

conquests of the people and further triumphs for colonial legislation. At least this is what one imagines. It is not possible to picture Mr Seddon with even a translated Homer or waiting crumpled post cards of luminous criticisms to visiting authors and poets. Perhaps, however, I am wrong, and Mr Seddon can without these aids manage to banish care. Any way one will hope that in his own way he will enjoy his holiday completely.



THE BANK CLERK'S GRIEVANCE.

Every man and woman in the universe is proudly conscious of a legitimate grievance. Most of us indeed have several, though there is always one of which we make a sort of pet, pampering it and feeding it up and nursing it in our bosom till occasionally it grows too heavy for our strength and overcomes us. But I doubt, if we look at the matter from an impersonal and impartial standpoint, if we shall not all admit that the grumble of the bank clerk now rumbling over the colony with ominous unanimity, is not the most legitimate and natural of all. In the first place he has been for years misrepresented, a symbol of a thing that is not. He has been referred to as the gilded youth of colonial society, and it has been the fashion to regard him as a sort of lotus eater who repairs daily to a species of a Castle of Indolence at ten and emerges therefrom at four. The number of days when he is forced to leave his work (which has to be done at another time) has been exaggerated beyond belief, and he has in short been set before us as one of the luckiest and laziest of mortals, with, as the saying goes—little to do and plenty to get. How far all this is removed from the truth those of us who have familiar acquaintance with the species know. It is true that there are in this colony an abnormal and perhaps excessive number of bank holidays, but as I have hinted these do not afford any real release from labour. It merely means the work has to be done at another time, and nine out of ten of the bank officials will tell you that they would far rather not have the holiday, the overwork before and after being too big a price to pay for "a day off." The holiday is therefore we see no holiday, and is as much a delusion as the popular belief that the average clerk gets down to work at ten and leaves at four. In no office, and in no business have clerks heavier hours. Nine to five is the lightest, and as everyone who has passed through town knows these are merely nominal, and that five nights out of the six or thereabouts, the unfortunate clerk is forced to return to work till ten, and on occasions even later. If the pay were in any way commensurate with the work there would yet be cause for complaint, but as a matter of fact the salaries are utterly out of keeping, not only with the work demanded of the unfortunate employee, but (especially in the case of tellers) with the responsibility and risk which attach to that work. Some years ago when things were bad in the banking world, several of the largest and wealthiest banks reduced the salaries of all their employees, except the managers. Commenting on the matter at the time I remarked on the meanness of cutting down salaries already too low, and the business iniquity of paying dividends out of the pockets of junior servants, and one also surmised that in the event of several fat years succeeding those disastrous lean ones, there would be a forgetfulness about the raising, or even the reinstatement of the reduced salaries. Well, we have had some admittedly good banking years of late, and dividends are high, but I fear few banks can contradict me, when I say the salaries are still as they were. The patience and humility of the bank clerk has been phenomenal, but it seems as if he were now at the end of it, and several of our new members have announced their intention of taking up his grievances during the next session. After all if we legislate to protect labour of our sort we should do so for another, and the bank clerk, underpaid and over-worked, is equally entitled to protection with the factory hand.



OUR OVER-WORKED PREMIER.

No one who knows the work Mr Seddon has been doing since he assumed the Premiership will be surprised to hear that he is suffering from the severe strain on his powers. Strong men frequently imagine that no labour can wear them out. How one enters the robustness of consti-

tution and the exuberant vital energy that alone can beget such supreme confidence. But the human frame, though a wonderfully tough machine, is not warranted to last for ever, and is as certain to break down speedily under inconsiderate usage as a steam engine that is not oiled and constantly driven at top speed. If there is one thing certain in the province of New Zealand politics, it is that the office of Premier is no sinecure if the duties of it are discharged as Mr Seddon has discharged them. No doubt many of these duties are self-imposed, and it would be perfectly easy and much more reasonable that they should be discharged by subordinates. But Mr Seddon has fallen in with the custom of his predecessors of attending to details himself, and has gone much further than even they did, so that the pressure of multifarious tasks that bears on his shoulders is greater than any previous minister has stood or fallen under. Outsiders have little conception of the work the Premier gets through in the six or, rather, I should say the seven, days of the week, for every Sunday is not a holiday for him. There is the ever-recurring calls of departmental business to be answered, the thousand outside requests and complaints to be considered, legislative problems to be pondered, speeches to be thought over, personal letters to be written, functions to be attended, and over and above, and in between these, the interminable deputations. Speaking of the last, Lord Palmerston used to say that he looked on deputations as his relaxation. I imagine Mr Seddon must take much the same view. Yet deputations must seriously clip his time, necessitating much harder and longer work to get through the other duties of the day. Arduous as is the Premier's life at any time, it is doubly so when Parliament is sitting and the session throws its additional burden on him. Then his existence is literally one of work, morning, noon and night. After breakfast he is in his room, and there he sits until the House meets at 2.30, snatching often but few minutes for lunch. The afternoon sitting ended, most members betake themselves for a walk, and then have a comfortable dinner. The Premier has no time for walks, and dinner is invariably a hurried meal, there being more work to do before the evening sitting. At the close of that the ordinary member looks for his bed. The Premier, however, in numberless instances, seeks his desk once more, and gets through one or two hours' work before he claims his well-earned sleep. Imagine this sort of thing, with a plentiful admixture of worry and anxiety, going on for three or four months, and there you have what the session is to the Premier. Nor does the rising of Parliament bring leisure to compensate in any degree for this continuous overwork. During the recess Mr Seddon has his hands full. The wonder is that his health has so long held out under this unnatural strain. That nature was bound to protest before long has been prophesied for the last two years. And now that prophecy has been fulfilled. Nature has protested, the doctor has protested, and the voice of the colony is protesting, too. Let us hope Mr Seddon will give some heed to the triple appeal.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

Mr E. Reynolds, who has been selected to represent New Zealand at the World's Cycling Championships, to be held in Paris in September, is well known throughout New Zealand for his consistent brilliant riding. Since 1894 he has carried off one or more of the New Zealand championships each year, and has also placed to his credit a championship of Victoria, and the Five Mile Championship of Australia. During the past season Mr Reynolds has been riding more brilliantly than ever, and though meeting the cracks of America and Europe under many disadvantages we feel confident that he will give a good account of himself when the struggle for holding the title of world's champion comes to be undertaken. Mr Reynolds sailed for Paris, via "Frisco," in the Mariposa on Monday, being accompanied by Messrs Tierney and Deulin, two well-known Auckland cyclists, who intend competing in some of the principal events to be held in connection with the Exposition.

A DASHING EXPLOIT.

The story of the capture of the train at Springfontein by Captains Pope Hennessey, of the Cape Police, and Gordon Turner (Montmorency's Scouts), the subject of our illustration, proves it to have been one of the most daring and successful exploits of the campaign. Securing a trolley, the two gallant officers trolled from Bethulia until close to Springfontein Station, and under cover of darkness advanced cautiously right on to the platform. In the waiting-room they found six Johannesburg burghers (three Greeks and three Italians) asleep; a few moments sufficed to secure both guns and men. This was barely accomplished when the seventh man (a German) came into the room, and was immediately disarmed and secured.

Captain Gordon Turner stepped out on to the platform, and ran right against the eighth man, also a German, who, when in Turner's powerful grip, meekly consented to relinquish his gun and be escorted into the waiting-room.

A train was standing in the yard, and the two gallant officers quickly interviewed the driver, who was found to be an Englishman with strong pro-Boer proclivities, and inclined to make a fuss. Argument, however, was brought to bear in the shape of a revolver, and the determined look of the two officers soon conveyed to him that resistance was useless, and he consented to their proposals. In a few minutes the engine, with twenty-three trucks, some laden with provisions, guns, and ammunition (mostly Martini-Henry), was gaily steaming to Bethulia, which was reached shortly before midnight, and handed over to General Gatacre, who highly complimented the two gallant officers.

Previous to leaving Springfontein, the two officers interviewed the stationmaster of Springfontein, and with due formality claimed all the buildings, rolling stock, etc., as captured by Gatacre's division.

About three o'clock the next morning the General, with his staff and some men, took train to Springfontein. While engaged in an office about ten minutes after his arrival, General Gatacre heard a voice claiming the station, etc., as his prize. The General and his staff officer thereupon went outside, and came face to face with General Pole-Carew, who had just arrived with the Guards (Foot) Brigade by train from Jagersfontein road. Mutual courtesies were exchanged, and the fact explained that for nearly twelve hours the station had been in occupation of Gatacre's division.

THE COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

The National Council of Women sat in Dunedin last week deliberating and settling a score and more of the knottiest problems of the day. Strange as it may seem, their work in this respect excited little comment on the part of the colony generally, and it was owing to quite another circumstance than the fact that the body had grappled and overthrown a dozen modern hydra that the majority of New Zealanders became aware of its existence. Some pro-Boer sentiments expressed by one or more of the delegates during the discussion on militarism and arbitration—mere obiter dicta of an excitable orator—offended the patriotic soul of Ouedin, and the Mayor, who had promised to take the chair at the Council's conversation on Saturday, wrote intimating that after the opinions expressed he must decline as a loyal British subject to fulfil that promise. Thereupon a deputation from the Council waited on His Worship and explained that the expressions were those of members and that the body as a whole was not committed to any opinion on the present crisis. The Mayor, however, was relentless, and on Saturday before it concluded its deliberations the Council endeavoured to soothe its troubled soul and vindicate itself by passing a unanimous resolution to the effect that "the Council of New Zealand Women strongly feel that as every collective body is subject to individual differences the people of Dunedin should be able to recognise that the utterances of some of the Council's members with regard to the present crisis do not express the convictions of the Council as a whole." Alas and alack, true enough though that may be, I am afraid that such an explanation will not satisfy a pa-

triotic public, which in spite of it will continue to regard the Council as the nidus of disloyalty. On more than one occasion has the body offended the susceptibilities of the community and provoked its ridicule, and its enemies have been lying in wait to denounce it. Now is their opportunity, and they will not fail to take advantage of it.

A THRILLING EXPERIENCE.

Nestling close to other comfortable residences in Featherstone on the Te Wharepouri Creek is the comfortable home of Mrs Peterson. Here a reporter elicited a remarkable story from Mrs Peterson. It related to the daughter of the house, who rejoices in the pretty and uncommon name of Petrea. This young lady, who is about 21 years of age and of prepossessing appearance, subsequently volunteered the following statement.

"When I was 15 I began to suffer with heart palpitation, swollen legs, loss of sleep and appetite, cramps and giddiness. The cramps were so painful that I would scream with pain; often when walking I became giddy and had to catch at something to save myself from falling. Although treated by several clever doctors, my illness increased, and I became a sufferer from pain near the heart. I was so pale and weak that my relatives thought I would die. I noticed a case in the "Evening Post" somewhat similar to mine, which had been cured by Dr. Williams' pink pills, and some were bought for me. After even a few doses I seemed to feel better, and when I had used several boxes the improvement was noticeable. I continued with them until quite cured, and my improved appearance is a subject of remark. My mother has also benefited by Dr. Williams' pink pills, in addition to three of my friends, and as we are always recommending them their popularity in the district is very great."

In almost every neighbourhood a similar case might be heard of, for there is hardly a town where there are not some people, once suffering invalids, who have been restored to health by Dr. Williams' pink pills. The disorders they have cured include paralysis, consumption, bronchitis, rheumatism, sciatica, blood impoverishments, rickets, indigestion, all forms of female weakness, and hysteria. They are a tonic, not a purgative. Substitutes are offered by some few retailers; there is no instance on record in which a substitute has benefited any one. Dr. Williams' pink pills are sold by the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Wellington, three shillings per box, six boxes sixteen and six, post free, and by chemists and storekeepers. But mind you ask for Dr. Williams'. The genuine are never loose or in bottles.

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