

FACTS, FANCIES, QUIPS & COMMENTS

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN PAPERS.

It has been long apparent that the Churches and the People are not in close touch. Where does the fault lie?

All the spenetic articles that can be penned in Melbourne will not affect Sydney's superiority as a city or commercial centre.

Cordiality must not be allowed to develop into slobbering in connection with the visit of the American fleet.

With a deficit of £11,000 in sight, the Sydney City Council agrees to waste hundreds of pounds a year in recording utterances that for the most part would be better (in the city's interest) buried in oblivion.

It is well to have these little points of social etiquette settled! It has been held by a Perth bobby magistrate that it isn't libellous to accuse a man of being friendly with the hangman, "as the Westralian hangman might be a most estimable gentleman."

The oldest legislators in Adelaide are John Carr and Alfred Hardy, both of them 90. Carr was several times a Minister, but Hardy never climbed that high. He is the oldest solicitor on the S.A. roll. Both men are to be seen almost daily in the streets of Adelaide.

Many men "don't care a hang" before a strike whether there is going to be one, but a week or so later, when wives are looking questions and children asking them, the striker thinks hard, and certainly "cares a hang."

Mr. Deakin should either work or get out. A Prime Minister who merely indulges in airy nothings is of no use to any country. In Australia, which needs a policy of vigorous progressiveness, he is worse than useless. Vaporers should be promptly turned down in favour of workers.

Some people have an amazingly weak hold upon life. Two recent suicides were (1) that of a young man in S.A., who shot himself because he received an anonymous letter reflecting on his best girl; and (2) that of a N.S.W. girl of 18, whose mother had spoken harshly to her about the inefficient washing of certain plates.

The State Parliaments should be half the size, and honorary, except in respect of actual expenses. Say, £1 a day for sixty sittings—six days a week for ten weeks; quite enough each year. That, added to the free railway pass, should be ample compensation. Would the people approve or reject this proposition if it were submitted per referendum?

Brudner Snowball, of the Orange organizations, sees the insidious paw of Rome in the fact that the Christian Brothers' schools in Victoria are going to supply three battalions of cadets. What on earth is wrong with Snowball? If war comes, and somebody must be killed, isn't it as good for a Roman Catholic to be killed as a Protestant? Does Snowball was only his own crowd to be wiped out on the horrid field of battle?

Mr. Joseph O'Malley, of Adelaide, is hereby entered for the Mixed Metaphor championship. Writing to the "Register," of July 7, to contradict a "thumping Ho" circulated by "certain pious firebrands" about the Cardinal, he ends with a joyous whoop that "the thumping Ho is dead, and the weeping firebrands hold in their arms a corpse."

The need for a Reformatory for Aged Criminals cropped up at a Sydney Police Court last week, when John King, aged 86, was sent to gaol for a month for having fowls under his arm without any knowledge how they got there. Certainly the magistrate had no alternative; but it is a foolish system that throws a man of 86 years old into gaol.

Another parson is reported missing, if Elder William Mackie, of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, otherwise the Mormons, ranks quite as a parson. He had a little flock of Brigham Youngites at Richmond (Vic.), and the flock has lost the run of its elder for some time, and would like the finder to return him.

Adelaide dealt very practically with its recent case of football-umpire assaulting. Two things happened to the assailant. First, the umpire himself showed an un-Christian spirit, and smote him good and hard. And, after he had been smitten good and hard, the Law gathered him in as a plain, ordinary, violent person, and the chairman of the League attended to prosecute and see that he was struck good and hard in the pocket also.

The anti-Socialistic bodies that are scattered about the Commonwealth are to hold a big conference in Sydney next October. Mr. John Stinson is apparently boss of the movement. Auntie Sosh threatens to settle the following questions at the conference: (1) The Australian Navy; (2) the State Debts; (3) the Liquor Problem; (4) the Censorship of Literature; (5) State Rights. From this list it would appear as if Auntie mistakes herself for a very vigorous female indeed.

The curse of drink again. That well-known Sydney man who stands charged with lifting £2000, and who, it is alleged, fitted out a schooner for Guam, via the Islands, took 10 gallons of whisky along with the "trade." Now, the "trade" schooner isn't allowed to carry spirits to the simple Islander; also, there is a limit to the ammunition, and the amateur trader stocked up with an excess of cartridges. So there was trouble with the Customs over a clearance, and, while the matter was being fitted up, three days slipped by—and then the arrest happened.

Practical Adelaide is proposing—through the Chamber of Manufacturers—that all city shopkeepers shall fix a day during the September Show, when the streets are crowded with country visitors, for exhibiting in their windows only goods of Australian manufacture. Governor Le Hunte is backing up the movement, and has promised to head a tour of inspection of the various displays. Adelaide, it may be remarked, makes cement and locomotives and fiddles and cricket bats and many other unexpected things besides its familiar flour and wine and oil.

Oh, Maoriland is a merry land, for there do the people thrive; The air is fresh from the big salt sea, and it's good to be alive; There's a mixture fair of work and play, and enough of corn and oil. And, thank the Fates and the Little Gods, it's a country hard to spoil; But, the way that they're trying there's little denying They're going to manage it yet (I know not!), With the steady increase in the debt.

NEW ZEALAND SETTLERS.

The stream of New Zealand farmers seeking land in New South Wales is steadily increasing. The Intelligence Department are in communication with at least 20 who are inspecting land in various parts of the State, while the Lands

Information Bureau is in communication with as many more, of whom seven have gone to the North Coast with the intention of taking up suitable farms.

There is also an ever-growing demand from Inter-State agriculturists for land in New South Wales, and at present quite a number of Victorian and South Australian farmers are inspecting country within our borders.

NO FOLLOWERS.

One Australian management, it is said, has been compelled to take strong measures to prevent the female adorners of his leading man invading those parts of the theatre where there is supposed to be no admittance except on business.

Ye little ladies in the stalls, And pert young persons in the pit, Whom his entrancing smile enthralled, Contented be from where you sit To view the actor's lovely face, And glory in his youthful grace.

The manager is very wroth At maids who wish to throng behind, And so the unromantic Goth Has set this notice, duly signed, High up before the tearful crowd Of girls: "No followers allowed!" Those who denounce Capital as a curse seem, somehow, anxious to have the curse come home to roost.

AN AUSTRALIAN "SUFFRAGETTE."

Died last week at South Yarra (Vic.), Miss Helen Hart, woman suffragist and many other things. She was an untidy woman and much given to wearing shapeless shoes and a baggy ulster, and she was a rebel and unorthodox from her feet to the top of her bashed hat. She was clever and eloquent and democratic and in deadly earnest, and she was wholly neglectful of her back hair. In some sense she was the counterpart of Jos. Symes, the bigoted atheist of Melbourne. She was so insurrectionary that she could never have settled down, even if everything she wanted had come to pass; the instinct of the fighter was in her, and she would have bitten the hind leg of the millennium rather than have had nothing to battle with. Between her and the sleek, persuasive, nicely-groomed Annie Besant there was a sort of kinship, yet a great gulf. One was akin to the drawing-room Socialist and the other to the women who stormed the Bastille. It is to be hoped that Helen Hart is resting where she has gone. While she was alive the capacity to rest was not in her.

LOW WAGES AND DISHONESTY.

The wealthiest corporation in Melbourne is the Metropolitan Gas Company, which always pays a first-class dividend. This is one interesting fact. Another is that, at the Kew Court, on July 8, a married man, with a sick wife and a sick child, was charged with stealing a bicycle, house-liner, etc. He was employed by the Gas Company as a lamp-lighter, and his wage was 25/- a week. His wife appeared and gave evidence as follows:—

Accused only received 25/- per week, and had to pay out of it 3/- for a bicycle to do his work, and 10/- for rent. Witness was unable to work herself, having been under medical treatment for years, and her child had been attending the Eye and Ear Hospital. She asserted, amidst floods of tears, that her husband had committed the crimes through absolute poverty, in order to support her and the child. Then the witness broke down. The Chairman of the Bench referred to the case as "pitiable," and admitted that it was due to "insufficient wages." But, "as there were six charges," the Bench awarded six months' gaol. And probably it would have been simple justice if those of the Gas Company responsible for the crime of paying a man 22/- a week net for his services (the whole dashed lot of them) had, at the same time, been given 12 months' Hard Jug. Still, of course, the Tory orator will declare that Wages Boards are quite unnecessary.

Room-mate: "What is this card in your hat?" His Room-mate: "Why, that was (hic) the wine list, but now (hic) it's my table of contents."

China at £80 an Inch.

A portion of a collection of jewels, valued at between £60,000 and £70,000, was sold recently in the Covent Garden saleroom of Messrs. Debenham, Storr, and Sons. The following is a list of the most important items sold:—

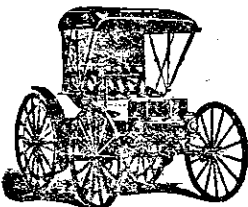
- A pearl necklace £2,648
- Six strings of pearls 2,303
- A collar of Oriental pearls 1,459
- A parcel of 500 pearls 2,014
- Collar of brilliants and emeralds 1,600

At Christie's a wonderful sale of old china and objects of art yielded a total of £22,887. Rare old Chinese vases were objects of the keenest competition, and ten of these precious treasures of the Orient were acquired by Eastern bargain-hunters at the enormous cost of £8,247 10s. The two rarest brought in £1,200 each, of nearly £80 an inch.

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