

TOPICS OF THE DAY.

(From Our Special Correspondent.)

LONDON, January 3.

"DOING A BEAT."

Every event of absorbing public interest produces its own striking piece of journalistic ingenuity to overcome distance and get an advantage over rivals. The Druce exhumation was no exception to the general rule, and the ingenious attempt of the Press Association to get the best of the Central News deserves record in the chapter of journalistic "beat" devices. The privileged representatives of these two great news-distributing agencies emerged from the exhumation enclosure arm-in-arm in order that neither might have an unfair advantage, and walked together to the superintendent's office, where, by official pre-arrangement, they could telephone simultaneously the news of the contents of the coffin. But as he emerged from the shed chatting amiably with his rival the P. A. reporter took from his pocket a small red handkerchief and casually blew his nose. It was a simple act, but it conveyed from Highgate to Fleet-street in a few seconds the news that a body had been found in the coffin. The signal was, of course, pre-arranged, and all was in readiness to act upon it. The red kerchief was no sooner produced than from a house near by a red flag waved, and another fluttered from a roof a few hundred yards away. A quarter of a mile further from the cemetery a man armed with field glasses caught sight of the second flag, and dropping his glasses he signalled to a colleague who had been waiting for a couple of hours at the telephone near by. By the time the two reporters had reached the cemetery superintendent's telephone office the news of the discovery was in Fleet-street, and the P. A. had achieved its "beat." But the Central News must also have had some secret method of signalling the news, for the P. A. report only arrived a few seconds in front of the rival organisation's at the various newspaper offices.

WEST END CLUBS.

Most of the buildings fronting on Piccadilly between Hyde Park corner and Devonshire House are clubs. If you drive by on the top of a penny bus you can have the supreme privilege of looking in through the windows of these gloomy sanctuaries of the well-to-do, and you can always tell a club by the melancholy looking gentlemen who sit by the windows reading the "Times" or the "Spectator." No member is ever to be seen talking to another member. The silence which hangs over these dignified retreats of the well-to-do is sacred. To purchase the right of entry into the solitude of a London club is a somewhat costly business. Major Arthur Griffiths gives some interesting particulars in his latest book, entitled "Clubs and Clubmen," which has just been published. Fees for admission to West End Clubs range between twenty and forty guineas or pounds, and the subscriptions may be seven, eight, ten, or even twelve guineas per annum. The best military clubs mostly charge the highest price. The entrance is £40 to the Army and Navy and to the Junior United Service. It is forty guineas in the Naval and Military. None of the great political and social clubs, except the Carlton, with £40, impose so high an entrance fee. At the Junior Carlton it is thirty-five guineas; at Brooke's, the Turf, the Travellers, Athenaeum, and Arthur's it is thirty guineas, the Garrick twenty-one, and at White's nineteen. The average salary paid by clubs for a chef is said to be between £200 and £300 a year.

The club for celebrities is still the Athenaeum. It has been calculated that sixty-nine members of the Athenaeum have been buried in Westminster Abbey and thirty-two in St. Paul's. The predominance of bishops still obtains in a measure at the Athenaeum, but they are not so numerous as when the club was styled Bishopsgate. Kinglake, the historian, lived almost entirely at the Athenaeum, growing, as time passed, more infirm and deaf. Hamley was heard to say, "When I talked to him everybody in the room heard, except Kinglake." The Athenaeum was not called a "dining

club" by its most fastidious members, but "a place where one can dine." It is told of a former librarian there that someone asked him, "Is Justin Martyr in?" and that the prompt reply was, "I do not think the gentleman is a member of the club, but I will see."

One of the original members of the Garrick was the Rev. Richard Barham, of "Ingoldsby Legends" fame; and Thackeray was a sort of social despot in the club who dominated the talk of the smoking-room and made or marred the prospects of new members. There was one whose odd figure and peculiar face lent themselves so much to caricature that Thackeray was for ever sketching them on every piece of blotting-pad and stray scrap of paper, and leaving the drawings about the club. Theodore Hook was fond of the Garrick, and there was a member of the club who predicted the advent of the Millennium at the end of three years. "All right," cried Hook, "give me a £5 note now, and I will pay you £50 at the Millennium."

Public gambling, Major Griffiths tells us, is strictly excluded from modern clubs, and although considerable sums may be won and lost in a few of the most reckless, it must be in the legitimate way at games of skill, not chance. No form of hazard is tolerated. The rattle of the dice is never heard, except in matter-of-fact, respectable backgammon. Bets may be freely exchanged, but with no extravagant odds. The old-fashioned games are only permitted—cribbage, piquet, carte, whist, and bridge. Play prevails to a greater extent at the Bachelor's Club, at the corner of Piccadilly and Park-lane, and "debts of honour," we are told, "are settled weekly on every Monday."

"THE HOUSE."

The new two-act play produced at the Court Theatre on Tuesday last is a clever satire on the present day pampering of paupers disclosed by recent official investigations into the management of some of our great metropolitan work-houses. "The House," as the play is aptly named, is "a bit of a sell." In the first act we find ourselves moved to tears by a tragedy of the genuine unemployed. They are the carter, his daughter the factory hand, his wife, and his wife's old father. For two days the carter, his wife, and daughter have had nothing to eat, and the old man has only eaten such crusts as they could give him because they swore to him that it was share and share alike. Now they can endure no longer. They have come down from three rooms to one, from beds to sacking. There is hardly any furniture left, no food even for the old man, no firing, and no hope. There is only one thing left to pawn, the Indian medal for which the carter's father bled; and only one place left for the old man—"the Ouse." He must go, but it is horrible degradation to them. "There has never been a pauper in our family," both sides reiterate; but it must be done, and after a long discussion the decision is broken to old Mudgey by his grand-daughter. He has been terribly upset already by missing the medal; the final blow seems almost to break his heart. But with the self-sacrificing spirit which marks all the family he proudly shoulders his disgrace. Not because he will be fed and warmed there, but because there will be one less mouth to feed at home, he goes out, alone, to the workhouse, leaving us all feeling horribly uncomfortable, so vivid is the reality of the picture presented, and full of admiration for the splendid qualities shown by the hapless quartet. The curtain falls whilst the spectators seek to swallow the lumps that will rise in their throats, and make resolves to do all that may be in their power to ameliorate the lot of those who like the carter and his family have been brought to starvation's door through no fault of their own.

The "sell" comes when the curtain rises again, and tragedy is turned into comedy. In the first act we are moved to tears, in the second cynical laughter rules the roost. The room is the same, but the furniture is there now. The medal is in its frame again over the mantelpiece; there are winkles and other "relishes" on the table, and blazers cooking on the fire. Mrs. Creek has a

new dress, Joe Creek, the carter, is shaved, and Mildred Creek has pink plump cheeks and is quite a different girl. They have got work; the grandfather is coming home. He comes, no longer pinched and pale, but rosy and sleek—and utterly demoralised. The stairs have put him out of breath; there is a lift at "our place." He finds the room shabby and cold, and turns up his nose at the "relishes." They do much better at the "Ratepayer's Home." No, he is not tired because he has walked; he came in a bus, and he explains how you trick your fare out of a kind lady or gentleman. The fine old soldier we saw in the first act has come back a cadging, cringing pauper, full of sly tricks and leery humour, and specious argument to prove that to live on the fat of the land in the House is not to accept charity; it is only to get your own rates and taxes back again. Finally, the author shows him persuading the able-bodied carter and his able-bodied wife and daughter to give up work and come and join him in the luxurious ease of "the Ouse."

Mr. Albert Chevalier's acting as the old man is as finished and as convincing as possible, while the other parts are admirably filled.

SONGS WITHOUT MUSIC.

It must be a relief to a musician to let himself go occasionally on the subject of current musical trash. Dr. Sawyer, of Brighton, let himself go in good earnest at the Musicians' Conference this week, and his denunciation of the rubbish that is published in vast quantities and sold as drawing-room songs and ballads and musical comedies makes very healthy and stimulating reading. I am afraid Dr. Sawyer is only a voice crying in the wilderness of Philistia, but his words may bring some sinner to repentance. You never can tell. "Reams of rankest rubbish" come from the music-publishers. "Why is it written? Why is it published?" demanded the angry doctor. The answer is simple enough. Rubbish is published so long as rubbish finds a market. Educate the girls of the family to appreciate the songs of Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Schubert, and they will then awake to the sad fact that most of the "drawing-room" songs they delight in at present are the sickliest nonsense. Dr. Sawyer described these songs by an apt analogy. There was, he said, an Irish milkman of the name of Simpson, who was prosecuted for not putting enough milk in the water. The composers of musical trash might similarly be prosecuted for not putting enough music in it; they could call it "Simpsonian music." While a huge amount of trash was brought out for piano and for organ, yet it was in the form of songs that the greatest bulk of feeble twaddle was published. What could they do? Life was too short to waste their time looking through this rubbish heap. Was it not possible to get a small committee of some of the experts of the society to whom members might send any really good music they discovered? And if it met with the committee's approval a list of such music might appear from time to time in their journal.

Still speaking of vocal music, Dr. Sawyer inadvertently on "the miserable way in which so-called artists hire themselves out to the unscrupulous publisher to go round the country, and by constantly singing vile rubbish draw the attention of an ignorant public to the twaddle, and so force up its sale." Though there is no criminal law to touch this debasing of our music, yet morally, every singer who thus sells himself to mankind for the sake of the guinea or two he gets for each time he or she sings the miserable twaddle, or for the sake of each twopenny or threepenny royalty paid for every copy sold by his or her singing and name, such singer should be branded as a disgrace to his art.

Still, there is a bright side even to this depressing picture. During the past ten years there has been a great awakening in English music, and a body of young composers has arisen which, while including no great writer of the first rank, contains a host of serious, earnest writers, imbued with ideas and views, from whom much may be hoped in the future. Dr. Sawyer says they may fearlessly place their English compositions of to-day alongside the present-day compositions of any other country, and things have never looked so favourable as at this moment for the formation of a real English school of composers. But

it is difficult for the young composer to get a hearing, and the public continues to want the old, old sentimental rubbish—so there you are!

ANOTHER KIDNEY

VICTIM CURED.

Auckland Man owes Good Health to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

In bed for a fortnight in great agony—Unable to work for two months. Thought he was never going to get better.

"About three years ago I was laid up with a bad attack of kidney trouble," said Mr. Kenneth Edney, 56 Howe-street, Auckland. "The pain pretty well doubled me up. It was a sharp stabbing ache, and every time I stooped or got up suddenly it caught me; sometimes I thought my back was breaking. It was a shocking pain, and used to make the sweat roll down my face. For a fortnight I was in bed and in agony all the while. When I got up I was terribly weak—I never realised how weak I was until I got out of bed, for when I stood up I went down on the floor. For two months I was unable to go to work. When I did manage to get along to the works I was in agony all day. I had no appetite. Often and often I sat down to the table and had to get up without touching a thing. I got terribly low spirited and depressed. My eyesight became affected. I got very shaky on it, and my hands trembled a good bit. In lifting up a cup of tea I often split some of it. The least little excitement used to start my heart thumping and nearly take my breath away. Often in the night the palpitation came on, and I had to sit up in bed to get my breath. I could not sleep well at night on account of it. It is a bit off to be awake at night and hear the church clocks striking the hour, and then perhaps drop off to sleep about five o'clock when it was time to think of getting up. When I got up I felt more knocked out than when I went to bed. I began to look old, and stooped in a shocking manner when I walked. I can quite understand people putting an end to themselves when their health is bad. My skin itched with a hot prickly heat, and my face often flushed up, and then I got as cold as ice. Occasionally I had night sweats, and all the clothes were quite wet, and I had to have a towel to dry myself. I was real bad, and thought that I was booked for an early journey from this world. Well, mother had been using Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for my sister, so seeing they cured kidney trouble I began taking them. For a month they did not seem to do me any good, but after that every dose put new life into me. I began to take a pleasure in my meals, and could eat more than I had for a long time. I could go to bed and drop off to sleep and wake up fresh in the morning. As I kept on taking them I grew stronger. Gradually the pains in my back eased up. It took twenty boxes of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills to cure me, but they did it properly. My health is simply grand now. I am always urging people to take the medicine that cured me. It gives me the greatest pleasure to make this statement."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills by making new blood strike straight at the cause of all blood diseases such as rheumatism, lumbago, backache, kidney trouble, liver complaint, indigestion, biliousness, debility, anaemia and spinal weakness. But, of course, you must be sure to get the genuine Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. They're always in boxes—never in bottles. Don't be cheated with any cheap substitute. You can always get the genuine from the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Wellington, 3/ a box, six boxes 16/6, postage paid.

There are five hundred ways of curing a cold. Some of the drug store cures offer to do the job in one day. The most common remedies are quinine, aconite, calomel, whisky, Dover's powders, and hot lemonade. These remedies, some of them at least, may be serviceable if judiciously used. If one keeps up good elimination from every source colds will seldom occur. This suggests something in the way of proper treatment. To "feed a cold" is ill-advised. In treating a cold, too, the vaso-motor system needs a good shaking up. Nothing does this better than the cold bath. If you have a patient who really can't afford the luxury of a cold more than a day, or so, here is the way to cure him. Keep him in a comfortable room where the temperature is unvarying. Better still, if you can keep him in bed.