

Poor Wilson Barrett, writes "M.A.P." had no idea of the gravity of his malady, and, thinking that the operation was for gastric ulcer, looked forward with no feelings of misgiving whatever to starting his London season at the Comedy on September 1. To the surgeons and physicians he turned and said, a few minutes before the chloroforming, "I was to have opened myself on the 1st of September, and here are you fellows going to open me on the 20th of July!" "Never mind," answered one of them, "we'll close you up again alright!" The actor smiled, never dreaming for an instant what grim meaning Fate was capable of giving to the words, "close you up." The operation, which was for intestinal obstruction of a very serious character, was in itself a remarkably successful one, and Mr. Anmour, an American surgeon, who is said to be only 28 years of age, was complimented by the two great physicians present, as well as by the Duke of Portland (a close personal friend of the actor), upon his skill in carrying out what they (Sir Victor Horsley and Sir Thomas Barlow) declared to be the biggest operation of the kind ever performed on the human body. But heart failure, through fatty degeneration, was waiting to turn into melancholy uselessness a brilliant man and a brilliant operation, and within half an hour of the calculated time of the crisis, about 30 hours after the beginning of the surgeon's work, Barrett sank peacefully and painlessly to rest.

A decidedly acid story, which may or may not be true, is told of Mr Hall Caine in "Harper's Weekly," on the authority of Mr Silvey, a member of Mr Beerbaum Tree's company. When the King and Queen recently visited the Isle of Man, Mr Hall Caine was asked to drive with them, in order to point out the objects of interest. He appeared to think that the only people of the island were the characters in his novels, and regaled their Majesties with something like this:—"There is the exact spot at which Gory Quayle is first introduced to the reader!" Again, "Donald MacSheaf passed through that gateway as he encountered the trusty laird from Douglas." And at another place, "Here the blacksmith shod the landlord's horse in 'The Manxman.'" Thus the eulogium continued for two mortal hours. Their Majesties were dreadfully bored. King Edward asked to be driven back to town, and abandoned sight-seeing. When Caine stepped from the carriage he dropped upon one knee. "Rise, Mr Caine," commanded His Majesty, according to the story. The author got on his feet, much chagrined. He had confidently expected, it is said at Douglas town, to hear words that would create him a knight—"Rise, Sir Hall!" Knight-hoods had been liberally doled out, and Caine couldn't understand why he failed to get one.

Some time before the ashes and lava of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. covered up Herulanum and Pompeii, a municipal election was held in the latter city. Mr Joseph Offord read a paper before the Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts concerning this election, about which nothing would have been known but for the terrible eruption, which from 79 to 1755 buried the municipality and its electors alike in a lava tomb. Mr Offord showed that many of the inscriptions uncovered on the walls of the city relate to elections and claims of candidates, much in the same way as do the placards posted in our streets to-day. Some were rudely inscribed, others set forth with artistic embellishment, and one, at least, contained a topical verse written by some minor poet and painted in red. Like our candidates, those in Pompeii were run by their supporters, who represented various trades and interests. The woodcutters, fishers, perfumers, dyers, barbers, and the like, had their men pledged to promote or protect their rights and privileges. There were faddists, too, in Pompeii, who were looked after by such societies as the Ball-players, Long Sleepers, Deep Drinkers, and Late Thieves to accept a free translation of some of their titles. At Pompeii's civic contest the Long Sleepers and Deep Drinkers appear most appropriately to have run a candidate in common—the main plank in their platform being the suppression of street noises. Even Pompeii had its religious difficulty. As every visitor to those wondrous unburied ruins knows, it was the home of a cosmopolitan, and, for its age, cul-

tured and tolerant people, and to this day stand aloft erected to Egyptian gods side by side with those of the established worship of Venus. Naturally there arose some differences between them. It is suggested that further excavations may prove that at the 79 election there were Isis passive resistors. Thus near came imperial Rome to representative Government.

In the encounter of wits the American has generally the best of it, but not always. A Melbourne man who recently returned from a tour of the world tells how his train was delayed for some hours at a Western town, and he took advantage of the opportunity to walk round the place. The day was hot, and he was attracted by a soda water fountain in a chemist's shop, so went in for a drink. "Make me up whatever you think best," he said; "I'm a stranger passing through, and I don't understand your American drinks." As he turned to look out of the door he saw reflected in the mirror opposite an emphatic wink from the chemist to his assistant, and guessed that he, as a casual customer, was to be the subject of a joke. He watched the material used for the drink, and knew enough of pharmacy to realise that nothing objectionable was being used. He was right in his surmise, though, for the draught was bitter, but he struggled through it without comment. "I'll take a couple of dozen of Hadu powders," was his next order. The chemist had never heard of this wonderful specific for headache, but the traveller mentioned half a dozen expensive drugs, the proportions to be used, and was informed that four dozen would be ready for him if he called again in an hour. Then the Australian returned to the station, and caught the express for San Francisco. The chemist has probably worked off the Hadu powders on some other casual customers, but not perhaps before the peculiarity in the name struck him.

"It is a great mistake, in my opinion," remarked a young married woman, "for husbands and wives to call each other by any term of endearment. It generally begins in the first part of their married life. They feel it is rather nice to say 'Dear' and 'My love,' etc., in public—it emphasises their sense of possession. Later on habit makes them continue the epithets, but they become meaningless; they might just as well be 'Molly' or 'Billy,' as far as sentiment goes, and the simple Christian name sounds, to my way of thinking, in better form. When special names have been adopted, as is sometimes the case, they are obnoxious in the beginning, and later on become absurd. I know a man who began by calling his wife 'Baby.' They have been married now for several years, and he keeps it up through force of habit, but it does sound ridiculous. I was playing bridge the other day with a quondam pair of turtle doves, who have become quite peckish with a decade of married life behind them, and it was funny to hear the old names used with marital sharpness. They were playing together, and were losing, which made them quite cross. 'You should never have taken that trick, Honey,' he said, sharply. 'A baby could have played that hand better, 'Ducky,' she retorted. And so on. Neither of them seemed aware of the incongruity of the epithets 'Honey' and 'Ducky' with their irate voices and expression."

One of the most famous of London wine buyers has been making some disclosures in regard to the tricks practised by certain hotelkeepers who plume their visitors. It appears that claret is not the only wine that is bottled up from one cask and sold to visitors under many different names at several prices ranging from 2/ to 8/, or even 10/ a bottle. "In my opinion," said the buyer, "the main reason for the falling-off in the consumption of wine is that they have not in very many cases been getting proper value for their money. "Practices which occur at some of the hotels which do a 'chance' trade—a trade for occasional visitors—and swarms of holiday makers as against a trade consisting of regular customers, are simply fraudulent. The landlord buys, say, five hogsheds of claret at 25 per hoghead, or at about the rate of 9/ odd per dozen. This he bottles, and from the same cask gets his Medoc, his St. Estephe, his St. Julien, his Margaux, and the rest, charging from 2/ to 8/ per bottle.

"Then he gets his arm of hock for £12 or £15, and in the same way produces his Niersteiner, Hockheimer, Liebfraumlich, etc.

"Burgundy he will buy at £10 per hoghead, and bottle it into Beaujolais, Beaune, Volnay, and Pommard at prices from 2/6 to 10/ per bottle. People who get such wine after paying a good price naturally take whisky and soda next time.

"In champagnes it is the grower himself who nets the huge profits, and most of the shippers have during the past twenty years become great merchant princes and millionaires. I will undertake to say that the finest champagne made does not cost more than 2/ per bottle, and that none of the 1900 wines cost the grower more than 20 per dozen.

"Of course, he has also to pay 10 per cent. commission to his English agent (there is one such agency worth £15,000 per annum), and also his advertising expenses; but you see how large a margin he leaves himself for profit. Of course, in champagnes, as in other wines, there are shady practices by the unscrupulous.

"There are champagnes without names which can be bought at 16/ per dozen, or, say, 24/ per dozen, after paying duty and charges. Such wines are imported labelled with a hotelkeeper's ported labelled with a hotelkeeper's own or 12/ a bottle."

An ostrich in harness is not a novelty, but a trotting ostrich, known as Black Diamond, and valued at £1000, has been establishing new records in America of late. Harnessed to a track wagon, and driven by its owner, W. W. Ford, formerly of Delaware, but now of Florida, this bird is doing a mile at 2.40, and even better.

A trotting horse was entered against the ostrich, but when time for the race arrived the horse did not appear. The ostrich, however, took Mr Ford round the track at a 2.40 pace.

The first heat was unsatisfactory, as the bird broke twice, and it was necessary for Mr Ford to climb out over the shafts and grasp his steed by the neck after a leap in the air to stop him. When once the ostrich is held firmly by the throat, like a serpent, it is powerless to resist.

Only a command is required to start the ostrich. With its head poised nine feet four inches in the air, the bird raises its great, sinewy feet quicker than the eye can follow them, and trots across the park and back again, then across again and again, with much of the grace and regularity of a young trotter on the turf.

For a race the ostrich is harnessed to the track wagon in much the same manner as a horse. The reins, which Mr Ford holds fairly tight, extend from his hands out over the bird's rich plumage to an especially constructed saddle, which is really a breast strap.

There they run through two rings, and take an upward course four feet into the air, where the steady, almost motionless head is held at a lofty perch. The reins are attached to a bridle with martingales and throat latch, but there is no bit.

The training of the bird was begun when he was very young; in fact, as soon as he had been taken away from the rest of his covey. Since then he has

been used at regular intervals, but not too often or too long at a time.

He has developed remarkable speed, Mr Ford having several times driven him at 1.12 for the half-mile.

"The theatre of the future," said Mr. Cecil Raleigh to an "Express" representative recently, "will probably be a cinematograph on Salisbury Plain."

The recent new ideas in theatre construction have aroused some curiosity as to probable ultimate developments, and Mr. Cecil Raleigh, who in theatrical politics may be said to be the leader of the Radicals, was an obvious person to consult.

"A theatre," said Mr. Raleigh, "built from the point of view of theatrical art—by the way, such a house would almost certainly be a failure financially—should have no seats higher than half the height of the proscenium opening.

"There should, therefore, be only one balcony, or, better still, the seats should rise in the shape of an amphitheatre, and they should begin very much further from the stage than is the usual custom now.

"Theatre decorations are almost always too garish and too pronounced. The auditorium should be painted in some neutral colour, sage-green for preference, while the sides of the proscenium should be black.

"You would in this way get a frame which would throw up your stage picture, and largely increase its effect.

"If the colouring of the auditorium were kept as unpronounced as possible it would not require the present glare of limelight to give the stage the necessary contrasting brilliance."

Nian Noblan Regon
Ja gracion Regon
Dio Savu.
Estu li venkinta;
Felica glorinda
Longe li Regadu.
Dio lin savu!

This is the first verse of "God Save the King," translated into Esperanto; and it was by singing this that the disciples of the new international language concluded their late conference at Dover.

There are many persons who smile at Esperanto, and probably the sentry at Dover Castle who declined to admit the Esperantists on the score that they were foreigners is among the number. The fact remains, however, that the new language is spreading by leaps and bounds.

So greatly, indeed, has it progressed of late, that there is a reasonable prospect of its becoming the "congress language" of the world, and the Salvation Army is considering its possibilities as an aid to its international propaganda.

Soon there will be no excuse for not knowing Esperanto, for 20,000 penny Esperanto grammars were recently put on sale in London, and more are to follow.

At the Dover Congress there was present a Bohemian who could speak nothing but Czech and Esperanto. He found himself able to chat freely with Englishmen, Germans and Frenchmen by means of the new tongue.

Another advantage of the new language is that connection with an Esperanto society enables a man of any nationality to find friends in any country. Every week international Esperanto tea parties are held in London.

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