

WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH

Love Laughs at Parents.

A MAN named Gamble, up at Uputapot, N.N.W., was very angry when the mail left (says "Melbourne Punch"). Gamble, is a widower. He has a fine farm and a handsome daughter. We gather that quite a number of promising young agriculturists in the vicinity wanted the fine daughter—whose name, by the way, is Annie—but Gamble had other views for her, and stilled them off. Gamble's methods were very severe, and had not his daughter's sanction, as they tended to make her unpopular with the youth of the district, and no nice girl likes to become unpopular. We trace in Gamble's programme of resistance all the familiar methods of the reluctant parent in the comic papers. He bought two horrid dogs, he kept a gun, he shod himself with hard, heavy boots, and he had a hose attached to the large iron tank, and would turn a stream on any aspiring suitor who would not be dislodged by the dog, the gun, and boots. The most persistent of Miss Gamble's admirers was a young man named Jimmie Beach, a surveyor, and a fine sample of the Australian goods we are raising nowadays. He defied Gamble's dog, he scoffed at his gun, he evaded the retributive blucher, and soldered up the tap of the big iron tank. But Gamble is a fierce, hard man, and fought Jimmie off, tooth and nail. Beach put it about Uputapot that he would have Annie in spite of her father and all her relatives, and in defiance of all the Gamble dogs and utensils of war, and Miss Annie seemed to think the better of him on account of his persistence. In Australia, when it comes to settling on a husband, girl children do not respect the opinions of their parents. However, Gamble kept Beach away from his girl, or his girl away from Beach, which is the same thing. Then came a wire from Sydney, calling Gamble to the capital on most urgent business.

Gamble hastened to Sydney and found that there was no urgent business, and that the wire was a wretched fake. Full of forebodings, he took train back to Uputapot next morning, and was consumed with rage and dread through a wearisome seven hours' ride. He found his house in possession of a rejoicing crowd. There had been a swaggy meal and great merry-making. Gamble raged through the assembled guests, clamouring for his daughter. "Why, don't you know," inquired a neighbour, "She's gone on her honeymoon." "Whee-ee!" shrieked Gamble, "She was married to Jimmie Beach in the house here this morning, and they've gone to Melbourne on their honeymoon." Gamble is still raving up at Uputapot, but Annie seems quite reconciled to the change, and no doubt all will come right when Gamble can forget the way he was lured from his home. Love laughs at many things besides locksmiths. It is often very hilarious towards parents.

Departure of the Londons.

The Jack Londons boarded their tramp-steamer Tymeric shortly before midnight the other day, says a Sydney paper, their farewells being Miss Oia Humphrey and Mr H. N. Southwell. The last-named, who was to have managed the lecture tour that never eventuated, was hypothesized into going on to Newcastle, swagless as he stood, with the pair of "mates." There the party bumped its head frequently in collisions and wood-tilt with the numerous interviewers. Mrs. London, as a matter of formality, goes as "stewardess" on the Tymeric; her husband is writ down as "purser," and their coloured youth attendant is a "cabin-boy." Apparently the tramp is not supposed to carry Gamble's passengers—only workers. "Gnawed by mosquitoes and splashed with sea spray," is the beginning of the inscription London wrote to Miss Humphrey in a copy of "The Sea Wolf" that had accompanied him in his wanderings in the snark, and which he bestowed upon the lady. They are a vital, hard-working pair, the Londons. Both lay low to the public while here, and wrote all the morning, and in the afternoon accumulated more material for more writing. The Londoness proved to be

no mean musician, and urged by Pianist Laurence Godfrey Smith, she attacked a dangerous, bristling concerto in its lair in a private drawing-room, and though the animal was new to her she won out brilliantly. At the three Crosley concerts, the male Mate used to write in a notebook with great velocity during intervals and some of the encores.

The Gastronome.

A Melbourne correspondent thus waxed reminiscent:—Something occurred the other day to remind me of a clever "fake" that Marcus Clark once wrote for the "Herald" here. This was headed "The Gastronome," and purported to give particulars of the latest and most wonderful scientific invention. An electric battery, it was described, was fixed in the editors' room. One wire attached to this led to the editor's table, and another to the kitchen at Menzie's Hotel. The chef had everything ready, and at a given signal placed his wire end in a soup entree, roast, or sweet. The editor placed his end of the wire on his tongue, and was at once able to enjoy the flavour, and to accurately discriminate between the viands. In Melbourne the "scientific article" was accepted as a clever fake. You can imagine the astonishment that was created many months afterwards on an English paper being found to contain a translation of a report of a meeting of scientists held

made a feeble pretence of sobriety. He was solemn, and stopped in his wanderings every now and then to rebuke other ants for whistling. Another ant was hilarious. He brandished a small stick in his tentacles, and said he had a brother who was a priest. Judkins was there, and kept running in and out of the drunks, and smelling in all the gutters. He was organising a group of Wesleyan ants into "spotters" in front of a piece of bread that had been soaked in beer, when my dissolute companion picked him up on a twig and dropped him into the beer. He came out very chastened, and took about 40 steps (that is giving him 10 legs, which may be more or less), and then he dropped dead. A big Cornish ant (still sober, as he had just come out of the mine) picked up the deceased and carted him home. Whether it was for pure charity or for the beer smell neither "Polstan" nor I could decide. This yarn may look tall, but it is all true, except that I can't be certain of the name of Judkins. Neither of us thought of asking until it was too late.

Popularity of Nellie Stewart.

The queue system was used in connection with "the early doories" for the first night of the Nellie Stewart season at the Princess's Theatre, says Melbourne "Argus." It was wanted, too, for the most enthusiastic of her admirers were already in waiting before 12 o'clock, and at that hour there were a score or more of gallery girls seated on the asphalt footpath of Little Bourke-street, nibbling at a frugal lunch of pastry and sandwiches, and looking forward gaily to an eight-hour shift on

of the performance, and gave forth one continuous roar of cheers and cooos until Miss Stewart, who had already bowed her acknowledgments many times, left her dressing room and came before the curtain once more.

Six Months' Reward.

That was a nice little game Charlie Ruffin and Willie Watt were up to on the Adelaide line at Millbrook, near Ballarat, the other day. These two bright lads, aged 17, built a stumbling-block of sleepers on the line to bar the express, with the object of making money by faking a splendid rescue. Willie was to rush along the line whirling a signal and whooping deliciously. Then, when the train pulled up in the nick of time, the grateful passengers would find Charlie working nobly by the pile, hurling the sleepers off the line. In the excess of their admiration and thankfulness, they would immediately take up a collection for Willie and Charlie, and all would be well. Unfortunately, a wretched line-repairer spoiled the little scheme. Willie and Charlie narrowly escaped getting the Royal Humane Society's medal, but they did not go wholly unrewarded—they got six months.

A Pyrrhic Victory.

The Broken Hill miners have won their battle against the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, but it is doubtful if they have profited anything by the victory (says a Melbourne writer). There never has been a strike in Australia where the men have been so utterly foolish in the course of action they followed. For three months the Proprietary mine has lain idle. For three months the miners have done no work, but have dragged out an existence on strike pay. In other words, they have lived on the charity of their fellow-workers all over the Commonwealth. And it has all been unnecessary. They could have won their case exactly as they have won it, and they could have been in full work all these months that they have been living on charity. The Proprietary Company offered in the beginning to pay into a trust fund the difference between the old rate of wages and the new lower rate which they intended to pay. Then the matter could be thrashed out in the Arbitration Court and the High Court, and if the men won the accumulated wages in the trust fund would be paid over to them. It was an unusually favourable offer for the men, but they rejected it. It is not hard to discover the reasons for this. All over the Commonwealth industrial disputes are cropping up. These disputes are successful or unsuccessful according to the wisdom or foolishness of their leaders. Where the union leaders are level-headed men the unions win. Where the leaders are fools, who imagine that Labour arrogance can sway the administration of justice, the unions lose. In Broken Hill the unions have won nominally, but in reality they have lost, and lost heavily. What does it profit them to have won their case in the Courts—to have obtained a decision in favour of higher wages—when, through their own foolishness, only a small proportion of the men receive these wages, and the others must continue to exist on charity, as they have done? Their leaders were the last men in the world who should have been allowed to handle a big strike. They were not Labour men. They were revolutionaries. Even if they thought honestly that they were advising in the interests of the men, their fanatical ideas prevented them from reasoning on sound lines. Revolution is their one thought always. They profess to believe that they can obtain by the bludgeon far more than they can get by negotiation and compromise. That they are wrong has been exemplified again. The whole business should be a stinging lesson to the Labour unions of Australia. It should show them once and for all that the most successful warfare is made with the weapons of peace.



THE RACE QUESTION IN CALIFORNIA.

"Let's Bust his Window; Father will Pay."

in Vienna. The "Gastronome" article had been brought under the notice of the grave and reverend signors there assembled, and they had expressed wonder that such a marvellous invention should have emanated from such a young and far-away place as Australia.

Alcohol Among the Ants.

"Oolo" writes in the "Bulletin":—"Polstan" and I, whilst on a shooting expedition, emptied the few drops of Australian Beer that we could spare in the neighbourhood of a regiment of ants that had come to clean up after our lunch. About one-tenth of a second served to make that swarm the most deplorable drunken community I ever saw. The first to fall was a big, raven-haired chap—a Scotsman, I think. He

the steps. At 4 o'clock there were well over 300 there, and afternoon tea, provided for them by a considerate management, was much appreciated. It was a strange sight to see the city streets turned for the nonce into a picnic ground, and the clatter of teacups, blended with the cheerful voices of the tea drinkers, attracted a curious and envious crowd of onlookers. Those who spent the afternoon in this way demonstrated their gratitude by taking up a subscription there and then for a bouquet, which was lowered down from the gallery by a chord when Miss Stewart made her first entrance, and was handed up to her amid much enthusiasm. More than that, the whole of the occupants of the gallery, some of whom had been in the precincts of the theatre for nearly twelve hours, stood in their places (or on them) at the conclusion

Angry conductor (with hand on the bell-rope): You'll pay your fare or get off.

Tramp: Statistics show that it costs five dollars in wear and tear an' steam to stop a train. Now, if you rob th' stockholders of this 'ere road of five dollars, jest ter gratify y'r selfish spite, I'll report ye to th' president."