

Minor Matters.

The New Zealander and the Army Male.

A pious New Zealand trooper was assigned to the duty of teaming, probably by mistake. The roads were muddy, and the rest of the teamsters were literally bombarding their charges with oaths. It was against the man's principles to swear, and he held his peace, albeit in impotent rage. At last one of the hind mules balked and refused to advance a step. The New Zealander used every endeavour to urge the beast along, but to no purpose. At last he roared in a loud and solemn voice: "O Lord, you know where this mule ought to be as well as anybody. This whole army knows where he ought to be this minute. He knows where he ought to be. I know where he ought to be, O Lord, and if he doesn't move in a minute I intend to say so, by gum."

A Bird in the Hand, etc.

As two gentlemen were cycling down the footpath of Wai-iti Road, Timaru, the other day, they were accosted by "a man in blue," who seemed to take great interest in their welfare, so much so that he asked them for their names in order, presumably, that he might renew acquaintance with them at some future date. Being respectable citizens, they offered no objections to divulging their identity and they immediately handed their cards to the important personage who stood before them. But just as they did so, a lady came out of a gate close by, and, mounting her bike on the footpath, she cycled jiggly off, without intervention on the part of any one. Possibly the man in blue had become inspired with a little of that gallantry of which the Governor had been speaking in the afternoon, or failing that, he may have thought that two "dead birds" were a good deal better than one very much alive, and which he had but little hope of catching. It should be a warning, however, to the lady, to be careful in future.

Too Good not to be True.

A story which is at least "ben trovato," is being told of a certain well-known Government official. A party of Maoris from the far north visited a certain land office, where they were introduced to the official who had especial charge of their section of the country, a bumptious little individual with a big head. This official prided himself on his importance. Grasping each seemed to overpower the brown men one of them cordially by the hand, he patted them patronizingly on their backs and then delivered a long speech, explaining in detail the work of the office, their interest in it, laying particular stress on the fact that he was the motive power of it all. As soon as their entertainer paused for breath the visiting Maoris began to grunt and talk among themselves. "What are they saying?" asked the egotistical clerk, expecting to hear high praise of himself. "Tell me what they are saying." "I cannot tell you," replied the interpreter. "It was not for you to hear." But the little man insisted, and with great reluctance the interpreter finally yielded. "They said," he translated, "little man, big head, heap talk, say nothing, much fool."

The English Idea of Americans.

"I have often jeered at the comic Englishman as depicted on the American stage," said a competent young actor the other day. "But I'll never do so any more. He is a miracle of realism compared to the comic American on the English stage. I was in London last season, and one of the first things I saw was a melodrama that opened with what was described on the programme as an 'out of door ball' at a diamond king's bungalow, at Kimberley. There were a lot of people in the scene, and among them was the inevitable comedy American, who was supposed to be a Chicago millionaire, travelling around the world seeing the sights. The part was played by a raw-boned cockney, who evidently

had an idea that all Americans talked through their noses. He wore an eccentric make-up, consisting of very short and very loud plaid trousers, blue cutaway coat and an old-fashioned plug hat, set on the extreme back of his head. A cigar screwed into one corner of his mouth completed his 'toot and scramble,' as the artists say, and he expectorated loudly and frequently, much to the delight of the audience. In the course of his remarks he referred to the time when 'Three-finger Ben was Mayor of Sheego,' and said that 'gents to hum' was always accustomed to 'checkin' their guns at the door' when they attended social functions. He also made frequent use of the terms 'guess,' 'arnal,' 'hunky' and 'reckon'; said 'plankin' down the dust' when he meant paying money, and continually alluded to his native land as 'the States.' The spectators recognised all these expressions as Americanisms of the deepest dye, and applauded rapturously. He excited still further enthusiasm by dancing a jig in his stocking feet and singing a 'coon song,' and, taken altogether, he was quite the hit of the evening. I laughed until my sides ached, and a British friend who accompanied me to the theatre was agreeably surprised at my tolerance. 'That's what I like about you Americans,' he said; 'you don't seem to mind it a bit when you see your little oddities taken off by our players.' Next day one of the London dramatic papers spoke of the impersonation as 'a clever piece of low comedy portraiture.' I think that lays over anything we have to offer in the line of impossible stage Englishmen. —New Orleans "Times-Democrat."

Can't Swear at Women Employees.

The other day a young woman who had been promoted to a post of responsibility previously filled by a man, and who was doing satisfactorily the same work as her predecessor at about half the pay, called the attention of the manager of the concern to this discrepancy. "Oh, but," he said, "a girl never does get as much as a man, you know." "But, why not?" the young woman persisted. "It is the same work that you paid Mr. — so much for, and you admit yourself that it is well done." "Yes, but one has to treat a woman differently. One can't swear at a woman, you know." Too well bred to transgress the rules of courtesy towards a lady in his employ he indemnified himself by docking her salary.

A Roberts Billiard Yarn.

Roberts, the billiard champion, during his stay in Melbourne, described an experience which is not altogether new to some admirers of billiards, but is worth setting down afresh, on his authority. When making a professional tour in England, playing exhibition matches, Cook, North, Shorter, and himself stayed at the Washington Hotel, Liverpool. In the billiard-room they found a well-dressed stranger practising fancy strokes. After they had admired him for a while in silence, he asked if any one of them would like a game. North assented. The stranger played remarkably well, and knew it; but North won by 20 points in 100. North, smilingly declined to play a second game, but suggested that one of his friends might oblige. Shorter stepped into the breach, and won by 35, much to the surprise and annoyance of the loser, who warmly requested another game. Shorter yawned. He was too tired himself, but one of the two remaining spectators might not refuse. Cook took up the challenge and won by 50. The stranger's blood was up; he refused to remain quiet under constant defeat, so the last man, Roberts, had to accommodate him with 100 up. "He gave a miss in baulk," said the champion, "and I did what I could not do perhaps once in 50 times. I ran out with an unfinished break of 100." "Well, you are the hottest," — "I've ever struck," remarked the stranger. They were at that time probably the four best exponents of the English game in the world.

The Young Bride's Idea.

Out in a big boarding house in well-never mind the city just now—there dwells a young married woman who is as naive as the bride in the comic papers. The matrons who live in the same house with her have been somewhat annoyed of late by mice. The young woman met one of them in the hall the other day, and the conversation naturally turned on their common pests. "The mice have been so bad lately," said the elder woman, "that I keep everything locked up and all my eatables in the boxes." The younger woman's eyes sparkled with eagerness. "My!" she said, "I wouldn't dare do that. I wouldn't want to run such a risk. I leave crackers and cheese lying about every night when I go to bed so that when the mice become hungry they'll find something to eat and not gnaw things. I'm always afraid they'll bite holes in my new frocks and my nice bonnets if I don't leave the cheese right where they can find it easily. I feel perfectly safe when I know there's plenty for the u to eat right where they can get at it." There's nothing, after all, like having a clever idea like that now and then.

The Latest of Schilling's World-Walking Tour.

Mr G. H. Schilling, the one-armed pedestrian, who is on a wagger-walking tour round the world, has arrived safely at Allahabad, in India, and writes to a friend in Christchurch to announce the fact that he is "not dead as reported." Schilling has been experiencing what he terms "hard times" since leaving New Zealand. Twice he has narrowly escaped death by drowning; he has been down with jungle fever in India, and had numerous narrow shaves of making a meal for a healthy tiger—so he alleges. In one place, through committing a breach of Hindoo native etiquette, he stood in danger of being clubbed to death, but in spite of all, talks hopefully of reaching Bombay, for which place he started overland, on foot, from Calcutta. From thence he took a ship to China, and then has some eight thousand miles to walk to complete his engagement. Schilling states that owing to the South African war his time limit has been extended by six months. His next address will be the American Consulate, Hong Kong.

A Protestant Cow.

In the old days on the diggings dairying was profitable. Pat attended the sale of an Orangeman's stock, and bought a fine cow, Biddy, who hailed from Cork, though a clever dairymaid, refused to milk the purchase till it had been cleared of the stain of its Orange breeding. Obdient to her instructions, Pat obtained a bottle of holy water from the priest, but on his way home he called at Murray's pub and store at Rowdy Flat, and in a moment of confidence to Murray the nature of the contents of the bottle, and the purpose to which it was to be devoted. Murray took an opportunity to change the water for vitriol. The first few drops of vitriol poured on the cow's head drove her frantic, and, smashing the bail, she made her escape to the bush. "Oh, Pat'sie," said the horrified Biddy, "wasn't the Protestant strong in her?"

Most Extravagant and Vicious Dinner Ever Given.

Undoubtedly it is a good thing to have an aim in life, even if the aim does not seem to be a very high one, and it probably brings a thrill of satisfaction to the possessor thereof when he can say, "I have done what I meant to do." This thrill has been the reward of years of earnest and persistent effort on the part of a young man now in Paris, who is regarded there as a typical American. He has succeeded in giving a dinner which for extravagance and recklessness has startled even that city of sensations. It had furthermore the distinction of having no woman at it who was not in some way distinguished in the records of vice. To accomplish this does not appear to the average person worth the price, but then we cannot all see things alike. The young prodigite has been working up to the accomplishment of his ambition ever since his father sent him to college with an allowance of a thousand a month for spending

money. The father was a self-made man who bequeathed his son more money than brains, so far as can be judged from indications seen as yet, and the father showed by his conduct toward his son that he himself was not as skillful in raising men as he was in making money. What a pity such things should be and that a life can be so poor that it was no better ideal of pleasure than dissoluteness. The man or woman who comes to maturity with no truer sense of things has been cheated out of the best of his or her birth-right, and this is a statement susceptible of proof had one time and place for an essay on the subject.

At a Branch Bank.

A branch bank was about to be opened. The manager arrived late in the evening with a leather bag full of cash, also a supply of clothes in another bag. The safe where he intended depositing the money was found to be so tightly shut that the blacksmith had to be called in. The blacksmith worked hard, and at last managed to get the safe door open. The money bag was put in, and the door shut with the assistance of the blacksmith. The manager then withdrew to his sleeping quarters with his bag of wearing apparel, which he presently opened. To his horror he discovered the cash before him, and realised that he had locked up all his clothes. It was now very late, nothing could be done, consequently he spent an unhappy night, keeping guard, in full dress, over the money. Next morning the blacksmith was called in again.

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