

Minor Matters.

Sorry He Spoke.

He had bought a nice little place in the country, loek, stock, and barrel, about 500 acres. On Sunday he was proudly riding round his property, when he met a man on a little iron-grey pony. Wishing to be friendly in the district, he commenced the conversation with "Morning, just riding round having a look." "You've bought the place, then, I presume?" asked the man on the pony. "That's so; nice property, ain't it?" "It is that. I'm told there's any amount of gold over in the creek, and there's indications of coal at the west side, and the new line is to go through the northern corner. Yes, this property is worth £3,000 of any man's money." "Three thousand, eh?" "Yes, sir, three thousand, and I wouldn't take a penny less." "Well, I'm glad to hear you say so. Other properties round here ain't worth more than a thousand at the outside, but I'll put yours down at £3,000. I'm the valuator."

A Derby Day Incident.

"Will you kindly allow me to stand?" asked a gentleman, as he got into a railway carriage at Auckland station en route to the races, and which carriage already contained the specified number. "Certainly not, sir!" exclaimed a passenger, occupying a corner seat near the door. "The way these trains are overcrowded is shameful!" "As you appear to be the only person who objects to my presence," replied the gentleman, "I shall remain where I am."

"Then I shall call the guard, and have you removed, sir!"

"Sitting the action to the word, the aggrieved passenger rose, and putting his head out of the window, vociferously summoned the guard."

The newcomer saw his opportunity, and quietly slipped into the corner seat.

"What's up?" inquired the guard, as he opened the carriage door.

"One over the number," replied the newcomer, coolly.

"You must come out, sir; the train's a-going on," and without waiting for any further explanation, the guard pulled out the aggrieved passenger, who was left wildly gesticulating on the platform. He didn't see the fun at Ellerslie.

A Meal Every Two Hours.

Lady Mary Saurin, who died in London the other day, having nearly completed her hundredth year, had, during her whole life, an unvarying habit of eating something every two hours. She never in any circumstances departed from the custom, and to it she ascribes her good health and longevity. When travelling or going about London she carried a little bag of sandwiches with her, and at the expiration of every two hours she would open her bag and eat one or two. Up to the end of her life the mind of this marvellous old lady seemed strong and active, and her memory was remarkable. At the time of the battle of Waterloo, her father, Lord Harrowby, held office as president of the council, and his town house was in Grosvenor Square. Lady Mary was often related the history of events at that critical moment and recounted vivid recollections of the rejoicings and illuminations in London when the news of the great victory was received. She would also tell tales of the days of the Chartists and the Cato-st. conspiracy. There was a deep laid plot to assassinate the entire Government of the day, and the blow was arranged to be struck when the members of the Cabinet were assembled at dinner at the house of her father, Lord Harrowby, in Grosvenor Square.

A Young Bride's Adventure.

A young and pretty bride was invited to a dinner party the other night, the understanding being that the festive event was in her special honour. Nevertheless, upon arriving with her husband, she was surprised to find herself shoved with him off into a corner, without being presented to anyone, and permitted to remain, after a brief word with the hostess, unnoticed and alone. When the butler did finally enter to announce that the roast was ready, she looked towards her husband, but at the table no attention was paid to her save by an old dow-

ager at the further end of the board, who appeared to be astonishingly deaf. "My dear," shouted the old lady, as the soup succeeded the oysters, "pray tell me how long you have been married." "Only a very few days," replied the guest of honour, also loudly, so that she might be heard. Evidently, however, the old lady did not hear, for when the fish was being brought on she cried out again: "My dear, have you been married very long?" "Not yet a week, madam," responded the bride, louder still this time. "Oh!" said the dowager, as if relieved, and thereupon relapsed into silence. But the removal of the roast woke her up again. "My dear," she remarked, "I did not understand how long you said you had been married." "Exactly five days," screamed the young matron, flushing half with embarrassment, half with anger. "Ah! yes," rejoined the old woman, having apparently heard this time. "And, my dear, how many children did you say you had so far?"

Sydney Apathy.

A friend who was in Sydney at the reception of Lord Hopetoun tells me (says a writer in the "Australasian") that Sydney crowds don't enthuse like those in Melbourne. The Governor's reception, he says, was somewhat cold to what it would have been in the Queen City of the South. Sydney people are more curious than enthusiastic. They like to look on at the show with hands in their pockets and pipe in mouth. The Governor-General came in for any amount of "gnaps seed" from men and women, and that was all. On Sunday morning thousands surrounded Government house grounds peering through every available opening, in the hope of seeing the Governor walking about. And they stayed nearly all day. Perhaps the climate has something to do with the lack of enthusiasm.

Not so Innocent as She Looked.

"Could you spare a few pence for a sick child, ma'am?" said a woman to a young lady who was about to get on a tram car in Auckland. Being of a sympathetic nature, the young lady looked in her purse and found she could spare sixpence. The coin was handed to the beggar, who took it and said: "Thank you, lady! It'll be a blessing to the child. It'll buy him a pint—a pint of milk," she added as an afterthought. The car came just then, and as the young lady mounted the steps she said: "Oh, don't get milk for the child! Get him the pint!" The woman scowled, and the car rolled on.

During the Festivities.

In Sydney things are a bit swift. A gentleman staying at one of the large hotels, after dining, managed to arrive at his lodgings about four in the morning. Hearing a very strange noise on the staircase, the manager, who is a light sleeper, slipped out to see what was up. There was the paying guest sitting on the stair landing, with a large bronze figure firmly clasped in his arms, which he was hushing to sleep. "Great Scott!" said the manager, "where on earth did you get that from?" "Outshide, dear boy; I thought she looked lonely, so I just brought her in out of the cold."

Who Says Colonial Children are Not Smart?

While the family were at tea the privileged cat sat on a footstool before the fire, quietly cleaning itself after the manner of its kind. Another privileged favourite had come to the table with hands that were not so white as the head of the house would have liked. "How nice of pussy," said papa insinuatingly, "to lick her paws and then smooth all the dust out of her head and ears. Is she not a nice clean thing?" The midget, for whom this lecture by implication was intended, sat soberly for a moment. Then the flash came: "I don't think pussy clean at all," she said. "I think it very dirty or her to spit on her feet like that, and then smudge them all over her face."

A New Zealander's Snake Story.

A New Zealand trooper now in South Africa sends me the following yarn, which he says is mild to some of the South-African snake stories:—"A lady in Durban on getting up one morning heard a most peculiar noise in the pantry. She was astonished to find that a snake had its head and part of its body through the handle of a china jug. Both sides of the snake—that is, the portion on each side of the handle—were bulging out. Then she discerned what had happened. Some eggs had been lying on the shelf, and the snake, after having swallowed one, had crawled partly through the handle of the jug—that is, so far as the swallowed egg would allow—in order to get at another, which it had also swallowed. Naturally enough, it could not then go either forward or backward through the handle. The lady was just going to call her husband, when the reptile gave a desperate wriggle, and in doing so fell on the floor with a bang, handle and all. But the fall broke both the eggs in its inside, and taking advantage of its release from the handle, it was out in the garden before you could say 'Ware!'"

A Champion of the Worm.

The recent session of the British Parliament furnished an amusing illustration of the occasional power of satire to bring about results which sober argument has failed to accomplish.

A bill designed to prevent cruelty to wild animals in captivity had been presented, and was opposed by a number of members on the ground that, if passed, it would endanger certain kinds of legitimate sport.

The Earl of Kimberley arose, and gravely admitted the force of this argument.

"Undoubtedly," he said, "the bill would put an end to fishing with worms as bait. It is a bill," he continued, "to prevent cruelty to wild animals in captivity; the schedule says the word 'animal' shall be held to include reptile; a worm may be held to be a reptile; a worm impaled on a hook must certainly be held to be in captivity; therefore the angler who uses a live worm for bait would be guilty of cruelty to an animal in captivity."

The laugh which this argument raised at the expense of the solicitous sportsmen robbed the opposition of whatever force it had, and carried the bill to a successful issue.

Woman: Heaven's Best Gift to Man.

"Woman," remarked Mr Gooseling, "is heaven's best gift to man, but whether it means a married woman or not I am not so certain. Now, there's my wife. I've known a good many women in my time and I don't think I'd be willing to change her for any woman I ever met, saw, or heard of. We've been married twenty years and in all that time we've never had a cross word that we didn't get disposed of somehow before we had many more. It's the only way to get along with a woman. I'd rather yield a dozen times a day than to eat the kind of a meal my wife can have brought on the table when she's a mind to. I'm willing to make as many concessions as the next man, but I really think there is a limit

that any reasonable woman ought to observe. Not that my wife is not as reasonable as any other married woman, mind you, for she is. But there are times when she makes me doubt the strict accuracy of the time-honoured maxim I have quoted. Now, for instance, the other day I was doing something or other round the house, like a man has a right to do on his own premises, and, just as men sometimes do, I put my finger where I had no business to put it, and hit it a lick with the hammer. "Well," said I to myself, though my wife was sewing by the window on the other side of the room, "I'll bet I'm the biggest fool in New Zealand." All of which I had a perfect right to say, but my wife looks up from her work and says she, "William," says she, "don't you know enough about the ethics of gambling to know that you have no right to bet on a certainty?" That's what she said, and under the circumstances, what on earth could I say but nothing, and that's what I said. But I hit that nail a lick with the hammer that drove it clear in over its head and broke a pane of glass that cost five shillings to replace."

The Harmaid's Remarks.

There is often found amongst harmaids an amount of humour, wit and aplomb which on the stage or in some higher sphere would lead them to success. That is, if hearsay may be trusted. For instance, a dandy, who had taken too much, knocked his glass of liquor over on the bar. "I don't mind about the liquor, don't you know," said he, "but anyone who saw me do that might suspect I was intoxicated." "Don't worry yourself," replied the ministering angel, "if they only 'suspect' it they will flatter you very much."

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