

ROUND ABOUT THE COLONY

Something Like a Yield.

A practical farmer from the Wanganui district was a recent visitor to South Australia. Talking to a farmer in a railway train he ascertained that it cost 22/3 an acre to produce a crop of wheat. A conference of farmers fixed the price at 29/3, but this allowed for leaving the land fallow for a year. In conversation with an official in the Department of Agriculture the New Zealander said that, exclusive of threshing, the cost here was about £2 13/6, and the threshing cost was counterbalanced by the returns from sales of straw. "How on earth do you live?" asked the Australian in wonder, and mentioned that even in Australia, with its lower cost of production, there were no fortunes in growing wheat, 10 bushels to the acre at 3/ a bushel. Then came the turn of the Maoriander. "Just reckon 60 bushels to the acre, and see how that suits." It was a bit of a staggerer.

Surely Not.

One of the merry ways of Christchurch during carnival week this year was to "take down" the visitors in the small shops. A returned Dunedinite writes: "At one fruiterer's they sold me apples from a heap that looked sound in the window, and when I took the bag home we had to throw half of them away; the second shop that I tried cheated me with figs so old and musty as to be absolutely unmarketable, even by the not too-particular small boys of the family; at another establishment the saleswoman charged me a shilling for a book that I could buy in Dunedin for sixpence, and laughed when I asked her if it was the regular price that she was charging; and a confectioner had the impudence to push down the scale with his finger while professing to weigh a shilling's worth of lollies for me. I don't know if the same exploitation of the foreigner is still going on; but visitors to the Exhibition would be acting wisely to patronise the leading shops, which were fair to me, or, if compelled to go into a small place, insist on seeing the contents of the bag before leaving."

Ignorance About New Zealand.

New Zealand surprised Mr. Keeler, a visitor from America, who was interviewed by a representative of the "Post." He was, indeed, greatly surprised at the progress it had made, and it was far ahead of what he had thought and what the average American thought. Most people who thought about it at all looked upon it as the home of the Maori, with Europeans in parts and perhaps more Europeans scattered about working native lands. In the same way, as the result of "wild west" shows of the Buffalo Bill type, many people regarded the western plains of America as peopled solely by cowboys and Indians, whereas it was difficult to get enough Indians for a wild west show, most of them living on territorial reservations set apart for them. He was convinced now, however, that New Zealand was a country of great natural resources, with an intelligently educated people, with a big future before them. The scenery had great beauty, and the climate could not be much better. Personally, the people he had met had made his visit a continual holiday since he came here.

Stanbury v. Webb.

There is a firmly rooted opinion among rowing men here (says "Tribune" in the "Nydway Mail") that Stanbury has a particularly easy task on hand to beat W. Webb at Wanganui, and take the £200 prize-money. Perhaps so, but from the way Stanbury has got to work it would appear as if he at least was not so confident and meant to get really fit for the forthcoming race. Webb is not far short of being a first-class sculler, and he has many advantages in the way of health—that is, athletic health—and youth. Stanbury evidently realises this, and is working as hard as ever he did for a big match. He is rowing many miles each

day, and is doing a good deal of walking and running. He is overweight, but he has time to get into good condition if he perseveres, and it must be remembered that Stanbury is only fast and a stayer when he is in perfect condition. Webb may be a hard man to beat, and the confidence of his party naturally leads one to the conclusion that they expect him to win.

High-priced Wool.

A prominent "wool king" of this district (says the "Timaru Post") made a calculation after the wool sale which went to show that the rise in the price of wool means an addition in the spending power of the South Canterbury district amounting to between £40,000 and £50,000 over and above the amount received by farmers for their wool last season. The same paper says that some of the local wool-growers are jubilant over the prices realised at the last sale. One well-known pastoralist says that for his best class wool this year he received 21d per lb more than exactly the same wool realised at the best sale last year, while for second-class wool he made 11d per lb in excess of last year's values.

Overshot the Mark.

Some of the boardinghouse keepers in Christchurch are said to be lamenting just now over a mistake in judgment on their part. Just previous to the Exhibition (says the "Press") they raised their terms to their regular boarders from 25 to 50 per cent, and some of them, anticipating a large influx of profitable paying guests, even gave boarders who had been with them for years notice to leave. Unfortunately for them, their anticipations proved too sanguine, and in many cases they find themselves not only without Exhibition visitors, but also without their regular boarders. In one case it is said that 12 working men in one house, on finding their terms raised from 18/ to 25/ per week, left in a body, and pitched a tent in a vacant section, and that boardinghouse is now practically empty. So far from visitors finding any want of accommodation in Christchurch at present, they will be received with open arms, and need have no difficulty in securing most moderate terms. Probably at Christmas and early in the new year things will become a little brighter from the "lodginghouse keepers' point of view, but at present they are decidedly doleful.

Sure Evidence.

Says Christchurch "Truth": The finger print expert is about the toughest proposition that Bill Sykes has run up against so far. The other day the police arrested one of the fraternity, who was so sure that he had left no traces that he stepped smilingly into the dock to hear the police break down. But he got a rude shock when Mr. Binnie came along with a copy of his finger print which was found on a chisel he had left behind him. The officer testified that it was a whole cartload of figures to one against any mistake being made, and Mr. Sykes' optimistic smile became a grin of the sickliest type. Taken in conjunction with the fact that he had a revolver, 25 cartridges, an electric flash-lamp, and other tools of his trade in his possession, there was not much room for doubt, and he decided to plead guilty. If this knight of the jenny on regaining his liberty, decides to continue his risky business, he will probably take the precaution to invest in a pair of gloves.

No More Pea-rifles.

It is as well that the public should have their attention drawn to the "Fire Arms Act, 1906," which comes into operation on January 1st, 1907. Under this Act no child under 16 years of age must be found in possession of a gun or pistol or firearm of any sort, whether "going by force of powder or not," or

ammunition of any description. No person must sell or supply any child under 16 years with articles of the kind stated; and in either case breaches of the Act may be visited with fines up to £10, while the arms will be forfeited. Nothing in the measure applies to any child practising under approved supervision at a properly constructed rifle range. Instructions have already been issued to the police to rigidly enforce the new legislation, so parents whose offspring are in the habit of indulging themselves with pea-rifle excursions are advised to teach them to deny themselves such luxuries before the end of the year.

Likes Her.

The "Colonial Girl" has been the subject of a comment by Miss Penecock, who is travelling through New Zealand in the interests of the British Girls' Friendly Society. "I like her independence," she assured a Christchurch "Press" reporter. "Certainly she does dress more than her English sister, but I think that is because she has more money. It is a defect of her character that she has little respect or reverence—no—I don't think that she reverences anybody or anything—but then she lives in a land where everything is new. I like her very much."

The Elevated Maori.

A native was doing the circus act on a horse near the post office, one evening, (says the "Gisborne Herald"). He had a big bag of fish and another with pipes strapped to the saddle. A crowd gathered, one of the police got hold of the bridle with the intention probably of taking the Maori to the station and charging him as drunk and disorderly. The constable had not gone far leading his capture when the native quietly slipped off the horse and made over the Kaiki bridge. On looking round the man of the law was surprised to find that he was leading a riderless horse. He mounted the animal to go in pursuit, but the horse was in conspiracy with his owner, and jibbed. Finally the constable chased the Maori over the bridge, but here the wily native tucked up his trousers and waded into the river, where he threw verbal mud at the constable after this fashion: "You lockee up my horse and fish, Mr. Policeman, but you no catchee me." After waiting some considerable time, and seeing there was no chance of the Maori leaving his watery citadel, the disgusted constable gave the horse and fish in charge of a lad who was watching the fun. The man in the river watched till his pursuer was out of sight, came out and got his horse, and scampered off on the road to Waitui.

New Dogs.

The "Otago Daily Times" says:—The steamer Kaipara brought some novelties in dogs this trip to the order of several New Zealand fanciers. These comprise a pair of black Schipperke terriers, two Pomeranian poodles, and a King Charles spaniel. All of these varieties are in great demand in England and on the Continent as pets for the ladies, the Pomeranians being in very high favour at present. The present importations are said to be fine types of the breed, and bear the hall-mark of the English Kennel Club's Stud Book. The "Poms" are really pretty animals, resembling diminutive Esquimaux dogs. The Schipperkes are smart, alert-looking little animals. They are believed to be of Belgian origin, and have only recently come into much prominence in Great Britain, where they bid fair to become almost as popular as the Pomeranians. Before being delivered to their owners the new importations will have to undergo the usual quarantine period at Lyttelton.

An impeachment of Banquets.

The "Oamaru Mail" says:—The banquetting of Ministers of the Crown is a cruelty to which they ought not to be subjected in a civilised, enlightened, progressive country like New Zealand. If a public man serves the people well he deserves something better at their hands than to be tortured by such dangerous attentions. It is not only a waste of food, but it is injurious to health, to eat and drink for the mere

sake of eating and drinking. A banquet spells numerous courses of varied and rich viands, the consumption of which is accompanied by the imbibition of intoxicating liquors. The alternatives of whisky or beer are so-called "soft drinks," which are not so soft as those who take them indiscriminately. It is clear then, that the moral tendency of such functions—sanctioned as they are by the most prominent and trusted members of the community—is bad. They help to perpetuate that thoughtless folly which assigns to malt and spirituous liquors the most prominent place on public occasions and maintains their defilement as social instrumentalities. They are a stumbling block to young men upon whose protection from impure influences depends the future happiness and prosperity of this colony. We could never understand or appreciate that sort of friendship which induced a man to ply his fellow, though he might be a victim of alcohol, with grog at a bar; and we see no difference in forcing food and drink upon a Minister when he wants neither. It is no exaggeration to say that such hospitalities are barbarous—that they destroy the health, and reduce the usefulness of Ministers, as well as shorten their lives. The colony badly needs the institution of an association for the discouragement of such inhumanities. The day will come when banquets to public men will be barred by statute.

Old-time Thames Item.

Bicycles were apparently in their infancy at Thames in March, 1879, judging by the following paragraph which appeared in the "Evening Star" of March of that year: "Bicycling is becoming a favourite pastime among the young men of this town. About half a dozen iron roadsters made a moonlight trip to Kirikiriki last evening and a return to Shortland. By that time they were considerably damaged about the nether garments. Time to Kirikiriki and back: five hours."

Awkward.

It is doubtful (says the Invercargill correspondent of the "Otago Daily Times") if Sir Joseph Ward was ever placed in such an embarrassing situation as that in which he found himself at an Otautau gathering, when a young man in mokeskins tapped him on the shoulder and asked him for "a bob." As Sir Joseph did not appear to heed the request, the man immediately returned to the charge. Then Sir Joseph, dipping his hand in his pocket, gave him a coin. The affair was not the outcome of a practical joke, and the man did not look like an inebriate.

BABY'S CLOTHES.

Baby's Clothes must never be washed with Alkaline Soaps or Soap Powders. They always leave an irritant in the fabric. **SAPON**—the new Gaietone Washing Powder—never leaves anything in the clothes which can harm the most delicate skin. To wash baby's clothes and cot-trimmings, soak for an hour in a solution of SAPON; then transfer to a bath of SAPON and water, and work them lightly in the soda; rinse through clear water; dry, and iron in the usual way. If your Grocer does not stock SAPON, send us his name and address. SAPON, Limited, P.O. Box 636, Wellington.

Tourist Season, 1906-7.

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