

# After Dinner Gossip

## and

# Echoes of the Week.

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### A Press Tribute to the Governor.

The protracted series of farewells to which His Excellency the Governor has good-naturedly, and even willingly, subjected himself, are drawing rapidly to a close. The main centres of population, with the exception of Wellington, have already done their devoirs, and the Empire City is just now in the throes of preparing to "welcome the coming," and providing suitable God-speed for "the parting guest"—in short, it is but a matter of days when the most popular Governor who has ever stood at the head of affairs in this colony will have gone his way, and a new man will take the place he has occupied so busily and so worthily for so generous a term of office. It may be, therefore, that no more fitting opportunity will present itself of allowing this paper to add its tribute of admiration for the kindly, good-natured and strenuous manner in which our retiring Governor has filled his high office, and its regret that inevitable Time has rolled on to the point when good-bye must be said. Seven years is a substantial slice out of a man's life, and it is a longer time than most of us care to go without a holiday; so it cannot be denied that Lord Ranfurly has well earned the rest from the many duties—the bulk of them self-imposed—which he has carried out so cheerfully during his stay amongst us. The work of a Governor in such a colony as this is pretty much what the individual filling it likes to make it. That, one supposes, may be said of most positions, but it is specially the fact with the supreme officer of a self-governing colony. He may be a mere ornamental figure-head of the State, signing—a perhaps occasionally—inconvenient number of papers, and more or less obliged to do a certain amount of perfunctory, if profuse, entertaining, or he may, like Lord Ranfurly, shoulder the position with a determination to leave the colony better for his coming, and may set himself to know and understand the people he presides over in the name of the King, and be able therefore to do them service when he returns to the Old Land. And though other Governors have done well, none have quite filled the position as has the man (I mistake the word gentleman nowadays) who is shortly leaving us, and, therefore, as one of the press, and on behalf of the "Graphic," one adds, as has been said, a tribute of warm admiration and respect, which, if ill-expressed, is at all events sincere. And, indeed, His Excellency does merit some extra expression of gratitude from newspaper men, and perhaps specially from those connected with illustrated journalism. It is the fate of men in his high position to be photographed: it is the duty of papers such as this to badge them into position on every occasion of public importance. It is their fate; but fate is not always accepted with equanimity; and under such circumstances the instruments of fate, the press photographers, reporters and others, cannot feel much surprised; or even if one considers the nuisance, much aggrieved if they are regarded with some disfavour by those whom they are bound to persecute. It has not been so with Lord Ranfurly. The ladders of the whole-plate camera men have been reared up against him, platforms have been set up in his grounds, he has been snap-shotted here, he has been posed there—never (we papers say it with pride) has he been able to escape the "fend" when the smallest interest attached to the business on which he was engaged. Yet he has never objected; at least not audibly. Frankly, it must be sufficient to make

most men restive; but His Excellency has, I imagine, quoted to himself, "Still I have borne it with a patient shrug, for sufferance is the badge of all my tribe," and has smilingly assented on all necessary occasions, merely stipulating that time is the essence of such contracts. May his successor be as courteous, and, perhaps, one may add without impertinence, as sensible, for with the pertinacious photographer and the modern camera little is to be gained by resistance, if one may so put it. Lord Ranfurly has seldom been photographically libelled, as were some of his predecessors, which goes to show that any virtue brings its own reward, even in the case of a Governor. To be serious again, the press will not readily forget Lord Ranfurly, nor will it forget those courteous gentlemen who have served under him at Government House. Major Alexander, in particular, will long live in the memory of all press persons, editors, reporters, photographers, or what you will, as the most obliging, most courteous, and, to use a press expression, the "waitest" man who ever held his all important position at Government House. The aide or the private secretary may be (and usually is) far more the governor than the Governor himself. Kipling has a remark to this effect it will be remembered; but with Major Alexander it has been different, and it is certain that no one who has been brought into contact with him and has had to worry him, as only press men can, and have to, over a hundred things which must have seemed to a less able man "a bore," but will endorse the writer's hearty liking for and hearty vote of thanks to the most charming and genial gentleman whom we have ever had amongst us in the private secretary's chair at Government House. To Lord Ranfurly and to Major Alexander, then, God-speed, and the hearty good wishes and thanks of the press of New Zealand—a sentiment in which every paper in the colony will heartily share.

### Parental Responsibility.

Every now and then it is discovered that some rule of law to which one has been accustomed from time immemorial is unfair in its operation, and that on all grounds of propriety it ought to be altered. Then comes the reformer, who tells his tale to the Legislature, and if only he tells it plainly enough, and use tact in its advocacy, Parliament says the necessary word, and the world is minus one more abuse. So with the matter of parental responsibility, though the consummation is yet to come. The public eye was opened to the situation thus. Years ago an illegitimate child was born, and the mother got a maintenance order against the putative father from the justices. For a time the weekly dole was paid. Then the father disappeared from the mother's ken, and the arrears silently mounted up to the tune of hundreds of pounds. Presently the father died, leaving a fair fortune, so the mother sued the executors to recover the arrears. It was then objected, for the defendants, that the order to pay was personal against the father, and could only be enforced during his lifetime, and that therefore his estate was under no obligation to make up any part of the sums unpaid. And this the Court held to be the law. The result is, of course, that the State may be charged with the cost of maintaining the child, or may have been in the past put to that cost, or the mother may have maintained the child at her sole cost, and may have to continue that maintenance, if able, until the child attains an age at which it can earn its own living. That the father of an illegitimate child should be able to dispose of property and neglect the interests of his own illegiti-

mate offspring is a position clearly unjustifiable. Even if no will is made, and the father dies intestate, the illegitimate child would not be entitled to share in the assets, for a bastard is *velius filius*, and is not capable of inheriting, unless by direct and express gift. It is clear that during life a parent may be compelled to support his family, if he has the means. Why should death end that duty? At all events, for a start, Parliament could readily and fairly enact that where any order has been made against a parent by magistrates that order shall be a valid against his assets after death as it was against himself in his lifetime. (Henry v. Carew's executors.)

### Vicarious Sports.

More than one visitor from other lands has told us that we are too fond of sports, and the older among us are only too glad to get (or make) an opportunity of telling the younger among us what a dreadful end they are shaping for themselves by giving this heinous proclivity a free rein. I have often wondered whether the young colonial really is fond of sport or has he merely a predilection for "watching sport." It sounds pretty much the same thing, but if you come to analyse it there is a vast difference. Personally I only wish the assertions of our lugubrious visitors were true, and we were fond of sport, but the average youth of New Zealand, from what I have seen of him, has not this amiable weakness. What he likes is to get up on a grandstand or somewhere else where he can get a seat with a back to it (and something to rest his feet on), and watch the other fellow make sport for him. Sport of to-day savours too much of the gladiatorial combat or the bull-fight, and we all know the history of the people who went in for these gentle amusements. I don't mean that our pastimes are blood-thirsty, but there are too many looking on and too few playing the game. Take football! Think of the proportion the handful of players bear to the thousands of yelling youths on the grandstand and round the fence! Better go out to watch a good game of football than hang round the town, you say. Quite so, I will agree that it is the less of two evils, but at the same time it does not prove the young colonial's "love of sport." At every street corner and in every saloon you will find a coterie of cigarette-smoking youths who know the strength and record of every player in the district team and call him by his christian name; they go out every Saturday to lend their side moral support; they are leather-lunged, and belong to the genus "barracker." If you were to tell these young gentlemen that they were not fond of sport you would greatly surprise them, and they would assure you of the fact in their own picturesque style. No, I am sorry to say, the youth of to-day is not "fond of sport," and in spite of what visitors may say "his true," "his pity, and pity is 'tis true." A youth who is over fond of sport may not meet with the approval of his elders, but he is on much safer ground than the young gentleman who has a penchant for "watching sport."

### Concerning Our Honesty.

Not this is not another form of one of those stupendous advertisements of a monumental work which are still appearing in this and other colonial papers, and imploring us all not to let the opportunity slip. You will find that conspicuously enough elsewhere, but it is, I think, worth noting that such an offer as the "Times" is now making with the Encyclopaedia Britannica, is a rather striking testimony to our national commercial honesty, and to the regard for the sacredness of a contract with which most of us are endowed. For to practically any individual in the land in return for a payment of an insignificant sum there is delivered a work which—whatever its value may be to the individual—is at all events commercially valued very reasonably at the number of guineas set down in the said offer, and if any number of cases of default were to occur it would be an exceedingly costly, trouble-some and perhaps hopeless task for the "Times" to reimburse itself. But experience has apparently shown that honesty is far more common than we are about to give it credit for. What exactly has been the experience of the "Times" with this affair in the Old Country has been stated, one believes, but the figures are not at the moment available. Suffice it to say the proportion of those who gave the remotest trouble with regard to payments with previous experiments was infinitesimal, and it is presumed the Encyclopaedia is meeting with a similar satisfactory fate. When it is all over, and these magnificently conceived and royally carried out advertisements have disappeared from our papers, it will be of much interest to know what sets have been taken up, and the average class of home into which they have gone. That the "Times" will have little or no difficulty with its monthly payments here may be guaranteed. It is certain we are not less conscientious than those in the middle classes of England, into which, it is stated, an amazing number of the Britannica's thirty-five volumes was poured. What will be the effect of this distribution of universal information amongst us will be hard to predict. It is almost certain to vastly increase serious reading, and perhaps where little has been done before, for the information in the Encyclopaedia will, with sensible men, merely whet the appetite for more on the same subject. At the same time it may give us a new set of bores, who will get a smattering of many things, but a knowledge of none. Still, the good will outweigh this trifling inconvenience, and though it is purely a commercial transaction, and one in which the "Times" will no doubt do exceedingly well, yet there can be no doubt we are to be congratulated that the opportunity has occurred out here, and that a work of such undoubted stability will be distributed in many hundreds of New Zealand homes.

Poor old chest it heaves and rattles,  
Tender throat and tonsils red;  
Pull my swag from 'neath the bunk, mates,  
Broach the bottle, Ted.  
Yes, alee, the spatters use it,  
Sherrers, nussers, rich and poor;  
Pitch the whiskey into blazes,  
Give me WOODS' GREAT PEPPER-  
MINT CURE.

**WINCHESTER**  
RIFLE AND PISTOL  
CARTRIDGES.

"It's the shots that hit that count." Winchester Rifle and Pistol Cartridges hit, that is, shoot accurately, and strike a good, hard, penetrating blow. They are loaded with great care and precision, and made in calibers suitable for all kinds of game, from rabbits to grizzly bears. If you want reliable ammunition, buy the time-tried Winchester make.

FOR SALE BY ALL DEALERS.