIBUTOR.

IT was late Christmas morning. The sun was shining in at the window of a large house, on a beautiful little girl asleep in bed. Presently the little girl, whom we will call Helen Lawrence, awoke, and slipping on her dressing slippers, ran across the room to the big fire-place, where her stocking was hanging full. She turned over her gifts, which were a necklace, a ring, a bracelet, a beautiful doll, and many other things with a somewhat discontented look, and then going down to the toe of her stocking, she brought up a little box, in which was a bright half sovereign.

'Well,' said she, 'this is the best thing in my stocking. I can buy that paint-box with it.'

Just then her nurse came in to dress her. When she was dressed she went to her father's and mother's room, wished them a merry Christmas, and then went downstairs to wait till they came down.

After breakfast her father said, 'How would you like to take a ride with your two cousins, Helen?'

Helen answered, 'Very much indeed, papa.'

They went, and got home just in time to get lunch, and for Helen to get dressed for the Christmas tree at her uncle's house.

Helen went, had a good time, and came home and went to bed very cross, tired, and not having done a kind thing for anybody poorer than herself.

* * * * * * *

But now let us raise the curtain on a very different scene. It is early on the same Christmas morning as our first story, and the sun is shining in the window of a little house on a little girl not so pretty as our first, but with a frank, honest look. This little girl, whom we will call Nellie, is still asleep, but she will soon wake. She is awake now. She jumps up, dresses herself, and then running to the stove, where she had hung her stocking the night before without expecting anything in it; but there is a little bit of a doll, some lollies, and in the toe is a little box. She opens it, and in it is a bright new penny. She dances around, and almost screams aloud in her joy. But remembering that her mother is still asleep, she tries not to.

'Now,' said she, 'I will light the fire and sweep the room before mother wakes up.' After she had done that she went to the cupboard and took from it a little box. She opened it, and took out some money and counted it. 'One shilling and sixpence,' she said at last. 'I can buy some coffee, butter, and two rolls, and still have sixpence left.' So slipping on her little shawl and hood, she went outdoors.

She returned soon, and putting the coffee on the stove, she began to set the table. Just then her mother woke, and after wishing each other a merry Christmas, sat down to a cheerful breakfast.

After breakfast, her mother said, 'Why don't you go take a walk, dearie?'

Nellie answered 'Oh, yes, I will, and I can look in at the shop windows, too.' So taking her dollie, and her remaining sixpence, she said, 'Good-bye, mother,' and went out.

As Nellie was walking along, she saw a little girl just her size crouched down in the corner of a door-step. When Nellie came up to her, she said, 'Oh, you poor little thing, what is the matter?' She got no answer, so she asked again, 'Are you hungry?'

'Awful!' was the answer.

Nellie thought for a second, and then said, 'Come in here and get something to eat.'

They went in together, and when they came out Nellie said :

'Have you any home?'

'Dunno,' was the answer.

Then Nellie said again, 'You poor little thing.' She stopped a second, and then began again. 'Here is sixpence for you to get some dinner with ; it is all I have, or I would give you more. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye,' was the answer. 'Thank you for the money.'

'You are very welcome,' and Nellie was off. She ran home as fast as she could, to tell her mother all about what had happened.

That evening Nellie did not go to any Christmas tree, but spent a quiet and happy evening with her mother, talking about what had happened that day and reading the little Bible. At half-past eight Nellie went to bed very tired and very happy, and having done one kind thing to somebody poorer than herself.

The little author of this story is eleven years old.

A NAVAL BATTLE FOR CLEVER BOYS.

THE amusing experiment of a small naval battle can be made with white chalk and the ordinary table vinegar. Model, say, a dozen chunks of chalk to the resemblance of ships, planing the bottoms evenly, and using matches for masts, smoke-stacks, and turrets. The rival forces you can distinguish by colouring the enemy's ships with black ink, leaving your own white. Having placed them in a pan or plate close to an imaginary dividing line, pour a good quantity of vinegar between the chalk sticks. Instantly you will hear an audible seething, like the hissing of shells in actual warfare, while ships as if puffing up steam will begin to move forward in slow revolutions, leaving behind them streaks of foam such as are observed in the wake of moving vessels. When meeting at the dividing line, they will have attained quite a respectable speed, bumping and cuffing together in the endeavour to push one another furthest from the dividing line. The engagement often proves an exciting one. Of course, the side has won which has the larger number of ships nearest the centre after the affray.

The chemical solution of this seeming mystery is quite simple. Chalk being largely carbon, combines with the acid of the vinegar in carbonic acid—the same gases that cause the effervescence of most mineral waters. The gases rise to the surface of the vinegar in small bubbles of sufficient strength to cause the current which turns the chalk.

Since the patriotic youth will want to see New Zealand boats win, it will be well for him to remember that the best quality of chalk contains the largest proportion of carbon. It will also prove of advantage to plane the chalk carefully, so as to permit it to glide easily.

QUITE LEGAL.

A CERTAIN English labourer who was noted for his great size and strength once thought of an original fashion of avoiding toll. The incident is described in the 'Autobiography of an English Gamekeeper.'

The labourer was going along the road mounted on his donkey, which was a good-sized animal, when he came to a turnpike gate.

'How much do you charge for my donkey to walk through?' he asked the pikeman.

'Twopence,' was the reply.

'And how much do you charge for carrying a parcel through the gate?'

'Nothing.'

'Whoa! whoa!' cried Joslin ; and quietly dismounting, he deliberately slipped his head under the donkey, seized his forelegs with his hands, lifted him off the ground, carried him through the gate and set him down on the other side.

'Gee up, Neddy!' he cried, getting on the donkey's back, and off they went, well content.

FOR A SUMMER EVENING.

'DISTRACTION,' or 'Spider web,' is a game in which each member of the party writs nnnibers, from one up to one hundred, in every direction over a sheet of paper, upside down, or, in fact, in every way but straight. The papers are then passed about, and each one must scratch off the number on his neighbour's paper, but must do it in order, two being marked only after one, three after two, etc. The one who first reaches one hundred wins the game, and receives a prize.

TOO SLIPPERY.

SEA captains have many adventures, and the stories of their wonderful escapes seldom lose by repetition. Many years ago pirates cruised up and down the English Channel, to the great peril of the merchantmen. The story is told of a Captain Davis, who was noted for his quick wit as well as for his skill in navigation, that he was returning from Ireland with a cargo consisting mainly of butter.

He had not been out very long when a pirate was seen coming down upon him. In vain all sails were spread, every moment brought the pirate nearer.

The men were at their wits' end, but the captain knew a trick or two. He ordered his men to take off their boots and stockings, and directed that a score of butter barrels be brought on deck.

In a few minutes the barrels had been knocked to pieces, and the butter was thickly spread all over the deck and outside the ship. Not a rope nor a spar that was not slippery. Even without their boots and stockings the sailors could scarcely keep on their legs.

On came the pirate, not dreaming how smoothly he was to be received. Captain Davis assumed an air of submission, and allowed the enemy to come alongside quietly.

But lo! when they jumped over, fully armed, with pistol in one hand and sword in the other, they slipped about and tumbled over each other on the buttered deck like so many rats.

One fellow shot head foremost down into the cabin, where he was immediately set upon by the boy ; another slid across the deck, and shot out into the sea by an opposite port-hole.

Not one of them could stand on his feet, and as pirates are generally superstitious, an idea seized them that the ship was possessed of the devil. They hurried back into their own vessel, cast loose, and Captain Davis got safely into port at the expense of a few pounds of butter.

HINTS FOR BOYS.

A GENTLEMAN advertised for a boy to assist him in his office, and nearly fifty applicants presented themselves before him. Out of the whole number he selected one, and dismissed the rest.

'I should like to know,' said a friend, 'on what ground you selected that boy without a single recommendation?'

'You are mistaken,' said the gentleman ; 'he has a great many : He wiped his feet when he came in and closed the door after him, showing that he was careful ; gave up his seat to that lame old man, showing that he was kind and thoughtful ; he took off his cap when he came in, answered my questions promptly and respectfully, showing that he was polite and gentlemanly ; he picked up a book which I had purposely laid upon the floor, and replaced it on the table, while all the rest stepped over it or shoved it aside, and he waited quietly for his turn, instead of pushing or crowding, showing that he was honest and orderly. When I talked with him, I noticed that his clothes were carefully brushed, his hair in nice order and his teeth as white as milk ; and when he wrote his name I noticed that his finger nails were clean, instead of being tipped with jet, like that handsome little fellow's in the blue jacket. Don't you call these things letters of recommendation? I do ; and I would give more for what I can tell about a boy by using my eyes ten minutes than all the letters of recommendation he can give me.'

LIVES IN A GLASS HOUSE.

THE King of Siam, according to the *London News*, has chosen a unique and effective method of keeping cool. He has recently had built for himself, by a Chinese architect, a pavilion of glass. Walls, floors and ceiling are formed of slabs of different thicknesses of glass, joined by impermeable cement.

By one door only can the king enter, and this closes hermetically when he comes in, and ventilator valves in tall pipes in the roof open, as does also a sluice besides a large reservoir in which the glass house stands.

The transparent edifice then becomes submerged, and the king finds himself in a cool and perfectly dry habitation, where he passes the time in a manner pleasing to himself.

A SUCCESTION.

'PAPA,' said Willie, 'little brother is a month old tomorrow, isn't he?'

'Yes.'

'Let you and me give him a birfday present.'

'Very well. What shall it be?'

'Let's buy him a wig. He needs that more'n anything.'

HARRY'S LETTER FROM THE COUNTRY

TO HIS FATHER IN TOWN.

DEAR PAPA,—The country is awfully nice—
They say that the fishing is fine ;
Although I've been asked to go out once or twice,
I could not, for I have no line.

Please send me one down, and a long pole also ;
When I don't go fishing, you see,
The pole can be used in the orchard below
To knock down the fruit from the tree.

We are going to get up a baseball match,
But haven't a ball or a bat,
You might send me some, and as I hope to catch,
I need a glove, mask, and a hat.

They've got a good place for a tennis-court here,
And all that we need is a net,
Some racquets and balls (the make of this year)—
Now, papa, *please* do not forget.

If you will send these things at once by express,
I know we can have lots of fun ;
We all send our love—mamma, baby and Bess—
Good-bye, From your loving
SON.

DOUBLE DEALING.

SHE has two eyes that twinkle so
One never can resist them;
Two cheeks, both red and white, you know,
Two lips, and I have kissed them!
Two tiny feet, surpassing art,
Two white hands, soft and supple;
And yesterday she stole my heart—
To make another couple.

SUITOR (to her father): 'Sir, I love the very ground your daughter treads on.'

Father (grimly): 'Well, young man, you ain't the first party that's had an attachment for it; howsumever, if you love it well enough to come and help to pay up the mortgage on it, like Jacob did, you can marry Sarah.'

AT ROTORUA.

'NOW let's take a look at the Sanatorium,' said a native, showing off the geysers to an Auckland visitor.

'I don't care if I do,' was the reply; 'I'm just about as thirsty as I usually get.'

TOLD THIS CHRISTMAS.

SEEDY STRANGER: 'Sir, at this holy and happy season, when the hearts of all are filled with joy, could you not by a good action bring—'

Mr Grasper Simmons (gruffly): 'If you needed a dinner, why didn't you apply to the authorities? There's no need of going hungry.'

Seedy Stranger: 'You wrong me, sir,—I seek not charity. Do good for both yourself and me by purchasing a box of Stuffum's After Dinner Pills, and secure at once bodily comfort and the sweet consciousness of having relieved the poor.'

SIMPKINS: 'Your little wife is a brilliantly handsome woman. I should think you would be jealous of her.'

Host (confidentially): 'To tell the truth, Simpkins, I am. I never invite anybody here that any sane woman would take a fancy to.'

Somehow Simpkins did not turn up on New Year's Day, and his friend wondered!

FISHERMAN: 'I say, my little lad, do you know if there are any fish in the pond?'

Scotch Boy: 'Well, sir, if there is ony they must be awful small 'cause there was no watter there till it rained yesterday.'

IT WAS AWFUL.

IT was by the merest accident that I happened to hear the following distressing conversation between young Mr and Mrs Mushy. They had just returned from their wedding tour, and were about to undergo the mortal agony of their first separation, for Mushy was going back to his office desk, there to remain for four long, weary, dreadful hours.

'How shall I ever live a *whole* half day without you, dearie?' whispered Mrs Mushy.

'You won't miss me much, will you, darling?'

'*Miss* you? O Horace!'

'Ever and ever so much?'

'Every moment will seem an *age!*'

'My darling!'

'And you will come home just as soon as ever you can, dearie?'

'You *know* that I will.'

'O Horace! I'm *so* glad!'

'Glad you are my own dear little wifey?'

'Yes, darling.'

'I'm a thousand, *thousand* times glad!'

'You old darling.'

'But now I really *must* go!'

'O Horace?'

'There, there! The little girly mustn't cry.'

'I just can't *help* it, Horace. It's *so* hard to see you go! Why must we *ever* be separated for a single *hour?* It is *too* cruel!'

'But I'll be back so soon. Be a brave little woman!'

'O Horace! I *can't!*'

'But you *must*. I'm not worth crying for.'

'Yes you *are*, too.'

'Indeed I'm not, Birdie.'

'Indeed you *are!*'

'Well, well, sweetheart, I'm off now. Just one more kiss.'

He took a dozen, and then gasped out.

'Just *one* more.'

'I've a mind to keep tight hold of you, and not let you go at all,' she whispered.

'What would you do with ugly old me around all the time?'

'I'd be the *happiest woman* in all the wide *world!*'

'No?'

'I *would!*'

'You don't love me that much?'

'*Love* you? O, Horace!'

'You little precious!'

'You dear old boy!'

He took another, and another, and a few more. She also seemed to be helping herself to a bountiful supply. Then he said:

'Good-bye, darling.'——'*Is* it time for you to really *go?*'——'Indeed it is. Good-bye, birdie.'——'Go-o-o-d-bye—precious! Are you sure your watch isn't too fast?'——'Oh, it's just right. Good-bye, wifey, dear.'——'Bye-bye, darling. Come home just the minute you can.'——'Yes, indeed; I'll run all the way.'——'You *dear* fellow! *Good*-bye!'——'*Good* bye. Throw me a kiss.' 'Bye-bye, my treasure boy!'

The door bangs and I hear him go down the steps, and I think the agony is ended. But the next moment the door opens, his head pops in, and he says:

'Just *one* more kiss; I couldn't go without it.' He doesn't go without it and a good many others besides, and gasps, 'Now I *am* off.'

Then he goes out to the corner, walking backward half the way, and fluttering his handkerchief. I catch sight of a dainty little bit of cambric waving from a window below my room, and I drop into a chair in all the querulousness and cynicism of my old bachelorhood, and say:

'Well, I hope to goodness it will last; but I just don't believe it will. If I felt sure it would I—I—don't know, but I'd get married myself.'

AUNT DINAH: 'Whafoah yo' wears brack, Deakun Ebony? Yo' am not a widower?'

Deacon Ebony: 'I is economical, honey. One brush do me foh a hat brush, hair brush, clothes brush, shoe brush, an' flesh brush.'

A DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE.

A FEW weeks ago a parcel arrived at this office, addressed to the editor, and labelled 'Spring Poems.'

With a muttered adjective he commenced to unknot the cord, inwardly deciding he would have to obtain the services of a 'Cussin'-Editor' if writers intended sending poems in this wholesale manner.

Upon opening the parcel the cheerful smile which broke out upon his countenance was worth framing.

There—resting upon cotton-wool—were twelve fresh eggs, accompanied by a card bearing the inscription:—

'Merry lays, by a hen.'

The shock was so great that it caused him a few days' indisposition, but he has now recovered.

We tried one of the eggs upon the office-boy, and in expressing his opinion, he, by a remarkable coincidence, pronounced it 'a poem.'

Our Editor is now prepared to apologise for all the nasty mean things he has said about spring poets in general, and also sends hearty thanks to this poet in particular. At the same time he remarked, 'If poets always turned out such work they would have a much better chance of acceptance.

CUPID'S COUPLETS.

I STRUGGLE hard to woo my love in rhyme,
But always miss it in the *second line*;
Inscribing Sophy what is 'dear to keep,'
I'm sure to sicken it with something 'sweet.'

I gaily launch a bright, ambitious 'hope,'
When, presto! it goes under in a 'boat,'
And when I write encomiums on 'home,'
I ruin them by wailing out 'alone!'

The pathetic beauties of a 'single man'
Are roughly coupled with a 'loving lamb;'
The weighty phrase, 'My heart is not a feather,'
Must needs fly falsely into 'love forever!'

When love-taught fancy plays the 'lover's harp,
The music's lost in the 'divinest art;'
A master-line, extolling 'beauty's sum,'
Spontaneously drivels into 'one.'

C.D.H.

ENGLISH HUSBANDS.

MRS NAGGER: 'Oh, James, how awkward! Mr Smith has not come, and now we shall be thirteen at table.'

Mr Nagger: 'What then?'

Mrs Nagger (with a shriek): 'Why one of us will die before the year is out.'

Mr Nagger (brutally): 'Never mind—*I'm* pretty tough.'

IRREPARABLE LOSS.

CHEMIST'S ASSISTANT: 'Oh, sir, I've given Mrs Ailment a fatal dose of poison by mistake!'

Chemist: 'Confound you, you idiot! You've killed my best customer!'

SCENE: A FREE DINNER.

RAGGED DINER (to lady assistant): 'Ere, young woman, jest give the lady next to me some more pudden, will yer?'