

# Minor Matters.

## Disorderly Conduct at a Synod.

Something in the nature of what is termed in Parliament "disorderly conduct" occurred during a recent sitting of the Presbyterian Synod. Of course, the conduct was "disorderly" only in the technical sense in which that term is applied in connection with legislative bodies. Shortly before 11 o'clock an elder rose, interrupting another speaker, and in anything but pacific tones expressed his opinion that they were listening to a lot of long speeches with nothing in them. Thereupon several members rose and objected to this comment, demanding its withdrawal. The member who had interrupted the speaker said, "I withdraw it," but made the remark without moving in his seat. This was not deemed satisfactory or respectful, and a proper withdrawal and an apology was demanded. The offending member thereupon apologised, but added, "Do you want me to make a long speech about it?" and as that was not desired the incident closed without further comment.

## A Story Worth Remembering.

The Dutch commandant who had charge of all the British prisoners taken after the battles of Glencoe, Dundee, and Nicholson's Nek has told Michael Davitt the following interesting little story:—Going his rounds at midnight on one occasion he was astounded to see an English soldier acting as Boer sentinel over the prisoners, and on the commandant demanding an explanation Tommy offered the following extraordinary account of his transformation from a prisoner to sentinel over himself and fellow prisoners: "Well, sir, this 'ere poor little chap," pointing to the sleeping form of a Boer lad fifteen years old, "was dead broke for sleep after two nights of dooty. I takes pity on the little chap, and I says, 'Look 'ere, you're regular done up, you are, that's sartin'. You give me your rifle and take a bit of sleep, and I'll do sentry-go for you, I will, Honor bright! I won't do nothink wrong; blow me if I do!' So the little chap went off. It's all right, sir; don't you blame him, please. He is only a kid!" "I was assured," adds Mr. Davitt, "that neither the kid nor the kind-hearted English prisoner suffered over the unique incident."

## A Unique New Zealand Tour.

A unique tour is planned by Mr. A. Monro, of Tararaki. He is having constructed as his "farm" a large caravan, which will be fitted up with living apartments, etc., and conveniences for cooking. It will be drawn by three or four horses, the animals being now prepared for their long journey. It is Mr. Monro's intention to drive to Wellington, cross to Picton, and drive thence right through the South Island to Invercargill, accompanied on the journey by his wife. He expects to leave about December 4.

## Laughter in Church.

The only time I ever heard a congregation laugh unrestrainedly during the regular services in a cathedral was back in the eighties, when I was a resident of dear, dirty Dublin. On one Sunday morning the bishop of Cork preached. He was a splendid man, an Irishman to the backbone and possessed of as fine a brogue as ever distinguished a son of Erin. His congregation was made up of the very essence of fashion in Dublin, which in those days was, one of the greatest social centres of the world. Notoriously, people were living beyond their means, for the income from the landed estates of Ireland had taken a big tumble. But that made no difference, and good dressing went as a matter of course and was one of the smallest of the extravagances. The bishop preached on the subject of extravagance and spoke particularly of overdressing. His sermon was a bitter arraignment of the sin of debt and the wickedness of setting the heart on fashion and dress. He attacked the overdressed woman and wound up this particular reference this way: "Now,

supposing every one of ye—every one, man and woman—should stand up in this church, take off the clothes ye have not paid for, your walkin' out with the things on your back ye have paid for—a pretty lookin' lot of 'sare-crows ye'd be." There was a pause until the real significance of the suggestion had percolated through the members of his congregation, then some one snickered. Every one was picturing to himself and herself the real scene that would occur should the bishop's idea be carried into effect, while wife looked at husband and members of each family nudged one another. The ludicrous side was irresistible and the laugh was general.

## Police Episode at Dunedin.

Shortly before 12 o'clock the other day Sergeant Higgins brought a young man named Frank Burns to the Dunedin police station on a charge of theft. When the watch-house keeper was taking a book from under the counter and the sergeant was giving him some instructions, the prisoner was asked to remove his effects from his pockets and place them on the desk. He was in the act of doing so when the idea of escape seemed to strike him, and, taking advantage of the momentary preoccupation of the two officers of the law, he bolted out of the watch-house and across the passage. The folding doors were closed, and, apparently, he imagined they were locked for he made straight at the glass panel in one of them and broke it to pieces, his body going partially through with the force of the impact.

The doors swung outwards, and the prisoner rolled down the steps leading into the station and on to the street. Recovering his feet he started off along the street, and a short and exciting chase followed. Constable Wholman, the clerk in the inspector's office, joining in. The police are evidently fletter of foot than those who are their particular care, for the young man had not gone many yards before he was overtaken, rearrested and lodged in the lock-up.

## Some Hat Stories.

The London "Globe" has been collecting a series of lost hat stories, of which the following are specimens:—A father and son were standing at the entrance to Old Chain pier, at Brighton, when the dear little boy tumbled into the dancing waves. A bystander, accoutred as he was, plunged into the sea, and buffeting the waves with lusty sinews, succeeded at last in setting the dripping child at his father's feet. "And what has ye done wi' his hat?" said papa. A correspondent sent the following narrative:—A festive blue-jacket was seen from a ship in Malta harbour dancing on the top of the parapet wall at Fort Ricasoli. First his hat blew over, and then, leaning over to look for it, he lost his balance and fell after it—a sheer drop of thirty feet or more. The surgeon on duty was landed with a party to bring off the remains for identification. They found him crawling about on hands and knees and inquired if he was seriously hurt. "Hurt be blowed!" was his reply. "Where's my hat?"

## A Riccarton Racecourse Episode.

A writer in the Christchurch "Press" relates the following amusing yarn:—"Turn yer pocket out like a gen'lman!"

But the individual so addressed, half intoxicated as he was, manifested supreme indifference to this hall-mark of a gentleman, and stared inanely at the bookmaker who addressed him.

The missing ticket contained a record of a bet which the investor had won, and until it was produced the bet could not be paid. The investor had not only failed to produce the ticket, but apparently had actually committed the unpardonable sin of accusing the bookmaker of stealing it. This was a fine row brewing.

"Turn yer pocket out like a gen'lman," imperatively demanded the bookmaker, his voice subduing the din of the other voices round him by mere power of lung. "Turn it out an' we'll see whether I've got the ticket."

"Turn his pocket out for him," yelled his assistant, savagely.

Meanwhile the subject of all this wrath was regarding both men with a vacuous grin. He wouldn't turn his pocket out, primarily because he wasn't able to, but the fact that he showed no inclination to accept this simple means of proving his good faith was beginning to weigh heavily against him in the minds of the crowd, who watched the contest much in the same way as a jury would.

He had a mate and this man attempted to pull the case out of the fire.

"Why should he turn his pocket out? He'll do nothin' o' the sort."

"Why won't he?" rejoined the exasperated bookmaker. "What ha' you got to 'ith it? He says I stole his ticket. Let him turn his pocket out like a gen'lman."

Murmurs of approval from the crowd.

"We'll soon turn his pocket out," shouted the assistant, who recognised that the day was won. He seized the man's coat, after a feeble resistance, and put his hand into the pocket indicated by half a dozen of those standing about him.

"Excuse me," he said with studious politeness, as he dived his hand in, and brought out a motley collection of crumpled papers of all sorts and sizes.

Selecting one of these he waved it aloft triumphantly. It was the missing ticket.

Then he proceeded to fall upon his man with the emphasis of a pile driver.

"D'ye know what ought to be done with you?" he screamed, with many adjectives. "You ought to have your head punched."

He started at once to punch, but the bookmaker interposed.

"You let him alone. You're not in this at all. I'm the bloke, not you. If anybody's got to do any punchin' I'm the man." He said this with the air of one who resented any infraction of his undoubted rights.

"Look here," he went on, addressing the investor, "you accused me of stealin' that ticket, an' here it is in your pocket. You ought to be kicked—any man who'd do a thing like that. Here's your money and clear out," and with this he won the jury over entirely. He was leaving the Court without a stain upon his character.

Then he handed £1 over to the man's mate, which immediately started the latter off in a long, and involved argument with the bookmaker, their voices pitched in a high key.

For in this queer world all voices must be pitched in the highest of keys, if they are to be heard at all in the midst of the noise.

## Saw the Mistake too Late.

"He asked me to marry him." "And you accepted him?" "No. Idiot that I was, I asked for time." "And what did he say?" "He said 'hold give me a year.'" "Ah! And what did you say?" "I saw my mistake. I said two days would be plenty. But he wouldn't hear it. He said no woman could make up her mind in such a short time. He really insisted upon my taking six months. We finally compromised on thirty days." "And then?" "He married that putty faced Humberling girl the very next week.—"Cleveland Plain Dealer."

## He Obeyed Orders.

Willie, six years old, has a pair of parents who try to break him of the habit of taking things on his plate that he cannot eat and leaving much to go to waste. He is in a fair way to improve under their watchfulness. "You must eat the crust too, Willie," his mamma will say, and Willie will dutifully eat the crust. "Don't take such a large piece of cake, Willie, unless you can eat it," his papa will say, and Willie will take it and stuff himself with it rather than to leave a crumb for his father to grumble about. The other day Willie was invited to a birthday party. His mother dressed him in his best clothes. "Now, mind, Willie," was the last thing she said to him, "eat everything you take on your plate." Willie came home that evening with ill-revered pains. The little girl in whose honour the party was given was thirteen years old. Her mother had baked a birthday cake and part of the scheme of ornamentation of it were thirteen wax candles. There were three of them on the piece that was put on Willie's plate.

## Red Tapeisma.

At the present time, when the ayac tem of red tape is being attacked and ridiculed, the following somewhat amusing methods of dealing with matters are still adopted by one of the great government departments. For instance, a hairbrush and comb must be purchased under the head of service "clothing," whereas a toothbrush is under "fuel" and spectacles under "medicines." A cotthebascket is "clothing," but clothes pegs are "accidentals." The funniest of all, however, are guano and straw, they being purchased under "victualing." A good instance of red tape is told in connection with the excise. An officer had entered in the inquiry column of his return: "March 13, Dog d.s.d." This did not satisfy his superior, who told him to inquire again, which the obedient officer did, recording: "April 10, Dog still dead."—"London Standard."

## Quite Wrong.

The other morning Jones turned up at the office even later than usual. His employer, tired of waiting for him, had himself set about registering the day's transactions, usually Jones's first duty. The enraged merchant laid his pen aside very deliberately, and said to Jones, very sternly indeed, "Jones, this will not do!" "No, sir," replied Jones gently, drawing off his coat as he glanced over his employer's shoulder, "it will not. You have entered McKurken's order in the wrong book. Far better to have waited till I came!"

## A Modern Hero.

A fluffy girl and a man with an undefinable air were seated recently at a table in a popular cafe, let us say, in Auckland. Hovering attentively near was a waiter known to the habitués of the place as Jim. "I wish," said the girl, with a dreamy look and a cultivated drawl, "that men of to-day, were like those of olden times. Then they would fight for a girl—lay down their lives if necessary. Now they (she paused, looking intently at a tall glass of ice cream) content themselves with buying ices or afternoon tea." The man looked nettled. "We have not changed," he maintained; "only nowadays there is no opportunity to display our devotions—no tournaments; no heavy villains. That sort of thing is out of date." "That's just it! Out of date! Chivalry is out of date, but a brave man would make an opportunity," pouted the fluffy girl. The man looked over his prominent nose sulkily, for he admired the girl and in his heart he knew he was a hero. Suddenly a bright thought struck him. He fumbled in his pocket for a match, and, failing to find it, hurriedly excused himself and left the table. "I ordered you another ice," he announced, returning. The girl protested gracefully, but just then the waiter's great figure, like that of a guardian angel, approached with the cooling mixture. Now Jim is the verbally skillful in his handcraft of juggling tumblers, but as he neared the pretty girl his footseemed to slip, and splash! went the ice over her summer gown. "Stupid!" ejaculated the

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