

There is a dubious compliment in the declaration of one aspirant in the following verse:—

"We think President Roosevelt
is a man without fear,
To send such a monster fleet
Into this far Southern Hemisphere!"

These specimens are by no means the worst of the stuff that is fondly deemed to be poetry by its writers. There are long effusions, devoid of metre, of most ungrammatical structure, and sometimes absolutely incoherent. But one satisfying feature runs through them all, which is perhaps better than elegant diction and fluent metre, and that is a sentiment of hearty hospitality and friendship towards the American people. This sentiment is well voiced by one competitor, thus:—

"Oh, list! ye American seamen,
To our joyful acclamations,
As we look upon this splendid thing,
The joining of our two nations.
Hurrah! hurrah! for the Yankee fleet;
Hurrah! for the men so merry!
Hurrah! for the country that sent them
here!
Hurrah! for Admiral Sperry!"

And "Hurrah!" we all shout—even the Competition Editor, who bears no malice, but cordially thanks all the contributors who have helped to make evident the hearty nature of New Zealand's welcome to the fleet. The prize poems it is hardly necessary to repeat, will be published in the Special Fleet Number of the "Graphic" next week.

The labour agitator in this country deserves all the hard things said about his being a curse to the community. He does not always state his opinions so nakedly as was done the other day by Mr. Hickey (who took a prominent part in the recent strike of Blackball miners) in the course of an address to the unemployed at Wellington. "I've never looked for work," said the valiant Hickey, "I'm looking for the means to live. . . I don't suppose you're particularly fond of work. You'd be foolish if you were!" This is honest, if nothing else. It was not always the wont of the chronic unemployed to be so outspoken; it was left for the satirists and critics to declare that doles, and not work, was the aim of these people. During the rotten famine of last century, crowds of English operatives used to march through the streets of the Old Country towns singing some doggerel, of which the refrain was:—

"We're all the way from Manchester,
And we've got no work to do."

A sentiment which the satirist parodied to run: "We want no work to do." Now days Labour (with a capital L) has made such progress that it has thrown off all disguise, and it openly confesses that what it demands is not work, but the right to live without working. Well might Mrs. Besant, in the course of a lecture at Auckland, deplore the decadent tendencies of the day, and ask: "What has become of the pride of the workman in his work?" It has gone with the snows of yester-year. The workman's chief concern of to-day is how to get the maximum of pay for the minimum of work. This much was candidly stated by the Hon. John Rigg, a Labour member of the Legislative Council, a few years ago, and the bad leaven has been working until it seems likely to leaven the whole lump. The "ca'anny" policy, slumped work, filling the trade-union principle of equal pay for unequal work—all these are now among the accepted ethics of the mis-named labouring classes.

Some of the workers must be exempted from this general condemnation—there is a remnant that is eager to work and unwilling to accept doles. At Christchurch last week, after a mass meeting of unemployed had been harangued by agitators, a resolution was passed to canvass the city for food supplies, but only about half-a-dozen had the courage to travel around and accept a donation of meat from a benevolent butcher. Later, when the Salvation Army opened a soup kitchen to relieve cases of genuine distress, only one applicant turned up to take advantage of the well-meant charity. The men are not nearly so bad as their self-constituted leaders; and it would be a good thing if means were found of suppressing vicious agitators of the Hickey stamp, whose example and precept are calculated to corrupt and degrade the community. Perhaps a new definition of

high treason should be devised, making it a heinous offence to propound doctrines hurtful to the State. It is to be hoped that such an extreme step will not be necessary; but the only way to avert it is for the real workers to assert themselves, emphatically repudiate the professional agitator, and assist in placing him in his proper place. Certain it is we shall go rapidly down the incline of national decadence if we accept the view that labour is a curse, and imagine that there is any other path to happiness and independence than that of honest and strenuous endeavour. When the unemployed of ancient Rome began to clamour for "bread and circuses" rather than for manly toil, the fall of the Empire was near at hand. So, too, will our civilisation end in ruin and chaos if the Gospel of Idleness is preached and practised. Those who wish to live without working should be assisted to migrate to some Pacific island, where they may vegetate on bread-fruit and bananas, "wed some dusky woman" and "mate with narrow foreheads." All civilisation is the result of resolute and sustained effort. As the wheat, without cultivation, would soon revert to a wild grass, so will culture degenerate into savagery if the impulse to exertion is withdrawn. It is well for the New Zealand workers to know that this is the inevitable ultimate result of Hickeyism.

At Christchurch the other day Mr. G. T. Booth, a well-known manufacturer, argued very cogently that legislation against strikes would be of no avail so long as workers were able to pursue the "go slowly" policy. He quoted a concrete example of the effects of that policy in one particular trade, proving that between 1901 and 1905 the product per man employed had decreased by 12 per cent, so that for an increased capital expenditure of £208,000 the employers only received a return of £440. The result of this decline in the efficiency of the workers was seen in the fact that while the New Zealand product had increased by £15,310, the value of the imported goods of the same class had increased by £234,194. This means, of course, that the local industry is being crushed out of existence, while the work is performed by cheaper or more efficient foreign labour. Thus the vicious circle of cause and effect is completed—inefficient work, unemployment, agitation for relief, or for further "protection," and higher prices to the consumers of the goods. These processes are not peculiar to New Zealand. The "New York Independent" has recently pointed out that the Americans are also on this down-grade. "We have," it declared, "educated a ruling class, but we have educated our common people away from the land and from that sort of knowledge which enables them to honour work and achievement. Industrial education alone can save our working classes, from degeneracy." And, it may be added, something more than manual proficiency is required, viz., moral stamina and a recognition of the principles of equity, along with a revival of that pride of the craftsman which has been crushed out by the sordid conditions of modern industrialism. "Conscience in work has quite gone out of date," wrote a poet a good few years ago. The only things that can restore it are (1) co-operative industry, (2) profit-sharing, or (3) the "exertion wage" proposed in our own Legislature.

Dr. A. K. Newman, of Wellington, in a letter to the "Dominion," states that ethnologists have traced the widespread, roving Maoris from New Zealand to Easter Island, Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, Motu, in New Guinea, and Timor Island. There are Maoris living still in Pulo Nias, Muntawai and other islands west of Sumatra. The more highly aryansed Nugas of Assam are Maoris, and there are Maoris in India. Further afield, the Hovas of Madagascar are an allied race; they are cousins of Maoris. Lying West of Madagascar are some small islands, Comoro (Komoro), between it and the coast of Africa. Mr. S. Percy Smith discovered that these people of Komoro Islands call themselves Mahori or Maori. "New Zealand libraries are small," Dr. Newman adds, "and we know nothing more about the Mahori of the Comoro Islands; if they are pure Maoris, that is the nearest the race is to Africa."

In a cemetery at Middlebury, Vt., is a stone, erected by a widow to her loving husband, bearing this inscription: "Rest in peace—until we meet again."

Musings AND Meditations

By Dog Toby

SCHOOL COMMITTEES

IT is customary for dwellers in our towns, and others who know but little of the conditions prevailing in our country districts to sneer at the school committees in isolated out-back places, and to laugh at the members composing such committees as being ignorant jackanapes puffed up with brief authority. Such an attitude towards these bodies is wholly uncalled for. I have met many members of the local school boards in the country, who were the equal in both education and brains of many who have gained seats on boards of education. They have been shrewd, practical men, fully alive to the duties and responsibilities of their position, and taking a keen interest in the affairs of the school and the district.

In New Zealand especially you can never judge of a man's education by his surroundings. I knew a Presbyterian minister, new to his work, who hastily assumed that all our country settlers were ignorant rustics. He called at a place where the man was working in his vegetable garden, attired in the regulation bluchers and dungarees. He was asked into the kitchen, and reproached the settler with the pagan heathenism in which he and his neighbours were sunk. The man listened and smoked in silence for some time. He then asked his visitor if he would like to come into the other room. The minister was astonished to find the walls lined with books in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and French, as well as standard editions of English classics. He discovered to his dismay that his host had taken a brilliant degree at Cambridge, had won two prizes for Greek Testament, and knew a great deal more about the Bible than he did himself. I can recollect a man applying to me for work. He spoke with the unmistakable accent of culture, and took Cornish's edition of Horace from the shelf with the remark that he always felt that Virgil had found the Latin tongue inadequate, while Horace had found it exactly suited to his neatly-turned, but wholly unimpassioned odes. He was an old Etonian, and had taken a first in Mods.

I do not say that these things are the rule, rather are they the exception. But one more often finds such men in the country school committee than in the town. It is not, however, men like this that I have chiefly in mind. The average member of the country committee is the ordinary settler, who has taken up a piece of ground in the rough, and spent most of his time in the open air, working on his place. He is no faddist, wanting ten minutes' instruction a week to be given to the children in a hundred different subjects; he knows theoretically very little about educational methods. But he is a shrewd judge of the progress the children are making; he knows whether his boys are being trained to be practical, manly, and self-reliant; he knows whether his girls are being trained to be helpful, prudent, and considerate.

The complaint is made that these people annoy and harass the school teacher who resents their interference, and it is urged that all the work they do could be done far more efficiently by the Board of Education. Both these statements I very much doubt. In some cases, perhaps, committees take a wrong view of their duties, and allow small local jealousies and prejudices to influence them in their attitude towards the teacher. On the other hand, I know numberless instances where the committee has been the teacher's best friend. The members have always helped in every way possible, and done their best to make the teacher's lot less lonely and more enjoyable. They support him in any action calculated to advance the best interests of the school.

But the great reason for the existence of these bodies is that they are on the spot, and know the requirements of the district as no one else does. They attend to the surroundings of the school, keep the playground dry and well drained, plant trees to make the spot less barren, and often give of their time and labour to supplement the scanty improvements sanctioned by the Board. They not only do this, but they get up entertainments for the children, and promote concerts and social gatherings to provide funds for school libraries and games.

For some years I was a member of such a committee. I was much struck with the interest the members took, one and all, in the school. We had the munificent allowance of £9 a year from the Board, and but for local effort the children would have lacked for many things essential to their health and comfort. We were not, perhaps, highly educated in the sense that members of Boards of Education and Ministers for Education are highly educated; perhaps our accent and grammar were not altogether Presbyterian, but we knew where New York was—a feat on which an educational authority so lately plumed himself—and we could read and write, some of us in two or three languages. And I was fully impressed with this fact, that ignorant as we were and country bumpkins as we were, we knew a great deal more about the requirements of our district and the wants of our children than the Board did. If it were not for the local committee, many a small school would be far worse off than it is to-day.



BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES

(Established 1817)

Head Office:

GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY.

Paid-up Capital	£2,493,720 0 0
Reserve Fund	£1,530,000 0 0
Reserve Liability of Proprietors	£2,000,000 0 0
	£6,023,720 0 0

Directors:

The Hon. Charles K. Mackellar, M.L.C., President.
The Hon. Reginald James Black, M.L.C.
Sir James H. Fairfax, Kt.
Richard Binns, Esq.
Hon. Sir Norman MacLennan, Kt., M.L.C.
Senator the Hon. James Thomas Walker.

Auditors:

Alfred S. Milson, Esq.; Frederick W. Uther, Esq.

London Office: Old Broad-st., with Branches in all the Australian States, New Zealand and Fiji, and Agencies and Correspondents throughout Tasmania, the United Kingdom, Europe, India, China, Japan and the East, Africa, Canada, the United States, South America, Honolulu, and the West Indies.

The Bank allows Interest on Fixed Deposits, collects for its Customers Dividends on Shares in Public Companies, and Interest on Debentures; undertakes the Agency of other Banks, and conducts all customary Banking Business; also Issues Letters of Credit and Circular Notes, negotiable throughout the world.

J. RUSSELL FRERCH, General Manager.